

# EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY 14 CHARLES LANE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

## Guide to Marxist Education III

An Introduction to the Ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky,  
and Sixteen Other Study Outlines



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## Introductory Note

*Guide to Marxist Education—III* is a supplement to *Guide to Marxist Education*, published in February 1973, and *Guide to Marxist Education—II: Fourteen Study Outlines on Socialist Topics*, published in March 1976.

*Guide to Marxist Education—III* contains seventeen study outlines. The topics are wide-ranging. They include several outlines on the American labor movement; a basic outline on the revolutionary-socialist view of the Black liberation struggle; an introduction to the origins, nature, and role of Stalinism; a class outline on the causes of the defeat of the Chilean workers; and many others.

Some of the outlines are useful for people who are just beginning to learn about socialism, while others assume a greater body of knowledge.

One of the new and important items in this collection is a nine-part introduction to some of the basic ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky which begins on page 3. This outline provides a basic introduction to Marxist ideas on the origins and workings of capitalism and the capitalist state, and on how the working class can carry out a successful struggle against capitalism.

This study outline should be of particular interest to people who are looking for a way to begin a study of essential Marxist concepts.

Taken together with "Building the Revolutionary Party" and "Prospects for Socialism in America" (two study outlines found on pages 3 and 38 of *Guide to Marxist Education—II*) this outline provides a broad overview of the basic outlook, strategy, program, and theory of the Socialist Workers Party.

The goal of these outlines is to assist in the education of socialists or of those interested in the ideas of socialism.

The study guides help to organize class series on a given topic by suggesting primary and secondary readings, and by dividing the subject matter into different classes. They suggest key questions and concepts for students to think about.

They aid educators in preparing classes by selecting key areas that should be stressed. They also suggest questions that discussion groups might want to take up.

In addition, the study outlines are very useful for those who want to study a subject on their own.

In using the study guides, educational committees and those giving classes should go over them with great care. They should be changed wherever desirable to meet the specific needs of the educational program. These needs will certainly vary in each area and for each group of students. The outlines should not be viewed as final or fixed. It is better to treat them as first approximations of what is needed.

The eleven study guides appearing on pages 35-62 are reprinted as they first appeared in *Party Builder* Vol. 8, No. 3, published by the Socialist Workers Party in 1974.

The National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, which prepared the bulk of these outlines, would like to get readers' ideas for new outlines and for changes in existing ones. We have found such criticisms invaluable in helping us to improve the study guides. Some of the suggestions we have received from readers or participants in classes are included in these study outlines.

**Fred Feldman  
Tim Wohlforth  
March 1977**

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MARXIST CLASSICS

The purpose of this series is to provide socialists with some background on the basics of Marxism and to stimulate serious study of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

Other study outlines provide an introduction to socialist ideas in the most general sense and to the political positions of the Socialist Workers Party. This series is aimed at introducing members to what underlies these political positions—the basic program, theory, and method of our movement.

Such a series will be valuable for all members of the SWP as well as those who are interested in or thinking about joining the SWP. Many may not have had the time to seriously study the questions taken up in these classes. Others may have read these works in previous years but could use a refresher course in the basics.

Today the Socialist Workers Party is fighting for the working class to break from the capitalist parties and adopt a class-struggle program against the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis. But how does capitalism work and why is it in crisis? Has there ever been a society in which the rule of dog-eat-dog didn't prevail?

Our participation in the battle for women's liberation has roots in a historical-materialist understanding of the family and its relation to private property, class society, and the state. But what is historical materialism?

We oppose policies of Stalinist parties and bureaucracies around the world. But what is Stalinism? How did it arise? Can a Stalinist-type regime be avoided in the United States?

We work to build a revolutionary workers' party with a democratic-centralist structure. But why do we need such a party and how did this structure evolve?

We fight to win the working class to the program of revolutionary socialism. But how can small numbers of revolutionists build a mass workers' party and win leadership of the masses from labor bureaucrats, Social Democrats, Stalinists, and other forces that oppose socialist revolution?

We put forward a transitional program combining demands of a minimum character, democratic demands, and demands that challenge capitalist property relations and state power. But what is a transitional program? How do we fight for such demands?

These questions are just examples of the many questions that need to be answered and understood to most effectively carry out our day-to-day class-struggle activity.

This class series is made up of three parts: Introduction to Marx's Writings, Introduction to Lenin's Writings, and Introduction to Trotsky's Writings.

The assigned readings are of modest length so that participants in the class will feel inspired and confident to begin reading these basic socialist writings. This is *only* a beginning, however. Hopefully, participants in these classes will feel strongly impelled to plunge deeper, beginning perhaps with the supplementary readings suggested for each class.

All required readings are available from Pathfinder.

## Introduction to Marx's Writings

### Class I—Historical Materialism

### Objective

#### *Required Reading:*

"The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man," by Frederick Engels, appendix to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, by Frederick Engels (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), \$2.95, pp. 171-82.

"I. Bourgeois and Proletarians," in *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), \$.75, pp. 16-27.

#### *Recommended Reading:*

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, by Frederick Engels (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), \$.95.

"The Materialist Conception of History," by George V. Plekhanov, available in *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, by George V. Plekhanov (New York: International), \$2.25, and other editions.

*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, by Engels, cited above.

The aim of this class is to get across two key points.

The first is that the evolution of human beings is fundamentally dependent on how we socially organize ourselves (productive relations) to utilize tools (productive forces) to take our needs from nature. Productive relations are dependent in the last analysis on the level of productive forces.

The second point is that capitalism is only a *stage* in the development of human society, one that has occupied a rather small portion of human history. It has not always existed and it will not always exist.

Earlier forms of society passed away because their productive relations (primitive communism, slavery, feudalism) blocked the development of productive forces. Capitalism came into being because it offered the possibility of further development of productivity, and is doomed to destruction because it blocks it today. The development of

the productive forces is the key to the progress of human society.

#### A. Origins of Humans

1. 2.5 million years ago—the *hominid* appears (a different species from modern humans but part of the same family):

- a. the hominid had a common ancestor with the rest of the primate family (apes and monkeys) dating back 10 million years;
- b. earliest remains show a social group—male, female, child—and primitive tools.

2. Thus human characteristics had appeared this far back:

- a. productive relations (social unit);
- b. productive forces (tools).

3. The key to the development of humanity has been social organization to use and develop tools to advance our control over nature through labor.

#### B. Stages of Development

1. Hunting and gathering society (sometimes called “savagery” by anthropologists):

- a. primitive communism, no private property, no inequality of sex or class;
- b. equality of poverty, able to provide enough to keep a small group alive with little or no surplus.

2. Early agricultural societies (sometimes called “barbarism” by anthropologists):

- a. beginning of domestication of plants, animals;
- b. surplus develops, leading to unequal distribution, trade, specialization, social differentiation;
- c. inequality develops on the basis of relative scarcity;
- d. a transition to class society and the beginning of class struggles—starts 10,000 years ago.

3. Class society (sometimes called “civilization” by anthropologists):

- a. ruling class controls means of production while masses work in poverty;
- b. permits a high development of culture, but only for benefit of a few;
- c. state emerges to guard the wealth of ruling class from the submerged class—the state an instrument of class struggle in hands of the ruling class;
- d. the systemization of inequality based on relative scarcity;  
(1) class society appeared around 6,000 years ago.

4. Socialism or advanced communism:

- a. equality of plenty;
- b. requires material base for abolishing scarcity and want;
- c. therefore exists nowhere at present although property relations pointing in this direction have been established in workers’ states;
- d. note the dialectical form of historical progress: assertion: equality of scarcity; negation: inequality based on relative scarcity; negation of negation: equality of plenty;
- e. we move in what *appears* to be a circle back to the point of origin—equality (but actually the movement is a *spiral* with equality reappearing on the vastly higher plane of material plenty).

#### C. Evolution of Class Society

1. Ancient Civilization:

- a. based on slave or peasant agricultural production;
- b. wealth accumulated by ruling class, but the surplus is *consumed*—not reinvested in improving tools, productivity;
- c. therefore all ancient societies go through cycle of growth followed by class struggle and decay when they reach the limits of expansion on the basis of a productive technique that changes little;

d. under slavery, productivity even declines, although the concentration of the surplus allows a cultural flowering for a time.

2. Feudal society:

- a. actually a degenerate form of ancient society (weakened state, generally lower culture);  
(1) production carried on by serfs tied to feudal lords—little advance in production techniques, although recovery of agriculture (undermined by centuries of slave labor) does take place;
- b. strength—commodity production began in the pores of feudal society—in towns outside the feudal holdings.

3. Capitalism:

- a. arose within feudal society;
- b. reproductive—profits plowed back into technical changes and into expanding the work force;
- c. however, in time old feudal political domination and state apparatus a limit, blocking further development of capitalist production;
- d. cause of great bourgeois revolutions like the French revolution.

#### D. Summary

1. When a given society no longer permits the development of productive forces—that is, human control over the environment to meet human needs—conditions are created for its revolutionary overthrow.

#### Questions

1. What are productive forces? What are productive relations? What are some of the ways in which the development of the productive forces has determined the course of human history?

2. It is said that human beings are naturally competitive, that private property has always existed because of natural greed and selfishness, and that women occupy a subordinate position in society because of their biological inferiority. What does human prehistory and history indicate about what is “natural” or “unnatural” for the human race?

3. Why did ancient society collapse?

4. Why did the capitalists have to destroy the old feudal state?

5. Humans spent their first 2.5 million years as communists but extremely poor ones. Why did they take a 10,000-year “detour” into private property and inequality? What is the basis for a new type of equality? Would this be a return to primitive communism?

6. Marx and Engels held that material conditions and not ideas are the ultimate determinants of human society. Others have held that “opinion governs the world” or that “great individuals” are the driving force of history. What do you think of these contending views?

7. Note Engels’s views on the relationship between human society and nature, and on the inability of

capitalism to take natural processes and long-range consequences into account. Are these ideas relevant to the environmental issues we face today?

## Class II—How Capitalism Works

### Required Reading:

*Wage Labour and Capital*, by Karl Marx (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), and many other editions, Chapters I and II, pp. 17-27.

### Recommended Reading:

*Engels on Capital*, by Frederick Engels (New York: International), \$1.75, pp. 13-20, 51-61.

“Capital and Labour as Productive and Unproductive” in *The Grundrisse* by Karl Marx, edited by David McClellan (New York, Harper and Row, 1972), \$2.25, pp. 78-84.

*Capital*, Volume I, by Karl Marx (London: Penguin, 1976), new translation with introduction by Ernest Mandel, and many other editions, Chapter I: The Commodity.

## Objective

Understanding how capitalism works is an immense task. This class should help participants gain an understanding of a few basic ideas.

First and most important is where the wealth created by human beings comes from—that is, human labor. This concept is known as the labor theory of value.

Secondly, the class should explain how *exploitation* takes place. Workers sell their labor power like any other commodity on the market. They receive in the form of wages what their labor power is “worth”—that is, what it costs to maintain and reproduce the worker.

But labor power is not like any other commodity. It is not simply consumed. It is creative. It adds value to what the laborer works on—value above and beyond the amount needed to reproduce the labor power of the workers.

The employer thus ends up with a creative power that produces more than what the employer pays the worker in wages. The remainder is called profit.

If these basic ideas are understood, the participants are ready for the next class on the capitalist crisis.

### A. Labor Theory of Value

1. Labor is the only real measure of why one thing is worth more, less, or the same as another.

2. A commodity is produced in order to be exchanged for other commodities (including money) and thus has “worth”:

- a. commodity production and exchange existed in earlier societies as a subordinate element; under capitalism commodity production is dominant and determines all social relations.

### B. Wages

1. Workers’ capacity to create new wealth (labor power) is purchased like any other commodity.

2. Workers are paid what their labor power is “worth”—that is, its cost of production:

- a. note that the cost of production of labor power is relative to the level of culture of a society; also the relationship of forces between classes (the existence

of unions, for instance) affects what is considered subsistence;

b. some workers may even be paid below subsistence in situations where a vast and continuous surplus pours into the labor market;

(1) early capitalism where peasants were forced into cities;

(2) today in some colonial areas;

(3) this means the life-span of the working class falls way down—the class is not really replacing itself.

3. Workers are *not* paid on the basis of the value of what they *produce* with their labor—in most cases they do not even know what this figure is.

### C. How Profits Are Made

1. Capitalists possess all products produced by the labor power they purchase. This stems from their ownership of the means of production without which the workers cannot work and make a living:

a. *capital* is commodities assembled for the purpose of production for profit.

2. When they sell these products they receive back:

a. money to cover wages spent—to pay workers’ subsistence;

b. money to pay for wear and tear on equipment used and for any raw materials consumed (these are known as “dead labor,” the result of earlier completed productive processes);

c. plus a *surplus* which is the basis for their *profit*;

d. profit does not stem from any *work* the capitalist may do in administering or planning production (capitalists often give themselves a salary for such “services”) but solely from the ownership of capital, the means of production.

3. In this productive process raw materials and machinery are simply *consumed* as they would be if they were any other type of commodity.

4. But the added element in the productive process is living labor. This produces *value* which returns to living labor in the form of wages *plus* a surplus value which is held by the capitalist.

5. The workers thus labor part of the day to produce sufficient value to pay wages or salary (necessary labor time) and part of the day to produce value which is the basis for the bosses’ profit (surplus labor time).

### D. What This Means

1. Labor is *nonreproductive* in this process:

a. That means that workers get out of the process, if they are lucky, more or less what they need to replenish energy.

2. But capital is reproductive in the process—it *grows*:

a. this means that the capitalist ends up with a larger amount of wealth than he or she had at the beginning.

3. This means the harder a worker works, the bigger the exploiter gets relative to the worker—the worker’s labor expands the worker’s enemy.

4. The worker is dominated by the capitalist, whose capital is the product of the labor of workers. The worker’s labor thus gives the capitalist greater power over the worker.

5. Since the worker has created his enemy (capital is made up of products of the worker’s labor), workers are

alienated from, dominated and exploited by, the products of their own sweat and blood.

### Questions

1. We can exchange, for example, a pen for a cup either directly through barter or indirectly through money (they are both, let's assume, worth \$.50).

What makes them equal?

2. What is a commodity?

3. How does wage labor differ from serf or slave labor? What does the wage worker sell? What determines the price?

4. Discuss the relative bargaining power of the worker and the employer. Does the worker improve this relative position by his or her labor?

5. What is capital? Who produces it?

6. What is wrong with the capitalist argument that profit is payment for risking their capital?

7. What do we mean by alienation? What does Marx mean when he says that under capitalism dead labor (labor already carried out and embodied in commodities) rules over living labor?

8. Under a workers state, will workers receive in wages the full value of what they produce?

## Class III—The Limits of Capitalism

### Required Reading:

*Wage Labour and Capital*, by Karl Marx, Chapters III-IV, pp. 27-45.

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, by Frederick Engels (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), \$.95, pp. 46-63.

### Recommended Reading:

*Engels on Capital*, by Frederick Engels, pp. 61-94.

*Grundrisse*, by Karl Marx, edited by David McClellan, pp. 87-105, 132-140.

## Objective

The purpose of this class is to communicate in a general way the basic reasons why capitalism is today in an economic crisis, and why such crises are inherent in the system.

Capital and labor are dependent upon each other under capitalism, but also antagonistic. For a whole historic period, labor's level of subsistence rises with the expansion of capital. At the same time, the gap between slowly rising salaries and wages, on the one hand, and the dynamic growth of capital, on the other, grows *far greater* even in this period.

In time, however, capital reaches a point where it can no longer profitably expand in the old way. It must drive down the level of subsistence of the workers in order to sustain and increase its profits.

This occurs for two basic reasons. Capital reaches the limitations of its markets.

Labor itself, whose level of subsistence does not grow as fast as capital, is a major part of the capitalist market. The colonial world market also cannot be substantially expanded because capital is dependent on the very backwardness of this part of the world for political stability and as a source of cheap labor and raw materials.

Secondly, living labor—the source of all *profits*—is so outdistanced by the immense mound of capital (plant,

machinery, etc.) that adequate profitability cannot be maintained (that is, the rate of profit falls).

The only capitalist answer to such a crisis is an intensified exploitation of labor, and a vastly intensified competition among different blocks of capital for shares of the world market.

### A. Capital vs. Labor

1. What they have in common:

a. Capital cannot be productively used without living labor;

b. Labor, separated by capitalism from the means to produce, cannot live without being employed by capital.

2. What brings about the conflict:

a. the more of the wealth produced by labor that the capitalist can appropriate, the bigger the profits;

b. conversely, labor gains nothing from increasing the profits of the capitalist but only from trying to reduce it by increasing its wages;

c. the harder a worker works (productivity) within a given time span, the bigger the profits of the capitalist;

d. conversely, the worker preserves his or her physical being only by resisting capitalist speedup.

### B. The Limits of Capitalism

1. Capital as reproductive:

a. Unlike early class societies, the dynamic of capitalism is for most of the surplus to be added to *capital* (means of production) rather than simply consumed;

(1) individual capitalist plows back profit into own firm;

(2) or buys stock which adds to the capital available to another capitalist;

(3) or pays off interest on loans which banker puts into the pool of money for loans to other capitalists;

(4) or banks profit where it is loaned out for capital expansion, etc.;

b. thus the portion of surplus produced by the worker is continually added to the mound of capital;

c. under capitalism, this is a limitless drive—a capitalist who falters in this process can be ruined; (1) this does not mean there are no limits to the ability of the capitalist to constantly reinvest profits, but there is no limit to the *need* to do so if a given block of capital is to grow as against competitors, and if the system as a whole is to grow and not collapse.

2. But labor is also the market for the end product of the capitalist system—consumer goods:

a. since capital must expand disproportionately to the slow growth of wages, there is a limit on the ability of labor as consumer to purchase the products of the capitalist process.

3. One solution—new markets:

a. Traditional way out of this is to seek new markets, stealing them from other capitalist nations (war); this reshuffles the world market without expanding it and also destroys some of the existing capital;

b. seek to develop lesser developed areas—colonial world;

(1) this is being done to a limited degree, but modern capitalism benefits from the backwardness of such

areas and thus cannot qualitatively expand these markets without threatening its superprofits (particularly low wages).

4. Another limit—most fundamental:
  - a. labor is the source of profit;
  - b. the proportion of labor to capital declines as capital steadily increases—machinery, etc. That is what is meant when Marxists say that variable capital—that which goes for wages—falls in proportion to constant capital—machinery, plant, etc. (dead labor, the remaining section of capital);
  - c. no matter how productive living labor is, there is a limit on its ability to produce enough profit to justify the employment of a constantly growing mound of capital;
  - d. so a squeeze on profits takes place under conditions of a limited market requiring the capitalist to seek to push down wages; the productive system as a whole slows down its growth and threatens to fall back to a lower level (depression).

#### Questions

1. Do capital and labor have common interests? Are the differences irreconcilable? How do different forces (the capitalist class, the union bureaucracy, class-conscious workers, etc.) answer this question and how does the answer affect their response to the economic crisis?

2. Why do Marx and Engels say that production under capitalism is “socialized”? What has happened to this tendency since Marx died in 1881? In what ways do economic crises reflect a conflict between socialized

production and private capitalist appropriation of the product?

3. Labor is the major consumer of the products of the capitalist system. What problems does this create for the capitalist?

4. What is the source of capitalist profit? Why does it shrink relative to the growth of capital as a whole? What problems does this present for the capitalist system?

5. What goals are the current economic policies of U.S. capitalism intended to accomplish?

6. What is a “crisis of overproduction”? Does this mean that more is being produced than people need?

7. America’s productive apparatus is today among the oldest in any advanced capitalist nation. What effect does this have on the productivity of labor? The competition for markets on a world scale is getting more intense. Why? Inflation and unemployment are growing on a world scale. Why? What do these developments mean?

8. Why are machinery and automation introduced? Are they progressive?

9. What is the economic basis for social revolutions? Engels writes in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*: “The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreasonable, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping.” Does this idea have any applicability to recent U.S. history?

10. How can socialism abolish commodity production and social classes?

## Introduction to Lenin’s Writings

### Class I—What Is To Be Done? (Part One)

#### Required Reading:

*What Is To Be Done?* by V.I. Lenin, available in *Collected Works*, Volume 5 [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973], \$2.50, and many other editions) Chapter 2 (all) and Chapter 3 (parts a and b), pp. 373-97, 398-417.

#### Recommended Reading:

*What Is To Be Done?* Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

“One Step Forward; Two Steps Back,” by V.I. Lenin, (available in *Collected Works*, Volume 7 [Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965]), \$2.50, and many other editions.

*History of the Bolshevik Party*, by Grigorii Zinoviev (London: New Park, 1974), \$3.50, particularly to page 96.

### Objective

This class is one of two classes devoted to Lenin’s *What Is To Be Done?*

In this famous pamphlet, Lenin develops essential concepts that distinguish the tasks and organizational methods of what came to be known as the Leninist-type party from those of reformist parties.

The fundamental split in the Russian Social Democratic movement which occurred in 1903 reflected in part opposed reactions to the ideas in this 1902 polemic.

The book was written in opposition to the Economists,

who favored limiting the class struggle to strikes and demands around economic issues. The Economists believed that political issues like tsarism, political freedom, and the need for a republic (much less socialism) had no place in practical political activity of working-class organizations. Such issues were to be left to the bourgeoisie, which was then in “democratic” opposition to tsarism. The Economists became leaders of sections of the labor movement. Their outlook led them first to ignore the political struggle against tsarism, and later to accommodate to the status quo.

The forces who later led the Mensheviks supported Lenin in his fight against the Economists. But when Lenin took these ideas seriously and tried to put them into practice, the grouping known as the Mensheviks abandoned them. Only at this point, however, did the Mensheviks begin to attack the ideas in *What Is To Be Done?*

The Economists later joined forces with the Mensheviks. One of the leading Economists, Martynov, became a leading Menshevik, and still later a leading Stalinist.

The break with Lenin’s conceptions started the Mensheviks on a long road that led them to compromise with the liberal capitalists. Ultimately they opposed the October 1917 revolution and the establishment of a workers state.

It is worth noting that some of the American trade-union tops long held the position that “politics” had no place in the workers movement. In the end these “nonpolitical”

bureaucrats (like Samuel Gompers) adopted the politics of the bosses.

The first class covers three sections of the book, which develop three basic ideas: (1) the critical importance of the defense and development of Marxist theory in building the party; (2) socialist ideas do not emerge spontaneously out of workers struggles alone, but must be introduced into the thinking of the class by a conscious Marxist party; (3) important as economic questions are to workers, prime attention must be focused on the central political questions (including but not at all limited to economic issues) facing the workers and the oppressed as a whole—above all the question of political power (in this instance, how to destroy tsarism).

#### A. *The Role of Theory in Building the Party*

1. Lenin insists that the struggle of the party is not limited to day-to-day struggles over wages, hours, and job conditions in the factories, on the one hand, and political struggles on the other.

2. Just as important as these—indispensable to them, in fact—is the struggle for correct theory and program which combats the pervasive ideology of the capitalist class and its reflections within the workers' movement and trains the party members so that they are equipped to *lead* the masses of people against powerful and experienced ruling classes.

#### B. *Spontaneous Struggle and Socialist Ideas*

1. Lenin insists that workers by their own experiences only develop "trade-union consciousness"; millions of workers do not spontaneously develop a program capable of overturning and reorganizing the social order:

a. trade-union consciousness is the understanding that workers have interests distinct from the capitalists' and thus need a separate organization to defend themselves and to better their lot.

2. Socialist consciousness must be "brought in from the outside" by the party:

a. socialist consciousness is an understanding that workers need to take the offensive politically and lead all the oppressed to overthrow capitalist society, establishing a new society based on common ownership of the means of production.

3. The phrase "brought in from the outside" has often been misinterpreted:

a. It means that the socialist movement begins with intellectuals who bring these ideas—the product of a vast historical, social, and cultural development extending far beyond the experiences of a worker's daily life—into the workers' movement;

b. once such a process has begun, then socialism is within the workers' movement; but it is a distinct tendency representing the historical tasks of that movement; its understanding goes beyond and may even oppose that of masses of workers for periods of time;

c. this tendency, based on the application and adaptation of Marxism to a changing reality, requires a separate organizational form—the vanguard party, which fights for the leadership of the class as a whole in the combat against the capitalists.

#### C. *The Importance of Political Questions*

1. Lenin insists that political questions are not subordi-

nate to questions of a trade-union character or simply of equal importance—rather they are the most important questions.

2. It is not that Lenin was uninterested in work in the trade unions and in the demands that flow out of this work—but he insisted that this work and these demands must be viewed from the standpoint of the overall political tasks of the working class.

3. Lenin develops this point at a time when Russian society was saddled with the tsarist autocracy; the central problem was the struggle for political liberty and confronting the many national and democratic tasks that tsarism could never resolve.

4. The essence of his point is true today, when all trade-union problems cannot really be solved outside of tackling the central problem of the capitalist government and system as a whole.

#### *Questions*

1. Why are correct theory and program important to a party? What happens to political organizations that try to carry on without them? Why?

2. Why don't scientific-socialist ideas grow up directly out of the workers' daily experiences in the factory and community?

3. Why is it important for workers to understand all the struggles and social conflicts that are going on in society? Is trade-union activity sufficient to accomplish the goals of the workers?

4. Discuss the SWP's trade-union activity in the light of Lenin's views on the relationship between economic and political struggle.

5. Are there any groups around today with views like those held by the Economists?

6. How do Lenin's thoughts on theory, on socialist and trade-union consciousness, and on the primacy of politics relate to the need for a party?

#### **Class II—What Is To Be Done? (Part 2)**

##### *Required Reading:*

*What Is To Be Done?* by V.I. Lenin, Chapter 3 (Part e, pp. 421-36), Chapter 4 (Parts a thru d, pp. 440-73), Chapter 5 (Part b, pp. 498-509).

##### *Recommended Reading:*

*What Is To Be Done?* (all)

"Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement of His Time", by James P. Cannon, available in *The First Ten Years of American Communism*, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), \$3.45, pp. 345-76.

*The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party* (New York: Education for Socialists, 1970), \$.35.

"Re-arming the Party," Chapter XVI of *The History of the Russian Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, Volume 1 (New York: Sphere Books, 1967), pp. 296-311.

#### **Objective**

This class takes up the remainder of Lenin's famous pamphlet. In reading this work, it is important to note views held by Lenin that were related to the specific problems of building a movement that had to work



underground and illegally because of the scope of tsarist repression. Members faced constant danger of arrest.

Note should be taken of comments that reflect the social conditions of Russia, where the most basic democratic tasks accomplished by bourgeois revolutions in other countries remained to be completed.

These points must be distinguished from Lenin's general concepts and ideas, which are highly relevant to building revolutionary parties under many different conditions.

Russia in 1902 had accomplished far less of the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution than the United States, England, or France today. It was not only a prison house of oppressed nationalities, but harbored a vast land-starved peasantry subjected to conditions similar to those of feudalism. There were no recognized democratic rights, and the government was an autocracy complete with an established church topped by an absolute monarchy.

However, no capitalist nation has been able to complete all the democratic tasks posed by the bourgeois revolutions, including nations far more advanced than tsarist Russia. As the capitalist crisis deepens, attempts are made to roll back democratic gains.

Therefore we can learn much from the resolute way Lenin fought for democratic rights, and the importance he gave to struggles on these issues. But there is a critical difference.

The bourgeois parties in Lenin's day were involved in a fight, weak and compromising as it was, for democratic demands. Until 1905, they even gave some support to popular movements for such demands.

In North America and the advanced capitalist states of Europe, bourgeois parties directly administer the oppressive state and are the driving force in efforts to curb democratic rights.

Many of the specific proposals Lenin makes for party organization are related to underground conditions of existence. This is why he favored in this period a party made up of professional revolutionists who were full-time paid organizers. Under changed conditions, the conception of professional revolutionist was considerably broadened.

The creation of professional revolutionists wholly devoted to socialism and the working class, and carrying out political work in a consistent and professional rather than haphazard and amateur way, is a goal of the Socialist Workers Party. This is true regardless of whether individual members are on the full-time staff of the party, working in factories, in school, or anywhere else.

The readings for this class also include a section of Lenin's discussion of the need for a national newspaper. Like Lenin, the SWP views its press not only as the key way of broadcasting our views, but as a central organizer of work.

#### A. *The Role of Democratic Demands*

1. Lenin believed that democratic demands should not simply be supported, but that the socialist movement should champion them, seek to lead the struggle around them; this way every democratic aspiration of the broad masses would be identified with the party.

2. Even in Russia under autocracy, Lenin did not believe one should leave such demands to the capitalist parties, which would compromise them. All the more so in the United States, where the capitalist parties administer the denial of democratic rights.

3. While Lenin believed in basing the party in the working class and in building the influence of the party in the unions (he actually proved more effective in this than any of his opponents), he also believed the party should reach out to other oppressed layers of the population and champion their needs as well.

4. He believed that a purely trade-unionist outlook would abandon democratic tasks to forces incapable of carrying them out and prevent the political development of the working class, which does not take place solely in day-to-day union struggles.

#### B. *The Professional Revolutionist*

1. Lenin originated the concept of a party of professional revolutionists. He opposed all amateurishness in party functioning.

2. While he developed these policies to deal with the problems of underground existence in Russia, he would later generalize the *essential* concept in his work to construct the Third International.

3. He saw the party not as some mass electoral and parliamentary machine, or as a talk shop, or as a battleground for warring factions, but rather as an organization of serious revolutionists, an instrument for the class combat against the capitalist rulers; the party develops itself theoretically and programmatically, training itself to carry out revolutionary work in the most professional way possible. It is made up of members who devote their lives to the socialist revolution, and see in the party the indispensable means to the emancipation of the working class.

4. As Lenin saw it, such a party was completely democratic in deciding its basic policy, but centralized and disciplined in carrying it out; over time, this combination would develop an authoritative body of leaders with the confidence of the membership.

5. In section e of Chapter 4, Lenin stresses his opposition under Russian conditions to the kind of "broad" democracy within the organization called for by the Economists. He noted that such a call could only be demagogic, since police-state conditions required party members to try to keep their activities and their identities from the police—this obviously made complete democracy in decision-making or selection of leadership impossible.

6. Even in this difficult period, however, the Bolsheviks were famous (and often ridiculed) for their wide-ranging debates. Insofar as was possible, the Bolsheviks held discussions, elected delegates, held democratic conferences, and tried to make basic policy decisions in a democratic manner; Lenin's base was always firmly located in the party rank and file.

7. When conditions changed in 1917 after the tsar's fall, full-fledged internal democracy became possible (see Chapter XVI of Volume 1 of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* for an example).

8. Centralism in action, however, remained a fundamental principle for combating the centralized power of the capitalist class and the capitalist state.

#### C. *The Role of the Revolutionary Paper*

1. Lenin saw the paper as the collective propagandist, collective organizer, and collective agitator for the party.

2. It gives the party its political direction on the main issues of the day, arming the members with arguments

and information, while allowing interventions in many different fields and around many different issues.

3. It gives the party a national and international voice and direction, and not just a local and immediate orientation.

4. Finally like a scaffolding of a building, the paper contributes to structuring and building the party itself.

### Questions

1. Lenin's opponents accused him of downplaying workers' demands by putting so much stress on democratic demands and on the struggles of other social layers. What do you think of this reasoning?

2. Lenin said the ideal of the party should be "not the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people." What did this mean? What were its implications for trade-union work?

3. How is the concept of a party of professional revolutionists related to what Lenin says in the beginning of *What Is To Be Done?* about trade-union consciousness and socialist consciousness? How is it related to his concept that the struggle for Marxist theory and program is as important as practical class-struggle activity for a party?

4. Why should a revolutionary party be democratic? Why should it be centralized?

5. What are the functions of the *Militant*? How does it perform them?

6. Some radicals have suggested that "local organizing" or a "coalition" of different movements can substitute for a revolutionary party. Perhaps you can think of other alternatives that have been proposed. What do you think about this?

## Class III—State and Revolution

### Required Reading:

*State and Revolution*, by V.I. Lenin, available in *Collected Works*, Volume 25 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), \$2.50, and many other editions, Chapters 1 and 3.

### Recommended Reading:

*State and Revolution* (all).

*Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*, by V.I. Lenin, in *Collected Works*, Volume 28 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), \$2.50, and many other editions.

"The State," by V.I. Lenin, in *Collected Works*, Volume 29 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), \$2.50, pp. 470-88.

### Objective

This class is intended to introduce participants to the essentials of the Marxist theory of the state, particularly those aspects that separate reformism from revolutionary socialism.

As Lenin makes clear, in this pamphlet he is only codifying an assessment of the state developed by Marx and Engels and clarified for them by the experience of the Paris Commune. This Marxist concept was then tested in action by the Russian revolution of October 1917, and by the role played by the Bolshevik government subsequently.

Since that time, the theory of the state has been further developed to deal with such questions as the bureaucratization of the Soviet state under Stalin, and the revolutions

after World War II in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, and Vietnam.

It is not possible, within the scope of this class, to take up in any depth these later issues.

Our understanding of the essential Marxist concepts stated by Lenin underlies the SWP's approach to the capitalist parties, opposition to coalitions with bourgeois parties on a program of preserving the capitalist state like the French Union of the Left, and opposition to the MFA government in Portugal.

### A. Why Do States Arise?

1. The state arises out of the irreconcilable conflict of classes.

2. It appears to be above classes but actually defends the property and interests of the ruling class against those of the propertyless masses.

### B. What Is a State?

1. *Bodies of armed men*, police, judiciary, prisons, etc., repressing the masses in order to protect property relations in the interest of the ruling class.

2. It is also an apparatus, a bureaucracy, and a government, to administer the rule of the ruling class, defending and furthering its interests.

### C. Can a Capitalist State Be Taken Over and Changed From Within by the Workers?

1. Marx considered such a peaceful transition possible at an early stage of the development of British and American capitalism before they had developed a powerful capitalist military-bureaucratic apparatus. Once that had occurred, however, he held that it was necessary to shatter, break up, and dismantle that apparatus.

### D. Lessons of the Paris Commune

1. In the course of a revolutionary upheaval, new proletarian forms of state power emerge:

- not a talk-shop parliament but a working body;
- not elections once every four years, but very frequently and with officials subject to immediate recall;
- not a privileged and highhanded bureaucracy but administrators paid a worker's wage;
- not a legislature of professional politicians but councils of ordinary working people;
- these characteristics of the Commune were shared to an even greater degree by the soviets in the first years of the Russian revolution.

2. The old state not transformed but shattered and replaced by a new, more democratic state structure that emerges from the workers and under their leadership.

### E. Some Misunderstandings of 'State and Revolution'

1. Lenin does not oppose participation in bourgeois elections. He views revolutionary participation in such elections as part of the political preparation of the working class. He makes this clear in parts of this pamphlet. He opposes *parliamentarism*, whose advocates never see beyond bourgeois democracy and seek to resolve fundamental class questions by legislative gimmicks.

2. Lenin never saw workers' councils and commune-type formations as a substitute for the revolutionary party. The

party is critical to the defense and final victory of the workers:

- a. Soviets were a valuable means of assuring the broadest participation of the workers and their allies in the revolutionary process; they provided an extraordinary opportunity for the party to win the leadership of the working masses to its political program;
- b. later they would provide the organizational forms for workers' democracy in a workers' state;
- c. however, Lenin held that soviets that upheld a bourgeois government would be completely vitiated and lose their potential for growth and struggle;
- d. after July 1917, for instance, Lenin proposed shifting the Bolsheviks' orientation to the workers' commissions and unions, since it appeared that the soviets were firmly committed to defense of the bourgeois government.

3. Lenin's party prepared the way for workers' democracy through a long struggle, outlined in *What Is To Be Done?* that included militant defense of the democratic rights of all the oppressed; while Lenin educated about the superiority of workers' democracy to the most democratic bourgeois state, he never opposed the restricted bourgeois-democratic rights that existed at a given time in the name of a future workers' democracy.

4. Lenin never reduced the state to armed bodies, even though he stressed that in the last analysis capitalist power rests on armed violence in defense of capitalist property relations; throughout 1917 he aimed his fire at the *bourgeois coalition government* headed by Kerensky as the main obstacle to socialist revolution; the October revolution was aimed at *replacing this government*, which

upheld capitalism, with a workers' and peasants' government headed by the Bolsheviks.

5. The measures taken to smash capitalist political power and establish proletarian dictatorship, wrote Lenin, "acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the 'expropriation of the expropriators' either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership."

### Questions

1. What is the cause of the existence of states? What purpose do they serve?
2. What differing positions on the state and its role were implicit in the Harrington-Camejo debate in the November 26, December 3, and December 10, 1976, issues of the *Militant*? What are the consequences of the differences?
3. Why can't the bourgeois state apparatus simply be taken over by socialists and used for their purposes?
4. What is the role of a bourgeois-democratic state like that in the United States? How does it carry out this role?
5. How does the kind of proletarian regime envisioned by Lenin differ from the Soviet Union or China today?
6. What are the differences between bourgeois parliaments and soviets? Are we opposed to bourgeois parliaments under all conditions?
7. Will there always be a state?
8. If the capitalist state cannot be reformed, why run in elections?
9. Why aren't workers' councils a substitute for a party? What is the role of the party in relation to such formations?
10. Why have revolutionary overturns included violent clashes? Who causes the violence? Why?

## An Introduction to Trotsky's Writings

### Class I—The Nature of Stalinism

### Objective

#### Required Reading:

"Whither the Soviet Union?" in *The Revolution Betrayed* (Pathfinder, 1972), \$3.25, pp. 284-90; also in *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*, edited by Isaac Deutscher (New York: Dell, 1970), pp. 275-79, \$.95.

"The USSR and Problems of the Transitional Epoch," a section of "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), \$2.45, pp. 102-106. Also in *The Age of Permanent Revolution*, pp. 279-81.

"Letter to the Workers of the USSR" in *Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1939-1940* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), \$3.95, pp. 165-67. Also in *The Age of Permanent Revolution*, pp. 281-84.

"Socialism in One Country" in *The Third International After Lenin* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), \$3.45, pp. 3-73. The main selections from this section appear in *The Age of Permanent Revolution*, pp. 145-62.

#### Recommended Reading:

*The Revolution Betrayed* (all).

*The Third International After Lenin* (all).

This is the first of three classes on Trotsky's contributions to Marxism. It deals with Trotsky's most fundamental theoretical contribution, his assessment of Stalinism.

Trotsky viewed Stalinism in a *materialist* way, going back to the fundamentals of historical materialism as developed by Marx. He rooted the growth of a privileged bureaucracy and its seizure of political power in the economic backwardness of Russia. It is precisely out of such conditions of scarcity that privileged layers develop.

In large part because of the backwardness of Russia, the proletariat came to power there first. However, this meant the weight of poverty and economic backwardness was far greater on this first workers' state.

Lenin and Trotsky realized this. That is why they saw the Russian revolution as only a steppingstone toward revolution in advanced countries. The aid and collaboration with advanced economies of Western Europe and North America would have permitted Russia to overcome its economic backwardness and the bureaucratic deformations this backwardness bred.

However, the spread of revolution was delayed. Major defeats occurred in Germany.

Under these conditions, a bureaucracy consolidated and pushed a small and increasingly demoralized working

class off the political stage. The bureaucracy became a separate caste devoted to its own privileges.

As part of this process, Stalin broke from Lenin's perspective of international revolution. He put forward the goal of socialism in one country, saying that backward Russia could achieve complete socialism within the boundaries of Russia alone (barring foreign intervention). This was nothing but a crude justification for the power of the bureaucratic caste, and an apology for its failure to advance toward real socialism on an international scale. It justified a policy of collaboration with imperialism against the world revolution, in exchange for nonintervention against Russian "socialism."

The result was the tight police regime protecting vast privileges that we see today.

Trotsky considered this a partial counterrevolution—specifically, a *political counterrevolution*. He meant by this that the bureaucracy had forced the workers out of power, but that they had not overturned the progressive nationalized property and planned economy created by the workers' revolution. The bureaucracy was not a new ruling class but a parasitic bureaucratic caste. The workers had an interest in defending these gains against imperialism and also against the corruption, mismanagement, and reactionary function of the bureaucracy.

Once Stalinism is understood in this materialist fashion, we can grasp why such a degeneration can be avoided in a revolution in an advanced economy like the United States, especially since this will remove the capitalist power most capable of combating world revolution.

Also, we can see why Stalinism is not a tendency in the workers' movement that can lead the way to socialism here or in the world as a whole. It is a tendency that is deeply hostile to the historic needs of the working class. On a world scale, it helps preserve capitalism.

#### A. *Why the Bureaucracy Arose*

1. Workers came to power first in a backward capitalist country. This backwardness is the material basis for the rise of a bureaucracy.

2. Lenin recognized this and therefore fought on two levels:

- a. He sought to extend the revolution to advanced capitalist countries;
- b. he sought to use the conscious Marxist party to counter the bureaucracy, and after the soviets had weakened owing to effects of famine, war, and depopulation of cities, to push forward industrialization of the country in part to strengthen social position of working class.

3. Stalin broke with Lenin on both counts—only after Lenin's death did this break clearly take place:

- a. Stalin abandoned the perspective of world revolution for "socialism in one country" and collaboration with the imperialists;
- b. he sought and finally succeeded in destroying Lenin's party (the Moscow trials were the end of the process), transforming it into an instrument of the bureaucratic caste, and doing the same to CPs all over the world.

4. The triumph was not an inevitable stage of the social revolution but a partial counterrevolution, the product of defeats of the working class in the USSR and in Europe—it reflected a period of reaction, not a part of the revolutionary process. The victory of the bureaucracy

required a struggle with the proletarian forces organized in the Left Opposition.

#### B. *The Nature of the Soviet Union*

1. October revolution created world's first workers' state:
  - a. removed capitalist government, established soviet power, and subsequently expropriated the capitalists, nationalizing the means of production. Placed the working class in power.
2. Bureaucratic caste usurped power from the working class:
  - a. Its goal, the preservation and extension of its special privileges;
  - g. a step backward toward capitalism, but did not overturn the new property relations;
  - c. that is why (1) we defend the workers' states against imperialism but (2) fight for an antibureaucratic political revolution to reestablish working-class political power and socialist democracy.

#### C. *Socialism in One Country*

1. The heart of the policy of Stalinism in all its forms—Russian, Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese, Albanian, Romanian, etc.

2. All these bureaucracies proceed from the interests and outlook of the bureaucratic caste and not from the perspective of world revolution; thus in one fashion or another all collaborate with imperialism and urge class-collaborationist policies on their admirers in capitalist countries.

3. "Socialism in one country" blocks the road to real socialism, real elimination of want, real equality, and real human freedom.

#### D. *What Will a Socialist America Look Like?*

1. A revolution in the United States will be harder to prepare but easier to preserve than in Russia.

2. Higher material level plus decisive impact of revolution in United States on world revolution will make bureaucracy far less of a problem.

3. The massive movement of the vast majority—workers, oppressed nationalities, women, etc., will be the best guarantee against bureaucratic problems that might arise.

#### *Questions*

1. What were the causes of the rise of the bureaucracy after the Russian revolution?

2. What is the theory of socialism in one country? Do the economic gains made by the USSR and China since the revolutions in those countries prove that the theory is correct?

3. Why does the theory of socialism in one country lead to opposing world revolution? Do the statements made by Soviet leaders in favor of the colonial revolution, or the aid they provide to certain struggles, or their ties with CPs around the world disprove this?

4. Does the American CP apply the theory of socialism in one country? How?

5. Why will it be harder to make a revolution in the United States than in tsarist Russia? Will we face the same kinds of problems with bureaucracy that the workers of the USSR did?

6. Trotsky advocated "defense of the Soviet Union." What did that mean? How does it differ from the "defense

of the Soviet Union" by the Communist Party, for instance?

7. What are some of the measures a political revolution in the Soviet Union or China would carry out?

## **Class II—Fascism, United Front, Popular Front**

### *Required Reading:*

*The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*, pp. 163-95.

### *Recommended Reading:*

*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1971), \$3.95.

*The Spanish Revolution (1931-1939)*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), \$3.95.

*Disaster in Chile: Allende's Strategy and Why It Failed*, edited with an introduction by Les Evans (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), \$2.95.

## **Objective**

This class introduces the tactics and strategy Trotsky developed for dealing with problems confronting the working class in Europe between 1923 and 1940.

Trotsky developed a scientific Marxist analysis of fascism and a tactical approach to the struggle against fascism. This contrasted to the ultraleftism advocated by the Stalinized Communist International, which equated the reformist Social Democrats with fascism and opposed united action against the fascist gangs. Stalin's policy contributed heavily to the triumph of Hitler in 1933.

Frightened by this defeat, Stalin made a 180-degree turn in the opposite—and equally wrong—direction. He adopted the policy of the popular front.

In the hope of obtaining alliances against the threat of a German invasion of the USSR, Stalin ordered Communist parties to support or participate in capitalist governments that might show an interest in such alliances. By orienting radicalizing workers toward confidence in bourgeois parties and bourgeois governments, the Stalinists helped to derail massive working-class upheavals in France and Spain and to tie the labor movement to the Democrats in the United States.

Although supposedly aimed at blocking fascism, the policy facilitated Franco's victory in Spain and the capitalist treachery that produced France's fall to Hitler in 1940.

Both the ultraleft policy and the popular-front policy were expressions of the application of the concept of socialism in one country by the Stalinist bureaucracy under changing international circumstances. In the end, the strategy failed even in its objective of preventing imperialist intervention in the USSR. Buoyed by the aid given them in preventing revolution and dampening radicalization, the bourgeoisies were able to plunge the world into the Second World War. Hitler invaded the USSR, which survived at the cost of 20 million dead.

Trotsky's strategy was based on the need of the working class for united action against fascism and on the recognition that only socialist revolution could eliminate fascism and the danger of war.

This material is rich in lessons for us today. The purpose

of this class is to stimulate interest and encourage further study of Trotsky's basic writings in this period.

### *A. What Is Fascism?*

1. Product of period of capitalism in *decay*.
2. Occurs when economic crisis of capitalism is so severe that profit system can be preserved only by driving down wages to such an extent that even the most sellout labor leadership could not prevent workers' resistance.
3. Therefore, trade-union and political organizations must be destroyed as well as all democratic rights.
4. Not just reaction or even dictatorship but the actual destruction of the organizations of working class.
5. Same economic conditions which give rise to fascism give rise to revolutionary possibilities for socialist movement:
  - a. Only when workers' parties prove themselves incapable of seriously fighting for socialist alternative does fascism have chance to succeed.

### *B. The Social Base of Fascism*

1. Big capitalists need a social base from which to fight workers; regular repressive apparatus is inadequate for scope of task.
2. Base provided by enraged petty bourgeoisie, impoverished by crisis but lacking in clear class outlook of workers.
3. Fascism thus has a demagogic social program while receiving support of largest monopoly capitalists.
4. This plus its hostility to all democratic gains distinguishes it from normal right-wing formations.

### *C. The United-Front Tactic*

1. Trotsky urged German Communists to seek united front in action against fascists.
2. Such a tactic, he felt, would help win important working-class base away from Social Democrats as well as be most effective weapon against fascist advance.
3. The defense of the working class in the immediate period would be advanced and at the same time the basis laid for the triumph of socialism.
4. Stalin persisted in a ultraleft position which considered the Social Democrats as "social fascists," as much and perhaps more the enemy than Hitler.
5. With this policy Stalinists were unable to seriously penetrate working-class base of the Social Democrats and "left" phrases were substituted for real actions against the rise of fascism.

### *D. The Popular Front*

1. After Hitler triumphed, Stalin then swung to a popular-front line in which he favored coalition governments with the liberal section of the capitalist class—those that expressed interest in "collective security" arrangements with Stalin against Hitler.
2. Such governments were restricted to a program acceptable to the capitalist components of the coalition. Since the capitalists will never agree to their own overthrow, this barred socialist policies and required anti-working-class policies. (Thus the Left Radicals participate in the French Union of the Left today because its program is acceptable to a capitalist party in this basic sense.)
3. Such governments are established as a procapitalist response by the reformist workers' parties and their

bourgeois allies to a radicalization of the working class. Their task: to keep the workers' struggle within bounds acceptable to the capitalists, to prevent revolutionary outbreak, to tame the workers' radicalization. To this end, popular fronts mobilized support around promises of sweeping reforms, promises to fight fascism, and sometimes even promises to open the road to socialism at some far-off date.

4. But to preserve the rights and living conditions of the workers in a period of capitalist crisis requires a socialist revolution. Such governments therefore disarmed and demoralized the masses. By doing so, they prepared the ground for a resurgence of the right. In Spain, this led to fascism. In France, to the collapse of France before Hitler and the installation of Pétain. On world scale, to World War II.

5. Stalinists still persist in this policy all over the world—with similar results (Chile, Indonesia, etc.).

6. This policy dovetails with the Social Democratic policy of "reforming" capitalism through coalitions with the bourgeoisie or through "labor" governments that defend the capitalist system (i.e., the Callaghan government in Britain or Schmidt's coalition in West Germany).

7. The Stalinist policy is rooted in a "socialism in one country" perspective on the part of various factions of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies. This policy both takes for granted and consciously aids the survival of capitalism and imperialism in the rest of the world.

### Questions

1. What are the causes of fascism? What is a fascist movement?

2. How can fascism be defeated?

3. Is fascism possible in the United States? How would you evaluate the fascistlike groups that exist in the United States today?

4. How does the American CP practice the "popular front" today? How does Michael Harrington's Social Democratic "Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee" apply its policy?

5. How does the SWP's call for a labor party differ from this policy?

6. If popular-front policies have led the workers to defeats, why do the Stalinist bureaucracy and its supporters advocate it? They aren't in favor of fascism, are they?

7. What kinds of popular fronts have appeared elsewhere in the world in recent years? Why have they appeared?

8. Why can't popular fronts defeat fascism or open the road to socialism as they claim?

### Class III—The Transitional Program and Its Method

#### Required Reading:

"The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), \$2.45, pp. 71-112.

#### Recommended Reading:

Introductory essays by Joseph Hansen and George Novack in *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, pp. 9-71.

*Prospects for Socialism in America*, by Jack Barnes, et al. (New York: Pathfinder, 1976), \$2.45.

### Objective

The Transitional Program is the main resolution adopted by the founding congress of the Fourth International. It concisely states the basic programmatic and strategic ideas of Trotsky. It was adopted by the congress after extensive discussions with American revolutionists and others. The Transitional Program is rooted in and summarizes ninety years of experience of the Marxist movement and the development of its theory.

Because it is based on a sound materialist evaluation of the long period of capitalist decay that we are living in, it remains essentially valid today.

It is not a recipe book; it is not a substitute for the continuous process of developing our theory, program, strategy, and tactics on the basis of a changing world situation and our own experiences as revolutionists.

Thus we approach the Transitional Program to learn its fundamental programmatic concepts, and above all its *method*, the way in which Trotsky approached the problems of his day. Our purpose in doing so is to properly approach the problems of our own time.

#### A. The Problem—The Crisis of Leadership

1. The basic objective conditions on a world scale are ripe for socialism and have been for some decades. The problem lies with the subjective factor, the problem of leadership. When capitalism's death agony reached a critical point and the masses were aroused against it, the leadership needed to abolish capitalism was lacking.

2. Of course, at any one moment in any specific country the objective conditions may not be ripe for socialist revolution. The United States, for instance, has never had a full-scale revolutionary crisis. The conditions for one are beginning to appear today. On the other hand, some European countries such as France and Spain have experienced several prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises since the First World War.

3. Portugal provides a case in point of the fundamental problem of leadership. After a half-century of totalitarian rule, the Portuguese masses looked to the treacherous SP and CP leaders to lead them to socialist democracy. They led them instead into a popular front with the military. On the other hand, the forces that stood to the left of the CP and SP failed to develop a coherent alternative to this class collaboration. The revolutionary party was too weak to lead to the overthrow of capitalism on the first wave of the workers' radicalization.

#### B. The Old Dilemma—Maximum and Minimum Programs

1. Traditionally the reformists put forward only minimum economic and democratic political demands that they think can be realized under capitalism; they readily sacrifice these demands if they cannot convince the capitalists to accept them.

2. It is false to counterpose to these demands our full program because that way we have no bridge—no way to get from the present thinking and struggles of the masses to the socialist goal. The use of minimum, democratic, and *transitional* demands provides such a bridge; transitional demands are those that place in question the capitalist state and capitalist property relations themselves.

3. Putting forward transitional demands in no way requires that socialists stop struggling for democratic demands and minimum reform demands—any more than

transitional demands mean abandoning our maximum program of socialist revolution and transformation. Under conditions of crisis, capitalism cannot grant democratic demands in a thoroughgoing way and only grants them under pressure—trying to roll them back at the first opening.

4. We fight for such demands and champion them in a different way than the reformists. We do not begin with what capitalists will accept or what we hope they will accept, nor do we rely on capitalist politicians to achieve them. We begin with the needs of the masses and the mobilization of the masses.

5. Thus we fight for transitional demands, democratic demands, and minimum demands. We approach this fight from the point of view of advancing the working class toward the only solution to all their social problems: the socialist transformation of society.

### *C. The Governmental Slogan*

1. The Transitional Program does not simply present demands to be fought for in the unions or elsewhere.

2. It concretizes these demands around a slogan which poses the need for workers to politically take power in order to realize their just demands. The main such slogan is the call for a workers' and farmers' government (in the United States, because of the decline of the small-scale farmers, we call for a workers' government):

- a. In countries with mass reformist or Stalinist parties, we call upon these parties to break with the bourgeoisie, to form a government independent of the capitalists; and we propose a socialist program that we demand such a government carry out;
- b. this is a way to expose these parties in practice before their working-class following, which wants them to serve the workers' interests;
- c. in the United States, where there is no mass workers' party, we propose a labor party based on the unions and representing all the oppressed; we also call for the formation of Black and Chicano parties as ways of advancing a class break with the

Democrats by the Black and Chicano oppressed nationalities; we would demand that such parties fight for a workers' government.

### *D. Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours—An Example*

1. Basic idea is that workers should not pay for capitalist crisis—as prices go up so should wages—and when layoffs threaten, the available work should be divided up among all who wish to work with no cut in pay (i.e., a shorter work week).

2. When we apply this policy today, we confront a problem—discriminatory layoffs of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities, and of women:

- a. so we combine the fight for a shorter workweek with the demand that layoffs should not reduce the proportion of minorities and women in the work force.

3. This is an example of how we apply the Transitional Program to changing conditions in the living class struggle, enriching it by the understanding of the class and national aspects of the class struggle in the United States.

### *Questions*

1. Is there really a crisis of leadership in the working class? If so, how has it manifested itself? What about the argument that the leaders merely reflect the consciousness of the masses, and that the masses' conservatism is the reason why socialist revolutions do not occur?

2. What is the role of the demands of the Transitional Program? What tasks are they used to accomplish?

3. How does the Socialist Workers Party apply the method of the Transitional Program?

4. Discuss the relevance of the demands in the Transitional Program for the United States today.

5. Why should a revolutionary party have a governmental slogan?

6. Are there groups today that put forward a maximum or minimum program rather than a transitional program? What is the difference?

7. Why is the Fourth International necessary?

# AMERICA'S REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE

(a six-class study outline)

The purpose of this class series is to give background on the development of America from its origins to its emergence as a modern imperialist nation in the twentieth century. We must seek to understand the forces that shape both the American bourgeoisie and the American working class if we are to be effective in developing a real base of our party in the struggles of workers and their allies today. This will help to prepare us for the kind of social struggles that will emerge in the future in response to the effects of the capitalist crisis. Thus, such a class is background for the recent party resolution, "Prospects for Socialism in America."

The central text for the class is the recently published *America's Revolutionary Heritage*, edited by George Novack. Written by several people over a long span of time, it offers an excellent introduction to the Marxist approach to this question. Available from Pathfinder.

However, being composed of essays on specific aspects of American history, both the class leader and the students are urged to read as much as possible of the recommended material to help fill out and give depth to the period under discussion. As there exists no single text on this subject, comrades are urged to make the study of American history a part of their continuous self-education work.

We are using a different format in this study outline, hoping to give class leaders some suggested central points that each class could seek to get across. In addition, class leaders are urged to bring in quotes and other material so the actual life of the period can come across in the classes.

## A Note on Recommended Readings

We have broken down recommended readings according to the breakdown of classes. However, several books could usefully be read as a whole to get a more rounded view of American history. We thought it best to give some explanation of these books.

*The Rise of American Civilization*, by Charles and Mary Beard

While not written from a Marxist point of view and somewhat dated, the Beards' work remains the best introduction to the whole sweep of American history. Several of the articles in *America's Revolutionary Heritage* help to offset the theoretical weaknesses of the Beards' approach, which is that of the liberal-progressive school.

*American Political Tradition*, by Richard Hofstadter

Hofstadter was a student and follower of Beard. In the period when he wrote this book he was quite radical in his political outlook. He attempted to develop a materialist understanding of American history through separate essays on certain key figures who reflected in one fashion or another the social forces at work in the period.

*Centennial*, by James Michener

It may seem out of place to some comrades to include a novel as a source book for a class. But Michener's novels tend to be very scrupulously researched history cast in the form of a dramatic narrative. This is particularly true of

this book. It presents better than any dull text the sweep of the settlement of the West beginning even before the migration of early humans across the Bering Strait and continuing right up to accounts of modern-day Colorado. His portrayal of the Native Americans and what happened to them is some of the best material on this question as well as his graphic account of the intrusion of big capital into the West.

*The History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, by Philip S. Foner

Foner's lengthy and still uncompleted history of the American labor movement should be viewed as an extremely valuable source book for all comrades interested in a study of American labor. It is Foner's lifework and is packed with scrupulously compiled original research. It is, of course, written from a Stalinist political viewpoint, which has its effects particularly in the later volumes.

The first three volumes are available from Pathfinder.

*Letters to Americans and The Civil War in the United States* by Marx and Engels.

American Marxists should become acquainted with the works of these giants pertaining to America. Both men closely followed American developments, corresponded with close personal friends and collaborators who lived in the United States, and wrote for the American press. Engels even made a personal visit here in his old age.

Marx and Engels's writings on the Civil War are indispensable to an understanding of the Second American Revolution. Particularly Engels's letters in the period after the death of Marx provide invaluable insight both into the weaknesses of the American Marxist movement of that day and into how to approach the broader problems of the political development of the American working class as a whole.

Available from Pathfinder.

## Class I—The Conquest of America

*Required reading: Heritage*, pp. 9-55.

*Recommended reading:*

*The Rise of American Civilization*, by Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard (New York: Macmillan, 1935), Vol. I, pp. 1-188.

*The Colonial Era*, by Herbert Aptheker (New York: International, 1959), \$1.95.

*The History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 1, by Philip S. Foner (New York: International, 1972), \$3.65, pp. 13-31.

*A. The reasons for the colonization of America*

America was colonized as a result of the growth of capitalism in Europe. The colonization coincided with the triumph of the bourgeoisie over the feudal elements in several countries, particularly in England. The colonies were established for one prime purpose: profit.

The predominant form of capitalism in the initial period is known as commercial capitalism, sometimes called



*mercantilism*. Under this system, companies were established that were given government-sponsored monopolies over newly conquered territories. These companies profited from the production of raw materials in the colonies, from the sale of manufactured goods from the mother country to the colonists, and from the shipping back and forth involved. It was similar to, but far more primitive than, the imperialism of a later period.

This established for the first time world trade on a wide scale and a world market. This in turn made possible a great growth of capitalism in Europe.

While many settlers were motivated by desires for religious freedom or political freedom, their movement to the colonies and their economic activity in the colonies were manipulated and guided by the overriding principle of profit, in the interests of the mercantilist monopolists and their government backers.

Flowing from this situation are several characteristics that remain central to American development to today. First, as Novack stresses in his introduction, profit dominated the origins and development of America right up to today. This capitalist motivation appeared in a purer form here than anywhere in the world. Second, America originated out of a need of *world* capitalism and has remained intimately interrelated to the world capitalist market ever since. The myth of the autarchic development of America in a virgin land in just that—a myth.

#### Questions

1. Novack quotes the Scottish historian Edmund Wright: "The colonies had been founded expressly for profit. . . ." Explain.

2. What is the relationship between the colonization of America and the development of the bourgeois revolution in Europe?

3. In what ways was mercantilism similar to and in what ways different from modern imperialism?

4. Part of the historical folklore of America is the notion of its autarchic (isolated and independent) development. This has always been the basis for isolationist sentiment. What can we learn from early America about the relationship of America to the rest of the world?

5. What was the single central motivation of the development of America from its origins right up to this moment? Why? How was this drive expressed?

#### B. The colonization of America

##### *as a conflict between opposing social systems*

In the first section of *America's Revolutionary Heritage* Novack explains that North America was very far from being an empty continent when the white explorers and settlers first arrived. Virtually every square inch was occupied by Native Americans, misnamed Indians. The dispossession and destruction of this population was actually a bitter conflict between the rising bourgeois social system based on profit and earlier forms of social organization.

Novack uses the term "primitive communism" to characterize this Native American social system. This description, while largely accurate when applied to the hunting and gathering culture of the East Coast Native Americans, is not entirely applicable to the great diversity of Native American culture of the precolonial period.

Most people are familiar with the highly developed cultures of the Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans in South

America, Central America, and Mexico. These were as advanced as the culture in the Middle East that gave rise to European civilization. These peoples had passed through the stage of agriculture with its beginnings of social stratification (what some call barbarism) and were on the threshold of civilization with its class society, written language, and complex culture.

At the same time there arose an agricultural society in America's Southwest, at first independently of Aztec culture, but later greatly influenced by the Aztecs' social and technological conquests. This culture, while it did not, as far as we know, have a written language, reached at least a stage of higher barbarism with a certain degree of social stratification. It was culturally at least the equal of the kind of social system that dominated Europe outside the reaches of the Roman empire before the collapse of this empire. It was these people who built the Pueblos, America's first housing projects, and their culture was at least partly intact at the time of the Spanish conquest of the region.

Another great Native American culture was that of the mound builders of the upper Mississippi Valley. Only in the recent period have we learned much of these people. However, they were far removed from primitive communism.

For instance, they built a great walled city, Cahokia, near the present East St. Louis, Illinois, which was inhabited by 20,000 people. The economic basis of this community was farming, virtually continent-wide trading, and the rudiments of manufacturing.

They are suspected of having a social structure very close to modern classes. There existed a nobility and a class of poor artisans and agricultural workers as well as slaves. The slaves and the poor were lumped together and known as the "Stinkers."

Remnants of this culture and social structure persisted into modern times among the Natchez of the lower Mississippi Valley and was observed by the early French explorers of the area.

Even the Native American cultures based on hunting and gathering attained a high degree of complexity. Most notable were the Native Americans of the Northwest Coast, where the food supply was unusually abundant. They developed a highly complex culture, extremely stratified society, and great artistic richness. This was expressed in the famous potlatch ceremony of giving great wealth to notables of another tribe to mark special occasions. This culture not only existed at the time of white settlement but persisted, though in a distorted form, into the twentieth century.

Yet all these diverse Native American cultures held a common approach to the question of land. That is, land was seen as held in common by the tribe, or by some subdivision, or open to many tribes. As Novack correctly insists, it was a conflict over two different systems of land ownership that was at the bottom of most conflict with the Native Americans. And land was central to the economic viability of America as essentially a producer of agricultural products for the world market.

The result of colonization was largely to destroy the economic foundations of all types of Native American culture, and in the process as many of the Native Americans themselves as possible. As a result of this process, the cultural progress Native Americans had made was largely wiped out and what remained of the Native

American peoples herded onto reservations and reduced to a state of pauperization.

### Questions

1. What was the basis of the conflict between Native American and colonist?
2. What was the difference between French and British policy toward Native Americans and what were the economic roots of these differences?
3. Why was Native American policy an important issue in the conflict between colonists and mother country that led to the American Revolution? Why was it that the poorest back-country farmers were the most hostile to Native Americans and for the most ruthless policies?
4. What were the causes of the extermination campaigns against the Native Americans?

### C. The Native Americans today

The past policies of the American bourgeoisie have much effect in shaping the current tasks of socialists. Some discussion is needed on the impact today of the reactionary manner in which the early capitalist interests sought to "solve" the Native American "problem." Unable to completely exterminate them, the bourgeoisie forced the bulk of the Native Americans onto reservations, where they today remain together with a large section that lives away from the reservations in ghettos in such cities as Minneapolis, Gallup, and Albuquerque.

Now, following the lead of the Black masses, the Chicanos, and the Puerto Ricans, these Native Americans have achieved a new consciousness and militancy in fighting for their historic rights.

The modern Native Americans represent an extremely heterogeneous and contradictory social grouping. In some areas they persist in a hunting and gathering mode of life with elements of primitive communism and its related tribal social structure still intact. Elsewhere Native Americans are primarily small farmers on reservations producing for a capitalist market but with a few elements of the old tribal, language, social, and political structure still existing. In the cities many Native Americans are industrial workers and yet maintain some links to life on the reservation.

These Native Americans may have a national identity as "Indians" as well as a sense of identity with the particular tribe and language group they are part of.

As a whole they remain oppressed by capitalism, and it falls to the workers' movement to fight for their right to self-determination and their right to develop along whatever cultural and social lines they choose. Thus the brutal way in which the Native Americans were treated in the past make Native Americans an important element in the general social struggle against capitalism today.

### Questions

1. What are the parallels and differences between Indian reservations and the apartheid policies of native enclaves in South Africa?
2. How is the rise of a militant group like the American Indian Movement related to the way the capitalists "handled" the "Indian question" in the early period?
3. What parallels exist between the Black question and the Native American question?
4. How does the theory of permanent revolution apply to Native Americans?

## Class II—The First American Revolution

*Required reading: Heritage*, pp. 59-134.

### *Recommended reading:*

- Beard, op. cit., pp. 189-335.  
Foner, op. cit., pp. 32-47.  
*American Political Tradition*, by Richard Hofstadter (New York: Vintage, 1948), \$1.95, pp. 3-17.  
*American Revolution*, by Herbert Aptheker (New York: International, 1969), \$2.25.  
*An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, by Charles A. Beard (New York: Free Press, 1965).  
*The Federalist Papers*, by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay (New York: New American Library, 1961) and many other editions.

### A. The causes of the American Revolution

The underlying cause of the American Revolution was the development of the productive forces promoted by commercial capitalism in the coastal colonies, which brought the most important classes in these colonies into conflict with the restraints and policies of British rule. This was accompanied by the developing opposition to mercantilist policies among sections of the ruling class in Britain, producing divisions that facilitated the victory of the colonists.

The mercantilist system broke down because of the further development of capitalism on both sides of the Atlantic. Only these economic factors can explain the fact that ten years before the revolutionary war broke out, the idea of independence had no support, not even that of a small minority.

In the 100 years of colonial development preceding 1776, the colonies developed a vigorous trade and shipping industry quite independently of the mother country. They did this under the protection of British dominance of the world's seas. This activity included very profitable trade with the colonies of other European powers, like France and Spain, even though this was illegal. This process was accelerated during the French and Indian War when the sharp New Englanders made huge profits from trade both with the British and with the French enemy. All of this was quite out of line with the proper forms of mercantilism, according to which all this commerce was to be under the control of the Board of Trade in Britain.

In England capitalist development was proceeding strongly outside the mercantile section of the economy, which was locked up by a clique tied to the royal family. The beginnings of manufacturing were reflected politically in the Whig opposition party.

In the meantime this new commercial aggressiveness of the New England economic interests began to receive support from the Southern slave owners. This distinct class was forced to rely exclusively on the large mercantile houses in England for the marketing of their cotton and for loans to tide them and their slaves over between cotton harvests.

As a result they became a debtor class whose wealth was being milked for the benefit of British economic interests.

Around this axis other classes soon rallied, some even taking a lead in the growing sentiment against England. The frontier farmers felt the British offered no support in their struggle with the Indians. Moreover, they resented the British insistence that settlements not proceed beyond

the Alleghenies, the region west of that being preserved for British mercantile interests that profited from the fur trade with the Indians.

There already existed a mass plebeian sentiment in the colonies made up of small farmers and artisans who resented the domination of the colonies by ruling cliques of the rich who were always supported in their control by the armed might of the British troops. When a section of these ruling cliques loosened their ties with Britain, it could tap a mass sentiment directed against the British.

The immediate cause of the oppositional movement was the issue of taxation. The British were forced to impose heavy taxes and other restrictions on the colonies because of the bankruptcy they faced after their recently concluded successful war against France. "Taxation Without Representation" became the rallying cry of the rebels even though such taxation had been the practice for a long time and was built into the mercantile system. But this time the taxation was more severe, the British actually determined to collect it, and the colonial economy developed to a point that it could and had to resist.

In other words, the mercantile system was based on a primitive level of economic and social development in the colonies, and the economic development of the colonies by the middle of the seventeenth century could not be contained in it anymore. At the same time, internal resistance to mercantilism was strong at home, weakening Britain's efforts.

The war was won by the rebels not only because of their determination to conduct a very long war despite great weaknesses and difficulties, but because of the divisions within England, and the support at a critical moment of Britain's enemies—especially France and Spain.

#### Questions

1. What were the economic factors that led to the American Revolution?
2. Why were the slave owners among the most militant patriots?
3. Why was England divided over the war?
4. Could America have won the war on the basis of its own resources?
5. Why is it that barely a decade before 1776 the idea of independence was not held even by a small minority of colonists and yet it rapidly swept the colonies leading to unavoidable war?
6. What is the significance of independence to American development?
7. What did it mean to masses of people in other parts of the world?

#### B. The class forces involved in the American Revolution

The two dominant classes in the colonies were the merchant class of the Northeast Coast and their banker partners, and the slave-owning class of the Southern coastal areas and the Piedmont. Of these two classes the merchants were the most hesitant because of their economic ties with British business, while the slave owners were more intransigent because of their debtor position.

But the real organizational work and much of the political leadership for the struggle emerged from a new class known in America as "mechanics." This class lay somewhere between a manufacturing class, which would later develop, and a property-less working class. It was made up of independent artisans and "master mechanics"

who employed apprentices in their work. It was this class that gave a truly popular scope to anti-British activity, organized the colonies, and continuously put pressure on the compromising merchant elements. Also part of the popular forces were the poor, debt-ridden farmers and the poor of the cities known in the colonies as the "mobility," similar to the sans-culottes of Paris in the French revolution.

The American Revolution was as much a *civil war* as the later Civil War was a second revolution. A large portion of the colonists supported England. This included those with direct ties with the mercantile houses, those who were part of the colonial administration, and many of the richest farmers.

The patriots conducted a determined policy of suppression against this element, more ruthless in many respects than those the Bolsheviks were forced to utilize during the civil war following the Russian revolution. Most of these Tories emigrated to Canada or England.

#### Questions

1. What were the different class forces in the American revolutionary camp and what differences existed among them in their determination to resist Britain?
2. What parallels exist between the Sam Adamses and Tom Paines of the revolutionary period and socialist fighters today?
3. Describe the American Revolution as a civil war and illustrate what parallels existed between the patriots' conduct in this civil war and that of the Bolsheviks in the civil war after the Russian revolution.
4. Why is it possible to regard the American Revolution as progressive even though slaveholders benefited from it?

#### C. The American Constitution

The American Revolution, like all popular revolutions, developed great expectations among the masses. They sought a realization of their dreams for equality and democracy at home. But the dominant merchant-planter bloc sought only the conditions that would permit the development of profit in their private interest.

This bloc wanted as centralized a government as possible, hard money policies, and social peace. The masses of people wanted as loose and decentralized a government as possible, guarantees of democratic freedoms, and cheap money to pay back their debts.

The Constitution was the product of this merchant-planter bloc. It consolidated their class rule at the expense of the masses. It codified the continued existence of slavery, from which both classes profited. And in its original form it did not include any specific guarantees of democratic freedoms.

The Constitution was highly unpopular and was carried only when the first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights, were added—and then only with much maneuvering and difficulty. It created the conditions for the growth of big capital in America, but the resistance of the masses against the plutocrats would be a persistent theme of American history up to the present day.

It is important to note that this rebellion of the small farmers and artisans had a utopian as well as a democratic aspect. That is, big capital develops out of little capital—the independent commodity production of the small farmer and artisan. Of necessity as it develops it crushes and exploits small enterprise. The latter longs for

a world of equality, of small commodity producers, the very world from which big capital emerges.

It is important to note that the very structure of the Constitution was aimed at allowing a limited amount of democracy but in such a way that it was hoped the majority of the people would never really gain real control over the government as a whole. This is the reason for the tripartite division of powers between executive, legislative, and judicial branches; for the indirect election of the president through the complicated electoral college; for the original proposal to have states appoint senators; and for the long and staggered terms given these senators as well as their ability to check anything emerging from the more popularly elected House of Representatives.

Concessions to democracy were necessary not only because of the democratic sentiment existing among the masses of people but also because of the sharp conflicts of interest existing within the ruling classes.

### Questions

1. Who drafted the American Constitution and what economic interests did they represent?

2. To what extent can the Constitution be considered to have a "Thermidorian" aspect? (Thermidor refers to the stage in the French revolution in which the capitalists consolidated their control of the political system, wiping out many if not all of the democratic gains of the revolution, and imposing a dictatorial regime capable of holding the formerly revolutionary masses in check. In England, after the victory of the revolutionary forces in the civil war with the followers of Charles I in 1649, this stage was represented by the "protectorate" of Oliver Cromwell. In France, after the revolutionary Jacobin regime of Robespierre, this was represented by the Directory, which overturned Robespierre in 1794, and later by the dictatorship of Napoleon Bonaparte. Trotsky frequently used the Thermidor analogy in describing the social-political significance of Stalin's rise to power.) How did the outcome of the American Revolution differ from "Thermidor" in England and France? What factors account for the differences?

3. What would have been the result if the popular masses had gotten their way in this period?

4. Why was the Bill of Rights in the form of amendments to the Constitution?

5. What did the framers of the Constitution mean when they said they wanted a republic but not a democracy, that they wanted a democratic system but wanted to avoid majority rule?

6. What progressive tasks did the Constitution help to accomplish?

7. What was the Constitution's stand on slavery?

### Class III—The Slavocracy

*Required reading: Heritage, pp. 59-134.*

*Recommended reading:*

Beard, op. cit., pp. 336-824.

Foner, op. cit., pp. 48-248.

Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. 18-92.

*The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America 1638-1870*, by W.E.B. Du Bois (New York: Schocken, 1969).

*Civil War in the United States*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (New York: International, 1972), \$3.50.

*Racism, Revolution, Reaction, 1861-1877*, by Peter Camejo (New York: Monad, 1976), \$3.45, pp. 31-48.

### A. The slave system

The slave system was the key to the economic viability of colonial America, contributing to the wealth of both the slave owners of the South and the merchants and shipping interests of the Northeast. At the same time, it was key to the first real industrial development of world capitalism, particularly with the rise of cotton textile manufacturing in the Midlands of England in the first part of the nineteenth century. Marx attributes to the slave trade the real beginning of the development of a capitalist world market.

The slave trade flourished in the form of the famous triangle. Slaves would be purchased in Africa and taken in the ships of pious New England Puritans to the West Indies, where they were sold and molasses purchased, the product of slave sugar production. The molasses was taken to New England and distilled into rum. The rum then went to Africa to be sold and a new shipment of slaves purchased. Many a fortune was made in New England this way. Dartmouth College, for instance, was financed by a wealthy slave trader—for the original purpose of teaching Christianity to the Indians!

The slave system did not represent a totally distinct class society like ancient Greece and Rome, as the historian Eugene Genovese suggests in such works as *The Political Economy of Slavery and Roll, Jordan, Roll*. It was a hybrid combination of an ancient labor method, used for the purpose of producing goods for the world market and in turn accumulating profits. It was thus precapitalist in its productive relations and capitalist in other respects, with capital investment flowing in and out of slaveholdings depending on market conditions for cotton.

Slave production began primarily with tobacco production (this was the main product of both Washington's and Jefferson's plantations) and indigo and some sugar (though this was grown primarily in the West Indies). Its great expansion came with the shift to cotton production following the invention of the cotton gin and the rise of the textile industry at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

There would develop in the nineteenth century sharp differences between the slavocracy and the Northern capitalists. These differences would take the form of competing political parties. Yet we must remember that there was underlying agreement between these two sections of big property owners with differing modes of labor. This agreement was rooted in a mutual sharing in the wealth produced by slave labor. It would take massive changes throughout the country, particularly in the twenty years preceding the Civil War, to transform minor differences into the "irrepressible conflict" of war and revolution.

### Questions

1. Explain how the slave system was key to the wealth not only of the Southern slaveholder but of the Northern capitalist as well.

2. How did slavery lay the basis for capitalist world trade and contribute to the industrial revolution in Europe?

3. Was the slave system a distinct form of class society like ancient Rome and Greece?

### *B. The Age of Jackson*

Soon after the adoption of the Constitution, conflicts developed between the merchant and banking class of the Northeast and the slavocracy of the South. Jefferson led the first and successful political onslaught of the planters against the leading families of the Northeast, basing himself on an alliance with small farmers and mechanics. Jackson escalated this struggle and further developed a popular demagoguery directed at the laboring masses to support his approach.

The slavocracy, while a powerful and rich class, gained its wealth exclusively from agriculture. As agriculturists, the planters opposed an "overcentralized" government; feared a central bank with tight money policies; opposed high tariffs, which aided Northern manufacturing but drove up the prices of consumer goods for slaveholders, etc. These stands won support for the planters among small farmers in the North and South.

Jefferson and his successors made numerous concessions to the policies desired by the bankers and merchants, countenancing the survival of a weakened national bank and fostering manufactures through rising tariffs. However, the slavocrats eventually became dead set against all such concessions.

Andrew Jackson introduced new elements into the alliance between the plantation owners and the small farmers. As a Western planter, he also reflected the needs of Western farmers, who insistently sought an aggressive policy toward the Indians.

The working class, hardly emerging as an independent social formation, was swept behind the Jackson coalition because of its demagoguery directed against their immediate enemy, Northern capital. Many of these workers dreamed also of land to the west to escape wage labor exploitation.

Thus we see emerging a highly popular "little people's" movement, actually spearheaded by the reactionary slavocracy. This political formation would dominate American politics almost uninterruptedly up to the election of Lincoln in 1860. This was the Democratic Party. A somewhat similar kind of demagogic coalition would be reconstructed under Roosevelt in the 1930s. The ideologues of FDR liberalism, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., would develop a mythology of this early period, hiding its slavocratic heart and using it to justify their own defense of capitalist rule in the later period.

While the Democrats dominated government, the development of Northern capital continued to grow despite the absence of the government encouragement they would have preferred. Their favored party was the Whig Party, which was not particularly successful outside of New England.

Since the Democratic Party rule never really threatened the capitalist basis upon which manufacturing began to grow, the Northern capitalists could live with it until far more fundamental changes took place in the American economy and regional distribution.

### *Questions*

1. What were the economic differences between the slavocracy and the Northern capitalists? Were they fundamental or secondary in character at the beginning? How and why did they develop as they did?

2. Describe the elements that combined into the Jacksonian movement. What parallels are there between Jacksonianism and New Dealism?

3. Why did the emerging working class get swept along behind Jackson in large part and what lessons can we learn from this? What were the origins of Tammany Hall? What is the function of capitalist political machines?

### *C. The origins of the Civil War*

The fundamental cause of the Civil War was a conflict between two mutually exclusive systems of labor—a conflict between the hybrid social system in the South based on a precapitalist labor form, and the expanding capitalist system in the rest of the country.

For a long and highly profitable historical period lasting for 100 years, slave labor fed the development of capitalism in Europe and America. It was this very development of capitalism that began, toward the middle of the nineteenth century, to find the slave system as an impediment to its further growth.

This was not just a vertical growth—that is, the amassing of wealth and industry in the traditional Northeast region—but also a horizontal growth—the spread of agriculture and industry toward the West. And it was not accidental that it was the issue of the West that helped precipitate the Civil War.

This process will become clearer if we grasp the relationship between the growth of manufacturing, the millions of small farmers, and the world market. The manufacturing industry in America was virtually nonexistent prior to the American Revolution. The requirements of that war promoted its first weak beginnings. During the first half of the nineteenth century it began to grow into a significant force, drawing funds from the merchant and banking elements and soon dominating them in influence.

This manufacturing was geared primarily to the home market—the millions of small family farmers and the townspeople. This gave it the appearance of being autarchic. But this was not the case. These millions of farmers produced a vast surplus that was sold on the world market. By the time of the Civil War grain shipments abroad alone began to rival cotton shipments.

In fact this, too, was critical for European industry. The European capitalists fed their workers with the cheap food imported from the United States and thus could pay low wages. The food was kept cheap by the impoverishment of the American farmer, each farming unit competing against each other in the world market.

The American manufacturers thus drained some of the wealth returned to the farmers through this selling on the world market. Much of the rest of this wealth was taken by the merchants, shippers, and bankers.

The westward expansion led to a vast increase in this market of small farmers and was accompanied by a shift of manufacturing to the west, primarily in the Great Lakes cities.

In the meantime, the world demand for cotton also vastly increased. Since at this point in time America had a virtual monopoly of cotton production, which was highly profitable, the planters also looked to the West for an expansion of their system.

Thus the issue began to be posed as to what system would dominate the West—would it be slave or "free soil"? Added interest in this question was created by the

precarious political balance in the country. The population had shifted dramatically with free soil areas far outstripping the slave areas. Despite this, the Southern planter clung to national power through the Democratic Party and the agreement to admit a paired slave state into the Union whenever a free state was admitted.

The powerful Northern manufacturers began to find Democratic dominance of the federal government a barrier to their unrestricted growth, while the slave owners found their control of the national government essential to the economic interests of slavery, especially now that they were increasingly so outnumbered in the country.

This explains why it was that although abolitionists were a small despised minority as late as twenty years before the Civil War, there would be a dramatic change in mass thinking and political alignments in the ten years preceding the Civil War.

The explosive factor in the situation was the swift growth in the North of a political expression of the determination to keep the West free of slavery and open to exploitation by manufacturers and settlement by small farmers. Almost overnight, millions of farmers broke from their traditional affiliations with the Democratic Party. A new party, the Republican Party, was formed in 1854 from the remnants of the Whigs and these mass deserters from the Democrats. In six short years a Republican president would take over the White House—Abraham Lincoln. It would be his election that sparked the rebellion of the Southern states and the Civil War.

#### Questions

1. What changes occurred in the American economy that created the conditions for Civil War?
2. Why was this conflict “irrepressible”?
3. Explain the development almost overnight of a new mass party in America, the Republican Party. What parallels exist here for the possible development of a labor party in America in the future?
4. What touched off the Civil War?

#### Class IV—The Second American Revolution

*Required reading: Heritage, pp. 249-84.*

##### *Recommended reading:*

Beard, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 3-121.

Camejo, op. cit., whole book.

Foner, op. cit., pp. 249-337.

Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. 93-136.

Marx, op. cit., pp. 53-278.

*Black Reconstruction in America*, by W.E.B. Du Bois (New York: Atheneum, 1963).

##### A. *The Civil War as revolution*

The Civil War did not originate as a revolution. It was led in the North by quite compromising elements—this was certainly true of Lincoln. And yet it inevitably took on a revolutionary character. Marx grasped this from the beginning, and together with the First International, which he and Engels led, he remained the North's staunchest international supporter.

The political movement, whose victory touched off the war, was dedicated to free soil—it opposed the expansion of slavery but did not call for its eradication. Once the war began with the rebellion of South Carolina (the firing on

Fort Sumter), it was conducted for the simple purpose of preserving the Union with guarantees given to loyal slaveholders for the continued possession of their human property.

On the military side, Northern efforts were far from brilliant or resolute. Most of the good generals were Southerners. But it was compromising political indecision that was most damaging to Northern efforts. Only in the West was ingenious and determined action taken. Engels, a man of considerable practical knowledge of military affairs, found the North's conduct in the war horrifying.

However, to win the war—that is, to achieve even the extremely limited objective of preserving the Union itself—Lincoln was required to take revolutionary action on the slavery issue. This took the form of the Emancipation Proclamation, which, while it only freed slaves *behind* Confederate lines, was nonetheless revolutionary in its impact and really spelled the end of the entire slave system. This was combined with the mobilization of ex-slaves into fighting forces pitted against the armies of the slaveholders. These actions were critical to the ultimate Northern victory. They meant that the Civil War was now a revolutionary war whose effect would mean the complete destruction of the slave system.

At the same time, command of the armies was shifted from compromisers like McClellan to figures like Grant and Sherman, committed to victory at any cost.

The role of the working class is also significant. A basis for confusion existed because of past ties to the slaveholder-dominated Democratic Party. Many historians have used incidents like the antidraft riots in New York City to present a view of Northern workers as sympathetic to the slavocracy and the pro-Southern Democrats (known as “copperheads”). Peter Camejo's *Racism, Revolution, Reaction, 1861-1877* provides a useful antidote to such misinterpretations.

Most working people threw themselves into supporting the Union, with whole unions joining up together and forming their own companies bearing the union banner.

Highly significant was the role of the international working class. In particular the British workers—who had a material interest in the Southern side because the Northern naval blockade cut off cotton shipments, leading to large-scale unemployment in the Midlands textile region—rallied to the side of the North. Marx and his friends in England were highly instrumental in this pro-Northern campaign and this internal dissension helped keep England from openly going to war on the side of the Confederacy.

##### Questions

1. Did the Civil War originate as a revolutionary war?
2. What factors caused its transformation into a revolutionary war, and what role did Blacks play in their own emancipation?
3. What position did Marx take on the Civil War and what influence did he have on its course?
4. What were the politics behind the hesitant conduct of the war by the North?
5. What was the position of the American working class on the war?

##### B. *Reconstruction as revolution and counterrevolution*

The Northern victory immediately posed the basic question: Would the revolutionary process begun with the

emancipation of the slave be carried through to its democratic conclusion with the extension of democratic rights to the Blacks and the distribution of land to the freedmen, or would the ex-slaves be forced back into some new system of servitude? The answer to this question was by no means predetermined.

The period immediately following the Civil War was one of reaction with the support of the federal government under Andrew Johnson of Tennessee. Black Codes were established in the South, vigilante groups formed, and every effort made to force the ex-slaves back into virtual servitude to get cotton production going again.

However, a coalition soon formed within the ruling Republican Party that initiated Radical Reconstruction. One side of this coalition was the radical bloc within the Republican Party, who wished the extension of political rights to the Blacks, and in its more radical wing, a land distribution program. On the other side were the Stalwarts, the political bosses of the party, who were uninterested in the Blacks as such but very much interested in maintaining Republican Party rule in the newly united country where a Democratic Party majority could quickly form if the Blacks were denied political rights in the South.

This bloc enforced Black political rights with federal troops, producing Reconstruction legislatures with many ex-slaves as legislators and government officials. These were by far the most democratic governmental bodies ever seen in this country. These legislatures fostered public education, fought for women's rights, and sought unsuccessfully to gain land for poor whites and Blacks. This was the revolutionary phase of Reconstruction and one of the most radical periods in our history.

However, this progressive change in the South was only partial and episodic because it never reached the point of a land redistribution program for the Black masses. That is because Northern and Southern bourgeois interests alike wanted to utilize the Black labor pool to produce cotton for *their* profit.

In the meantime, as Peter Camejo points out in his new book, Northern economic interests had deeply penetrated the South with the former slaveholders reduced to fronting for Northern businessmen. Northern capital was thus behind both the Radical Republican forces in the South and their "redeemer" all-white enemies—the latter to be the nucleus of a revitalized Democratic Party in the South.

Big business began to lose its fear of the Democratic Party on a national scale as that party was more penetrated by business and began to take over the identical program as the Republicans on tariffs, railroad giveaways, and related issues. A section of capital furthermore participated in the liberal "reform" revolt within the Republican Party directed against patronage, corruption and the growing government bureaucracy, because of their interest in a more modern and efficient government for capital.

All these factors contributed to a change in national policy conducive to a violent seizure of power in the South by the "redeemer" elements. Paramilitary organizations were set up for this purpose and the Blacks intimidated from voting. One after another the radical legislatures were toppled and the white supremacists took over. The Blacks were reduced to servitude as sharecroppers in the interests of merchant and banking capital, largely Northern in origins.

The bourgeoisie betrayed the necessity for the democratic revolution to complete the liberation of the Black masses after the Civil War. This paved the way for the race question to persist so powerfully to this day in American politics. That is why the coming American revolution will have a combined character—it will bring together both the struggle of the Black masses for self-determination and the struggle of the working class as a whole for socialism.

#### Questions

1. What happened to the ex-slaves in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War?
2. What forces came together to bring about a change in policy—Radical Reconstruction?
3. What were the accomplishments of the Reconstruction legislatures and what were the limits of this revolutionary development?
4. What forces brought about the overthrow of these legislatures and for what reasons?
5. What was the role of Northern capital in this process?
6. Explain what democratic tasks these events left for the socialist revolution to accomplish. How have they affected the U.S. working class? How does the theory of permanent revolution apply here? What is meant by the statement that the coming American revolution will have a *combined* character?

#### Class V—The Triumph of the Monopolists

*Required reading: Heritage, pp. 287-358.*

##### *Recommended reading:*

Beard, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 123-537.

Foner, op. cit., pp. 338 ff.

Hofstadter, op. cit., pp. 164-237.

*Letters to Americans, 1848-1895*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (New York: International, 1953), \$2.45, pp. 145 ff.

*American Labor Struggles*, by Samuel Yellen (New York: Monad, 1974) \$4.45, pp. 3-170.

*Pragmatism Vs. Marxism*, by George Novack (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), \$3.45, pp. 15-54.

##### A. *The age of the Robber Barons*

The period from the end of the Civil War to the First World War was characterized by a fantastic growth of American industry. It was truly a full-scale industrial revolution, one of the most rapid growths of industry the world has ever seen. As a result, the nation was transformed from a primarily agricultural country into the most powerful industrial nation in the world.

Agriculture dominated American exports right up through the turn of the century. However, after World War I, manufactured goods were America's chief export. In the course of the war the United States not only outstripped all European countries in economic development but was able to emerge from the war in a position to seize the dominant place in world imperialism previously held by England.

This frenetic pace of expansion, made possible by the overthrow of slavery in the course of the Civil War, had its deep political repercussions in the nation. The Republican Party of free soil and reform, which had a revolutionary aura and a radical wing within it during the Civil War, emerged as the corrupt bureaucratic party of the plutocracy. The Democratic Party was reconstituted with a

platform virtually identical with that of the Republican Party, becoming also the replacement vehicle of the plutocracy. Even the old inter-capitalist interests reflected in oppositional parties before the Civil War were now submerged in both parties and dominated in all cases by big business. Thus emerged the twin parties of big business we know so well.

This industrial development brought about a transformation in American foreign policy. For two centuries as a colony and as an independent nation, America's primary relation to the world was that of an exporter of agricultural goods to Europe. Thus it did not participate in the empire building of England and other more advanced capitalist nations. Even its exploits in the Mexican War were primarily motivated by a desire to grab more agricultural land, in the particular interest of the slavocracy.

The very industrialization process of the latter part of the nineteenth century made American capitalism dependent on foreign markets for an increasingly critical and profitable portion of its production and on world sources for raw materials. This is what brought about the imperialist Spanish-American War, resulting in the annexation of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and the Panama Canal. At about the same time, Hawaii was annexed. No less significant than the acquiring of these new possessions—small when compared to Britain—is the motivation that lay behind these actions. For the United States was now a reactionary world imperialist power. It would act as such in the future, although less through overt seizure of territories than its predecessors, who had a head start.

### Questions

1. Explain the impact on America of the pace of industry between the Civil War and World War I. How was this prepared by the events that preceded it in the Civil War?

2. What were the roots of the sharp change in America's international role in the Spanish-American War and related events? What would this portend for the future?

3. What impact did the rise of industry have on the American political system?

### B. The rise and fall of populism and progressivism

As we noted earlier, a central strand of American political life has been the opposition of the small farmers, independent artisans, and small businessmen to domination by big capital. This plebeian movement dates back to the colonial days.

Prior to the Civil War this volatile force was tapped demagogically by Jackson, and it herded behind the slavocracy in the Democratic Party. By the time of the Civil War the bulk of these forces had shifted to the Republican Party, where they represented its most radical element. In each case, certain concessions were made to their demands for cheap land, democratic rights, and so on.

The post-bellum period tended to dislodge these forces from both parties. At the same time, the pressure upon this layer mounted as the plutocracy grew in power and began to squeeze the farmers economically. This increased agrarian radicalism. The weight of agrarianism within the United States went through a precipitous decline as large farms drove out small farms, and the metropolitan

population grew not only absolutely but relative to the agrarian population.

The agrarian radicalism of the latter part of the nineteenth century and its weaker expression in Progressivism in the twentieth century (as well as the Non-Partisan Leagues in the Dakotas, and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in neighboring Saskatchewan) were the advanced expressions of this declining social layer.

The political expression of this tendency and its aims was Greenbackism, Populism, and their related independent political parties. In addition, some attempts were made to demagogically enlist these forces behind the major parties or fractions of them. Thus in 1896 William Jennings Bryan succeeded in forming a bloc of poor farmers and Western mining interests in his Democratic Party crusade against gold and for cheap money. Then, on the eve of World War I, Theodore Roosevelt bolted from the Republican Party to form his Bull Moose Party, which tapped the same layers. The Socialist Party of Debs also drew from these layers as well as sections of workers in its heyday before World War I.

Even the most intransigent, principled, and radical expressions of this tendency were affected by the weakness of the class layers on which it was based. It attacked big business but not the system from which it sprang. The strengths of the independent populist parties tended to precipitously decline when the immediate pressure was off the farming class and a period of prosperity developed.

While the layer on which populism was based has almost disappeared from America—making up perhaps less than 5% of the population today—the outlook of populism remains deep within the American people, among workers and not just the remaining small farmers.

Imperialism still does not sit well with masses of people. The growth of government bureaucracy and police spying is abhorrent to masses who have an image of America as they think it once was—a democratic society of relative equals. Big business is universally hated. And yet the fact that the roots of all this is in the system of capitalist ownership is not grasped. Thus today socialists can tap this residue of populist anticapitalist thought positively in our work as well as fighting its theoretical and political shortcomings.

### Questions

1. Why did the populist movements take place?

2. What had happened to the social position of farmers after the Civil War? Why?

3. What were the weaknesses of populism and related agrarian radical tendencies and how did these weaknesses relate to the social basis of these movements?

4. In what ways is populism expressed today in America and what tasks flow from this for American socialists?

5. Why did populism fail? What do "populist" solutions fail to take into account about the class struggle in the United States?

### C. The birth of the modern American working class

The great expansion of American industry brought with it a massive increase in the size and concentration of the American working class. In addition, vast waves of immigration—millions coming in a single year—gave a primarily foreign-born and foreign-language-speaking character to this working class.

Facing conditions of exploitation even worse than in



Europe, this working class passed through an explosive period of struggle, taking its first steps to organize itself as a class. This produced the first national strike of workers—the largely spontaneous railway strike of 1877, which in some parts of the country took on the character of a popular uprising. The year 1886 marked the first modern labor party movement in the city of New York, led by Henry George, as well as the martyrdom of German-American labor leaders in Chicago.

In the same period American labor sparked the international struggle for the eight-hour day and initiated the international holiday of all workers, May Day. The Knights of Labor arose and became a many-millioned-member organization of skilled and unskilled workers, while the smaller, conservative union of skilled workers, the AFL, was born.

This process did not produce either a stable organization of industrial labor or a mass party of workers. Yet it laid the basis for the former to emerge in the 1930s and developed a tradition that we must draw upon in our struggle today for a labor party based on the unions.

The American workers, fresh to the work force and divided by culture and language, were only beginning to develop political class consciousness, which lagged way behind the recognition of defending the economic interests of workers in concrete class battles.

This was particularly true in a new country with such a pervasive tradition of “small people’s” radicalism that caught up workers in its wake. For instance, the National Labor Union, the first national organization of labor, ended up in the Greenback Party, while Terrence Powderly, leader of the powerful Knights of Labor, dissolved his organization into the Populist Party.

### Questions

1. Explain the great changes that occurred in American labor during the last decades of the nineteenth century.
2. What was the impact of immigration on the development of American labor?
3. What were the character and extent of labor struggles in this period? What contribution did American labor make to the world working class?
4. Explain why the political class consciousness and even the permanent economic organization of the working class lagged so far behind the militant elemental struggle of the class.

## Class VI—The First Wave of Feminism

(Note: This class can be given as part of this series or combined with other material as part of a class on socialism and feminism.)

*Required reading:* *Heritage*, pp. 361-99.

### *Recommended reading:*

*Feminism and the Marxist Movement*, by Mary-Alice Waters (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), \$.60.

*Socialism and Women’s Liberation*, by Mary-Alice Waters (New York: Pathfinder, 1976), \$.50.

### A. *Women and the social movements of the time*

The women’s suffrage movement has its origins in the activities of women in support of the abolition of slavery. From this fact we can draw some conclusions. Women,

who came forward in various social movements for the liberation of others, became conscious of the need to struggle for their own liberation. One test of the depth of radicalization and social ferment was the extent to which the issue of women’s liberation was brought forward.

The struggle for women’s rights in America is among the oldest and most militant in any country and has always been an aspect of the general social and democratic struggles of the country. Of course, at the same time, there have always been pressures within these social movements to concede to prejudices against women. Within the women’s movement, there have been tendencies that tried to seek respectability by aligning with reactionary causes and opposing militant, mass action in defense of women’s rights.

Victoria Woodhull, a somewhat erratic figure in the early women’s movement, headed for a period of time an affiliate of the First International in America. While this was only a temporary arrangement that broke down in recriminations on both sides, it symbolized a tendency to see the connection between women’s liberation and the struggles of the working class at this early date.

Delegates from the women’s suffrage movement were seated, despite some opposition, at the convention of the National Labor Union in the 1860s, at the urging of America’s first great labor fighter, William Sylvius.

Women played an important leadership role in the radical farmers movement, the Populists, in the 1890s (Mary Lease), in the militant labor struggles of the same period (Mother Jones), in the IWW (Elizabeth Gurley Flynn), and in the SP. Lucy Parsons, the wife of the hanged Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons, addressed the founding convention of the IWW; Margaret Sanger was also present and would later aid in the defense of the Lawrence textile strikers.

When the famous Russian novelist and revolutionist Maxim Gorky toured this country in 1906 to raise support for the leaders of the revolution now facing tsarist persecution, liberals refused to have anything to do with him because he was not legally married to the woman he lived with. It was the IWW and SP left-wingers and their trade-union supporters who rallied to Gorky.

Not all participants in social movements were clear on the rights of women, and there was a tendency on the part of some to bow to the prejudices of the time; not all women saw the link between their own oppression and that of the working class and Blacks. Nonetheless, we can make this generalization: The broader and deeper the social struggle, the more women came forward within it and the more their demands were pushed forward as part of it. Compromises on the issue of women’s liberation only hurt other social movements, and compromises by the women’s movement on broader social issues and with the ruling class only hurt the women’s movement.

### Questions

1. How did women win the vote? Why does American capitalism need to foster and preserve social inequality for women?
2. What is the connection between the movement of women for their rights and the movement of the working class, the Blacks, and democratic and social struggles in general?
3. Why and to what extent is the women’s struggle and

the role of women within the movement a test of the depth of a social crisis and radicalization? Give examples.

4. After the Civil War, the women's movement was split between those who favored fighting for Black voting rights at that time and women's voting rights later, and those who wished to combine the two struggles. What were some causes of this split? What was the result of this split? What would have been the correct approach?

5. Today there are some in the women's movement who refuse to take up a fight for abortion rights on the grounds this may hinder efforts to win the ERA. What can we learn from history about the correctness of this tactic?

#### *B. How the vote was won*

Women won the right to vote after an extremely long struggle, which tested in action many tactical questions that still confront the women's movement today. For a long period of time many in the suffrage movement hoped to achieve voting rights through compromises and by avoiding mass action. They would compromise with racism, suggesting that suffrage would increase the white nativist vote against Blacks and immigrant workers. They advocated a policy of supporting different figures within the two capitalist parties who purportedly might be friendly to suffrage.

However, a militant trend developed within the women's movement, which, with some limitations, insisted on the independent, militant action of women themselves com-

bined with a continuous and aggressive educational and propaganda drive. This came to a head during World War I when the most militant women refused to push this issue aside for the benefit of the war effort. Instead they insisted that all talk of a fight for democracy was a fraud as long as one-half of the American people were denied the right to vote (actually the figure was far greater than one-half, since the mass of Blacks in the South were also disenfranchised).

Stephanie Coontz proves that women won the right to vote despite class-collaborationist compromises and not because of them. The main factor was their own militant action combined with the social changes brought about by the struggle of the working class and others. As the struggle approached its successful climax in 1920, more and more sections of the labor movement and the working class entered into the battle.

#### *Questions*

1. Did supporting capitalist politicians help women win the right to vote?
2. What were the cause and nature of the split in the early women's movement?
3. What was the relationship between the social ferment of the working class and its allies and the final victory of the suffrage movement?

# STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTY

(an introductory series of 3 classes)

## Required Reading:

*The Revolutionary Party: Its Role in the Struggle for Socialism*, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), \$.35.

*The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), \$2.45.

*Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, by Farrell Dobbs (Education for Socialists Bulletin, 1971), \$.75.

*The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party*, (1965 SWP Resolution, Education for Socialist Bulletin), \$.35.

## Supplementary Reading:

*The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), \$2.95.

*The History of American Trotskyism*, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), \$3.95.

*Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)* (New York: Pathfinder, 1976), \$4.45.

## Class I—The Revolutionary Party

### Required Reading:

*The Revolutionary Party: Its Role in the Struggle for Socialism*, by James P. Cannon, pp. 3-13.

*The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 72-79, 106-112.

### Supplementary Reading:

*The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 79-106.

### Questions

1. Why is a revolutionary leadership needed? Why can't the masses make a socialist revolution spontaneously without a revolutionary leadership?

2. What is a party? How does a revolutionary-socialist party differ from organizations like unions formed for more limited purposes? How does it differ from the kind of political parties most people are familiar with in the United States?

3. Why can't trade unions, a coalition of different movements, or a common front of left groups fulfill the role of a revolutionary party?

4. What is the importance of principles and program for a party?

5. What is the crisis of leadership? What role do other tendencies (Stalinists, Social Democrats, ultralefts) play in this?

6. How does the SWP try to resolve the crisis of leadership in the United States?

7. Why does a revolutionary party usually begin as a propaganda group? Can the activities of the SWP in struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities be considered propaganda? Why is the recruitment of many more socialists vital for winning the leadership of the working people as a whole?

## Class II—Democratic Centralism

### Required Reading:

*Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, by Farrell Dobbs, pp. 1-20.

### Supplementary Reading:

"On Democratic Centralism," in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1937-38)*, pp. 89-91.

*The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, by James P. Cannon, pp. 1-82.

### Questions

1. What is democratic centralism? How does it differ from the "all-inclusiveness" practiced by some Social Democratic parties, the bureaucratic centralism of Stalinist parties, and the "participatory democracy" of the "new left"?

2. Why is democratic centralism necessary for a party like the SWP?

3. Why can't democratic centralism be reduced to a set of rules applicable at all times? Why does the relationship between democracy and centralism change in different situations?

4. What is the role of democratic discussion in the SWP?

5. How does democratic centralism uphold majority rule?

6. What are some of the differences between the application of democratic centralism in a national party like the SWP and its application in a world party like the Fourth International? What are some of the reasons for these differences?

7. What are some of the functions of leadership in the SWP? Why is a degree of continuity in the leadership desirable?

8. What is the difference between team leadership and leadership by stars, by cliques, or by a cult? Why is the creation of a broad team of leaders important?

9. What is a clique? What is the difference between comradeship and friendship? How can cliquism damage a revolutionary party?

10. Discuss the relationship between the party and its trade-union members.

11. What is party loyalty? Why is it a necessity for a revolutionary party?

## Class III—How the SWP Is Organized

### Required Reading:

*The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party*, pp. 2-24.

*Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, by Farrell Dobbs, pp. 21-37.

"On the Method of Selecting the National Committee," by James P. Cannon (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1973, \$.30), also in *Letters from Prison* (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), pp. 16-19.

*Supplementary Reading:*

*The History of American Trotskyism*, by James P. Cannon, Lectures IX-XI.

*Speeches to the Party*, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), pp. 172-92.

*Questions*

1. The 1965 resolution states, "The role of America in the world is decisive. The showdown battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought in this country." Discuss. Why does the resolution give particular importance to party loyalty?

2. What is meant by a "combat party"?

3. How are the basic policies of the party decided? Why is the convention the highest body of the party?

4. What is the role of the National Committee? How is it elected?

5. What is the function of the Political Committee?

6. What are the functions of branches and of branch executive committees? What is a local?

7. What is the role of the party press? What was wrong with Shachtman's demand for a public organ for his faction?

8. How are differences over political line discussed in the party?

9. What are tendencies? What are factions? What are some of the dangers inherent in factionalism? Why doesn't the party bar factions as the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking Stalinists do?

10. How has party history shown the role of unifications and splits in building the party?

11. The application of the proletarian orientation in the 1965 resolution is different in some respects from its application in the 1953 resolution. How and why?

# THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE (three classes)

## Required Reading:

*Wage-Labor and Capital*, by Karl Marx (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970) and many other editions. (Available from Pathfinder.)

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, by Frederick Engels, Chapter 3 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), \$.95.

## Supplementary Reading:

*Value, Price, and Profit*, by Karl Marx (New York: International Publishers, 1970), \$.60, and many other editions.

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, by Frederick Engels, Chapters 1 and 2 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), \$.95.

*An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, by Ernest Mandel (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), \$1.25.

## Class I—Wages

### Required Reading:

*Wage-Labor and Capital*, Introduction by Frederick Engels, and Section 1 of *Wage-Labor and Capital*, pp. 5-22.

### Supplementary Reading:

*Value, Price, and Profit*, pp. 9-43.

*An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, pp. 7-28.

### Questions

1. What is a commodity? How does it differ from other products of human labor?
2. What determines the *value* of commodities?
3. What determines the value of *labor power*?
4. How does labor power differ from all other commodities?
5. Why does the view that employers buy *labor* rather than *labor power* cause confusion?
6. Do employees get wages equal to the value of the products their labor produces?
7. Under socialism will workers be paid the full value of the products of their labor? Why not?
8. Why is the money pocketed by the employers *profits*, while the paychecks of the workers are *wages*? Is the owner being repaid for his labor?
9. How does wage labor differ from slave or serf labor? What does the worker sell to the employer in return for wages?
10. Discuss the relative bargaining power of the worker and the employer.

## Class II—Profits

### Required Reading:

*Wage-Labor and Capital*, pp. 22-44.

### Supplementary Reading:

*Value, Price, and Profit*, pp. 44-62.

### Questions

1. Why is the current price of commodities always higher or lower than the actual cost of production? Does this hold for labor power also?
2. What determines the "cost of production" of labor power? Why does Marx hold that this cost of production is relative? (See pp. 32-33 of *Wage-Labor and Capital*.)
3. What is capital?
4. How are profits created?
5. What is the relationship between wages and profit? In what sense can profits rise only at the expense of wages and vice versa?
6. Why does the employer introduce labor-saving machinery and what is the impact on the individual worker?
7. Are mechanization, automation, etc., progressive?
8. Why are the economic interests of workers and employers irreconcilable?

## Class III—Crises

### Required Reading:

*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Chapter 3, pp. 46-63.

### Supplementary Reading:

*An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, pp. 37-54.

### Questions

1. What is the difference between "individual" and "social" production?
2. How did commodity production become capitalist production?
3. How did production become socialized?
4. How does the capitalist mode of production come into conflict with its methods of distribution?
5. Why are there recessions and depressions? Discuss the role of "overproduction" in the capitalist economy?
6. Why did social classes come into being?
7. What is the economic basis for social revolutions?
8. How does capitalism prepare the economic basis for building socialism? How can socialism abolish the economic crises that characterize capitalism?
9. How can socialism abolish commodity production and social classes?
10. Engels writes, "The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which the social order, adapted to earlier economic conditions, is no longer in keeping." Discuss this idea and its applicability to the development of the current radicalization.

# AMERICAN LABOR STRUGGLES: 1877-1934

## (a four-class study outline)

### *Required Reading:*

*American Labor Struggles*, by Samuel Yellen (New York: Monad, 1974), \$3.95. (Available from Pathfinder.)

### *Supplementary Reading:*

*Labor's Giant Step*, by Art Preis (New York: Pathfinder, 1973), \$3.95.

*Class-Struggle Policy in the Rise of the Labor Movement*, by Tom Kerry (Education for Socialists publication, 1976), \$.75.

*1877: Year of Violence*, by Robert V. Bruce (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959).

*Capital*, by Karl Marx (New York: Modern Library), and other editions, Volume I.

*The Pullman Strike*, by Almont Lindsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

*We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW*, by Melvyn Dubofsky, (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969).

"Labor's Political Struggle: 1886 to Today," by Tom Kerry (June 1976 *International Socialist Review*, supplement to the *Militant*, June 4, 1976).

### **Class I—The Railroad Strikes of 1877 and the Eight-Hour Day Movement**

#### *Required Reading:*

*American Labor Struggles*, Chapters I and II, pp. 3-71.

#### *Supplementary Reading:*

*1877: Year of Violence*.

*Capital*, Volume I, Chapter X, "The Working Day," pp. 255-341.

#### **Questions**

1. What are the basic advantages the capitalists have over the workers in negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions? Why do workers need unions? Does unionization completely overcome the bosses' advantage?

2. How did the employers try to make the workers pay for the economic crisis of the 1870s? What is a "watered capitalization"?

3. Why were many workers inspired by the railroad upheavals rather than demoralized by the immediate setbacks they received? Are there any parallels between these early labor struggles and the Black struggle of the 1960s?

4. The capitalist press and politicians claimed that the workers' demand for an eight-hour day at the same pay was asking "something for nothing." Why is this claim fraudulent?

5. What was the role of the state—the government, cops, army, etc.—in these struggles? Why didn't it play a "neutral" role?

6. What is anarchism? What is individual terrorism? What is wrong with these views? Did ultraleftism aid or harm the eight-hour-day struggle?

7. How did the police and government take advantage of the ultraleftism of some workers to destroy the movement? Have similar methods been used today?

8. Who was responsible for the violence in 1877 and in the Haymarket incident? Who initiated it? Why didn't the ruling class permit the struggle to proceed peacefully?

9. Why does the struggle for better living conditions often lead workers to challenge capitalist property and political power, even when the workers themselves are conservative? Give examples from these chapters.

### **Class II—From the Homestead Strike to the Miners' Strike of 1903**

#### *Required Reading:*

*American Labor Struggles*, Chapters III-V, pp. 72-170.

#### *Supplementary Reading:*

*The Pullman Strike*.

*Class-Struggle Policy in the Rise of the Labor Movement*.

#### **Questions**

1. What were the reasons given by the Carnegie Company for the pay cuts at Homestead? How did the workers answer them? What can you add to their replies?

2. How did conditions in the steel mills after the Homestead strike compare with earlier conditions and with those in more unionized industries?

3. What is the difference between an industrial and a craft union? What are the weaknesses of craft unions? How did the American Railway Union arise?

4. What is an injunction? How and why was it introduced into labor struggles?

5. Throughout these struggles, the capitalists and their press refer to the "democratic rights" of the capitalists to control their property and the "right" of workers to contract individually with the bosses. What do these "rights" mean for the workers? How did the enforcement of these "rights" affect the democratic rights of the workers?

6. What were conditions like in the coal mining industry at the time of the anthracite strike? Why was it important to win having union check-weighmen?

7. What was the National Civic Federation? Why is it a mistake for unions to participate in such formations?

8. Is "impartial" arbitration of strikes possible? Can the government play this role? What did arbitration lead to in the anthracite strike?

9. Theodore Roosevelt adopted a different stand toward the anthracite strike than his predecessors did toward the Pullman strike or the railroad strikes of 1877. Why? Was he more friendly to unions?

10. What kind of organizations did workers have in the strikes taken up in chapters I through V? What role did they play and what lessons were being learned?

### Class III—Lawrence and Ludlow

#### *Required Reading:*

*American Labor Struggles*, Chapters VI-VII, pp. 171-250.

#### *Supplementary Reading:*

*We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW.*

#### *Questions*

1. Discuss the role of immigrant labor in the strikes described in *American Labor Struggles*.

2. What was the IWW? How did it differ from the AFL?

3. What methods were used by the IWW and the strike committee in winning the Lawrence strike? What attitude did the strikers take to arbitration?

4. Why was the sympathy strike for Ettor and Giovannitti especially frightening to the bosses and capitalist politicians?

5. What were the differences between the IWW and the AFL roles in this strike? What underlay the differences?

6. What is a company town? How did Rockefeller's company towns operate in Colorado?

7. Discuss the role of the state (from the governor and militia to the courts and the president) in the Colorado mining strike.

8. What is an "open" shop? What is a "closed" shop? Does the union shop violate workers' rights? What are the capitalists really concerned about when they make this assertion?

9. How was the miners' strike defeated?

10. What were the results of the strike? What is a company union? Why did Rockefeller initiate this?

### Class IV—Labor Struggles After World War I

*Required Reading: American Labor Struggles*, Chapters VIII-X.

*Supplementary Reading: Labor's Giant Step*, Chapter 4. "Labor's Political Struggle: 1886 to Today."

*Class-Struggle Policy in the Rise of the Labor Movement.*

#### *Questions*

1. What was the strategy of the steel strike organizers and how did it work out in practice? How did the strike reveal the weaknesses of craft unionism?

2. How was the strike defeated? What were the lessons of this defeat?

3. What was the role of racism, red-baiting, and antiforeign prejudice in the strike battles described by Yellen?

4. What was the role of the capitalist press? Has it changed? How can it be counteracted?

5. What is the "stretch-out"? What factors made union organizing in the South so difficult?

6. What was the "blue book"? What is the hiring hall and why is union control of the hiring hall so important for longshoremen and other maritime workers?

7. What sparked the general strike in San Francisco? How would you evaluate the outcome of the longshoremen's strike? What criticisms does Preis make in *Labor's Giant Step* of the strike leaders?

8. Why is a general strike a particularly explosive form of struggle? What are its limitations?

9. Using the events described in *American Labor Struggles*, compare the effectiveness of class-struggle and class-collaborationist methods in winning labor's demands?

10. What was the basic political weakness of the working-class movement? How did it affect the strikes taken up in *American Labor Struggles*?

11. How did the struggles described by Yellen prepare the way for the rise of the CIO?

# THE FIRST FOUR CONGRESSES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

(a four-class study outline)

*Classes based on following books:*

*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), 2 volumes, \$3.75 each.

*Speeches at Congresses of the Communist International*, Lenin (Progress Publishers, 1972, distributed by International Publishers and carried by Pathfinder, \$1.50). Many of these speeches also appear in the later volumes of Lenin's Collected Works.

*"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, by Lenin (the edition distributed by Pathfinder costs \$1.25).

*International Communism in the Era of Lenin*, by Helmut Gruber (Anchor, 1972, \$2.50). This book is available at many bookstores and libraries. It may be desirable to make copies of the required readings if a sufficient number of the books can't be obtained. Some of the items in this book are available in other sources.

## **Class I—Historical Background; Zimmerwald and Kienthal; the First Congress**

*Required Reading:*

*International Communism in the Era of Lenin*, by Helmut Gruber:

pp. 62-65, "Manifesto of the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald."

pp. 66-69, "Draft Manifesto Introduced by the Left-Wing Delegates at the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald" (also available in Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII).

*Speeches at Congresses of the Communist International*, by Lenin (Progress Publishers):

pp. 11-27, "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

*The First Five Years of the Communist International*, by Trotsky (Pathfinder), Vol. 1.

p. viii, Introduction.

p. 18, Editor's Note.

pp. 19-30, "Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World."

*Supplementary Reading:*

*International Communism in the Era of Lenin*, by Helmut Gruber:

pp. 65-69, "Manifesto of the Kienthal Conference."

pp. 69-72, "Resolution of the Kienthal Conference."

pp. 79-82 (objections of the German delegation to the founding of the Third International at the first congress).

*The First Three Internationals: Their History and Lessons* by Novack, Frankel, and Feldman (Pathfinder):

pp. 7-12 (necessity of internationalism).

pp. 67-78, "The First World War and the Collapse of the Second International."

*Imperialism*, by Lenin (International Publishers).

*Questions*

1. Why is an international revolutionary organization of the workers needed?

2. List the accomplishments of the First and Second Internationals.

3. Why did the Second International collapse? Why was the Third International created?

4. What was the cause of World War I? Why did the leaderships of most Socialist parties support their governments during WWI?

5. Why did the war have a conservatizing effect on the working class during its early months only to be followed by a sweeping radicalization later?

6. Can the Zimmerwald and Kienthal antiwar conferences be correctly viewed as preliminary congresses of the Third International?

7. What was the immediate perspective of the Third International at its founding congress? What four tasks were its adherents urged to carry out?

8. Why was Germany looked to as the most promising and important country for revolutionary opportunities?

9. What was the League of Nations and what steps did it take to quarantine the fledgling Soviet Union? What was the Bolshevik attitude to the League of Nations? Is the United Nations different?

## **Class II—The Second Congress**

*Required Reading:*

Trotsky, *First Five Years* (Vol. I):

pp. 102-132, "Manifesto of the Second World Congress."

Lenin, *Speeches*:

pp. 31-49, "Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International."

pp. 55-60, "Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions."

Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, Chapters I-IV.

*Supplementary Reading:* Gruber, *International Communism*:

pp. 241-46, "The Twenty-one Conditions of Admission to the Communist International."

Lenin, *Speeches*:

pp. 61-67, Speech on the Terms of Admission to the Communist International.

pp. 68-71, Speech on Parliamentarism.

Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder*: The rest of the book.

*Questions*

1. What were the most important events that took place



between the first and second congresses of the Third International?

2. What was the Two-and-a-Half International? What forces attempted to launch it? What was its fate? Why did it fail? What is centrism and how were its characteristics manifested by this formation?

3. Compare Lenin's speech on the Fundamental Tasks of the Comintern with his speech on bourgeois democracy given at the founding congress of the Third International.

4. Why did socialists of a reformist type consider joining the Third International in 1919 and 1920?

5. What event led most directly to the Third International laying down conditions of membership? What were these "21 conditions" intended to accomplish? Do you think these conditions are generally applicable today?

6. How did Lenin explain the persistence of reformist trends in the European working-class movement?

7. Why did many left communists want to abstain from electoral activity? What is wrong with such abstention?

8. Why did many of the left communists want to avoid work in the established trade unions? Why was participation in such unions a condition of membership in the Third International?

9. What did Lenin think were some of the internationally applicable lessons of the Russian revolution? Are these lessons well understood by revolutionists today? Why not?

10. What was the position of the Second Congress on the national and colonial questions? Discuss the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. Why was support for colonial struggles demanded by the Comintern of parties in imperialist countries? What had been the record of the Second International on this?

### Class III—The Third Congress

#### Required Reading:

Trotsky, *First Five Years* (Vol. 1):

pp. 1-2 (Author's 1924 Introduction); p. 172, Editor's Note.

pp. 174-226, "Report on the World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International."

pp. 238-61, "Theses of the Third World Congress on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern."

Trotsky, *First Five Years* (Vol. 2):

pp. 19-29, on the March Action in Germany.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Lenin, *Speeches*:

pp. 81-89, "Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the RCP."

pp. 96-105, "Speech in Defense of Tactics of the Comintern."

Gruber, *International Communism*:

pp. 274-309, "The German March Action" (selections by participants in the action and Comintern leaders).

Trotsky, *First Five Years* (Vol. 1):

pp. 293-96, "The Main Lesson of the Third Congress."

pp. 297-312, "Report on 'The Balance Sheet' of the Third Congress of the Communist International."

#### Questions

1. What events resulted in a sharp change in the political situation by the time of the third congress?

2. What important changes had taken place in the

attitudes of workers and what did Trotsky believe would change this situation?

3. Why did discussion of the March Action in Germany dominate the proceedings of the third congress of the Third International?

4. In what ways did the turn at the third congress depart from the approach of the previous congresses of the Third International?

5. At the third congress, the main source of tactical errors and internal crises among the various Communist parties was attributed to an underestimation of the importance of constructing revolutionary Communist parties. How and why did this underestimation take place?

6. Why is it so important to know how to retreat as well as how to advance in working-class politics? What determines the appropriate course of action?

7. Why did Trotsky believe that capitalism would not achieve an equilibrium following the First World War? Was he right?

8. Why did the slogan "To the Masses" become the theme of the Third International in 1921? What did it mean?

9. What do revolutionists mean by "the epoch of war and revolution"?

### Class IV—The Fourth Congress

#### Required Reading:

James P. Cannon, *First Ten Years of American Communism* (Pathfinder):

pp. 4-73.

Gruber, *International Communism*:

pp. 318-27, "Directives on the United Front of the Workers."

Trotsky, *First Five Years*, (Vol. II):

p. 184, Agenda of the Congress.

pp. 185-216, "Report on the Fifth Anniversary of the October Revolution and the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International."

pp. 304-33, "Report on the Fourth World Congress."

Lenin, *Speeches*:

pp. 131-44, "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution."

#### Supplementary Reading:

James P. Cannon, *Speeches for Socialism*:

pp. 41-62, "The Russian Revolution" (1923 speech given upon return from fourth congress).

Trotsky, *First Five Years* (Vol. II):

pp. 1-43, "The School of Revolutionary Strategy."

pp. 91-109, "On the United Front" (Theses).

#### Questions

1. What events indicated that the revolutionary wave continued to recede following the third congress?

2. In what sense had capitalism outlived itself by the time of the First World War? How did this make the tasks of revolutionaries in the 1920s different from the tasks of the prewar period?

3. Why wasn't the united-front tactic formulated earlier than 1922?

4. What are the objectives of the united-front tactic? Discuss the SWP's use of the united-front tactic and its results.

5. How should socialists challenge the reformists while working within the framework of the united-front tactic?

6. Is the united front a tactic, or a strategy, or a principle?

7. If applied correctly, how should the united-front tactic expose the reformist leaderships and win the majority of the working class over to the revolutionary party?

8. Why were many of the larger Communist parties reluctant to accept the united-front tactic (specifically the French and German parties)?

9. Show how the positions taken at the third and fourth congresses of the Third International began to anticipate the Transitional Program.

10. What did the experiences of the Communist Interna-

tional show about the importance of building revolutionary parties? How and why did stress on this point change between the first and fourth congresses?

11. What are some of the fundamental political concepts developed by the Comintern that we hold today? What basic concepts of the Comintern has the Stalinist movement broken from?

12. How did the organizational functioning of the Comintern under Lenin differ from its role under Stalin? (See particularly Cannon on this.)

13. The first question in the first class was "Why is an international revolutionary organization of the workers needed?" What can you add to that answer in light of your study of the Communist International?

# THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

October 1972

eight classes

Prepared by Bob Chester

Note: Page numbers listed below refer to the one-volume Ann Arbor edition of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution. References placed in parentheses refer to the three-volume Sphere Books paperback edition printed in England.

## Class 1.

Required Reading: Preface, Chapters I, III, IV in vol. 1

### Questions:

1. What were Russia's main peculiarities? How did they apply to the problems of the revolution?
  2. Compare the size of the proletariat and peasantry in 1916. How did this affect the problems of the revolution?
  3. What is the difference between an economic and a political strike? Give some examples.
  4. What is defensism? Defeatism? How is each implemented? Is it possible to compromise between them?
  5. Why did Menshevism take shape during the years of reaction?
  6. Explain the passage on page xviii (page 16 in paperback) "... the swift changes in mass views and moods thus derive, not from the flexibility of man's mind, but just the opposite, from its deep conservatism."
  7. What were the objectives of the workers at the beginning and at the end of the Five Days? Suppose the actions were stopped dead by the police in the first day, would the revolution have taken place?
  8. Does the disappearance of the police from the streets have a special significance?
  9. Would you consider the revolution a peaceful one? Was it democratically achieved?
- Discussion question: Give your own description of the law of uneven and combined development and its importance in Marxist theory. Give some examples from American history or your own experience.

## Class 2.

Required Reading: Chapters IX, X, XI, and XII to page 220 in vol. 1

### Questions:

1. Who organized the Soviets? Who elected its Executive Committee? What tasks did it allocate to itself?
2. What was the real relation of power between the Soviet and the Duma? Did the Soviet spokesmen accurately reflect the views of those they represented?
3. What was the paradox of the February Revolution? What threat did the bourgeoisie hold over the heads of the Soviet leaders?

4. What was the composition of the new government? What position did Kerensky hold? What was the attitude of the workers and soldiers to it?

5. Why is dual power usually a characteristic of a revolutionary period? What are its contradictions? How are they resolved?

6. What was the basis of authority of the Executive Committee? What was the role of the soldiers in the Soviets? What was the relation of the Petrograd Soviet to those in other cities?

Discussion question: Did the Bolshevik Party keep up with the events? How can a revolutionary party best meet the test of a critical revolutionary period?

## Class 3.

Required Reading: Chapters XV, XVI. Also, if possible XVIII, XXII in vol. 1

Supplementary Reading: "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution," Writings of Leon Trotsky 1938-39, pp. 110-116; The Fourth International (magazine), November 1942; Stalin School of Falsification, page 235, Minutes of March Conference; Speech delivered to the caucus of Bolsheviks, April 17, 1917, Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 24 (page 139 of 1964 edition)

### 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?
5. How necessary was the role of the individual, Lenin, to the success of the revolution? Could it have succeeded if Lenin had been killed in April?
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. How was it possible for the workers to be 100 times further to the left than the Bolsheviks, when the Bolsheviks had a program to take power?

Discussion question: Discuss Trotsky's analysis of the time lag in all representative institutions, pages 351-352 (or 328-9 in paperback). Also, time lags in consciousness, pages 435-437 (or 403-5 in paperback).

#### Class 4.

Required Reading: Chapters I, II, III in vol. 2

#### Questions:

1. List as many conditions as you can that brought the tensions to the boiling point in July.
2. What touched off the July Days?
3. What motivated the Kadets in resigning from the government? What weapons against the Bolsheviks did they develop?
4. What was the contradiction facing the Bolshevik Party? How did they solve it? What would have happened if they had seized power?
5. Was it proper for Lenin to go into hiding?
6. How was the reaction able to organize so quickly? What were its first objectives?
7. Were the July Days a demonstration or an insurrection?

Discussion question: Were the July Days a necessary phase in the development of the revolution?

#### Class 5.

Required Reading: Chapters IX, X, XII in vol. 2

#### Questions:

1. What was the plan of Kornilov's revolt? On what pretext was it begun? Analyze Kornilov's Declaration, page 212 (208-209, paperback).
2. What was Kerensky's plan as against that of Kornilov?
3. What was Miliukov's role? Why was Kerensky impelled to oppose Kornilov when the showdown came?
4. List as many reasons as you can for the failure of the revolt, grouping them into categories of social, political and subjective reasons.
5. Why was it necessary to set up a Committee of Defense? How did it function? What were the Bolshevik tactics in this period?
6. Discuss the process of decline and split up of the S. R. and the Mensheviks. How did their left wings differ from the right wings? What was the role of Martov?
7. Why was the vote of the Petrograd Soviet on September 9 of such significance? How did it affect the relationship of the Soviets throughout the country?

Discussion question: How strong was the power of the Soviets from February through October? How pertinent was the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" in each period? How did the content of the slogan change?

#### Class 6.

Required Reading: Chapters I, II, in vol. 3. Also, "A Further Note on Nationalities."

#### Questions:

1. Why has the peasant question been of such vital importance throughout all European history?
2. How did the peasantry differ in various areas of Russia? What were the two stages of revolt between February and October?
3. What were the various organs representing the peasants? How significant were each of them? Why were the Soviets less important before August?
4. Why were the Social Revolutionaries the party of the peasantry?
5. How were the ties between the city workers and peasants established? What was the role of soldiers and sailors?
6. Why did the program of the Bolsheviks call for independent organs of peasant struggle? What were Lenin's views in April? Why?
7. What is a nation? How was Russia different from Western European nations in national composition? What forms did national oppression take in Russia?
8. Explain the difference in national composition between the cities and the countryside. How did the national question link up with the agrarian question?
9. What was the history of the Bolsheviks on the national question? What was their stand on the right of nations to self-determination? How did this contrast with the question of national differences within the party?

Discussion question: Is nationalization of the land a bourgeois or socialist step? What is the difference between the bourgeois and socialist stages on the land question?

#### Class 7.

Required Reading: Chapters IV and V of vol. 3

Supplementary Reading: Statement of Kamenev and Zinoviev contained in Towards the Seizure of Power, Volume XXI of Lenin's Collected Works (1932 edition), p. 328

#### Questions:

1. How was the Committee of Revolutionary Defense (Military Revolutionary Committee) set up? How did the Bolsheviks utilize the committee?
2. Why were the transitions of the garrisons from right to left so violent? What was the role of the Conference of the Garrison?
3. Why was the discussion of the "coming out" carried on so openly? Compare this with the concept of "conspirative seizure of power" peddled by our opponents.
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 Soviets?

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?

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 October 10?

7. What was the order of points in Lenin's motion? page 148 (page 142, paperback).

8. What were Kamenev and Zinoviev's main arguments? How prevalent were their views in the party? What was Stalin's role?

Discussion question: Discuss the importance of State and Revolution both as a theoretical work and as a guide to action. What is meant by Trotsky's statement that "the tactical mistakes of Lenin were for the most part by-products of his strategic power?" page 128 (123, paperback).

#### Class 8.

Required Reading: Chapters VI, IX and X in vol. 3

#### Questions:

1. Is there an element of "conspiracy" in even the most

popular revolutions? In what sense? Why? Analyze Trotsky's description of the Art of Insurrection, page 169 (page 160-161, paperback).

2. What is Blanquism? What are its positive aspects as well as its basic weakness? 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. What was the role of the Red Guard? How did its existence act as a thermometer of the stage of the revolution?

5. Why are defensive formulations so important, especially in a period of insurrection?

6. Could the revolution have been forestalled by a bold action of the provisional government?

7. What were the first measures proclaimed by the new government? What was the purpose of the Bolsheviks taking over the S. R. land program?

8. What was the Bolshevik attitude toward the Constituent Assembly before and after the seizure of power?

Discussion question: Do the lessons of the History of the Russian Revolution apply to the present period in the advanced countries as well as the underdeveloped ones?

# THE POST WORLD WAR II TRANSFORMATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE, CHINA AND CUBA

November 1973

four classes

## Class 1. Precedents for the Overtures in Eastern Europe

Required Reading: In Defense of Marxism, by Leon Trotsky, pp. 15-23, 54-59, 87-90, 129-137, 170-178; "From World War II to the Cold War," by Cliff Conner in Education for Socialists bulletin, Towards a History of the Fourth International: Part I--Three Contributions on Post-War Developments

Supplementary Reading: "The Evolution of the Buffer Countries," Resolution of the 7th Plenum of the IEC of the Fourth International, in Education for Socialists bulletin, Class, Party and State and the Eastern European Revolution; The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954, by Joyce and Gabriel Kolko (Harper and Row, New York, 1972), chapters 7, 14

### Questions:

1. In what ways did the Soviet occupations of the Baltic states, Eastern Poland, and Finland presage the later developments in Eastern Europe? What were the differences between the East European overtures and those analyzed by Trotsky in In Defense of Marxism?

2. What circumstances compelled the counterrevolutionary Soviet bureaucracy to eliminate capitalist property relations in Eastern Poland and later in the Baltic states?

3. Did the Soviet bureaucrats set out to create workers states in Eastern Europe in 1945? How and why did Stalin's policy shift between 1945 and 1948?

4. What did the resolution of the 7th Plenum of the International Executive Committee mean by "structural assimilation"?

5. Why are property relations decisive for Marxists in determining the class character of the state? Why didn't the presence of the Soviet army ("bodies of armed men") make these countries workers states in 1945?

## Class 2. Theoretical Conclusions of the Discussion on Eastern Europe

Required Reading: From Class, Party and State and the Eastern European Revolution: "The Problem of Eastern Europe," by Joseph Hansen, pp. 20-35; "Evolution of Eastern Europe," report to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International by Pierre Frank, pp. 47-53; "The Yugoslav Revolution," resolution of the Third World Congress, pp. 56-61; "The Wohlforth Way: A Methodological Mutation," by Tom Kerry, pp. 3-10

### Questions:

1. When was the Fourth International's discussion on

Eastern Europe concluded and what conclusions were reached? What criteria led Pierre Frank to conclude, as Joseph Hansen had earlier, that the East European regimes were workers states?

2. Joseph Hansen writes: "The question of the class character of the state is the touchstone of the proletarian revolution and the heart of Marxist politics." Why is this the case? What errors might have flowed from a different outcome of the East European discussion?

3. How did the transformations confirm our evaluation of the class nature of the Soviet Union?

4. All the transformations in Eastern Europe except for that in Yugoslavia occurred without a civil war taking place. What is the essential function of civil war in a revolution? Was this function accomplished peacefully in Eastern Europe? If not, what performed the function normally played by a civil war?

5. Many comrades feared that recognizing that these countries were workers states would require us to conclude that Stalinism was no longer counterrevolutionary, since it could lead revolutions. Does our characterization of Stalinism as "counterrevolutionary" still hold true in spite of these overtures?

6. What were the key differences between the way capitalism was overturned in Yugoslavia and the method of its abolition in the other Eastern European states where overtures occurred? Does the 1951 resolution on Yugoslavia stand up in all respects? What problems existed with the position of the Third World Congress that the Yugoslav CP had "ceased to be a semi-Stalinist party and evolved as a centrist party?" How do we evaluate this party today?

## Class 3. Theoretical Problems Posed by the Chinese Revolution

Required Reading: "Report on the Chinese Situation," by Peng Shu-tse in Education for Socialists bulletin, The Chinese Revolution, by Peng and Chen Pi-lan, Vol. I, pp. 23-34 and 42-50; "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath," resolution adopted by the 1955 SWP convention, in Education for Socialists bulletin, The Chinese Revolution and Its Development; "Peasant War in China," by Leon Trotsky in The Chinese Revolution: Problems and Perspectives (Merit Publishers, New York). This work will appear in 1974 in the collection of Trotsky's writings on China being published by Pathfinder Press; "The Transitional Program," (the section on Workers and Farmers Governments) in The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution (Pathfinder Press, 1973), pp. 93-95

Supplementary Reading: "The Myth of the Mao-Stalin

Rift," by Tom Kerry, International Socialist Review, September-October 1969; Introduction by Joseph Hansen to Ten Years: History and Principles of the Left Opposition (Part V of Education for Socialists bulletin series, Towards a History of the Fourth International, \$.40)

#### Questions:

1. What factors led Trotsky to conclude that the Chinese CP was a petty-bourgeois party? What are the criteria that we use in making such an evaluation?

2. In the Transitional Program, Trotsky writes, "...one cannot deny categorically in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.) the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish on the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case, one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality and the 'workers and farmers government' in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat."

How does Trotsky's suggestion shed light on the actual course of the Third Chinese Revolution? What conditions made it possible for the transition from a workers and farmers government to a workers state to take place under the leadership of Stalinists instead of revolutionary Marxists (an outcome Trotsky had not expected)?

3. Did the overthrow of Chiang by Mao go against the interests and orientation of the Soviet bureaucracy at that time? How were the various turns undertaken by Stalin reflected in the policy of the Chinese CP?

4. Did the policies followed by the Chinese CP before and after World War II serve to advance the Chinese Revolution? If not, in what ways did these policies retard that revolution?

5. Did Mao set out to create a workers state in 1949? What factors led him to overthrow capitalist property relations?

6. What considerations led the SWP to call for political revolution in China in the resolution adopted in 1955?

7. Why is it incorrect to refer to the Chinese Communist Party or the Mao regime as bureaucratic centrist?

#### Class 4. The Cuban Revolution

Required Reading: From Education for Socialists bulletin, The Nature of the Cuban Revolution: "Draft Theses on the Cuban Revolution," Political Committee resolution submitted on December 23, 1960; "What the Discussion on Cuba is about," by Joseph Hansen; "The Character of the New Cuban Government," by Joseph Hansen; "Workers and Farmers Government" (Extracts from documents of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern).

Supplementary Reading: "The Algerian Revolution from 1962 to 1969," and other material in Education for Socialists bulletin, The Workers and Farmers Government (\$1.00)

#### Questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities in the social transformations that occurred in Cuba, Yugoslavia, and Eastern Europe?

2. The Fidel Castro leadership did not originate out of the Communist Party or out of any other historical current within the working class. Under these conditions, did the Cuban Communist Party help advance the Cuban revolution forward to the establishment of a workers state?

3. Based on the criteria we use in evaluating the class character of political groupings, what was the class character of the Castro grouping at the time it smashed the Batista regime and took power?

4. Some comrades held that Cuba became a workers state in October 1959 when a massive popular militia was formed. Discuss Hansen's reasons for opposing this view. When did Cuba become a workers state?

5. What is a "workers and farmers government"? How does it differ from a labor party type government, such as in Australia? From the dictatorship of the proletariat?

6. Is the progression from a "workers and farmers government" to a workers state inevitable? What lessons can we draw about this from the Algerian revolution?

7. How did the transformation process confirm the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution?

SPEECHES TO THE PARTY  
Spring 1973

(A four-class series on the 1952-1953 fight with the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction based on readings from James P. Cannon's Speeches to the Party, Pathfinder Press, 1973, \$3.95 paperback, \$10.00 clothbound.)

Additional Resource Material: This material is primarily for background use by teachers or class organizers. It may be ordered from the National Education Department, Socialist Workers Party, 14 Charles Lane, New York, N. Y. 10014

- Tapes: 1. The Cochran Fight on Tape. Three talks by Al Hansen plus speeches by James P. Cannon. (Classes will probably want to schedule special sessions to listen to the tapes of Cannon's speeches.) 2-track, \$20.00; 4-track, \$12.00
2. The History of the SWP. Ten talks by Harry Ring. 2-track, \$16.00; 4-track, \$9.00

Education for Socialists Bulletins:

1. Toward a History of the Fourth International, Part I. Articles on the post-WWII Fourth International, by Cliff Conner, Les Evans and Tom Kerry. \$.40 (These articles are recommended as supplementary reading assignments if time permits.)
2. Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part III. International Committee Documents, \$4.00
3. Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part IV. International Secretariat Documents, \$3.25
4. Class, Party and State and the Eastern European Revolution. Documents of the International Discussion. \$1.00
5. The Development and Disintegration of World Stalinism. Contains the 1954 resolution on The Rise and Decline of Stalinism. \$1.25
6. The Structure and Organization Principles of the Party. Three lectures by Farrell Dobbs. \$.65

Class 1. Background of the Developing Differences

Required Reading: Introduction, by Al Hansen, pp. 5-23; Report and Summary to the 1952 Convention, pp. 24-50; Letters to Comrades, pp. 223-230, 231-233, 240-243, 249-251. (All from Speeches to the Party)

Supplementary Reading: Theses on the American Revolution, pp. 323-337; Letters to Comrades (other than above), pp. 223-255

Questions:

1. At the 1952 convention of the SWP, what dangerous implications did Cannon point out in the prognosis of "cen-

turies of deformed workers states?"

2. What was entryism "sui generis" as outlined by the Third World Congress and the Tenth Plenum of the International Executive Committee (IEC)? Discuss Cannon's attitude to this policy. What differences between the American political scene and that in other countries influenced his views? How did entryism "sui generis" differ from Trotsky's proposal in the 1930s for entry into some social democratic parties?

3. Why does Cannon put special emphasis on the effort to build and maintain an independent party during a period of reaction and labor conservatism? What factors would make an "entrism" tactic toward the Stalinist and social democratic milieus more dangerous in such a period?

4. What was wrong with Clarke's proposal for a "propaganda campaign"? Isn't an SWP election campaign really a "propaganda campaign"?

5. How does a faction of any type differ from others kinds of groupings in the party--e.g., an ideological tendency?

6. What rights do minorities have in relation to the SWP Internal Bulletin? How is the bulletin "edited"? Can the majority exclude or change articles submitted by supporters of a minority? (pp. 252-253)

Class 2. The Character of the Cochranite Opposition

Required Reading: Trade Unionists and Revolutionists, pp. 51-66; Letters to Comrades, pp. 256-289

Supplementary Reading: The Roots of the Party Crisis, pp. 338-399

Questions:

1. Discuss the relationship between social composition and factional alignments in the revolutionary party. Do all political disputes reflect social composition? What were the similarities and differences between the Cochran grouping and the petty-bourgeois opposition of 1940?

2. Cannon describes the trade unions as a "culture broth of opportunism." Why is this the case? He discusses the seniority clause as having a dual character--one result being the creation of a more conservative layer of high seniority workers. What attitude do revolutionists have toward seniority rights in the unions? What effect does the demand for "preferential hiring" of Blacks and Chicanos have?

3. Why did the Cochranite trade unionists embrace an orientation to the American Stalinists proposed by Clarke and Bartell? What was the real political direction of Cochran's grouping? What did the two orientations have in common?

4. Why is so much fire directed against the "combinationist" character of the Cochranites? Must all elements of a grouping be in complete accord on every question in



order for a grouping to be principled? What defines a principled and unprincipled faction? How is the combinationist character of the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell grouping reflected in "The Roots of the Party Crisis"?

5. A central issue in this dispute was the prospects for an American revolution. The Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction tended to denigrate these prospects, particularly as expressed in the "Theses on the American Revolution." There later proved to be an area of agreement on this between the Cochranite minority and Pablo. For instance, the December 1953 plenum of Pablo's IEC stated: "Historically, the American revolution seems, as before, to take its place most probably as the final link in the chain of world revolution, and not as one of the next successive links.

"Furthermore, preparation for the virtually inevitable struggle of the revolutionary forces throughout the world against the last stronghold of reaction--Yankee imperialism--must be freely accepted with all its consequences."

What does this statement indicate about the revolutionary potential of the American workers? How did it fit in with the Cochranites' pessimism about the future of the party? What were Cannon's views on this question? What was Trotsky's position on the role of the American revolution? Why is this a fundamental question?

### Class 3. International Questions in the SWP Faction Fight

Required Reading: Discussion Preceding the Third World

Congress, pp. 400-411; Internationalism and the SWP, pp. 67-91; Stalinist Conciliation and Stalinophobia, pp. 290-301

Supplementary Reading: The Stalinists and the United Front,

pp. 315-322; "What the New York Discussion Has Revealed," by Joseph Hansen in Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part III, vol. 1, pp. 30-43;

"The New World Reality and the New Confusion: What Hansen's Document has Revealed," by Harry Frankel, in Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part IV, vol. 2, pp. 62-81

#### Questions:

1. In the discussion preceding the Third World Congress, Clarke asserted that it was correct to characterize the Stalinist parties as "not exactly reformist." What did he mean by this? What was wrong with his position?

2. Clarke argued that it was incorrect to call Stalinism a "national reformist bureaucracy and an agency of imperialism in the world labor movement." He said that the Communist parties could not be reformist parties because they "do not rest on a bureaucracy and a labor aristocracy deriving its privileges from the superprofits of imperialism." Comment on Clarke's argument. Why do we call Stalinism a "national reformist bureaucracy and agency of imperialism in the world labor movement?"

3. The positions of the SWP were characterized by the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell grouping as an expression of Stalino-

phobia. How did Cannon answer this argument? What is Stalinophobia? How did the positions of the SWP on issues like defense of the Soviet Union, the Korean war, and the civil liberties of Stalinists contrast with those of actual Stalinophobes like the Shactmanites, etc.? What is the difference between Stalinophobia and the view that Stalinism is an entirely counterrevolutionary force in the world labor movement?

4. Contrast Cannon's concept of the role of an international leadership with that of Pablo--e.g., the intervention of the International Secretariat in the French section. What factors make democratic centralism on an international scale different in application from the democratic centralism that can be applied in a national party?

5. Why is Cannon opposed to the international leadership intervening organizationally in national disputes? What special dangers arise when such intervention is carried out without the knowledge of the national leadership? Does this mean that leaders of the international should express no opinion on disputes in national sections or fraternal parties?

6. Is organizational intervention by the international leadership ever justified? If so, under what kind of circumstances could it intervene?

7. What does Cannon mean by the "natural selection" of national leaderships? Is there a process of natural selection for developing international leaders? How does an international leadership gain authority?

### Class 4. The Split in the Party

Required Reading: Report and Concluding Speech to the May

Plenum, pp. 136-171; Factional Struggle and Party Leadership, pp. 172-192; American Stalinism and Our Attitude Toward It, pp. 124-135

Supplementary Reading: Speech to the 16th National Convention, pp. 193-221; Mass Work and Factional Struggle, pp. 302-313

#### Questions:

1. The May 1953 resolution on American Stalinism and Our Attitude Toward It describes work in the CP milieu as "opponents work." What is opponents work? Would any current activities of the SWP and the YSA fall into this category?

2. Later the same resolution states: "The struggle of tendencies in the next upsurge of labor radicalism will have the double aspect of continuing struggle for the leadership of the broad mass movement and continuing struggle for the leadership of the vanguard." What is the relationship between the two?

3. In The Struggle for a Proletarian Party Cannon emphasizes the subordinate role of organizational questions in a political fight. Yet, in his speech to the May 1953 plenum, he seems to say just the opposite with regard to the fight with Cochran-Clarke-Bartell, that the "organizational question, all wrapped up in the struggle for power in the

leadership... has all other questions subsumed into it." (p. 149) Discuss the relation between political and organizational questions. (Note the concluding sentence in this paragraph of Cannon's speech.)

4. Cannon states that in opposition to Pablo, the SWP believes that the only way to resolve the leadership crisis of the working class is through building the party. He goes on to say further that "the problem of the party is the problem of the leadership of the party." (p. 182) What does he mean by the second statement?

5. What are the characteristics of the "leading cadre" concept of party leadership? What is the real relationship between leadership, program and composition? Contrast the

SWP's concept of leadership with those of opponent political groups.

6. In the light of Cannon's earlier statements about the need to proletarianize the party, what do you make of his observation at the 1954 convention that the campus work of the Detroit branch is "revolutionary trade union work of the highest significance"?

7. Cannon writes that "Trotsky once remarked that unifications and splits are alike methods of building the revolutionary party." Discuss this statement in the light of the fight with the Cochran-Clarke-Bartell faction. Under what circumstances does factional struggle have a destructive effect on building a revolutionary party?

# HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL: FROM LEFT OPPOSITION TO THE 1963 REUNIFICATION

March 1974

four classes

## Class 1. From the Third International Through the 1933 Preconference of the International Left Opposition

Required Reading: From Documents of the Fourth International, 1933-40: "The Evolution of the Comintern," pp. 113-131; "The International Left Opposition, Its Tasks and Methods," pp. 19-43; from Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part II (Education for Socialists bulletin, November 1973): "How the Fourth International Was Conceived," pp. 3-5; "Trotsky's Struggle for the Fourth International," pp. 6-9

Supplementary Reading: "Ten Years: the History and Principles of the Left Opposition," by Max Shachtman, with an introduction by Joseph Hansen, in Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part V (Education for Socialists bulletin, April 1974). Also available from Pathfinder Press in a Red Books edition with an introduction by Tariq Ali; "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, in Intercontinental Press, March 13, 1972, pp. 257-261 and March 20, 1972, pp. 298-301

### Questions:

1. Why did the defeat of the revolutionary upsurge in Germany in 1923 mark a turning point for the Communist International?
2. Why did Trotsky feel that the positions on the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee, the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, and the economic policies of the CPSU were the keys for defining the Left Opposition? In what way did the Right Opposition differ on these questions?
3. Why did the Left Opposition continue to act as a faction of the Communist International, even after it had been expelled?
4. Why did Trotskyists describe the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1920s as bureaucratic centrism? Why don't we use this term to describe Stalinism as it exists today?

## Class 2. From the 1933 Break with the Comintern to the 1940 Emergency Conference

Required Reading: From Documents of the Fourth International, 1933-1940: "On the Need for a New German Party," pp. 51-55; "Declaration of the Four," pp. 55-59; "The Present Situation in the Labor Movement," pp. 60-65; "Minutes of the Founding Conference," pp. 284-302; from Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part II: "The Fourth International," by Michel Pablo, pp. 10-26

Supplementary Reading: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, in IP, March 27, 1972, pp. 336-339; Transitional Program (In Documents of FI, pp. 180-220).

### Questions:

1. Why did the Left Opposition change its orientation toward the Communist International?
2. In what way did the "Declaration of the Four" and the "French Turn" reflect similar responses to different situations?
3. Why was the decision made to form the Fourth International in the face of adverse conditions? How did Trotskyists refute the argument that revolutionary Marxists were too isolated from the masses and a new international was therefore "premature"?

## Class 3. From 1940 to 1951

Required Reading: From Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part II: "The Fourth International," by Michel Pablo, pp. 27-39; from Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part I: "From World War II to the Cold War," by Cliff Conner, pp. 3-9

Supplementary Reading: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, IP, April 3, 1972, pp. 370-374, April 10, 1972, pp. 394-397; "Criticism of the Theses of the February 1944 Conference," in the second volume of Documents of the Fourth International

### Questions:

1. What were the key differences between the revolutionary Marxist approach during World War II to occupied semi-colonial countries like China and occupied imperialist countries like France?
2. Did a world revolutionary upsurge occur after World War II as Trotsky had expected? Were the international's predictions about the results of the war borne out?
3. What criteria were finally used to determine that the Soviet-occupied states of Eastern Europe (except Austria) had become workers states?

## Class 4. From 1951 to 1963

Required Reading: From Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part I: "The Fourth International from Split to Reunification," by Les Evans, pp. 9-19; "Problems of Methodology in the 1953-1954 Split in the Fourth International," by Tom Kerry, pp. 19-24

Supplementary Reading: "The Fourth International," by Pierre Frank, IP, April 24, 1972, pp. 466-469; May 1, 1972, pp. 502-504; May 8, 1972, pp. 532-536; Towards a History of the Fourth International, Parts III and IV (Education for Socialists bulletins)

1. What were the key organizational questions in the dispute? How were Pablo's organizational methods related to his political views?
2. What is meant by "entryism sui generis"? How does

it differ from other forms of entryism?

3. What factors in the development of the International Secretariat and the International Committee led to reunification?

## APPENDIX

### OUTLINE FOR CLASSES ON THE HISTORY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL BEFORE THE FOUNDING CONGRESS

I. Brief description of origins of Internationalism--Communist Manifesto, First International, Second International, Zimmerwald and Kienthal, healthy period of Third International. Why Marxists have always been internationalists.

II. 1923-1933--Rise of Left Opposition as faction of CPSU and Communist International (CI).

Divided into two periods: 1923-29; 1929-33

1. 1923-29--Based and centered in Soviet CP. Struggle waged around internal and international questions.

a. Internal questions--bureaucratization, socialism in one country; industrialization, kulaks, etc.

b. International questions--socialism in one country; 1923 German revolution; 1925 Anglo-Russian Committee; 1925-27 Chinese revolution.

--Whole period one of defeats for international proletariat and strengthening of Soviet bureaucracy. Connection between two.

--Small opposition groups develop in CPs around world on one or another question. No contact or coordination with Opposition in CPSU.

--Initiation of 1928-34 "Third Period" ultraleftism of Stalin faction internally and internationally. Struggle against Bukharin and Right Opposition.

2. 1933-38--Expulsion of Trotsky to Turkey made first international collaboration possible. Beginning of process of clarification, sifting, consolidation, homogenization of opposition groups and politics.

--March 1929 Trotsky begins circulating documents to clarify positions internationally. Need to differentiate three factions of Comintern internationally (Left Opposition, Trotsky and followers; Centrist tendency, Stalin and followers; Right Opposition, Bukharin, Lovestone, Brandler, etc.). Emphasizes that it isn't enough to oppose Stalin regime. Must oppose Stalinist political line from left. Three key questions differentiate Left and Right Oppositions: (1) Anglo-Russian Committee; (2) defeat of Chinese revolution; (3) economic policies of Soviet bureaucracy.

--Other major questions debated from 1929 in Turkey: class character of Soviet Union (workers state or state capitalist?); function as faction of CI or as independent organizations building new international?

Left Opposition consolidates around:

a. program of first four congresses of CI

b. common assessment of Stalinism, including class character of USSR and need to work within Comintern.

April 6, 1930, International Left Opposition officially formed in Paris conference. Elected "Provisional International Secretariat," began issuing International Bulletin to share experiences and prepare for holding formal conference as soon as possible.

February 1933 "Preconference" held in Paris. One week after Hitler came to power but before German working-class organizations crushed.

a. Contrast positions of Trotskyists and Stalinists on Germany and fascism (including "united front from below," "social fascism," "red trade unions," "after Hitler us," etc.).

b. German defeat led to conclusion, in three steps, that Comintern could no longer be reformed and that ILO had to break with it: March 1933 decision that German CP hopeless, build new German party; July 1933 (after Executive Committee of Communist International upheld record of German CP), CI dead; October 1933, CPSU dead, build Soviet section. As symbol of change, ILO's name changed to International Communist League (ICL).

III. Laying basis for Fourth International, 1933-38. Period of probes, entries, fusions to build nucleus of new international.

1. Turn toward left-moving centrist groups that drew some of lessons of German events (1933 "Declaration of the Four," fusions with Musteites in U. S., suggestion of British entry into ILP). Orientation to centrists was largely played out by 1935 Stalinist "Popular Front" turn which brought most centrist groups back toward Stalinists, although we continued to work in this milieu in some places.

2. "French turn." First formulated in 1934. Increasing radicalization in Europe in 1934 (Spanish revolution and French crisis) led to development of big, young left wings in many SPs. Proposal that Trotskyists enter SPs to win over radicalizing left wings. Problems with sectarianism in French (major problem) and American sections regarding entry.

3. July 1936, ICL sponsored "International Conference for the Fourth International."

a. Events directly before and after conference showed crisis of both European capitalism and Stalinism (June, sitdown strikes in France; July, beginning of Spanish Civil War; August, first Moscow Trial).

b. Trotsky, now in Norway, wanted conference to form Fourth International. Conference only went as far as changing name to "Movement for the Fourth International."

4. 1936-38 saw:

a. Intense struggle against any adaptation in ranks to centrism. Example of POUM in Spain. Need for clarity against "Popular Fronts," class collaboration. Defection of elements like Sneevliet over Spain.

b. Major step-up in Stalinist attacks against Fourth Internationalists (agents and agents-provocateurs had always been problem--Etienne, Senin-Soblevious brothers, etc.--but now escalated with murders of Erwin Wolf, Ignace Reiss, Leon Sedov, Rudolf Klement, etc.)

# REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSE POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

May 1974  
three classes

## 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 the defense policy in a political case remain with the defendants rather than with 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

Required Reading: "Defense Policy in the Minneapolis Trial," by Grandizo Munis and James P. Cannon, in Socialism on Trial (Pathfinder Press, 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. Explain the concept behind the term "defensive formulation." How do such formulations express reality? Why are such formulations an aid to effective propaganda?
4. What was wrong with Munis' criticism of Cannon's formulation on "submitting to the majority"?
5. Do revolutionaries' defensive formulations undergo a change in a period of revolution?
6. 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

Required 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 Attacks 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 Press, 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 sup-

press 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?

## BLACK LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

May 1974

six classes

This study guide is based primarily on readings from Black Liberation and Socialism, (Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1974, \$2.45) but also assigns other readings relevant to the Leninist approach to the national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples and the combined character of the coming American revolution.

### Class 1. The Leninist View of the National Question

Required Reading: "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)," by V. I. Lenin, 1916, (Collected Works, Volume 22, pp. 143-156). These theses appear in various editions, including Critical Remarks on the National Question; The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, which is presently available from Pathfinder Press; From Black Liberation and Socialism: "Lenin's Real Views on Nationalism," by Tony Thomas, pp. 177-197

Supplementary Reading: Other articles by Lenin on the right of oppressed nations to self-determination

#### Questions:

1. What does it mean to say that democratic demands such as for the right of self-determination are bourgeois-democratic demands? What are other examples of bourgeois-democratic demands? Why can revolutionary socialists support bourgeois-democratic demands?
2. Did Lenin think that semi-colonial countries that had formal independence like China and Turkey no longer needed to fight for national liberation?
3. Do Leninists favor the right of self-determination for all nationalities under all circumstances? What are the criteria?
4. Why did Lenin view support for the right of self-determination of oppressed nationalities as the basis for internationalist unity of the working class? Is it sufficient to advocate unity of the working class against the class enemy, irrespective of posing the question of self-determination? Why not?
5. How was Lenin's advocacy of self-determination for all oppressed nationalities consistent with his view that national boundaries and the national state have become outdated?

### Class 2. The Leninist View of the National Question (Continued)

Required Reading: the same as for Class 1

Supplementary Reading: "Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism," resolution of the LSA/LSO, Canadian section of the Fourth International, in the July-August 1973 issue of International Socialist Review

#### Questions:

1. How does the fight for self-determination of oppressed nations tie in with the socialist revolution in the imperialist epoch? How does this fit in with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution?
2. Lenin often pointed to the danger presented by bourgeois trends in the nationalist movement for self-determination. Why do such trends have less social weight among oppressed nationalities in this country than they did in the European nations that Lenin was writing about? Why would it be a mistake to reject the struggle for self-determination because of the presence or leadership of such trends? Did Lenin feel that such tendencies could fight consistently for self-determination?
3. Discuss Tony Thomas' criticism of Wohlforth's views on Black nationalism. Tim Wohlforth asserts that the "bourgeois democratic revolution was completed long ago" in the USA. How does this distort reality? Wohlforth asserts that "Lenin saw no validity to the right of self-determination in such countries." How does this distort Lenin's actual views? Did Lenin recognize the existence of oppressed nationalities within bourgeois imperialist countries? How did he evaluate the status of Black people in the U. S.?
4. Why did Lenin oppose the demand of the Austro-Marxists for "cultural-national autonomy?" What was meant by that demand? How does that demand differ from present-day demands by Black people for control of their communities or language demands raised in Quebec? Did the Bolsheviks raise demands analogous to Black control of education in the Black community?
5. What is the difference between Quebecois nationalism and English-Canadian nationalism?

### Class 3. The Roots of the Combined Character of the Coming American Revolution

(Note: Suggested points to be taken up in this class include slavery and the molding of a Black nationality; the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Thermidor of the Second American Revolution (1876-1900); the role of Blacks in the U. S. economy in the 20th Century; and the combined character of the socialist revolution in the USA.)

Required Reading: From Black Liberation and Socialism:

"The Combined Character of the Coming American Revolution," by Derrick Morrison, pp. 22-28; From Towards an American Socialist Revolution: "The Course of U. S. Imperialism and the Revolutionary Struggle for a Socialist America," 1969 Political Resolution of the SWP, pp. 163-167; Selection from "Political Report to the Twenty-third National Convention of the SWP," by Jack Barnes, pp. 142-146, and "Summary



of Political Report to the February 1970 Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP," by Jack Barnes, pp. 197-202; From Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination (Pathfinder Press pamphlet, \$1.05) "Self-Determination for American Negroes," pp. 20-33

Supplementary Reading: From Marxist Essays in American History (Pathfinder Press, \$2.45) "Slavery in Colonial America" (Two Articles by George Novack), pp. 33-39; "The Emancipation Proclamation," by George Novack, pp. 81-86; "Two Lessons of Reconstruction," by George Novack, pp. 87-91

#### Questions:

1. What key tasks of the Second American Revolution (the Civil War) were completed? In whose interest? What do we mean when we say that the Second American Revolution was incomplete?
2. How did the formation of Black people as a nationality come about? What about the questions of common territory? national origin? What about common language? What is decisive in characterizing Black people as a nationality? What was Trotsky's view?
3. What is inadequate about the view that Black people are only a specially oppressed sector of the working class? What is the historic origin of Black oppression? Why are Blacks oppressed today?
4. What special conditions have led to the creation of other oppressed nationalities in the U. S.? The Chicanos? The Native Americans?
5. What is the difference between supporting the right of self-determination and advocating separation?
6. What is wrong with the argument that self-determination is impractical? Why do Black people need the right to self-determination in order to assure their liberation?
7. Why can the Russian Revolution and the coming American Revolution both be described as combined revolutions? What characteristics do they have in common from this point of view? What are some of the important differences?
8. What does the combined character of the coming American revolution indicate about the relationship between the class struggle as a whole and the Black liberation struggle?

#### Class 4. The Position of the SWP on Black Nationalism

Required Reading: From Black Liberation and Socialism: "The Combined Character of the Coming American Revolution," by Derrick Morrison, pp. 13-32; "Black Nationalism and Confused Marxists," by Tony Thomas, pp. 115-123; "In Defense of Black Nationalism," by Tony Thomas, pp. 128-134

Supplementary Reading: "Freedom Now," 1963 Black Struggle resolution of the SWP (Pathfinder pamphlet, \$.25)

#### Questions:

1. Why do the ruling class and the labor bureaucracy try to compartmentalize and separate the national question from the class struggle as a whole?
2. Why is it correct to say that an independent Black struggle will be a central component of the coming American revolution? Why is the independent organization of Black people necessary?
3. What characteristics give the Black struggle a vanguard role in the American socialist revolution? How has that role been manifested so far? How will the development of independent Black organizations help advance the class struggle as a whole, including the development of independent working class political action?
4. In "In Defense of Black Nationalism," Tony Thomas writes, "The industrialization and urbanization of African-Americans in the Twentieth Century has deepened our sense of 'nationhood.'" (Black Liberation and Socialism, p. 150) What does this indicate about the claim that Black nationalism has bourgeois or petty-bourgeois roots? What are the material roots of Black nationalist sentiments?
5. How do we define Black nationalism?
6. Is it likely that Black nationalism will decline in influence among Black people in the U. S. as the entire working class radicalizes?
7. Is nationalist consciousness of oppressed nationalities incompatible with Marxism? What has been the fate of tendencies in the Black movement like the Black Panther Party and the Black Workers Congress that claimed to embrace Marxism-Leninism but rejected Black nationalism? What has tended to be the evolution of tendencies, like that led by Imamu Amiri Baraka, that seek to embrace Black nationalism while rejecting Marxism? What do these experiences indicate about the relationship between the two?

#### Class 5. Lessons from the Twentieth-Century Struggle of Black People

Required Reading: From Black Liberation and Socialism: "Leninism, Stalinism, and Black Nationalism," by Tony Thomas, pp. 157-176; "Malcolm X and the Struggle for Independent Black Political Power," by Derrick Morrison, pp. 84-91; "In Defense of Black Nationalism," by Tony Thomas, pp. 134-143

Supplementary Reading: Black Liberation and Political Power: The Meaning of the Gary Convention, by Tony Thomas and Derrick Morrison (Pathfinder Press pamphlet, \$.35); Marxism and the Negro Struggle by Harold Cruse, George Breitman, and Clifton DeBerry (Pathfinder Press pamphlet, \$.75); The Fraud of Black Capitalism by Dick Roberts (Pathfinder Press pamphlet, \$.25)

#### Questions:

1. What were the real differences between W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington in the early years of this century? Did either of their strategies offer an effective

road of struggle for Black people? Was Booker T. Washington a Black nationalist?

2. What was wrong with the Communist Party's "Black belt" theory and its demand in the 1930s for a separate Black state in the "Black Belt"? How does it differ from the SWP position of unconditional support to the right of self-determination of Black people?

3. How does the CP's opposition to Black nationalism and an independent Black political party fit in with its general class-collaborationist political line? Give historical examples.

4. What was the progressive significance of the civil rights movement? Does support for Black nationalism contradict support for struggles that raise integrationist demands? What is the revolutionary socialist position on questions like open housing? School integration? Busing?

5. What is wrong with Harold Cruse's position that the internationalism of Marxists requires them to oppose the nationalism of the oppressed Black nationality?

6. Harold Cruse believes that the goal of the Black struggle is the establishment of Black capitalism. What is wrong with this concept? How is it an example of failing to recognize the combined character of the coming American revolution?

7. What were the differences between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King?

8. What political problems was the Black Panther Party unable to solve?

9. Discuss the significance of the Gary Black Political Convention in 1972 and the Little Rock convention in 1974.

#### Class 6. A Strategy for the Black Struggle Today

Required Reading: From Black Liberation and Socialism: "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation," 1969 SWP Resolution, pp. 33-58; "The Case for an Independent Black Political Party," pp. 59-83; "How to Fight Racism," by Andrew Pulley, pp. 84-91

#### Questions:

1. What demands does "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation" put forward to oppose the national and class oppression Black people face in unemployment? On the job? In the schools and universities? By the police?

How do these demands relate to the present consciousness and needs of the Black masses? How do struggles around these demands tend to lead toward advancing the socialist revolution?

2. What is the relationship between the demand, "Jobs for All" (as discussed in "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation") and the demands for preferential hiring of oppressed nationalities, etc.? How does utilization of such demands fit in with our general program for the American revolution as a combined revolution?

3. The demand for "Black Control of the Black Community" is a democratic demand. Can the ruling class grant this demand? Does it seem reasonable to the Black community? What effect does capitalist opposition to such demands have in educating the masses about the reality of capitalist "democracy"?

4. "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation" calls for Black control of key institutions in the Black community. But it does not call for Black control of the police. What demand does the program put forward in this area?

5. The document, "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation," was developed through Marxist analysis of the experiences of the Black struggle. Give examples of how some of these demands and issues arose through the concrete experience of struggle. Has the document tended to be validated in the years since 1969? What new demands and issues would be added to it today?

6. What is the difference between the concept of working class unity against capitalism found in "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation" and that of the Communist Party? of the anti-nationalist sectarians?

7. What is our view of Black caucuses in the unions? What kind of demands can such formations raise?

8. What is the relationship between the demand for a Black party and the demand for a labor party? Why do Black people need their own party? Why would the formation of a real Black party represent a major break from capitalist politics? What would be the class character of a Black party?

9. How does "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation" project the socialist perspective of the struggle for Black liberation? How does its approach to the Black masses distinguish it from ultra-left strategies? from class-collaborationist strategies?

STALINISM  
Summer 1972  
six classes

Class 1. Why Stalinism Triumphed

Required Readings: Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, Chapter 5, "The Soviet Thermidor," pages 86-114, Pathfinder Press.

Supplementary Reading: Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, Chapters 1-4, 6, pages 5-85, 115-143, Pathfinder Press; "The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1934-35, pages 166-184, Pathfinder Press.

Questions:

1. What were the main international and domestic causes for the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy? What is the material basis for the continued existence of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union? Did Stalinism disappear with the death of Stalin? Is the problem of Stalinism mainly that of a "cult of personality"?

2. Was the rise of Stalinism inevitable? Could the Left Opposition have carried out a different course of action to prevent its rise?

3. Do dangers exist for a similar Stalinist degeneration after the American socialist revolution takes place? What measures can be taken against any such dangers?

4. Stalin proclaimed that socialism had been achieved and classes eliminated in the Soviet Union. Is this true? What classes or remnants of classes bear down on the Soviet state?

5. Lenin's position was that the state would begin withering away with the first act of the workers state in expropriating the capitalist productive forces. Why is a state needed as a repressive force after the revolution? Why did Lenin say that it would begin to wither away? Has this process developed in the Soviet Union? What is the nature of state compulsion in the Soviet Union? What does this say for the claim that socialism has been established?

6. What does Trotsky mean by the "Soviet Thermidor"? What happened in the Soviet Union to cause Trotsky to use this historical analogy?

Class 2. Internationalism and "Socialism in One Country"

Required Readings: Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, "Appendix," pages 291-301, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, pages 3-6, 43-61, Pathfinder Press.

Supplementary Reading: Leon Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, pages 3-73, Pathfinder Press.

Questions:

1. Why is a national program inadequate for the present epoch of world history? What must be the starting point for

an international program? What is its relationship to the programs of the national sections?

2. What is the theory of "socialism in one country"?

3. How does the development of world economy affect the Soviet Union? Can the Soviet Union build socialism in isolation "even if at the speed of a tortoise"? How do international factors affect the tempo of Soviet development?

4. Why is it impossible to build socialism in a single country? Can socialism be built in a single industrially advanced country?

5. How does the theory of "socialism in one country" reflect the interests of the bureaucracy? Have the outlook and policies of the Soviet bureaucracy changed fundamentally since Trotsky's writing?

6. Discuss Bukharin's arguments that (a) the Soviet Union possesses the necessary and sufficient material resources for the complete construction of socialism, and (b) since the relationship of forces between the proletariat and peasantry is roughly the same both in the Soviet Union and on a world scale, if it is possible to build socialism on a world scale it is also possible in the Soviet Union.

Class 3. The Foreign Policy of the Stalinist Bureaucracy

Required Readings: Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, Chapter 8, pages 183-203, 225, 233, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, pages 61-65, Pathfinder Press.

Supplementary Reading: Leon Trotsky, The Third International After Lenin, pages 3-60, 66-166

Questions:

1. What would be an internationalist foreign policy for the Soviet Union? What would be the program, policies, and role of the International and the national sections?

2. Taking as the starting point the goal of complete construction of socialism in a single workers state, what role does foreign policy play? What role does the International play? What role do the national sections play?

3. Discuss several examples of Stalinist international policy from among the following:

- the rise of fascism in Germany;
- the Spanish civil war;
- the French Popular Front period in the late 1930s
- the Stalin-Hitler pact;
- World War II
- the post-war revolutionary upsurges.

4. Discuss these questions in relation to the recent escalation of the war in Vietnam, the Moscow and Peking trips by Nixon, and the role of the American Communist Party in the antiwar movement. What program would a revolutionary leadership in a workers state follow? Is there any fun-

damental difference from Moscow in the approach of the Chinese bureaucracy and the Maoist parties around the world?

5. What is the basic approach of Stalinist foreign policy in the Mideast and Chile? What is the meaning of the Soviet military and economic aid? What is the role of the Communist parties of these countries?

6. Is it accurate to characterize Stalinist international policy as counter-revolutionary?

7. How does the theory of "peaceful coexistence" relate to the theory of "socialism in one country"?

8. What is the relationship between the "two-stage" theory for the colonial revolution and the theory of "socialism in one country"? Between "anti-monopoly coalitions and the theory of "socialism in one country"?"

#### Class 4. The Soviet Union, Women and the Family, the National Question, Youth, and Culture

Required Reading: Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, Chapter 7, pages 144-186, Pathfinder Press

Supplementary Readings: Leon Trotsky, Women and the Family, Pathfinder Press; Caroline Lund, The Family: Revolutionary or Oppressive Force? Pathfinder Press; Wilhelm Reich, The Sexual Revolution, pages 153-269, Noonday Press; Tony Thomas, "In Defense of Black Nationalism," Black Liberation and Socialism, Pathfinder Press

#### Questions:

1. What was the program of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin in relation to the family? What measures did the revolutionary leadership in Lenin's time take to replace the family and end the oppression of women?

2. How successful was the Soviet Union in achieving the goal of ending the oppression of women? What were the main objective factors determining both the successes and failures in their policy? What do these failures mean to the claim to have established socialism?

3. What role did the bureaucracy play in the retreat on the family, divorce, abortion and prostitution? How was this in the interests of the bureaucracy? Is it likely that the struggle against this oppression will play an important role in the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy?

4. How does the bureaucracy's maintenance of the family and the oppression of women reflect itself in the position of the American Communist Party on the women's liberation movement and the family?

5. What was the Bolsheviks' attitude on the national question at the time of the revolution? What role did this play in the victory and defense of the revolution? How did the revolution affect the nationalities in the Soviet Union?

6. As the bureaucracy rose, what changes took place in the Soviet leadership's attitudes on the national question and on the position of the nationalities in the Soviet Union?

7. What importance does the national question have for the East European workers states? Give examples. What role will the national question play in the political revolution?

8. How does the position of the nationalities within the Soviet Union reflect itself in the positions of the American Communist Party?

9. What did the rise of Stalinism mean for Soviet youth? In the area of culture? What will the political revolution do in relation to youth and culture?

#### Class 5. The Class Nature of the Soviet Union

Required Readings: Jean van Heijenoort, "How the International Was Conceived," in Education for Socialists Bulletin Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part II; Leon Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed, Chapters 9, 11, pages 234-256, 273-290, Pathfinder Press

Supplementary Readings: Leon Trotsky, "The Tragedy of the German Proletariat: The German Workers Will Rise Again--Stalinism Never!" in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, pages 375-384, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, "It is Necessary to Build Communist Parties and an International Anew," in The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, pages 419-426, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, "It is Impossible to Remain in the Same International with Stalin, Manuilsky, Lozovsky and Company" in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1933-34, pages 17-24, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" in Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1933-34, pages 101-192, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, "The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1934-35, pages 166-184, Pathfinder Press; Leon Trotsky, In Defense of Marxism, Pathfinder Press

#### Questions:

1. What is the bureaucracy? What is its social base for existence? What is a class? Is the bureaucracy a class? What classes do exist in the Soviet Union?

2. Why do we still call the Soviet Union a workers state? What would be necessary to overthrow the workers state?

3. What do we mean when we say a political revolution is necessary in the Soviet Union? What is a political revolution? Why is a social revolution not necessary? Why do we say a political revolution is inevitable? What about China? What about Cuba?

4. What are some of the main issues that will be raised in the course of the political revolution?

5. Discuss the evolution of Trotsky's attitude from being a faction in the Communist International toward the need for new parties and a new International.

#### Questions Based on Supplementary Reading:

1. What did Trotsky mean by bureaucratic centrism?

What was the relationship between the earlier characterization of the Stalinist leadership as centrist and being a faction of the Communist International?

2. Why did Trotsky change his position on the characterization of the Stalinist leadership as bureaucratic centrist?

3. What was the development of Trotsky's position that new parties were necessary in Germany, in the rest of the world, in the Soviet Union? How did this relate to his characterization of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and the necessity of a political revolution?

#### Class 6. The Program for Political Revolution in the Workers States

Required Readings: The Struggle for Socialist Democracy in the Soviet Bloc, by Gus Horowitz (Pathfinder Press, \$3.60); Solzhenitsyn in Exile, by Allen Myers (Pathfinder Press, \$3.35); The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, page 102-106, by Leon Trotsky, (Pathfinder Press, \$2.45); Section III of the resolution, "Decline and Fall of Stalinism," published in the Education for Socialists bulletin entitled The Development and Disintegration of World Stalinism, pages 38-43

Supplementary Reading: Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition (Pathfinder Press, \$3.95, Introduction by George Saunders, pp. 15-44); Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1939-40, pages 44-54, 74-75, 86, 90-92 (Pathfinder Press, \$3.95); "The Twilight of Bureaucratic Reformism in Eastern Europe," by Cliff Connor in June 1972 International Socialist Review

#### Questions:

1. What changes have occurred in the objective conditions that allowed the bureaucratic castes in the workers states to hold power? How have these changes affected the outlook of the masses in the workers states?

2. What are the forces favoring capitalist restoration? Are these forces stronger or weaker today as compared with the 1920s? Discuss the experience of the anti-Stalinist struggle in East Europe in 1953-1956 and 1968-1971. Have these struggles tended to favor capitalist restoration?

3. What are some of the demands that workers have been putting forward in their struggles against the bureaucracy? What kinds of organizational forms did the workers develop in their struggles in Hungary in 1956? in Czechoslovakia in 1968? in Poland in 1970? What likely changes would a political revolution produce in the economic priorities of the workers states? How would the economic plan be developed? How would the role of the trade unions change? How does our program differ from that of the technocrats?

4. What is the revolutionary Marxist program to counter the special high material privileges enjoyed by those in gov-

ernmental or administrative authority?

5. What is the position of revolutionary Marxists on the rights of oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union? What was Lenin's policy? (for instance on the question of Georgia in 1923, or on "Ukrainization" process described on pp. 22-23 of Samizdat)? How did Stalin's policies differ from Lenin's and in what ways did they hark back to Russia's pre-revolutionary past? What current developments indicate that the national question will be a key factor in the struggle against the bureaucratic caste? In 1939, Trotsky proposed raising the slogan of an "independent Soviet Ukraine." How do we answer those who express the fear that this would break up the unity of the USSR?

6. How important are demands for democratic rights likely to be in the political revolution? What is our position on freedom of speech? Freedom of assembly?

7. What is the attitude of revolutionary Marxists to the rights of political tendencies and parties to exist in the workers states?

8. Do we support the civil liberties of intellectuals and artists in the workers states, even when they express reactionary ideas, as in the case of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's most recent statements? Why? What was the Leninist policy towards artists and writers, even during a civil war against outright counter-revolutionary armies?

9. What demands would a revolutionary Marxist leadership in the workers states put forward on the rights of women?

10. What kinds of demands have students been making for socialist democracy (as in the case of Yugoslavia in 1968)? What do we think of the bureaucracy's claim that students are bringing bourgeois culture into the workers states because of the influence of Western students on them? Who is really bringing bourgeois habits and concepts into the workers states?

11. What has experience shown about the ability of the bureaucracy to reform itself or lead a struggle for democracy? What were the lessons of "de-Stalinization" in the Soviet Union? Of the Czechoslovak movement of 1968?

12. Why do we think the working class is the only force capable of overthrowing the bureaucratic caste and instituting socialist democracy? What are the objective limitations of other layers and trends, even when they are in opposition to the bureaucracy?

13. How important is the political revolution for the world revolution as a whole? What would be its effect on the colonial revolution? On the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries?

14. Why are concepts of revolutionary internationalism and opposition to "socialism in one country" important in the political revolution? Are these concepts likely to develop at the very beginning of the struggle?

## A MARXIST APPROACH TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT

May 1974  
five classes

### Class 1. The Trade Unions and the Class Struggle

Required 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

Required 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 were some elements in the ruling class willing to lift controls? Have their objectives changed?
3. How are wage controls enforced? What 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? What are these demands necessarily linked?
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

Required 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 in 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 social-democratic 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

Required Reading: From Selected Documents on SWP Trade Union Policy, "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 Coalition 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 demagogy...." 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

Required 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. These 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 spur to labor radicalization under changed conditions?

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 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 farmworkers 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?



## TEAMSTER REBELLION

May 1974

two classes

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

Required 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 to 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?
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?

19. 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

Required Reading: Teamster 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 were 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 revolu-

tionary 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

May 1974

two classes

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

Required 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 over 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

Required 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 the 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?

## POPULAR FRONTISM: ROAD TO DISASTER IN CHILE

May 1974

three classes

This series is based on selected readings from Disaster in Chile, edited with an introduction by Les Evans (Pathfinder Press, 1974, \$2.95). The balance of the book should be regarded as supplementary reading. Other supplementary readings will be noted below.

### Class 1. The Unidad Popular Comes to Power

Required Reading: "Introduction," by Les Evans; "Allende's Chile: Is it Going Socialist?," by Peter Camejo, pp. 29-49; "The History of Popular Frontism in Chile," pp. 50-62; "Chile--the Coming Confrontation," December 1971 Statement of the Fourth International, pp. 77-94

Supplementary Reading: From The Spanish Revolution, 1931-39 by Leon Trotsky: "Introduction," by Les Evans, pp. 21-48; "The Lessons of Spain--the Last Warning," by Leon Trotsky, pp. 306-326

#### Questions:

1. What was the program of Unidad Popular? Was it a program for socialism, as many radicals thought?
2. What parties made up the Unidad Popular coalition in Chile? How would you characterize the class character of these parties? What criteria are used to define the class character of these parties?
3. What criteria were used in the required readings to characterize the Unidad Popular as a popular front? To characterize the Unidad Popular government as a bourgeois government?
4. Supporters of Allende placed many of their hopes on an alliance with "anti-imperialist" sectors of the bourgeoisie. What are the real relations of a bourgeoisie like that of Chile with imperialism?
5. What was Allende's political background? Did the Chilean bourgeoisie fear that his regime would threaten capitalism? What were they afraid of? Had such governments appeared previously in Chile? What was their effect on the workers movement?
6. What agreements were made by Allende with the bourgeois parties in order to be allowed to take office in 1970? The Christian Democrats said that this agreement was to "reinforce democracy." What did the agreements really reinforce?
7. What was the attitude of the bourgeoisie toward the Popular Unity government in the first phase of the regime?
8. What was Allende's attitude to the army? To the formation of popular militias? To land seizures by the peasantry? To U. S. imperialism? To the working class and its struggles? What did Allende's firm reliance on bourgeois institutions signify about his professions of

"socialist" goals?

9. Why was Allende ultimately unable to satisfy either the bourgeoisie or the workers? What were the workers pressing for? What did the bourgeoisie need?

10. What are the essential characteristics of a "popular front"? How do the actions and program of the Allende government point up the difference between a popular front and a united front of workers organizations? Why could the 1971 United Secretariat statement describe Unidad Popular as a "popular front" despite the relative weakness of the outright bourgeois parties in it? Under what kind of circumstances does a popular front government usually rise? What use can the bourgeoisie make of it?

11. The December 1971 statement of the United Secretariat held, "Revolutionists cannot participate in such a coalition even by offering it electoral support. (Revolutionary Marxists can, in certain situations, vote for a labor candidate but not for a candidate of a front that includes petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces)." Discuss this statement. What damage was done to the revolutionary struggle when militants like the MIR supported such a formation?

12. What reforms did the Unidad Popular regime introduce? Under what pressures? Can revolutions support such measures even while opposing the government that carries them out?

13. What program of demands did the United Secretariat statement put forward to deal with the land question? The struggles of workers? Ownership and control of industry? The army and police? Parliament? How did these measures differ from the program and policy of Unidad Popular?

14. What kind of government did the United Secretariat statement propose to replace the Unidad Popular government? What are the differences between a workers and peasants government and a popular front government?

### Class 2. Deepening Class Polarization: Allende Turns to the Army

Required Reading: "The Deepening Political Polarization," pp. 109-120; "Allende Declares a State of Emergency," pp. 121-4; "The Army Moves to the Fore," pp. 124-9; "The Workers Move Forward--as Allende Retreats," pp. 132-142; "The Generals Leave the Cabinet," pp. 155-58

#### Questions:

1. What was the meaning of Allende's efforts to focus the attention of the masses on the March 1973 elections?

Why couldn't the outcome of these elections solve any fundamental problems?

2. Why was the bourgeoisie able to mobilize the middle classes against Allende's policies? Was this because he was too radical? How did Allende's policies discredit socialism in their eyes?

3. What would have been the policy of a workers and peasants government toward inflation? Unemployment? The national debt? The distribution of food and other necessities? Why couldn't the Allende government undertake these measures?

4. Against what elements did the Allende government use repression? What role did the CP play in this? Why were Allende's attempts to repress the right doomed to ineffectiveness? What kept Allende from using more repression against the left than he did?

5. What was the attitude of Allende toward the appearance of incipient organs of dual power as in Concepcion? What did this indicate about his fundamental attitude toward the bourgeois state?

6. Why did Allende become more and more dependent on the Communist Party for support of his policies? What were the goals of the CP? Why had his own Socialist Party become a less reliable ally in Allende's eyes?

7. What was the "bosses' strike"? How did Allende respond to it?

8. What was the response of the workers to the "bosses' strike"? What was Allende's position on what to do with the factories seized by the workers during the bosses' strike? How did the workers respond to this?

9. Why did Allende include generals in his cabinet? How did this serve to lull and disarm the masses in the face of the rightist threats? Did the leaders of the Socialist Party left wing or the MIR openly oppose this move? Why was it impossible for them to arm the masses or appeal to the ranks of the army with such a policy?

10. Why did the generals leave the Allende cabinet after the March 1973 elections? Did this indicate a shift to the left in Allende's strategy? Did it change the character of his government?

11. Why did the outcome of the bosses' strike and the maneuver with the military leave Allende's attempt to preserve bourgeois-democracy more isolated than ever? How had the mood of the workers changed? The strategy of the bosses? The mood of the middle classes?

### Class 3. Crisis of Leadership and Defeat for the Workers

Required Readings: "The Workers Organize Distribution," pp. 162-165; "The UP's Right Wing Consolidates," pp. 165-168; "The Sharpening Struggle," pp. 173-175; "Workers Organize to Meet the Rightist Threat," pp. 178-181; "The Workers Cordones Challenge the Reformists," pp. 182-185; "The Miners Strike Poses a Dilemma for Allende," pp. 185-88; "The Struggle Revives," pp. 188-191; "The Coup" (concluding sections), pp. 224-229;

"Why the MIR Did Not Win the Leadership of the Workers," pp. 239-42; "Interviews with Survivors," pp. 242-59

Supplementary Reading: Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It, by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder pamphlet, \$.60); From The History of the Russian Revolution by Leon Trotsky, material on the Komilov insurrection, pp. 201-242 in Volume Three of the Sphere Books paperback edition or pp. 203-249 in the University of Michigan single-volume clothbound edition.

### Questions:

1. What were the JAPs? Why did the workers feel the need to organize distribution themselves? How did Allende seek to keep this tendency under government control?

2. What were the cordones industriales? How did they tend to bypass the bureaucratic grip of the top union leadership? What were the advantages of the cordones in organizing the workers in crises? What was the response of the reformists to the cordones? What further developments would have been necessary for the Cordones to fully challenge capitalist power?

3. Did the beginnings of workers power in the cordones and the JAPs represent dual power in the full sense of the word? Compare this situation with the situation in Russia in 1917.

4. Why did such developments convince the bourgeoisie that strong repressive measures would now be necessary to preserve capitalism? What is the value of a popular front government for the bourgeoisie and why had Allende's government failed to accomplish this purpose? How did Allende respond to this situation? How did the CP respond to a threat of a coup?

5. What was the correct revolutionary attitude toward the miners strike despite its right-wing leadership? How were the bourgeois parties able to use Allende's opposition to the workers' demands against the Popular Unity government?

6. Was there a wing of the army that attempted to oppose the coup? What was Allende's attitude toward these groups? How could rank-and-file soldiers have been won over to the workers?

7. Was it correct for revolutionaries to defend Allende's government? Against whom? How? Did the Trotskyists call on the masses to arm and overthrow Allende? Could capitalism have been overturned without ultimately removing the UP regime?

8. The MIR and others called for armed struggle at various times, and there was some armed resistance to the coup. Yet the masses were rapidly beaten by only 50,000 troops. How could this happen? What role did the support given by advocates of armed struggle to the Allende regime play in this? How could the outcome have been different if a strong revolutionary party had existed?

9. Was the coup an example of fascism? What role did fascist organizations play in the events leading up to the coup? How does this contrast with their role in Germany,

Italy and Spain?

10. What kind of a grouping was the MIR? What were its policies and how did they change? What was its relationship to the UP? What were its key failures? How did these confirm the criticisms made by the United Secretariat in its December 1971 statement?

11. What role did the left wing of the Socialist Party play? Why was it incapable of providing leadership in the

struggle against the coup?

12. What role did the example of the Cuban revolution play in influencing the class struggle in Chile? What role did Fidel Castro play?

13. How was imperialism responsible for the coup? Why is it important for revolutionists not to allow the crimes of imperialism in Chile to blind them to the role played by the UP and its political supporters?

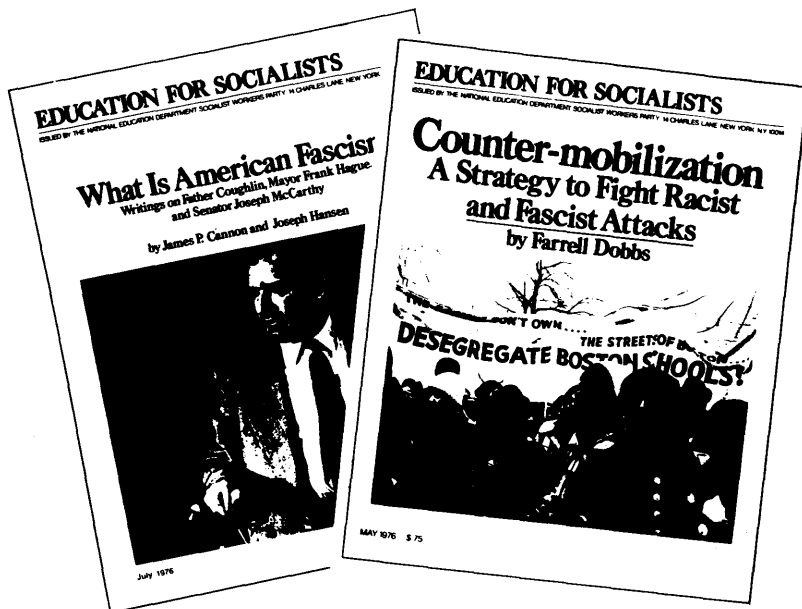
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