

I. BOURGEOIS EDUCATION

A. Focus - to use theory and people's experiences in school to analyze bourgeois ed.

B. Readings:

Total pages: 15 (&5)

- 1) Classes and Schools, by NUC (New University Conference - an organization of radical teachers & professors & students in the early 1970's), 1970, 11 pgs. This article tells us about the ways that schools are made to serve bourgeois interests. They prepare us to do their boring jobs, and prevent us from seeing the truth and organizing for our own class interests. They trace the history of public education, how it grew and why. They give clear examples of class, race, and sex oppression in the schools. They explain the problems with some of the reforms that the petite bourgeoisie are suggesting for the schools. They give us a little hint of what schools might be like under socialism, and suggest things that teachers can do in the schools to help the revolution.
- 2) DW's Notes on "Tasks of the Youth Leagues" by Lenin, 4 pgs. Here DW summarizes the main points of Lenin's 28 page article. Lenin says that teaching must be transformed as the old method is the bourgeois separation of books from practical life. Children are not educated but drilled and crammed with useless information in the interest of the bourgeoisie. We must however, use some of that information as Marxism arose out of the sum-up of human knowledge up until then. But we must replace drill-sergeant methods by class conscious discipline which combines hatred of the old society with determination, ability and readiness to unite and organize our forces for the fight. Communism cannot be learned by rote, but must be something you yourself have thought over. In order to learn it we must get rid of bourgeois morality when man thinks only of his own profit first, and replace it with communist morality, when we help each other work for our common good. School and life cannot be separated: we must be trained in the storm of life. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist.

supplementary:

- 3) The Dove Counterbalance General Intelligence Test, 5 pgs. This is a test made up by someone in the civil rights movement a few years ago. It is a test about black culture. They did it to show that if the school system used IQ tests about black culture, black kids would do a lot better than white middle class kids. They did it to make the point that all IQ tests are biased in favor of white petite bourgeois culture, and therefore can't really measure very well the intelligence of black, brown, Indian, Asian, & white working class kids.

C. Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are the main things about bourgeois education?
(by the end of this whole "How to Learn Marxism-Leninism" section, we want to make a list comparing bourgeois and proletarian education)
- 2) What parts of bourgeois education did you rebel against the most?
- 3) How does the history of public schools show they are tools of the bourgeoisie?
- 4) What things does Lenin say we have to do to change education?
- 5) What is class conscious discipline?

D. Definitions we'll learn:

- 1) theory
- 2) practice
- 3) economic base
- 4) superstructure
- 5) class conscious discipline

II. PROLETARIAN EDUCATION

A. Focus - to stress the unity of theory and practice as the basic principle of Marxism

B. Readings:

- 1) excerpts, section on "The Importance of Theory" - from "Foundations of Leninism" by Stalin, pgs. 21-22 of Chapter 3 on Theory. Here Stalin is underlining the importance of theory to the success of our revolutionary work. He defines theory as "the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect". That is that theory is the summed up experience and general lessons from working class movements past and present in all countries. Right away he stresses the connection of theory and practice when he says, "theory can become a tremendous force if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice." Here is his famous quote, "Theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events". And he repeats Lenin's famous quote, "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".
- 2) excerpts, section on "Study" - from "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War", by Mao, Selected Works, pgs. 154-157. In order to link theory with practice and use the science of Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action, Mao says we must study three things:
 - a) the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin
 - b) our national history, using the Marxist method to sum it up
 - c) the current movements and trends

Mao stresses that we must not only know the general laws but also the Marxist standpoint and method in examining and solving problems. We'll talk about this in the discussion. Mao reminds us that our fighting capacity increases with our grasp of Marxism-Leninism (among other things, its what the Vietnamese had on their side). "The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries." This means that because Marxism is mostly about how you look at and work out problems and not a rigid set of rules about exactly what to do, it can be adapted and used to guide the revolutionary struggle in any country - it is the science that when used correctly, can liberate the worldwide proletariat. Again, the connection with theory & practice is stressed when Mao says that whoever refuses to study the problems of the current movement is no Marxist at all. Again, and again we will find that linking theory with practice means we must apply the general theory of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the revolution in our particular country - a winning combination. It is when we separate them and ignore one or the other that we run into trouble. Mao reminds us that "complacency (laziness) is the enemy of study", and that we must "help educate members with less schooling" in order to educate ourselves.

- 3) The Purpose of Study is to Use, pgs. 93-95 of "The Women's Movement in China". Here we have a very good short article that emphasizes that we must have a definite purpose to our study. They tell about two women who decided to study Chairman Mao's works to raise their understanding and remould their thought. One woman had a desire to become rich and famous and looked down upon working people, and the other, an actress, did not know whom she should serve, that is which class of people. Through their studies each raised her class consciousness, and changed her thoughts and feelings. They stress that "the aim of our studying the thought of Mao TseTung is to revolutionize ourselves, to transform the objective as well as the subjective worlds..." (see the definitions). We must "proceed from small to big problems, from a low level to a high level, and go from the shallow to the deep", a step at a time. In summing up, they stress

again, that to link theory with reality we must combine three things:

- a) intensive reading
- b) deep thinking
- c) frequent use of knowledge

"Knowledge depends on practice, and separated from application, learning loses its practical significance". Use is the purpose of study & also the method of study.

- 4) On Investigation: study materials, September, '76, page 1, put together by the Women's Work Team. These four short quotations from China and Russia stress that we must combine study with investigation if we are going to link theory with practice and solve the real problems of the revolution in our country.
- 5) excerpts from "Oppose Book Worship", Mao, Selected Works, pgs. 40-43, (sections I, II, and III). The main points of this article are in the headings of its sections which are: "No investigation, no right to speak", "To investigate a problem is to solve it", and "Oppose Book Worship". Again, it stresses that to correctly link theory with practice, we must investigate real problems as well as study. 1900-1940
- 6) Praise of Learning, a poem by Bertolt Brecht, a radical German poet & playwright ↑
In this poem Brecht stresses that it is never too late to learn, that we must learn everything so that simple people can take over the leadership, and that we must ask about everything we don't know about.
- 7) excerpts on learning to study from "Autobiography of Malcolm X", Malcolm, pgs. 169-180. We include this as an example of the powerful drive to learn we can have when we understand what we must learn, and why. Malcolm started to study because he couldn't write about his anger at the condition of his people and their enslavement (he had a purpose to his study). He had only gone to the 8th grade and couldn't understand enough words to read hardly any books at all when he started. But in prison he began to copy the dictionary page by page so that he could learn enough words to read books and write about his people. He was excited and proud by the first page which took him all day. This small step gave him determination to continue. After a while he could read and spent almost all his spare time reading. (He went from the shallow to the deep). He slept only 3-4 hours a night and said he had never felt so free in his life even though he was in prison. He was of course most interested in black history, which led him into imperialism, the ripoff of the world's resources and people by a few powerful nations. Although Malcolm was religious, it was the black nationalism of the Muslims that most attracted him. Toward the end of his life Malcolm was beginning to see the ruling class as his enemy, not all white people, and of course this is why they had him killed. A leader of the black masses who has a class analysis is very dangerous to the capitalists. We are confident that had Malcolm lived long enough to learn Marxism-Leninism, he would have shed his religion, as he would no longer have needed it - he would have had a science in its place. Although we don't think people should copy the dictionary or read all the time, we include revolutionary Malcolm as an example of the self-discipline we all work for in ourselves.
- 8) My Short Sum Up, by LV, written during the last Worker's Study Group. This is a very good short sum up of what happened when L almost dropped out of the last WSG. Several problems happened at once. First, her religion was beginning to conflict with the Marxism. Second, and most important, housework and the full responsibility of the kids made it harder and harder for her to study. As she got further and further behind, she understood less and less, and wanted to drop out. But, a lot of people were having family problems at that time and so we interrupted our regular study and began the study of the woman question. This helped L and others because she could understand the study, was excited because it was talking about her problems, and so through it she slowly began to learn how to study. It also helped to change the situation in the house a little and she got help with the housework and kids. She talks about the

guidelines she used to help change her study: 1) to make time to study, 2) to look up in the glossary words she didn't understand, 3) to stop being afraid to ask questions, and 4) to ask people to explain in a new way things she didn't understand. The result was the shallower to the deeper, the more she understood, the more she wanted to learn. She ends with a very dialectical materialist attitude: even though she has made a leap, there will still be more problems and when they come up she must remember her guidelines.

- 9) Speech Opening the First Theoretical Course of Nguyen Ai Quoc School, by Ho Chi Minh, pgs. 284-291 of "Ho Chi Minh on Revolution". (Nguyen Ai Quoc was Ho's other name during part of the revolution). This article is a very good sum up of almost all the points in this section on proletarian education. It begins with the question, "Why do we have to study theory"? And gives us the general answer, "to meet the requirements of our revolutionary tasks and the practical situation so that we can better carry out our work". It reminds us that we must learn from the experiences of other countries and apply them in a creative way. We must apply the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint, and method in summing up our experience, and correctly analyzing the particular problems of our country. This is because theory is not a dogma but a guide to action, which must constantly be improved by new conclusions drawn from practice in each new country. "Society cannot be transformed unless the Party members transform and elevate themselves". Again we see that we cannot learn Marxism-Leninism without going through changes ourselves. It says that Marxist-Leninist studies are an urgent need for our Party and emphasizes the importance that Lenin placed on theory. They admit some of the empirical mistakes that some of them have made: burying themselves all day long in routine work without being aware of the importance of theory; grumbling when encountering difficulties in reading; and not understanding the importance of learning from the experiences of other countries. Their empiricism meant at times they relied too much on their own narrow experience and did not use theory, the experiences of other revolutions. They also warn against the danger of dogmatism, that is relying too much on book knowledge. The main form it took in Vietnam was trying to apply the lessons of other countries mechanically without thinking of the particular situation in Vietnam enough. These two dangers, empiricism, and dogmatism are ones we always have to guard against. In summing up, Ho gives us five guidelines for the integration of theory with practice, which can help us each make study a habit:
- a) be modest and frank - we have much to learn
 - b) consider study a task to be completed at all tasks
 - c) think freely, ask "Why?", talk to the articles when you read them
 - d) defend truth & stick to principle (don't be easily talked out of what we know is true)
 - e) help each other through criticism, self-criticism

supplementary: (read only after you've read the others)

- 10) A Definition of Marxism-Leninism, from "Handbook of Philosophy", by H. Selsam, pgs. 71-73. This brief definition outlines the major contributions that Marx and Engels, Lenin, and Stalin made to the science of Marxism-Leninism. (It was written in 1949, before Mao's contributions.) In particular, read the last paragraph which outlines three things we must do to master the science of Marxism-Leninism:
- a) learn to distinguish its spirit from its letter,
 - b) assimilate this spirit and learn to apply it under various conditions of class struggle, and
 - c) learn to enrich, develop, and carry it forward in relation to new historical situations and new problems.
- 11) excerpts from "How Lenin Approached the Study of Marx, by Krupskaya (Lenin's wife), parts of pgs. 137-144 of "Lenin and Books". This article helps us learn from Lenin's method when he studied Marx. It says that Lenin had a perfect knowledge of Marx. That is, he knew many of Marx and Engel's works. But he not only

knew Marx, he thought deeply about all of his teachings. In 1920, Lenin advised young people to "acquire the sum total of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that communism shall not be something to be learned by rote, but something that you yourself have thought over". Lenin studied Marx by consulting him as a guide to action. He would select works that were analyses of similar situations, make a thorough study of them, and then compare them to his own situation to bring out the differences and similarities. This method of consulting, and the practical work of the revolutionary movement that Lenin did made him use Marx and Engels works not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. He was guided by the essence, not the letter, of Marx's works and could apply them to different historical periods. Lenin also not only studied Marx, but also his critics, the people who said he was wrong. And finally, Lenin studied the sources of materials that Marx used in forming his views.

- 12) How to Study Lenin, Chapter 7 of "Dialectical Materialism", by V. Adoratsky, pgs. 86-93. Here again we learn some tips on how to study. He says that we must study Lenin's works combined with an understanding of his activities and conditions at the time. That is, we must understand what was going on at the time that Lenin wrote something and therefore why he wrote it. We must again link the study of Lenin up with the present-day struggle of the proletariat in our own country. He cites again Lenin's famous quote, "Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action". Lenin stressed an important feature of Marx and Engels theoretical work, that is the living contact they maintained with the mass movement. (We saw in the quotations on Investigation that Lenin too had close contact with the masses and was interested in every detail of their lives.) Adoratsky says that Lenin treated Marxism as a science, that is he seriously studied it. He knew that valuable knowledge from the past must be mastered. But he also drew lessons from the current struggle of the masses in his time and of course took an active part in them. "Marx and Engels never dogmatically thrust upon the masses views which they held to be correct, but which the masses could understand as a result of their own experience and not merely as a result of verbal precepts and preaching. But this cautious attitude in respect of the education of the masses was accompanied by the most exacting demands in matters of theory!" Lenin understood well that there were no formulas for all times and all places, and urged the study of the works of Marx and Engels with the knowledge of the concrete time and place they were written. Lenin of course further developed the theory of Marx and the rest of the article outlines his major contributions in each of the three component parts of Marxist theory: philosophy (most developed by the Germans), political economy (most developed by the English), and socialism (most developed by the French).

C. Questions: (try to think of the answers before you come to the meeting)

- 1) Why do we have to study? What can theory do for us?
- 2) What are the 3 things Mao said we must study to link theory with practice?
- 3) What does Mao mean when he says "international content with a national form"?
- 4) What was the main purpose of the Chinese women studying? What did they say we must do to link theory with practice? Which of these do you do well - do poorly?
- 5) Can talking to people about their conditions be part of creating new Marxist theory? How? What else do we have to do?
- 6) What is the basic principle of proletarian education? What are some of the things you have to do to practice it?

D. Definitions:

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| 1) mass work | 5) principle |
| 2) stand | 6) empiricism |
| 3) viewpoint | 7) dogmatism |
| 4) method | |