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TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The National Education Department is suggesting three focuses for branch internal and public educational activities this fall.

1. Fall Internal Education

The goal, as in past years, should be to involve every comrade in a class, with every comrade having the time to devote serious study to the given subject, as during the summer schools, but for a shorter period of time. Our experience over the past few years has shown that this can best be accomplished through special concentrated class series, limiting the number of class sessions to a realistic number (3 - 6) over a two to three week period of time, and organizing the political activity of the branch to give a very high priority to education during this period.

Other classes held over a more lengthy period of time are useful and should be continued, but it is usually impractical to involve all comrades in such classes.

The National Education Department suggests that this fall's concentrated class series concentrate on some of the following key topics:

A. Dynamics of World Revolution Today

A five-class study guide for this series, based on the newly published Pathfinder book, is included in this mailing. Branches may want to link this to a class or classes on the Transitional Program, for which a six-class study guide can be found in the Education for Socialists bulletin, Guide to Marxist Education, or to classes on the new Pathfinder book, The First Three Internationals, for which a six-class study guide is enclosed.

B. Popular Frontism

A four-six class study guide on the United Front vs. the Popular Front can be found in the Guide to Marxist Education. In addition, a three-class study guide on the Pathfinder book, Disaster in Chile, was already sent out and is reprinted in Party Builder, Volume VIII, No. 3.

A study guide for a single class on Portugal is also enclosed, along with a five-class study guide on the Spanish revolution, based on readings from Trotsky's The Spanish Revolution, 1931-39 and Felix Morrow's Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain, both published by Pathfinder.

In addition, the document "The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International," included in Dynamics of World Revolution Today, contains valuable material on this subject.

Branch educational committees can combine some of the classes from these series to create an up-to-date series on the Popular Front.

C. Organizational Principles of the SWP

An eight-class study guide on this topic can be found in the Guide to Marxist Education. It is in need of some updating to deal with the organization questions posed by the split of the Internationalist Tendency party from the SWP.

Of special interest at this time are the writings of James P. Cannon on the question of the party. A study guide on Speeches to the Party appears in Party Builder, Volume VIII, No. 3. Extensive questions from older study guides on History of American Trotskyism and Struggle for a Proletarian Party will be sent to the branches.

In addition, an eight class series on James P. Cannon's writings on party building (with two optional additional classes on electoral policy and defense policy) is in preparation and will be sent to the branches shortly. This class will include readings from many of Cannon's books. Therefore, it cannot treat any one subject exhaustively. It will, however, offer an overview of Cannon's works that may generate considerable interest. In this particular case, a class of 8 - 10 sessions may well be practical for intensive branch education this fall.

Branches which have not had classes recently on Black Liberation and Socialism, on the Marxist approach to the labor movement, or on the women's movement may want to consider classes on these topics. Study guides on the first two can be found in Party Builder, Volume VIII, No. 3. A new study guide on women's liberation is now in preparation and will be made available during the fall.

2. Fall Conferences

We suggest that, in collaboration with the YSA, socialist educational conferences be held this fall. These conferences are not primarily oriented toward intensive cadre education; rather they should be seen as propaganda activities for our movement. Well planned, well organized, aggressively and imaginatively built conferences can have considerable appeal, and can be a powerful recruiting tool.

The timing of these conferences should be given careful consideration. In past years, it had been usual to schedule them shortly after the main fall actions of the antiwar and abortion repeal movements. In the present circumstances, branches may find it desirable to hold them at an earlier date

in order to draw contacts around the party and YSA with adequate time for follow-up. The program of the conferences should also be considered from the viewpoint of the growing interest in basic socialist ideas. Wide advertising of these conferences on campuses, at workplaces, and elsewhere will maximize their recruitment potential.

The conferences offer the opportunity to present in one weekend a concentrated series of talks by SWP and YSA speakers. The interest generated by these talks can provide the basis for recruitment classes and cadre education classes to be held in the weeks afterward.

3. Recruitment Classes

Classes aimed at introducing people to socialist ideas are likely to have increasing appeal in the coming year. An important recruiting tool, such a class series can be used either to build or as a follow-up to the fall conferences.

The value of such classes was emphasized in the Party Tasks and Organization Report to the June, 1974 National Committee Plenum by Barry Sheppard, published in Party Builder Volume VIII, No. 4:

"There is one area that some of our opponents have done better, I think, than us. That's the use of recruitment classes on socialism. Such classes flow right from everything we've been talking about, about the nature of the present stage of the radicalization. There's a different problem in recruiting now, a little different than at the height of the antiwar movement. The Cuban revolution, the upsurge of the Black struggle, and the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese -- those massive examples more readily impelled young people toward revolutionary conclusions, toward the conception that they had to overthrow this system. At this time there doesn't exist the same kind of direct inspiration for people to become revolutionists who have already become radicalized. We've seen some cynicism and a little bit harder time in recruitment since the end of the antiwar movement. Not just for us, but for all our opponents too. But there is big interest in the ideas of socialism and we have to work hard on recruitment, pay attention to it. There's no gimmicks to it, just hard work. And part of that should be the projection of consistent recruitment classes. For instance, I understand the Lower Manhattan New York branch has organized a special class for parents and others who have been attracted to us around the District One struggle. Having classes on socialism for beginners is important. Classes on why you should join the YSA, which were useful with the antiwar movement when the YSA looked like it was the leader and many wanted to find out about our organization, are not that fruitful today. What is more appropriate are classes on what is Marxism, what is socialism."

Such recruitment classes can be widely advertised among people we meet in our political work. In association with consistent contact work and energetically built fall conferences, they can prove quite useful in building our movement in the coming months.

Comradely,



Fred Feldman



Gus Horowitz
National Education Department