

ORIENTATION OF OUR WORK

Experience in the teachers committee has confirmed the observation made in the document "Burning Questions for our Party", that we have yet to fully understand accept the line of the second congress document, the fundamentals of our Party. That there are only two classes in Britain today, and that incessant political warfare rages between them.

We have been told that teachers have two aspects. On the one hand they are workers and on the other hand they are educators. As workers teachers are merely engaged in economic struggles (higher wages, better conditions etc). As educators they enter the fertile field of political struggle (influencing children etc). Further, as educators, teachers are more than just workers—they must be middle class. And notice that for the middle class politics are dealt with, while the summit of achievement for the workers is economic demands.

The fact is that teachers are workers by virtue of being educators. this is their job, the labour by which they are exploited. What's more the teachers recognise this exploitation, they recognise the restrictions and mismanagement of their field of work, hence their fight against their employer: the Councils and the Government. In this political battle, teachers have seen no separation between the fight for better education and the fight for better wages and conditions. For an outline of these struggles see "Teachers to the Front Line".

Our work among teachers

As with any other section of the working class therefore, our job is to participate in the struggles of our fellow workers; to learn and teach the political lessons that accrue from them. And work among teachers means work in the mass organisations of teachers, for teachers have learnt that nothing can be achieved alone.

In the union our job is not to expose the manoeuvres of "corrupt officials", nor is it to bombard the members with high-sounding resolutions that imply no action because of their world-embracing compass. The union branch is the basic mass organisation through which we see most of our political work being carried out. Ideas of "teachers councils" are fundamentally anti-union. Nor do we seek to achieve democracy in schools; our enemy is the Government not the headmaster or heads of department. What we do seek is the ideological transformation of our section of the working class, something that comes about through struggle and not through lectures.

In the Classroom

What about the teacher in the classroom? Like toolmakers or milkmen they'll learn their job principally through their experience in doing it - for teachers this means in the classroom. Our Party is not going to act as a Teachers Training College - less is it going to act as a second boss, telling the teachers how to do their job. they are doing it already and that's where it all started—exploitation of their labour.

Relations between a teacher on the one hand and pupils, students, or parents on the other; they are particular aspects of the job. A teacher meets his students directly and the parents indirectly in the course of his job, just as a milkman meets housewives and children in the course of his round. There is political contact between them but only if one or both is engaged in struggle. Such political contact cannot be made in the abstract by forming a liason body between teachers and students and parents. It can only be based on a specific struggle that one or both is engaged in. Looked at in this way, such a relationship can only be based on complete equality, both are workers. It is the same relationship as that between teachers and other sections of the working class that will be asked for support and vice versa in

when either is involved in struggle.(eg recent student strike)

Teaching methods, course content and relationships with the pupils are aspects of the job of a teacher. There are correct and incorrect attitudes to all. The teacher learns the correct way through his own experience and certainly does not need to be a communist.

Recruitment

Once we have accepted that teachers are workers, all the teachers are potential recruits to the Party. Thus far, no teacher has been recruited from his place of work. True, recruitment takes time and is not easy. But it is not that difficult either. Like the rest of the Party we have not been bold enough in approaching the honest rank and file teacher with the Party, our programme, teachers pamphlet etc. We should not spend our time trying to convert so-called "lefties" (as far as they are concerned they are trying to convert us) while neglecting the genuine teacher who might not talk in our jargon but is eager to know about our Party and Marxism-Leninism. What is lacking is the political conviction in the Party, the working class, that Marxism-Leninism is the derivative of the working class, their heritage and birthright. We, the communists are not a special brand of people endowed with special abilities. We are ordinary, honest workers like the rest of the working class. If we can understand Marxism-Leninism and become communists, so can they.