

Preliminary

What follows is a summary of some changes in our method of proceeding. If we can judge by past errors, they seem to be needed.

It is not possible to go into particular cases. What is needed is to become clear about our basic outlook and analysis. This in turn is applied in particular cases. If correct in fundamentals you will not have errors in specific applications. But suppose your basic outlook and method is wrong. In this case even a correct decision in specific cases will be an accident. The chance for error will be immense.

Making Judgments about Political Events

1. Two questions need to be asked in thinking about *every* development: (a) Does this case display a trend that is reactionary, or revolutionary? (b) Do the people involved believe it has a socialist or a capitalist aim? (The objective and the subjective are for the most part not closely matched. For instance, objectively the SA troops are counter-revolutionary. Subjectively they are revolutionary.)

2. If the tasks that need doing are to be done rightly, in deciding each judgment and policy you must ask:

- What's happening in the various strata of the masses?
- What favors us there? What opposes us?
- What is the broad, unpolitical or miseducated masses' perception of the political events?
- How do these masses perceive and feel about the revolutionary movement?

3. Every development is contradictory. It has elements which favor the revolution and elements which retard it. *Fore-sight* is possible only when:

- The contradictions are understood;
- The different possible courses for further development are explored. (For example, the reactionary and the revolutionary elements within fascism.)

4. The social process contains progressive forces, but it also contains retrograde or retrogressive ones. Revolutionary work consists of understanding both, and of promoting the revolutionary tendencies. (For example, in the Hitler Youth, sexual freedom is progressive, and trust in authority is retrogressive.)

5. Human needs do not exist for the sake of the economy. Rather, the economy exists for the sake of those needs.

6. The police, and others whom one flinches from as foes, should be pictured in their undershorts. And so with every feared authority.

Methods of Proceeding

7. To win over the masses by manipulating and mesmerizing them—let us leave all that to the political reactionaries. The revolutionary movement does not want to mesmerize. It should rather disclose processes to the masses. It should locate and articulate their unexpressed and their unformulated needs. (The theory of "the inevitable revolutionary upswing"—that's an example of mesmerizing.)

8. Secret negotiation is the politics of reaction. The politics of revolution is to turn always to the masses, and to root out secret negotiations.

9. If you read your own desires back into the masses, and you do not judge the *real* situation *independently* of your own desires, then the most directly felt needs will remain unfulfilled. (Projection of the situation in a small circle onto the masses.)

10. The attitude called "economism" only leads to mistakes. Not the machine, but man, makes history. He uses machines for that end. The economy as such never enters directly into consciousness. There are many intermediary stages and also contradictions (for example, the worker who is Christian, the Nazi woman who is poor).

11. Possibly when the masses revolt against their material and sexual misery, it seems a "natural" development. Is this why it is always an incomprehensible problem when the masses *act against* their own interests ("irrational conduct")? Examples of the latter: The woman who welcomes marriage even though it may be her cage. The worker who ignores the facts of exploitation when his job horizon appears clear. The adolescent who comes out on behalf of sexual repression.

12. Class consciousness is not something to be taught to the masses like lessons in school—as a set of doctrines. Rather, it is to be elicited, drawn out of the masses' own experience. The discovery of the politics of all human needs.

13. Demonstrate clearly that when the proletariat acts in its own interests, it represents at the same time the interests of all people who work. Head off any conflict between the proletariat and the middle classes. For the industrial proletariat under advanced capitalism is numerically in the minority and it is bourgeoisified, too.

14. Better to employ no leaflets (or other actions) than to employ poor ones. Be sure to avoid anything that will disappoint and discourage the masses! Your will and your intention are not decisive. How the masses react is decisive! Instead—build confidence by all that you undertake. For instance: admit to not knowing something.

15. Do not exhort the masses to undertake more than they can carry out. Proceed step by step! In general, work by adopting the long view. Yet seize the advantage in every sudden turn of events!

16. The destiny of the revolution will always depend on the broad, unpolitical masses. Accordingly, discover the politics that underlie private life. Politicize its most trivial details, wherever people gather—in the dancehall, the movie house, the grocery store, the bedroom, the tavern, the betting office! The energy of the revolution is concentrated in the little events of everyday life!

17. Always think internationally. Never just nationally. ("We Germans aren't interested in the popular front in France, or the Saar question, or the Chinese revolution.")

ORGANIZATION: Points For Discussion

The Party—We Are It

18. Class consciousness comes in two types. That of the masses is different from that of the leadership. (Examples of the former kind: The needs of adolescents, as for their own living accommodations. The factory worker's refusal to accept a cut in his pay. The fury of the SA people when they were disarmed. Examples of the other kind: A knowledge of the mechanisms by which crisis takes its course. Technical understanding of the socialist economic plans. Understanding of imperialist contradictions and armaments races throughout the world, combined with the most attentive empathy with the needs of the masses.)

19. The political force of an organization or movement is ultimately determined not by its will or its program, but by its mass base, i.e., by what elements of the mass make up its following. Hence the same fate should not lie in store for the revolutionary leadership as came to Goebbels, who could brush off the massacre of June 30, 1934, since he was the representative of no mass base by which he was held accountable and which might have made him come down on the "right" side.

20. A crucial question: In what ways am I, who am a revolutionist, hampered by bourgeois, religious or moral habits? In what ways therefore am I crippled in my revolutionary work? At what points do I too tend to trust in authority?

21. The least we should expect is that the revolutionary leadership will act, not only subjectively, but also objectively in the revolutionary interest.

22. Where mistakes are made, it is imperative that corrections be carried through not only at the lower level but also at the higher level.

23. The political line must be submitted constantly to the control of the base. (Inner-party discussion.)

24. It is wrong to launch political steps silently or in secrecy. This only sows confusion and breeds incompetence. A full accounting ought to be given to the members of the party for every political step that is taken. The failures that occur should be the occasion of a true self-criticism, which doesn't merely distribute mechanical blame to the lower levels of the party ("The decisions of the Xth Party Congress have not been carried out properly").

25. In this connection, the problem of the leadership has to be raised. There must be renewal of the personnel at the middle and upper levels . . . Whoever acts and does so ignorantly . . . whoever proves reluctant to act . . . is not prepared to lead—and the pressure of the masses should induce him or her to admit it!

26. It is essential to find and prepare *in advance* the means which will prevent the bureaucratization of a living revolutionary organization. Why does the ordinary worker so readily turn into a mandarin when he is appointed a functionary? What are the warning signs?

27. How are we to detect the future turncoat, the police spy, renegade, unreliable type in a decisive moment, even before he realizes or is aware of it? (Vanity, ingratiating manner; soft-pedaling his position in debate; excessive friendliness; forced and abstract display of the revolutionary viewpoint, etc.)

28. What are the recognizable signs of the firm revolutionist? (Outwardly simple bearing; capacity for direct contact with people; simple, straightforward conduct in sexual matters; absence of phrasemaking; of course an emotional but above all a reasoned conviction favoring socialism; no mandarin tendencies when entrusted with tasks; absence of patriarchal attitude towards women and children.)

29. Composition of the party in the process of its building: Quality, not quantity, at the core! A core (the party), plus the matrix of sympathizing masses (formerly the simple party card-holders). A testing procedure before the admission of others.

30. No overburdening of the functionaries! Absolutely provide them with free time! Don't be indifferent to their private life, instead aid in maintaining its health! Always have substitutes prepared and ready to step in. Work allocated in tolerable proportions. Meetings brief and to the point! Criticism sought if pointed; critical carping *stringently rejected*! Always understand the other point of view first! Avoid the "scattershot" approach and intermittent "campaigning"; rather, pursue what is most fundamental and urgent, until the discussion has run its course.

31. No needless heroism! Do not be proud of martyrdom, but conserve your resources! There's no skill or fame in serving a sentence. But it can take the greatest skill to avoid serving a sentence! Don't brag about "proletarian solidarity." Rather, really do practice solidarity.

32. Personal conflicts and relationships often disturb the political work! Learn how not to reject the personal, but to politicize it. (For example, a wife who is self-centered and hampers the husband; or vice-versa.)

33. We must learn to go through changes in our thinking. This doesn't mean we shouldn't have convictions. We must learn to recognize that our adherence to organization and to transmitted ideas can get in the way of seeing the living reality. (The revolutionary organization, and our conscious solidarity in it, is the basis for the individual's revolutionary work. Yet where the organization becomes an unconscious substitute for a homeland and family, the sharp focus on reality can be obscured.)

34. Also with regard to inner-party issues, always turn to the open forum which is the party (this, of course, in times of legality). Inner-party secret proceedings are harmful. Anyone who must hide her/his opinion is not one of us. The same applies to anyone who subordinates the revolutionary cause to the service of tactics, rather than the reverse.

35. To develop one's own initiative, means quite unequivocally to observe life steadily and to proceed from one's conclusions.

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