



Workers' Liberty

'Marxism at Work' dayschool, 7/12/13

11:00 Introduction, including:

- introduction to Workplace Bulletins exhibition
- an outline of the purpose and format of the day
- announcement of room allocation for sessions

11:30 Our Fantasy Union: how do our trade unions measure up?

- an activity in which participants locate their trade union on a scale in six areas: democracy; industrial effectiveness (militancy); equalities; organising; politics; industrial trade unionism (one industry, one union, all grades)

12:15 The Marxist Critique of Trade Unions

- two separate workshops, each looking at the issue in a different format

13:00 Lunch

13:45 Understanding the Trade Union Bureaucracy

- two separate workshops, each looking at the issue in a different format

14:35 The Rank and File in Action: three examples

- The Australian Building Workers' Federation and Green Bans – a showing of the film 'Rocking the Foundations', introduced by Ed Whitby
- The Sheffield Workers' Committee during the First World War – a presentation and discussion led by Gemma Short
- The National Minority Movement 1924-1929 – a presentation and discussion led by Becky Crocker

15:25 Break

15:40 The Role of Marxists in Workplaces and Unions

- two separate workshops, each looking at the issue in a different format

16:30 Plenary

17:00 Close

This dayschool covers the same themes as a six-part AWL education course, 'Marxism and trade unions'.

Its purpose is to give participants a solid grounding in some fundamental ideas about what trade unions are, and the role of socialists in unions and workplaces.

The course and the dayschool are for everyone – those currently active in trade unions, those who will be union activists in future, those who have past experiences to share.

This collective knowledge and understanding will extend individuals' knowledge, and will help make the AWL even more effective and help develop our ideas.



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Suggested follow-up reading

OUR FANTASY UNION

Fantasy Union of Rail and Transport Workers, Off The Rails broadsheet:
www.workersliberty.org/story/2008/07/03/fantasy-union-rail-and-transportworkers

THE MARXIST CRITIQUE OF TRADE UNIONS

Three excerpts from Marx: The Poverty of Philosophy; Trade Unions: their past, present and future; Wages, Price and Profit: www.workersliberty.org/node/5289

Can we build a revolutionary workers' movement?, Solidarity 3/200, 6 April 2011:
www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/04/06/can-we-buildrevolutionary-workers-movement

Extract from Frederick Engels' Condition of the Working Class in England:
www.workersliberty.org/node/3632

Hal Draper, Marxism and Trade Unions - a class that US Marxist Hal Draper gave in 1970 -
www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1970/tus/1-marx-tus.htm

Hal Draper, Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, volume 2, chapter 4, 'Trade unions and class'
V.I. Lenin, What is to be done?, Chapter III: Trade-Unionist Politics and Social-Democratic
Politics: www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm

Leon Trotsky, Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch, The Transitional Programme:
www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/tp-text.htm

THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY

The Trade Union Bureaucracy, from Off The Rails, Summer 2010:
www.workersliberty.org/story/2010/07/09/trade-union-bureaucracy

The first section of Brian Pearce, Some Past Rank-and-File Movements, 1959:
www.marxists.org/archive/pearce/1959/04/rankandfile.htm

Extract from Beatrice and Sidney Webb, The History of Trade Unionism:
www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/11/05/webbs-development-trade-unionbureaucracy

Extract from Rosa Luxemburg: The Mass Strike, The Political Party and the Trade Unions,
Section VIII. Need for United Action of Trade Unions and Social Democracy:
www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/11/05/rosa-luxemburg-trade-unionbureaucracy

Leon Trotsky, Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, unfinished article found in
Trotsky's desk after his death, August 1940: www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/xx/tu.htm

THE RANK AND FILE

Three articles, each from a Workers' Liberty pamphlet, one each from 1980, 1989 and 1996
www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/07/22/three-articles-trade-union-rank-and-file

Brief extract from James Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, about the Clyde Workers'
Committee 1915: www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/11/05/clyde-workers-committee-1915

The Workers' Committee: www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/08/04/workerscommittee and
www.workersliberty.org/story/2011/08/24/how-workers-can-findtheir-power

'Trade Unions: a chance to learn from the past': www.workersliberty.org/node/4603

THE ROLE OF MARXISTS

Leon Trotsky, Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch, The Transitional Programme:
www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/tp-text.htm

V.I. Lenin, Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder, Chapter 6: Should Revolutionaries
Work In Reactionary Trade Unions?: www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/lwc/ch06.htm

What we do in the workplaces and unions from 'We Stand for Workers' Liberty':
www.workersliberty.org/node/5774

WORKPLACE BULLETINS

A selection of AWL workplace bulletins: www.workersliberty.org/union-andworkplace-bulletins

Taking socialist ideas onto the shopfloor, Workers' Liberty supplement 3/3, March 2006:
<http://www.workersliberty.org/system/files/wl3-3.pdf>

Producing and distributing socialist workplace bulletins:
www.workersliberty.org/files/workplace_bulletins.pdf

Harry Wicks, 'Keeping My Head: Memoirs of a British Bolshevik': section on the 'Victoria
Signal' bulletin