

# Left-wing communism: An infantile disorder

## *Facilitator's discussion guide*

Questions should be asked by facilitator. While questions are open-ended, we have listed some possible answers in italics to assist discussion leaders in keeping the discussion on track. Where applicable, prompt participants to give examples from your local area.

- 1. What do you typically think of when you think of discipline?** (This question is accessing prior knowledge or in this case, prior misconception or popular understanding of the term “discipline.” Our purpose in asking is to help members distinguish between the popular understanding of the term and our specific, Marxist-Leninist understanding.)
  - a. Is this what Lenin has in mind when he talks about discipline?
  - b. How does Lenin define discipline throughout the book?
  - c. Ask for an example
  
- 2. Lenin divides the Bolsheviks' practical experience into distinct periods.**
  - a. What do the non-revolutionary periods have in common?
  - b. What do the revolutionary periods have in common?
  
- 3. How did the Bolshevik Party relate to unions, including *reactionary* ones?**
  - a. What other kinds of organizations does this have relevance for? (Be specific and give examples)
  - b. What do we lose by not participating in these organizations?
  - c. Given all that Lenin has said about working in reactionary organizations, what approach should we take to events like the Women's March or the March for Our Lives?
  
- 4. Throughout the struggle in Russia, how did the Bolsheviks reach out to the masses?**
  
- 5. In part VII, when discussing Germany, Lenin writes that “the ‘Lefts’ in Germany have mistaken *their desire*, their politico-ideological attitude, for objective reality.” What does he mean by this?**
  - a. What would this look like? [Ask for examples.]
  - b. Why might it be tempting to mistake our desire for objective reality?
  - c. How can we guard against this mistake?
  
- 6. How do we maintain close contact and integration with the working class?**
  
- 7. Lenin writes that “revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone.” What does he mean by this? Why is it important?**

**8. In the book Lenin distinguishes between different kinds of compromises and gives examples of their difference. What are some key examples?**

- a. Can we formulate a rule concerning compromises?
- b. What is our role in making such a determination?

**9. How should communists relate to “liberal” organizations and individuals?**

- a. Can you think of current examples of such groups, locally and nationally?
- b. What would it look like to relate to them in such a way?

**10. What does it mean to say “politics is a science and an art that does not fall from the skies or come gratis”?**

**11. What are the difficulties of being a revolutionary in non-revolutionary times?**

**12. Jigsaw activity**

- a. In small groups, comrades read documents which exemplify the Party’s application of these principles in recent years. Each small group reads one document and reports back to whole group about what it says and how it relates to the principles of LWCAID (this jigsaw approach will work well in face to face discussions. For online discussion groups of at-large members, we may need to modify this activity)
  - i. Bernie Sanders movement <https://www.liberationnews.org/socialist-tactics-bernie-sanders-campaign/>
  - ii. military issue memo, available as PDF
  - iii. critique of KKE <https://www.liberationnews.org/greece-shift-left-class-struggle-communist-tactics-statement-psl/>
  - iv. Gun violence article <https://www.liberationnews.org/united-states-violence-socialist-approach-student-walkouts-gun-control/>
  - v. Same sex marriage (or memo on disrupting Pride Marches--this document is shorter and more recent)  
<http://liberationschool.org/resolution-of-the-party-for-socialism-and-liberation-marriage-equality-and-what-it-means-for-the-lgbtq-struggle/>
- b. Guide for reading and reporting back:
  - i. What document did you discuss?
  - ii. What was the context/issue addressed?
  - iii. What is the example of “ultra-leftism” presented in the document?
  - iv. What approach is counterposed to the ultra-left approach?

**13. What concluding lessons can we draw from this text as it relates to our work?**

- a. Ask comrades to individually think of a few and write them down.

- b. After a few minutes, have comrades turn to the person next to them to discuss. (skip this step in skype/Zoom based discussions)
- c. Have comrades share out.
- d. Write a list reflecting discussion