"Training for the Class Struggle"- Communist Workers' Schools in USA, 1923-1956

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Abstract

U.S. Communists charged that public-school culture was "a potent instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie to enslave the toiling masses." In response, leftists created Workers Schools, counter-beacons to "clarify their minds, …elevate them to the dignity of builders of a new society." Beginning in 1923, Communist Workers Schools offered courses "to equip the workers with the knowledge and understanding of Marxism-Leninism" so that worker-students could engage in "militant struggle." In the 1940s schools adjusted to the Popular Front, but New York's Jefferson School and Chicago's Lincoln School continued offering courses in Marxism even as they offered a progressive narrative of the United States, delivering some of the first courses in African American history and the history of anti-colonial struggles, championing a revolutionary form of adult education for "workers of hand and brain." Schools also provided access to literature, arts, and other humanities courses in a progressive milieu.

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Nearly a century before the invention of rubrics and metrics, critics of education argued that the public schools were designed to turn out nothing more than obedient cogs for the corporate United States. From the left aisle of the classroom, workers in the orbit of the Communist Party argued that schools were agents of indoctrination, designed to instill quiescent, interchangeable workers. Fortunately, the Party established a network of Workers Schools that were designed, in the words of Chicago's Workers School, "to equip the workers with the knowledge and understanding of Marxism-Leninism" so that worker-students could engage in "militant struggle … toward the decisive proletarian victory" (Chicago Workers School, 1935). Such strident Third Period rhetoric would be tempered as Workers Schools adjusted to the Popular Front, but schools such as New York's Jefferson School and Chicago's Abraham Lincoln School continued to offer courses in Marxism even as they offered a progressive narrative of the United States, foregrounding the achievements of African Americans and other working-class people. Such schools pioneered in teaching some of the country's first courses in African American history and labor and working-class history, celebrating moments in which rule by "economic royalists" had been resisted and overcome. The schools championed a revolutionary form of adult education for "workers of hand and brain" (Jefferson School, 1949).

Workers Schools such as the Jefferson School implemented a critical, student-centered pedagogy designed to overcome capitalism's savage structural inequalities, and as such serve as prefigurative examples of the "pedagogy of the oppressed" later famously articulated by Paulo Freire. The schools urged worker-pupils to bring the lessons they studied out into their workplaces, picket lines, and unemployment campaigns; instructors, too, pressed students to incorporate their own work and family histories into the class discussions of labor history.

Prefiguring Henry Giroux and other advocates of “a critical pedagogy of learning,” the workers schools rejected a model of schooling as filling empty craniums with knowledge that only the instructor possessed, and only that knowledge of use to the employing class. The schools aspired to become Giroux’s politically charged public spheres (Freire, 1992; Giroux, 2014; Giroux, 2020; Giroux, 2025).

The Communist Party’s Workers Schools themselves have received astute attention from Marvin Gettleman, who demonstrates that the schools were not interested in students’ personal advancement, but in developing workers intent on transforming society. Gettleman notes, too, that the Jefferson School and other Workers Schools run by the Communist Party developed the largest network of adult education in the 1940s and ‘50s (Gettleman, 2002). Gettleman regrettably passed away before he could write a comprehensive history of the nationwide network of Workers Schools, and as such his work is largely restricted to New York’s Jefferson School. Recently, too, other scholars have addressed discreet places and topics related to the schools, with Andy Hines exploring the African American history and literature courses taught at the Jefferson School, as well as the activism of some Jefferson scholars such as Doxey Wilkerson and W.E.B. Du Bois, and Denise Lynn likewise has written on Du Bois’ experience teaching at the Jeff. Conversely, James Farr has written on the 1920s-30s Chicago Workers School and its early director, Eugene Bechtold (Hines, 2022; Lynn, 2019; Farr, 2020).

These scholars have presented important evidence on aspects of the radical educational institutions that once flourished. What is needed in these reactionary times is an exploration of just how capacious a Communist-run national network of Workers Schools once was, and the liberatory potential such revolutionary institutions once offered. This article hopes to make a contribution in that direction.

The need for such an exploration of alternative, leftist education is critical. In the United States the current assault on progressive education has seen several states (most notably but not only Texas and Florida) criminalizing discussion of race, the history of slavery, indigenous dispossession, and other material critical of the dominant white-male, pro-corporate narrative of U.S. history. Assaults on critical race studies have recently been joined by expulsion of students and firing of faculty members who have condemned Israel's scorched-earth policies in Gaza, with congressional representatives and even university officials at places such as Harvard equating any criticism of Zionism with antisemitism. Such Trumpian attacks on free inquiry in and out of the classroom have caused many to see 2025 as an unprecedented descent into U.S. fascism. But reactionary assaults on progressive pedagogy and the humanities in general has been building in the United States and elsewhere for at least thirty years.

Moreover, a look at earlier "Red Scares" suggests that sites of radical pedagogy were often in the state's coercive crosshairs – but less depressingly, the resilience of the Communist Party USA's Workers Schools provides a welcome example of liberatory education in challenging times. Then too, as universities (at least in North America) increasingly become beholden to corporate agendas, serving as feeder systems for the needs of terminal-stage capitalism, we may have to look to earlier eras' alternative, radical spaces to develop a strategy for delivering liberatory pedagogy. All these current crises facing education, and the future of an engaged, democratic citizenry, necessitate a look back at the Communist Party USA's Workers Schools and their effort to instill in workers a class-conscious education, via course curricula designed by the Party to foreground the class struggle. Such worker-based pedagogy occurred in the schools while they also disseminated, as the Jefferson School phrased it, "the best of all thinking in past

history, … the works of the great theoretical leaders of the working class movement and … the democratic heritage of the American nation" (Jefferson School, 1949). The course catalogues, course outlines, and other records of the Jefferson School and its predecessor Worker Schools from the 1920s into the 1950s are deposited in several archival collections at New York University's Taminent-Wagner Library, as well as in the papers of Doxey Wilkerson, the Jefferson School's director, which are housed at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Library. These sources, combined with the coverage of the schools in the Communist Party newspaper the *Daily Worker*, demonstrate that the Party's national chain of Workers Schools ably delivered a revolutionary brand of adult education for more than thirty years.

"What is Workers' Education?"

The deficiencies of public education were spelled out in 1925 by Max Bedacht, in a few years to be general secretary of the International Workers Order (IWO). "What is Workers' Education?" he asked in *The Workers Monthly*, before detailing the means by which "the educational machinery" created "the mentality and psychology of the masses which falls an easy victim to the guiles of the capitalist press and the preachers, which succumbs so easily to the germs of patriotic paroxysms without any attempt at resistance …" Capitalist schools, Bedacht argued, had to give "the prospective wage-slave the intellectual requirement to make him a useful wheel in the profit mills of present day society" but not a loose wheel: "(T)he exercise of the mental faculties of the pupil present a dangerous prospect for the ruling class. Therefore, this ruling class endeavors to accompany this positive education with enough hypodermic injections of intellectual poison to sterilize the minds of the pupils as much as … possible" (Bedacht, 1925, 262-263).

Public education's limitations were similarly detailed in a 1925 *Daily Worker* article deriding public schools as "hothouses of reaction": "The primary motive of the institutions of so-called free education is to turn out as large a number of obedient patriotic wage slaves … the general patriotic, religious, pro-boss propaganda … is dished out under the guise of education" (Kaplan, 1925, supplemental 8).

To counter this boss-centered indoctrination, the Party established a network of "people's universities," the Workers Schools. The flagship Communist school was the New York Workers School. Founded in 1923 under the direction first of Bertram Wolfe and then East Harlem dentist Abraham Markoff, the school provided a Marxist counter-pedagogy to students unwilling to become Bedacht's "useful wheels." The school offered courses in the Principles of Communism, Marxism-Leninism, and Historical Materialism, and was frank that it saw its mission as preparing its pupils for their role in bringing about the workers' state. Wolfe in 1925 declared his school was "a part of and subordinate to the political agitation and propaganda of the party, to be designed to definitively serve the party's needs in its major campaigns. … This is the spirit in which we must approach our work" (*Daily Worker*, November 4, 1925). A subsequent article on the school reaffirmed, "To turn out 'Marxist-Leninists' for leadership in the working-class movement – that is the fundamental aim of the school" (*Daily Worker*, November 18, 1925).

"Counteract All This Bunk"

A student at the New York school appreciated this melding of praxis and theory, contrasting in a letter to the *Daily Worker* the value of a school for worker-students "motivated by the desire to become leaders, equipped with better ammunition to

fight the battles of their class. Not like the students in the bourgeois night schools, who have the petty ambition of acquiring knowledge, so as to exchange it for dollars and cents” (“M.H.”, 1926, 4). The fixation on the transactional nature of education – tuition plus diploma equals higher earnings – in which students only focused on narrow individual advancement, was rejected at the Workers Schools. In the second year of the Depression, news came from Berkeley of a California Workers School designed to “counteract all this bunk, and expose the corruption of the capitalist system” and “develop leaders who will be able to lead the workers in their relentless struggle for freedom” (*Daily Worker*, March 12, 1931). In 1934, the New York Workers School’s director noted Party leader Earl Browder addressed students, “emphasiz[ing] the importance of bringing about a real Bolshevik result in the teaching of Marxism-Leninism in our schools.” General theory in courses, he stressed, “must be linked up with the immediate problems and developments of today” (Markoff, July 3, 1934).

The Chicago Workers School similarly advertised itself as providing practical courses that would train leaders for the coming workers’ revolution. (*Daily Worker*, January 12, 1927). In 1935 the school asserted, “The Workers School is not purely an academic institution. It participates in all the current struggles of the working class. It takes part in strikes, campaigns and demonstrations …” (Chicago Workers School, 1935). As James Farr has documented, the Chicago school envisioned itself as engaged in “training for the class struggle,” which the school adopted as its motto (Farr, 2020). In 1937, Chicago was still advertising that its courses were “based upon the principles of scientific Socialism” and “deal primarily with social, political and economic problems, … presented from an authoritative Marxist-Leninist viewpoint” (Chicago Workers School, 1937). Praxis went to the head of

the class. When a New York Workers School contingent marched in the 1934 May Day parade, they succinctly chanted, “Don’t be a boss’ tool! Learn to fight at the Workers’ School!” (Markoff, May 8, 1934).

During the Party’s strident Bolshevizing “Third Period,” when Communists were certain the proletarian revolution was just around the corner, Workers Schools curricula were top-heavy with courses such as the Fundamentals of Leninism and Trade Union Strategy, although some of the United States’ first courses in “Negro” history and Colonialism were offered at schools in New York, Chicago, Boston, and elsewhere. The humanities, however, were sometimes dismissed as bourgeois affectations. Workers School Director Wolfe took a swipe at “so-called workers’ education movements that wish to bring bourgeois ‘culture’ to the working class thru the aid of bourgeois professors.” Wolfe contrasted his school’s offerings to its rival, the Rand School of the hated Socialist Party, “which combines courses in appreciation of music, literary criticism and aesthetic dancing with gross perversions of socialist economics, politics and philosophy” (*Daily Worker*, February 23, 1926). A month later the *Daily Worker* again compared the class-conscious curriculum of the Workers School to the Rand School, “a place for Greenwich Village freaks to study Freudian psychology and sex interpretations of literature, art and history and for sweet young things to master aesthetic dancing” (*Daily Worker*, March 12, 1926).

Still, even early Communist schools ambivalently offered some liberal arts to accompany Marxist pedagogy. In 1924, lectures on Freud, evolution, Voltaire, and theology were given at Chicago’s Workers’ University, and in New York, a literature course explored the works of Oscar Wilde, Eugene O’Neill, Emile Zola and others. In subsequent years the New York and Boston schools’ literature

classes continued to analyze Zola and other authors through a Marxist lens, suggesting a more expansive worker education already enhanced the more programmatic, Bolshevik curriculum (*Daily Worker*, March 1, 1924, March 14, 1924, March 21, 1924, May 30, 1924, June 21, 1924, February 3, 1927, April 5, 1928; Bosse, 1926).

Some of these bourgeois add-ons may have been in response to the desire for an expansive, liberal-arts education expressed by radical immigrants themselves. Although aligned with the CPUSA, the radical Finnish Federation was quite independent on many matters, the autonomy of its own Finnish Workers’ Schools among them. This calls into question the later right-wing allegation that ethnic members of the U.S. Party marched in lockstep to the Party’s, or Moscow’s, directives. Regarding education, already in 1925 Finnish Workers’ Schools in Worcester, Massachusetts, and Superior and rural towns in Wisconsin featured courses in biology, sociology, political economy, evolution, American history, and imperialism, supplementing and enhancing the Marxist curriculum. The *Daily Worker* praised the pioneering work of the Finns in regard to radical education (*Daily Worker*, January 14, 1925, March 20, 1925; Hayes, 1925; Salmi, 1925).

Among radical immigrants, demand for counter-hegemonic instruction was great. Already by 1920 immigrant radicals such as members of the Slovak Workers Section, later affiliated with the Party-led International Workers Order, had established a network of Workers Schools offering classes to children by day and evening sessions for men and women avid for lessons in literature, history, and practical courses such as union organizing, vocabulary building, and public speaking. Larger cities such as New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Chicago featured several Slovak Workers Schools, but even smaller places such as

East Akron, Youngstown, and Bellaire, Ohio, had such schools. Radical Slovaks appreciated the liberatory possibility of art, with theater, choral groups and film and painting classes on offer at the Slovaks' Chicago school. Attendance at this school was praised as "a rare opportunity to learn and have a bit of fun, too." A Chicago writer to the Slovak-language Communist newspaper *Rovnosť ľudu* (Equality for the People) enthused: "We don't even have to explain the meaning of our school, we're only organizing the workers, who are eager for education, … when I had to, I'd spend my last red cent as a sacrifice for your school, even more, because school is everything to us" *(Rovnosť ľudu*, 1920, 1921, January 25, 1928, December 22, 1928).

By 1931, "fun" supplemented Dialectical Materialism, or perhaps the value of offering worker-students access to art was recognized, and the Party's John Reed Club Art School began its program. Although started "as a school for the development of revolutionary artists," with "only a few courses in painting and composition," two years later all digs at "Greenwich Village freaks" seem to have been forgotten and an array of classes in painting, cartooning, sculpture, lithography, fresco painting, and other arts were on offer. The Party was on its way to the Popular Front when, as Michael Denning notes, the progressive possibilities of art and literature were recognized as forces for political change (Denning, 1997). The John Reed Club Art School averred that "the aim of this school is to produce revolutionary art as well as revolutionary artists," but also boasted of the bourgeois pedigree of its leftist instructors. Although painting instructor Anton Refregier (who in the 1940s and '50s would again teach painting at the Party's Jefferson School in New York) was hailed for creating art that "has been an effective weapon in this part of the class war," it was also noted that painting instructor Raphael Soyer had works in the Whitney and Metropolitan Museums,

while other fresco and painting instructors had appeared at the Chicago Art Institute and worked with Diego Rivera (*Daily Worker*, October 23, 1933). The Party’s schools were broadening their conception of worker education so as to include the fine arts. Yet Bourdieu’s notion of name-dropping distinction was also in evidence (Bourdieu, 1984).

Perhaps the dual demand for “Bread and Roses” was recalled, because praxis was quickly supplemented with aesthetic and recreational offerings. Even as the New York Workers School continued listing courses in “Dialectic Materialism,” and offered some of the country’s earliest courses in “American Labor History,” “Negro History,” “Colonial Problems” and “Imperialism,” and urged workers “study as you fight!,” the need to provide overworked toilers with recreation as well as education was recognized. Summer camps offered courses in sylvan settings far removed from the sweatshops. In 1928 the magazine *New Masses* encapsulated this dual attraction by promising that a summer program at Camp Wocolona (“workers’ colony”) offered “Baseball and Revolution.” A seminar on “The Intellectual and the Labor Movement” was balanced by America’s athletic pastime. Radical artist Hugo Gellert and Communist novelist Mike Gold were featured speakers at the camp, but there would be plenty of “time for swimming, baseball and other out-door sports” (*New Masses*, 1928). Likewise in the mid-1940s, Chicago’s Abraham Lincoln School offered summer classes in a bucolic setting where worker-pupils could “Loaf as You Learn” (Abraham Lincoln School, 1945).

Summer camps such as Camp Kinderland had combined recreation and retreat from crowded city streets with educational offerings for decades (Reiter, 2002; Mishler, 1999), and the Party’s Jefferson School later continued in this progressive

tradition. In 1946 and ‘47, the Jefferson School Camp at Arrowhead Lodge offered recreational amenities such as swimming, tennis, boating, hiking, baseball, bicycling, and square dancing, as well as “social dancing to the music of the Foner Swingsters,” Jack, Moe, and Phil, who otherwise taught courses such as American history and labor history at the Jeff. Yet the real attraction may have been the vast array of courses offered throughout the summer. “Jewish Folk Music” was taught by Ruth Rubin, and “the Jewish Question” met with Frederick Ewen. Some of the other options were “China Today” with Chu Teng; “Modern Art and Artists” with Gwendolyn Bennett; “The Poetry of Latin America” with Albert Prago, a veteran of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and “The Negro in America,” taught by Jefferson School Director Wilkerson. In July there was a course in “Life and Culture of India.” The vast array of courses to supplement social dancing and swimming suggests the diversity of the Jefferson’s students and faculty, and perhaps the respite that progressive learners sought from the fast-developing Red Scare in such an alternative learning space (Jefferson School, 1947, 1946-47).

But such alternative pedagogical spaces were always under the state’s panopticon. In 1930 Detroit’s Workers’ Camp and school was raided by sheriff’s deputies on the alert for critical thinking. “Quantities of radical newspapers, magazines and books were taken,” the *Detroit Free Press* reported, and the four-week course of instruction for children from the poorer parts of Detroit was noted. Subversive graffiti at the camp came in for condemnation. “One of the crude childish drawings found by the raiders portrayed a man labeled ‘Boss,’ swinging a cat-o-nine-tails over the bare back of a worker. ‘Don’t be a Slave’ was the caption lettered over it” (*Detroit Free Press*, 1930).

Deputies' confiscation of "Red" literature in this instance did not squelch the desire for worker education, as throughout the '30s and '40s the Detroit Police "Red Squad" scrupulously documented the Motor City's network of Workers Schools run by the leftist fraternal society the International Workers Order, the Young Communist League, and other groups. A summer fiesta and frolic at Camp Liberty in suburban Detroit to raise funds for the IWO raised FBI hackles (FBI, 1946). At the height of the Depression, Communist artist Robert Minor lectured at the Detroit Workers School held at Finnish Hall on "Capitalism's 4 Horsemen: Father Coughlin, William Randolph Hearst, Huey Long, and Upton Sinclair" (Minor, 1935).

Indeed, the Motor City was not atypical, for by the mid-1930s an array of Workers Schools blanketed the country, with thousands of unrepentant pupils. Yet while the class struggle remained front and center, already by the mid-'30s schools were expanding in two ways: The curriculum grew in offering many courses in the broader humanities. And Workers Schools taught children and adults not just in large cities but in many smaller localities as well.

"What's Doing in the Workers Schools"

From 1933 to 1935, a weekly *Daily Worker* column, "What's Doing in the Workers Schools of the U.S.," demonstrated the depth of offerings, pedagogical and geographical (Markoff, 1933-1935). Already in January 1934, James Ford, recently Communist vice-presidential candidate, and James Allen were offering a course on "Problems of the Negro Liberation Movement," which covered "Negro" history from colonial times to the present, highlighting "the revolutionary traditions of the Negro people which have been buried by bourgeois and reformist historians" (Markoff January, 8, 1934). The Schools offered a mix of ethnic culture, training in

public speaking and union organizing, and history lessons from the U.S.'s submerged ethno-racial and working-class past. Cyril Briggs, Otto Hall, and Lovett Fort-Whiteman taught "Negro History" at the Chicago and New York schools, lionizing Nat Turner, leader of an 1831 slave revolt, as an African American freedom fighter (*Daily Worker*, January 31, 1929, January 15, 1930, November 10, 1931, May 20, 1933; Briggs, 1930). Already in 1930, organizers of classes on Black anti-colonialism, which featured homages to Toussaint L'Ouverture, stated, "It is the duty of every Negro and militant white worker to join in commemoration of the heroic deeds of the Haitian revolution," a message certainly not offered in public schools (Negro Department, 1930). In Pittsburgh, however, a similar course drew only a few white attendees, and comrades were urged to do a better job of recruiting white students to the course. The Harlem Workers School in 1934 also offered a course on "History of the Negro in America," with lectures on "the history of the Negro in America from the beginnings of slavery up to the Civil War," and "What has Capitalism Done for the Negro?" (no bonus points if you answered "not much") (*Harlem Student Worker*, 1934).

Similar courses on Black and anti-colonial history were already taught in 1934 at Workers Schools in Saint Louis; Brownsville, Brooklyn; Los Angeles; Detroit; Buffalo; Louisville, Kentucky, and even Newport, Illinois (Markoff, 1933-1935). The valorization of African American history continued in the schools as the Party swung into its Popular Front period, when Communists asserted, like General Secretary Browder, that Communism was "Americanism updated for the twentieth century" (Browder 1935, 1936). Schools after 1935 claimed prominent historical figures as progressive icons; they were urged in 1936 to stress "the revolutionary historic role of Lincoln" and to "link up their present struggle with its revolutionary traditions and past" lest "fascist falsifiers" claim "all that is valuable

in the historical past of the nation," so "that the fascists may bamboozle the masses …" Workers Schools embraced Lincoln, as well as "that great liberationist son of the Negro people, Frederick Douglass," as part of a progressive U.S. genealogy (Agitprop Commission, 1936). Communist immigrant newspapers such as Slovak *Rovnosť ľudu* and *Ľudový denník* (People's Daily) and Polish *Głos Ludowy* (People's Voice) serialized history lessons lauding John Brown and presented the revolutionary legacy of Lincoln and Douglass. The Polish paper added the American and Polish Revolutionary wars' hero, Kosciuszko, to Lincoln and Douglass as "the Big Trio" of democracy (*Rovnosť ľudu*, 1923; *Ľudový denník*, 1942; *Głos Ludowy*, 1942, 1946; Mason, 1945; Rabowski, 1946). In an era in which African American contributions to U.S. history were denigrated or ignored in "mainstream" public schools (not all that dissimilar to education in many Trumpian-era schools, come to think of it) the Workers Schools were truly revolutionary and counter-hegemonic.

The Communists' abrupt switch during the Popular Front to venerating ostensibly progressive U.S. historical figures formerly denigrated as "capitalists" may be gauged by considering that as late as 1934, *Rovnosť ľudu* had published an article by Communist James Allen, "Lincoln's Policies Protected the Interests of Northern Capitalists" (Allen, 1934). Moreover, this emphasis on progressive Americanism led to some unintended ironies. Popular Front Communist schools celebrated both Thomas Jefferson and "Negro slave revolts" as progressive U.S. icons (Education Department, 1938). Yet what was unusual for the 1930s-40s was that schools such as the New York Workers School and later the Jefferson School, offered courses by Herbert Aptheker on "Negro Slave Revolts" at all. Earlier on, Elizabeth Lawson's 1939 course on the "History of the American Negro People" offered some of the first rejoinders to the dominant public-school discourse (canard) on Reconstruction

as “the Era of Negro Misrule.” Likewise, she presented Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey as heroes, surely a dissenting view in the 1930s (Lawson, 1939). New York’s Workers School, Chicago’s Lincoln School, and the Jeff were some of the only majority-white venues in which African-American agency and self-liberation were recognized at all. For example, into the 1950s, as Clarence Taylor notes, New York public schools still taught that African culture was backward and that North American slavery had actually benefited African captives (Taylor, 2011). Workers Schools championed Madison Washington, the Amistad captives, Harriet Tubman, and others decades before Critical Race Theory gave the Trump administration its recent nightmares.

Other innovative humanities courses, while anchored in a Marxist perspective, expanded workers’ horizons. New York’s school in 1934 had courses in “Social Forces in American History;” “History of Science and Technology;” “Origin of Man and Civilization;” “Colonial Questions,” and “Revolutionary Interpretation of Modern Literature.” Los Angeles students could take “Emancipation of Women,” taught by “a specialist in social medicine and women’s hygiene” (another course that might be anathema to twenty-first-century reactionaries). In Chicago, courses in art and literature were similarly on offer by 1934, while Detroit offered “Elementary Photography” alongside Marxism and “Struggle of the Negro People.” Drawing and illustration and dramatics were already proving popular with children and adults enrolled in Cleveland, although that school also offered Russian History. Workers Schools in Queens; Crown Heights, Brooklyn; Harlem, and Detroit had drama and art courses, with a Queens Laboratory Theater run with and by the school’s students. Sacramento offered journalism and radio courses, and Harlem’s school offered “Labor Journalism.” At Cleveland’s Workers School, the library contained many novels such as Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* to enhance

courses in literature, but no works, as Markoff lamented, by Lenin or Engels. Schools in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and even Newport, Illinois, taught courses in "Colonial Problems and Movements." In Los Angeles, "puppet and marionette making" was also offered (Markoff, 1933-1935). This class may have appealed to Italian and Jewish immigrants who had enjoyed satirical puppet shows mocking former President Hoover's inept handling of the Great Depression (*Daily Worker*, December 9, 1932). Some students evidently gravitated to Workers Schools for expanded horizons in literature, art, or the theater. The schools already made available a preliminary course in adult education.

"A Truly National Institution"

The Party's Workers Schools were capacious also in their geographical reach. The largest number of courses was offered at the New York school, and course material was available to interested parties elsewhere if they contacted Markoff at 35 East 12th Street. But the *Daily Worker*'s weekly column on the schools was accurately billed as "News of the Workers Schools from East Coast to West Coast." Markoff noted in his column that Workers Schools offered courses in industrial centers such as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Los Angeles, but had also sprouted in places such as Eugene, Oregon; Sacramento; Elizabeth, Jersey City and Bayonne, New Jersey; Louisville, Kentucky; Oklahoma City; Youngstown, Ohio; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Bismarck, North Dakota; Richmond, Virginia; Worcester, Massachusetts; and New Brunswick, New Jersey. Most intriguing was the announcement in May 1934 of a "Farm School on Wheels," to offer classes on organizing and rural problems in North and South Dakota. A similar course had already been offered in Arkansas; the Dakota "Farm School on Wheels" was reported to be a "travelling school … complete … in itself, with tents, cooking equipment, library, a truck … and a staff of three instructors and a cook. In each

district a leading farm organizer participates in conducting the discussion of organizational problems." As the column another week lamented that even Philadelphia had trouble maintaining its school, it is unclear how durable some of these schools were (Markoff, 1933-1935).

In larger urban areas, satellite schools were established. New York set up branch schools in outer-borough neighborhoods such as Brooklyn's Williamsburg, the Bronx's Coop City, and Queens's Long Island City, and made correspondence courses available to comrades further afield. Chicago reached out to Gary, Indiana; Boston had satellites in Quincy, Cambridge, Malden, Chelsea, and Lynn; Los Angeles established branch schools for agricultural and oil workers in San Gabriel, San Fernando, and Centinela. Summer camps near New York such as Camp Unity featured classes from the Workers School (Markoff, 1933-1935).

It was the coordinated effort of a serious revolutionary organization – the CPUSA – that enabled a "national chain of schools" to develop across the country. The New York School billed itself as "a truly national institution, providing curriculum and aid to Workers Schools throughout the country" (New York Workers School, 1929-1930). New York Director Markoff in 1934 reported on the creation of a Party Commission on Schools tasked with "coordinating our work" of educating and training workers in revolutionary courses via the Workers Schools. Markoff reported that the Commission called for regional conferences of existing schools' faculty "for the purpose of examining our work, discussing new tasks and coordinating the work." The Commission also planned to assist in opening new schools in the coming fall in cities such as Minneapolis, Saint Louis, Milwaukee, and Newark (Markoff, May 2, 1934).

A $15,000 fund-raising campaign was begun in 1935 to develop a National Training School so that qualified teachers would be able to staff “a network of full-time schools throughout the country” (Markoff, December 27, 1935). And when planners of new schools needed assistance getting their institutions up and running, the New York comrades were glad to help. John Ballam traveled from New York to the nascent Baltimore school to teach a course in “the main political and labor problems of the day” (*Daily Worker*, May 23, 1935). Centralized planning and assistance by already established schools enabled worker education to grow.

This coordination continued after the creation of New York’s Jefferson School. Outlines for courses such as “The Struggle Against White Chauvinism” and the “Negro Question” were published by the New York school in coordination with the Party’s Education Department; Wilkerson, Jefferson’s director, in 1945 traveled to Newark to teach a course on the “Role of the Negro in American Life.” His course outline, “Three Centuries of Struggle for Negro Rights,” was sent to comrades who had, the FBI noted, established a New Orleans Communist Party School (Education Department, 1949a and 1949b; FBI, 1945-1946).

At such schools proletarian earnestness was not neglected, but the earlier promise of Bolshevik revolution was deemphasized by the late 1930s Popular Front. As war clouds threatened Europe and the economic Depression persisted, the Chicago Workers School announced it was “offering a special course for unionists and all others who want to familiarize themselves with readings about the biggest threat of war. Courses on the foundations of political education; the Popular Front movement in France and Spain; … the movement against war and fascism” and others were publicized. Chicago’s school two months later explained the need for its classes: “The working class needs an instruction and education, for right now

the march is on for higher wages, better working conditions and a better world" (*Denník Rovnosť ľudu*, June 20, 1934, July 6, 1934; *Ľudový denník*, January 9, 1937, March 29, 1937).

"School is Everything to Us!"

From the beginning of the Chicago, New York and other schools, students played a large roll in running the libraries, speakers' forum series, and other facets of the schools. A student-run magazine presented news of the New York school from 1927, and a student council was composed of representatives from each of the night classes. The student-centered activities and curricula seem to have been appreciated by students. As noted, a student at Chicago's Slovak school gratefully enthused "school is everything to us!" and offered his "last red cent" to support the classes (*Rovnosť ľudu*, 1921). Similar praise came from the Windy City's English-language Workers School, with letters to the *Daily Worker* proclaiming the school "the best ever." This student said of the Chicago school it was "really inspiring to be in a class of students, … motivated by the desire to become leaders, equipped with better ammunition to fight the battles of their class" (M.H., 1926). A New York student wrote that she appreciated being in a class "where we can express our thoughts freely, without seeing an ironic smile on the teacher's face." She also appreciated the freewheeling discussions between students and teachers "in a comradely atmosphere" on matters "concerning the class struggle" (Weissberg, 1926). In 1934, after the Hearst newspaper in Chicago ran an exposé on the dangerous ideas disseminated at the school, students passed a unanimous resolution denouncing the paper, and printed stickers calling out Hearst's lies, which they plastered all over the city (Markoff, November 20, 1934).

The following year two Chicago students wrote to the *Daily Worker* on why they appreciated the school. “Believe me, I’ve found out plenty,” one student wrote. “The real and truthful idea about the Workers School is the tremendous ‘eye opener’ it is on conditions such as exist today in this country.” In an almost Freireian insight, the formerly passive student added that “At the Workers School you not only find out about these matters, which are of such vital interest to all, but you find out about it in the real true way that concerns you most.” Every reader was urged to “join the Workers School” (Markoff, April 3, 1935). A second Chicago student termed his three classes at the school “the most interesting part of our work, as I can get more understanding out of it than any part of our revolutionary work.” He criticized, however, the tardiness of many of his fellow students (Markoff, March 20, 1935).

At the New York School, the student-published newspaper, the *Workers School Weekly*, in 1931 ran a contest asking students “Why I Came to the Workers School.” Sample prize-winning answers suggest pupils’ enthusiasm and appreciation for the school:

> “Because there is a class struggle and I must know how to interpret current events from a Communist angle.
> “Because my first course in Fundamentals has corrected my color-blindness, which made Upton Sinclair appear as a Red to me, whereas I now perceive him to be of a shade of lavender.
> “Because the school dealt a death blow to any false bourgeois pacifist notions, and I have learnt that no ruling class relinquishes its power peacefully, as is attested by all the upheavals and revolutions.
> “Because it teaches the absurdity of reform by law, when we know that the law is a weapon in the hands of the rich.

> "Because I am being taught to think collectively, instead of subjectively" (*Workers School Weekly*, 1931).

"A People's University"

By World War II, the schools were part of a network of left-wing Workers Schools, which served as "a people's university," as the Polish newspaper *Głos Ludowy* labeled Chicago's Abraham Lincoln School. In 1942 more than 4,000 black, white and Hispanic men and women flocked to classes at Lincoln, which included courses in "The People's War; Structure of Fascism; Propaganda Analysis; Spanish; Basic English; Russian; French; Economics; Philosophy; History; Psychology; Art; Music; Writing for Short Story; Newspaper and Radio; Public Speaking; Labor Problems; History and Culture of Racial and National Groups; Refresher Courses." Polish history and language courses were introduced during the war (*Ľudový denník*, 1944; *Głos Ludowy*, 1944). The California Labor School of San Francisco by Fall 1945 boasted of the 25,000 students that had already attended "our lectures, forums and group discussions" (California Labor School, 1945), while the Jefferson School of New York in its first year enrolled more than 10,000 students, with thousands more taking classes through extension programs as far afield as Rochester, Buffalo, and Syracuse (*Sunday Worker*, 1945). Such schools, combining practical skills with liberationist education in subjugated people's history and culture, were welcomed by students such as a Young Pioneer who wrote to the Slovak Communist paper, underscoring "Away with bosses' propaganda!" (*Rovnosť ľudu*, 1930).

Bosses (President Roosevelt's "economic royalists") might be slammed, but by the time of the war the Workers Schools refashioned themselves as advocates of a progressive Americanism, with talk of revolution downplayed. Chicago's Abraham

Lincoln School in 1944 now advertised its goal as "For a national unity and a united world through people's education." Education, the school argued, must be "a truly American method of preserving and extending our democracy through frank, objective discussion" (Abraham Lincoln School, 1943, 1944). This was a far cry from "the decisive proletarian victory" the school's predecessor had demanded less than a decade earlier (Chicago Workers School, 1935). Nonetheless, courses in Negro Liberation taught by William Patterson remained revolutionary in their content, as were arguably courses in the lessons of the Four Freedoms and the necessity for enduring Soviet-American friendship. The Lincoln School by war's end was also offering courses in "Jewish History and Culture;" "Irish History and Culture;" "Czechoslovakia in the Storm of Ages;" "The First Democracy of the Western World" (ancient Greece); "Latin American History and Culture;" "Art as a Weapon;" and "How Writers Fought for Freedom," which examined Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Milton. Proletarian novelist Jack Conroy taught "Problems of the Individual Writer" (Abraham Lincoln School, 1943, 1944).

Similarly, although the New York Workers School in 1943 still urged students to "study as you fight!," it now offered enrollees a course in "Giants of American Democracy" (co-taught by Louis Budenz). "By learning from the mighty movements of the people throughout the ages, and from their leaders – Jefferson, Paine, Lincoln and Douglass; Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; Browder and Foster – we will be better equipped to fight the battles of today." Other courses offered in 1943 were "Women in the People's War" co-taught by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn; "History of the Negro People;" "The Negro People and the War;" "Key Problems of American Foreign Policy;" "The Italian People and the War;" and "The Jewish People and the War" by *Freiheit* editor Paul Novick (New York Workers School, 1943).

After 1944 the Jefferson School of Social Science in New York became the flagship Workers School, as Gettleman has documented (Gettleman, 2002). It offered courses in African American history, Latin American history, and U.S. labor history by scholars such as Herbert Aptheker, Elizabeth Lawson, and the Foner brothers. Aptheker and Phil Foner's resurrection of the salience of slave revolts and black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass to the country's freedom story was a counter-hegemonic pedagogy at a time when public schools persistently dismissed abolitionists as unstable, dangerously violent extremists and slavery as a benign institution. Into the 1950s New York public schools taught that slavery had been beneficial to the "lesser-developed" African race. Such liberatory lessons on African American agency and centrality to the U.S. saga might again be useful in today's embattled academy, all too often bending the knee to Trumpian ultimatums (Taylor, 2011).

At the Workers Schools this mixing of progressive culture with Marxist analysis continued into the 1950s. In some respects, the Jefferson School was not coy about where its ideological focus lay: The school's capstone was the Institute of Marxist Studies, (Jefferson School, 1949-1950) and as noted, history classes offered a counter-hegemonic analysis of workers' militancy and anti-racism. But Jefferson and other schools also brought literature and art to "workers of hand and brain." Jefferson offered a panoply of non-credit classes in art, literature, music, and sculpture to workers interested in education and culture for their own sake. By 1950 it was possible for a garment worker to take classes in "Mystery Story Writing" with Dashiell Hammett, author of *The Maltese Falcon*, or painting instruction with Philip Evergood or Anton Refregier. Hugo Gellert and Charles White also taught painting and drawing. Creative fiction classes were taught by Myra Page and Howard Fast. The course catalogue labeled its varied classes,

whether in painting, Marxism, Black History, Shakespeare, or creative writing, as "Know-How for Progressives." The school argued: "Students come to the Jefferson School solely because they believe the school will help them understand the world we live in" (Jefferson School, 1950).

Supporters of the "Jeff" and other Workers Schools such as the International Workers Order cheered them on by arguing that "IT IS THE DUTY of every citizen living in a democracy such as ours to strive to keep pace with events … If we are to fulfill the obligations we have as Americans living in these crucial years, we must never stop learning" (*The Worker*, 1945). Boston's Samuel Adams School advertised itself as "A School for you and you – yes, perhaps YOU!" (Samuel Adams School, 1945).

It seemed as if the Workers Schools, and their students, took this message to heart. As at earlier New York and Chicago Workers Schools, student councils, student-run lecture series, as well as student choirs and theater groups flourished at the Jeff. The cards and letters of thanks to teachers such as Wilkerson and W.E.B. Du Bois suggest students' satisfaction, even enthusiasm, for the school, which over its twelve-year existence enrolled more than 120,000 students (Wilkerson, 1955, Jefferson School, 1956b). Socially conscious, egalitarian pedagogy endured at the Jeff. In its final year, classes included "The Puerto Rican National Minority" by Jesús Colón; "U.S. History Schools Don't Teach" by Aptheker; "History of the African Slave Trade" by Du Bois, and "China, India and Africa: New Role in World Politics" by Alphaeus Hunton (Jefferson School, 1956a). Du Bois in particular relished the opportunity to teach at the Jeff, as red-baiting had already by 1948 limited his teaching and earning opportunities. Student evaluations showed that Du Bois' students (including future playwright Lorraine Hansberry) greatly

valued their time in his classroom (Lynn, 2019, Hines, 2022). In Du Bois's courses in Anti-Colonialism, Africa, and Black Reconstruction in America, as in the Jeff's other courses, students pursuing non-credit, non-career driven courses were the antithesis of Bedacht's pupils as "useful wheels." The Jefferson School catered to workers interested in education for education's sake but also those who prized knowledge that could transform society.

Radical workers created a counter-hegemonic pedagogy in these "People's Universities," as the Jefferson School's directors called the schools, designed to help "workers of hand and brain" "achieve that education which can enable them to change their world through ever better understanding of it" (Jefferson School, 1946-1947). Three years later, the school reiterated its commitment to educate "workers of hand and brain – for it knows that these are not only the most numerous group in our society, but also that in their thought and struggles lies the promise of the future" (Jefferson School, 1950). At a celebratory banquet on its fourth anniversary attended by Paul Robeson, DuBois and others, the school proclaimed: "Ideas – when the people take hold of them – can change the world!" (Jefferson School, 1948).

For a time, it seemed progressive pedagogy was a growth industry. The Jeff developed annexes in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens, and made its course outlines in anti-colonialism, Black history, and labor available to other progressive institutions such as Newark's Walt Whitman School or White Plains' Tom Paine School. The Jeff's instructors were available to teach at union halls and to other interested groups. As noted, course outlines from the Jefferson School were available to schools or even study groups elsewhere in the country. It was the

Party’s Education Committee’s coordination of and assistance to the schools that made such educational outreach to progressive pupils across the country possible.

Non-white radicals likewise embraced popular adult education. Schools such as those run by the Cervantes Fraternal Society, the IWO affiliate for Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking members, provided practical training for unionists and economics classes, but also classes on “Spanish” literature, dance, and music (Spanish Section, 1940). In 1947, in line with the IWO’s earlier call to make Workers Schools into full-fledged social centers for organic, working-class intellectuals, Cervantes opened a Casa de Puerto Rico in East Harlem, with “a gym, a library of Spanish and English books, classes in English and Spanish, discussion groups, lectures, handicraft classes, glee clubs, a nursery and similar activities of interest and aid to the Puerto Rican people.” The Casa also endeavored to educate Anglos on the cultural worth and history of Puerto Ricans. Honorary chairman José Ferrer envisioned the Casa “as a Center where Americans of other origins and backgrounds may learn about Puerto Rico and her people.” Indeed, white ethnic IWO members from East Harlem such as Congressman Vito Marcantonio and Vito Magli attended events at the Casa, emblematic of the commitment of the Workers Schools, and the IWO, to interracialism (Casa de Puerto Rico, 1947).

This defiant counter-hegemonic pedagogy continued well into the McCarthy Era, particularly among African Americans and Latino/as enrolled in the IWO’s Douglass-Lincoln and Cervantes Societies. In 1952, the Cervantes Society’s Jesús Colón was joined by African American IWO Vice President Louise Thompson Patterson in serving on the inaugural board of Harlem’s Frederick Douglass Educational Center, which was “dedicated to Negro liberation.” The Center’s board

declared, “The Frederick Douglass School is dedicated to teaching the people of Harlem – Negroes, West Indians, Puerto Ricans, and others – how to break down the ghetto walls. It will explain what the trade unions and workers who do not live in Harlem must do about these conditions. It will show the workers of Harlem how to take the leadership in solving the community’s problems.”

The Douglass Center also promised that it would “bring to the community the lessons of the victorious struggles of the colored peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America.” The Center was explicit in the weapon it regarded as essential in that fight: “Marxism … offers the only genuine answer to the problems of working people.” Still, the Center offered lessons in the rich cultural contributions of African and Hispanic Americans, as well as courses in a broad range of subjects, including “conversational Spanish for Progressives,” a prototypical intersectional offering, “the Negro Woman” (taught by Claudia Jones), “the History of the Negro People for Teen-Agers,” “Science and Society,” “Culture of the Negro People” taught by Lloyd Brown, “Public Speaking for Progressives” by Lorraine Hansberry, “African Liberation Movements” by W. Alphaeus Hunton, “West Indian Liberation Movements,” and a course in “el Problema del Pueblo Negro” (Frederick Douglass Educational Center, 1952).

“Here’s Where Our Young Commies Are Trained”

Workers’ Schools found some unlikely allies. The moderate Republican *New York Herald Tribune* in 1945 approvingly reported that the Jefferson School had annually enrolled 14,000 students and that the “Leftist School [was] Copied in Seven Other Cities,” citing the Sam Adams School in Boston among others. The paper noted that 1,000 students per semester attended the California Labor School in San Francisco, 950 in the Los Angeles school, 825 in Chicago’s Lincoln School,

with somewhat smaller totals per semester in Boston and Cleveland. The “experiment in adult education” was, the paper noted, regarded by the Jeff’s directors as “a strong trend … toward realization of the dream of a ‘people’s university’ – an educational forum geared to the ‘needs of citizenship in a democracy,’ rather than to ‘self-development’ or ‘heightened individual awareness.’” The bemused *Herald Tribune* wondered, “Does this mean that a new educational yeast is beginning to leaven in the nation?” (*New York Herald Tribune*, 1945). Progressive, even radical educational “yeast” was yielding promising results from Los Angeles to Boston.

Within a few years, though, the yeast was deflated, courtesy of the postwar Red Scare. More indicative of the United States’ anti-Communist mood was a *Saturday Evening Post* “exposé” of the “Jeff,” “Here’s Where Our Young Commies are Trained.” The *Post* asserted the Jeff was “where American youngsters are taught contempt for their country;” evidently courses focusing on racial brotherhood or the works of Frederick Douglass were equated with subversion and not the kind of patriotism of which the magazine or officials approved (Thompson, 1949).

Progressive schools were already in the cross hairs of the House Un-American Activities Committee, the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations, and other professional red-hunters. Schools were stigmatized for preaching such heresy as anti-colonialism or scientific Marxism but also for teaching racial equality. The IWO’s Jewish Children’s School of Chelsea, Massachusetts, was condemned before HUAC as “the little red schoolhouse” where lessons favoring black civil rights were derided as part of “a deliberate Communist conspiracy to inflame racial and religious minorities here against the United States.” A teacher countered in a letter to a local newspaper, defending the teaching of interracial

democracy at the school: "[O]ur schools deepen the student's understanding of American democracy and American history, emphasizing the different nationalities that have built America and rejecting all racist doctrines and all theories of the superiority of one nationality group over the others …" He added, "We consider this as the function of all education in the United States" (*Chelsea Record*, 1949).

Red-baiters were unmoved. Chelsea, like many other schools, closed. Many school boards, including New York City's, barred IWO use of public schools. "We will carry our fight for freedom of education to the people of New York until we get a reversal of this un-American procedure and resolution," the IWO vowed. "Labor and the progressive people of New York initiated the fight for free public schools and they will not allow the schools to become the private property of a few reactionary individuals who are transgressing their civic responsibilities" (*Fraternal Outlook*, 1949).

The IWO and Workers Schools soon faced even graver threats. The Red Scare's Blitzkrieg against all manner of progressive institutions quickly attacked the Jeff and eleven other radical schools, all in December 1947 placed on the Attorney General's List of Subversive Organizations. With the 1950 passage of the McCarran Internal Security Act, the Jeff was burdened with having to prove to the Orwellian Subversive Activities Control Board it was not a foreign-controlled, Communist front. Showing more intestinal fortitude than your average Ivy League president, the Jeff sought to rally supporters of free enquiry to its cause, urging "Don't Let McCarthyism Darken the Halls of Learning" and extolling "Man's Right to Knowledge" in laying out "the Case of the Jefferson School" (Jefferson School, 1954a). The Jeff further detailed the broader threat to free speech and thought its particular plight posed: "*Now it's a school* for working people they want

to destroy – the 10-year-old Jefferson School of Social Science.” (Jefferson School, 1954b).

Faculty members of the Jeff sent the SACB a petition by 197 academics from Bolivia, Japan, England, France, Israel, Ecuador, and Venezuela demanding an end to the campaign against the school. “Any attempt to suppress the teachings of Marxism in the U.S. imperils all free inquiry,” they averred (*Daily Worker*, June 29, 1954). Another petition from U.S. academics rejected the SACB’s claim that “academic freedom is not involved,” condemning action against the school as a threat to “all freedom of teaching in the realm of social, political and economic theory” (Jefferson School, 1955).

When the SACB denied the Jefferson School’s appeal, and ruled that it had to label all its publications with a statement it was a foreign, Soviet-controlled Communist front, students and their tuition fees fled the Jeff and other Workers Schools. The Jefferson School saw declining enrollments and faced crushing legal bills as it fought “subversive” designation. By Fall 1956 Party officials noted that the Jeff now faced an “enrollment of fewer than 300 at the school” (Charney and Norman, 1956). The school’s directors pleaded with the public, “Don’t Let McCarthyism Darken the Halls of Learning” (Jefferson School, 1954a), but it closed by the end of 1956. In announcing its demise, Jefferson’s board wrote they were sure the school would rise again (it didn’t). In noting that more than 120,000 students had taken classes at the school, they were “confident that the understanding and inspiration provided by the School will live on in the minds of its many thousands of students, and will continue to be reflected in their daily lives” (Jefferson School, 1954b, 1956b).

Such bravery, admirable and perhaps a needed reminder to current neo-liberal university administrators, unfortunately, was unsuccessful. The Jeff and other Workers Schools were shuttered by November 1956. But alternative spaces carried on. Miraculously, Arow Farm, once the site of classes run by the IWO's American Russian Fraternal Society, continues today, even though the American Russian Fraternal Society and the rest of the IWO was liquidated in 1954. As late as 1979, Arow Farm hosted a fund-raising picnic for the CP's newspaper, the *Daily World* (Foley and Brall, 1979). And within a few years some former Workers School teachers joined others in resurrecting countercultural classrooms with names such as Alternate U. and the Free University of New York. In 1966, at the height of Vietnam, the Free University of New York declared, in language that might also apply to current university administrations bludgeoning students and faculty protesting the IDF's blood bath in Gaza: "The Free University of New York is necessary because … American universities have been reduced to institutions of intellectual servitude," particularly beholden, it asserted, to "business, government and military bureaucracies." By 1970, the Liberation News Service listed dozens of alternative schools and free universities across the country that rejected the educational status quo in another moment of crisis (Free University, 1966; Directory of Free Schools 1970).

While it might be tempting to look at the suppression of Workers Schools such as the Jeff, or the brevity of the Free School movement, as cautionary tales on the dangers of standing up to "The Man," whether McCarthy or Musk, it's more fruitful to consider these schools as models of resiliency we could do well to emulate in our own neo-fascist times. Workers Schools offer a liberating pedagogical genealogy to counter contemporary privatized, marketized education mania. The infrastructure of Party-based curricula, training schools, course

outlines, and teachers reaching out to outlying Workers Schools is perhaps what is lacking today in order to revive a systemic network of radical pedagogy. In a neo-Dickensian era where monetization has replaced much of the liberal arts, and what remains of the neo-liberal university knuckles under to austeritarians, it is time to create our own alternative spaces for radical pedagogy, "training for the class struggle."

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