

PART TEN

Edward Pickersgill Did Not Dare To Release Initiative

INITIATIVE CRUSHED AND DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP BLOCKED

During the six months prior to Edward Pickersgill's split from the Collective in August, 1978, it became increasingly evident that he was no kind of revolutionary leader. By embracing bourgeois ideology he met some success in misleading the Collective. He was never successful in providing correct leadership.

Edward Pickersgill frequently promoted that what was needed was a collective leadership structure inside the organization. Yet he persistently crushed all efforts to develop such a leadership structure and instead promoted himself as "the leader", the ultimate authority. This is a clear indication of his deep-going bourgeois individualism, arrogance and overblown view of himself as a special, dynamic force inside the Collective.

Edward Pickersgill dismissed his comrades as mere incompetents and viewed himself as best at everything. He promoted himself as the best typesetter, the best writer, the best external organizer, the best internal organizer, and the best at applying revolutionary theory.

His standard line on theory was that although other leading comrades knew more theory, he was better at applying it. This was an absolute distortion of the facts. He actually only knew one or two theoretical works in any detail and could not apply the information in them at all.

Edward Pickersgill was constantly bragging about the "gloriousness" of his own contributions to the work while belittling the work of other Collective members. Mao Zedong addresses this erroneous attitude in his essay, "Speech At The Assembly Of Representatives Of The Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region". He wrote: "A Communist must never be opinionated or domineering, or think that he is good in everything while others are good in nothing; he must never shut himself up in his little room, or brag and boast and lord it over others."

Edward Pickersgill's view of himself as "the leader" was so deeply ingrained that he went so far as to assume the name of the Lu Hsun leadership unit as his own. He was mortally afraid of collective leadership because he knew this would lead to the development of secondary leaders. This would ultimately threaten this petty despot with exposure and threaten his privileged position as "the leader" of the Collective. Edward Pickersgill could not afford to see actual democracy flower in the Collective. His empty calls for more democracy, more initiative, and collective leadership were pure sophistry, designed to try and keep comrades off his trail.

The most common way in which Edward Pickersgill suppressed initiative was by suppressing criticism of himself and the ideas he promoted. Failure to understand, failure to implement ideas according to his narrow perceptions of the world, and opposition to his ideas, all led to vicious attack by the petty despot. Although in words Edward Pickersgill was willing to concede that he was fallible and mortal, in practice he acted as a god-like being who was infallible, omnipotent and almighty.

Edward Pickersgill's attacks on those who opposed him, or who he perceived as opposing him, were vicious. Edward Pickersgill conducted his reign of terror under the slogan, "If it works, it's good". Translated into this tyrant's practice this slogan literally meant that "anything goes" in the struggle to force an individual to conform to his own warped view of the world. Needless to say such vicious treatment of dissenters led to fear of speaking at all in Edward Pickersgill's presence. This was a cruel suppression of comrades' basic democratic rights and a crushing of any initiative.

In his 1962 "Talk At An Enlarged Conference Convened By The Central Committee Of The Communist Party Of China", Mao Zedong addresses this question of one-man tyranny, and

denounces it as a violation of the basic principles of democratic centralism. Mao Zedong wrote: "Our centralism is centralism built on the foundation of democracy. Proletarian centralism is centralism with a broad democratic base. The Party committees at all levels are the organs which exercise centralized leadership. But leadership by the Party committee means collective leadership, not arbitrary decision by the First Secretary alone. Within Party committees, democratic centralism alone should be practised. The relationship between the First Secretary and the other secretaries and committee members is one of the minority being subordinate to the majority. Take the Standing Committee or the Political Bureau of the Central Committee by way of example. It often happens that when I say something, regardless of whether it is correct or incorrect, if the others don't agree, I must accede to their opinion because they are the majority. I am told that there are now some provincial, prefectural and county Party committees where all matters are decided by the First Secretary alone. This is quite wrong. How can we justify the idea that what one person says goes? I am referring to important matters here, not to the routine work coming after decisions. If a matter is important, it must be discussed collectively, different opinions must be heeded, and the complexities of the situation and the dissenting opinions must be analysed seriously. Thought must be given to the various possibilities and estimates made of the various aspects of a situation, what is good and what bad, what is easy and what difficult, what is possible and what impossible. This should be done as carefully and thoroughly as possible. To act otherwise is just one-man tyranny. Those First Secretaries should be called tyrants and not 'squad leaders' practising democratic centralism."

Further in this same speech Mao Zedong states: "In short, if you let others speak out, the heavens won't fall and you won't be toppled. And if you don't? Then the day will inevitably come when you are toppled."

Edward Pickersgill refused to let others speak out. Inevitably he was toppled.

A CORRECT THESIS APPLIED INCORRECTLY

Norman Bethune, in a speech at the opening of a model hospital in Chin-Cha-Chi in 1938, said, "Our organization is not like a house — settled, static and still. It is like a globe — round, fluid, moving and dynamic. It is held together like a drop of water, by the cohesion and cooperation of its individual parts. So, when I think of leadership, I think, principally, of the 'little' leaders of small units, and not so much of the big leaders of great units. This development of the 'little' leaders is the absolute necessity for the revolutionary reorganization of human society into autonomously acting, socially conscious individuals. When that has been accomplished, leaders (like the State itself) will gradually disappear. So, even though you need leaders now, and will for a long time to come, you must begin to learn not to depend upon (I mean not to get into the habit of leaning heavily on) your leaders. Be a leader yourself, though you only lead yourself, for every leader starts by first leading himself."

Norman Bethune's stress on the necessity to lead oneself is correct, especially when it is considered that he was speaking largely to peasants with a low political consciousness in an area which had just been liberated from the yoke of imperialist and feudal oppression. The concept of initiative and leading oneself is also useful in the context of a revolutionary organization like the Alive Production Collective, if it is applied correctly.

When it is applied dogmatically without consideration of the conditions under which it is applied, when it is applied woodenly as a catch-all for every situation, and when it is applied in the abstract without a concrete framework on which to build the thesis into a

material force, Bethune's concept can be turned into a force opposing the release of initiative and the spread of democracy.

Edward Pickersgill's indiscriminate, wooden, dogmatic application of this thesis did just that. Edward Pickersgill used this thesis in practice to crush the initiative of Collective members rather than to encourage initiative and democracy.

All members of the Collective already had proven abilities as "little leaders" and had demonstrated, most thoroughly, the capacity to lead themselves. The proof of this lies in the fact that every member of the Collective has, to one extent or another, ripped away the chains and fetters imposed on them by the bourgeoisie. Each member of the Collective joined on their own initiative and has since moved forward to develop more fully as a revolutionary.

The fact that new members move forward is due to two main factors. First, this forward motion is encouraged by the correct politics of the organization and the expression of these politics in good, solid external organizing work. Secondly, each comrade has taken the initiative to drive or lead themselves forward to take up revolutionary politics.

Edward Pickersgill's call for comrades to develop as "little leaders" was an empty call to create something which was already a reality in practice. The devastating effect of this incorrect line on releasing initiative can be illustrated with a simple analogy.

Consider the question of starting an automobile engine. If the starter motor is turned on when the engine is already running the result is a discordant noise, damage to the starter motor and, in general, a process that does not benefit the already running motor. Using the ignition switch when the engine is already running is anti-materialist and ridiculous to say the least.

Similarly, within the Collective, comrades are already running like efficient machines. By his actions, Edward Pickersgill was constantly attempting to turn the switch of initiative to get the engine started. The result was discord in the running of the engine, variously manifested in the Collective by individual panic, confusion, rebellion, tears, subjectivism and feelings of gloom and doom.

Comrades were confused by the constant call to start doing something which they had been doing consistently for years. As with the automobile, the starter motor had been damaged in the process. Initiative was suppressed rather than released. If the starter motor is turned on repeatedly with the engine running it can be permanently damaged. Initiative may be totally lost. Of course, if the starter motor is broken and the engine dies, it cannot be re-started. In a revolutionary organization such as the Alive Production Collective, if an individual stops leading themselves and their initiative has been totally suppressed, the result is passivity.

There has been a weakness in the Alive Production Collective for some time in regards to developing programs. If one program was running smoothly and we tried to implement something new, the original program suffered and died or, alternatively, the new program never took off. We had the proven capacity to fire on one engine but what we needed to do was to learn how to fire up a second, thereby running two engines at once.

The seemingly mysterious difficulties which individuals and indeed the whole Collective has had in achieving this goal are not so mysterious after all. When viewed in the light of the fact that "the leading comrade" was trying constantly to fire up an already running engine, one can see clearly where the problem lay. Edward Pickersgill did not want even one engine to run smoothly and so worked hard to damage the spirit of Collective members with his discordant leadership.

MAXIMIZING CONFUSION TO MINIMIZE REVOLUTION

Besides constantly promoting that "every leader starts by first leading himself", there was another aspect of Edward Pickersgill's suppression campaign which helped thoroughly crush the initiative of Collective members. This was the issuance of general calls without concrete guidance.

Edward Pickersgill would issue general calls and then expect people to implement them in some mysterious fashion without any concrete guidance. Even if these general calls could be understood and linked to reality at all, they certainly could not be implemented without guidance.

In his essay, "Some Questions Concerning Methods Of Leadership", Mao Zedong said: "If persons in leading positions confine themselves to a general call — if they do not personally, in some of the organizations, go deeply and concretely into the work called for, make a break-through at some single point, gain experience and use this experience for guiding other units — then they will have no way of testing the correctness or of enriching the content of their general call, and there is the danger that nothing may come of it."

Further in the same essay, Mao Zedong stated: "Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership becomes bureaucratic."

This was the case with Edward Pickersgill. He expected comrades to push forward without any concrete assistance from him. Yet he dared to promote himself as leader of the Collective.

There are numerous examples of the kind of nebulous general calls that Edward Pickersgill gave and the diverse, devious ways in which he ensured that it was impossible for comrades to take up these calls.

For example, this petty tyrant would issue the call for more democracy. He would point out that the membership should provide this and then he would completely undermine any attempts to actually develop democracy in the Collective.

He issued the call that comrades should have "an enthusiastic but calm state of mind and intense but orderly work", yet his vile attacks on people left everybody dishevelled and disorganized, and in a state of great turmoil.

His call that people should be "platforms not doormats" was superficial in that he was the only person in the Collective who treated comrades like doormats. This slogan was supposed to be a call to comrades to stand firm as part of the foundation of the Collective. In fact it was an exercise in trampling all over comrades. Comrades in the Collective did not actually act like doormats, they were just treated as such by Edward Pickersgill.

A result of these general, nebulous calls was that Edward Pickersgill became further isolated and divorced from the mass of Collective members. An "us and him" type situation developed. This served to disunify the Collective and isolate the leadership from the membership. The result of these vague, general calls among the broad masses of the Collective was very often confusion, frustration, and despair.

Comrades were called upon to take up initiative and then slammed down when they dared to do so. Comrades were called upon to stand up as part of a "platform" and then trampled over as doormats. Frustration, confusion and feelings of personal failure resulted from the fact that no real progress could be made towards these goals no matter how hard comrades pushed. Edward Pickersgill stood as the roadblock in all these processes. In words he would call for liveliness, spirit and democracy. In reality this petty tyrant wanted passivity, subservience and one-man rule.

Coupled with this tyrant's issuance of general calls was his practice of demanding that all problems be solved immediately with one masterful stroke of his magic wand. Rather than taking a protracted piecemeal approach to solving problems he would demand that everything be changed all at once. He required comrades to move forward in great leaps, in line with his nebulous general calls.

Edward Pickersgill's attitude was that to discuss any problem once was more than enough. This ignominious distorted Mao Zedong's correct thesis that "To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it." Edward Pickersgill's line was that for him to address a problem was, indeed, to solve it. No investigation or struggle was necessary. All that was needed were a few glib words of advice and encouragement from "the leader" himself.

Mao Zedong, in his essay "Some Questions Concerning Methods Of Leadership", outlines the correct method by which to move people and the whole revolutionary work forward, as: "Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership — such is the basic method of leadership. In the process of concentrating ideas and persevering in them, it is necessary to use the method of combining the general call with particular guidance, and this is a component part of the basic method. Formulate general ideas (general call) out of the particular guidance given in a number of cases, and put them to the test in many different units (not only doing so yourself, but by telling others to do the same); then concentrate the new experience (sum it up) and draw up new directives for the guidance of the masses generally."

Moving people forward by encouraging them to stretch to a new, slightly higher level and by giving them guidance through educational criticism and encouragement were completely alien to Edward Pickersgill. Offering them warm support if they made the grade, criticizing comrades' shortcomings in a calm way if they failed, and consolidating comrades at their new level before having them move forward again, were outside the realm of this tyrant's thinking and practice. His method of slander, innuendo, insults and contempt simply alienated comrades. It blocked all forward motion.

The sum total of Edward Pickersgill's line of "shake up everything, guide nothing" added up to an active suppression and obstruction of initiative and democracy within the Collective.

SUPPRESSION OF DISCUSSION

Edward Pickersgill loudly proclaimed the campaign, "Against silence, for participation" inside the Alive Production Collective. He would explain that each Collective member had the right, indeed the duty, to participate fully in Collective meetings. Behind this thin veneer of democracy and openness lay a mire of suppression and tyranny.

At Collective meetings Edward Pickersgill would pounce on any ideas he did not like and denounce the speaker in vile terms. There was no freedom to express ideas. There was only freedom to agree with Edward Pickersgill's ideas. During meetings, this petty tyrant increased the pressure on comrades still further by launching spontaneous, surprise attacks, catching people completely off guard. Such attacks were most frequently launched against comrades who tried to "stay out of trouble" by keeping quiet.

With Edward Pickersgill at a meeting, there was no way to "stay out of trouble". To speak meant vicious criticism if your ideas did not correspond with those of the petty tyrant. To remain silent was to lay yourself open for attack. Comrades at Collective meetings were, therefore, caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. You were damned if you did, and damned if you didn't. There was no escape from Edward Pickersgill's tyranny in these meetings. Comrades more or less attended these meetings as defenceless victims awaiting their fate, never knowing when the axe would fall.

Edward Pickersgill carried his veneer of democracy still further by promoting that ordinary members should feel free to call Collective meetings. Needless to say, whenever this happened, the comrades who had called the meetings were subjected to his abuse and contempt. He would treat comrades like uppity minions who had stepped out of line.

For example, on one occasion, an incident arose around a meal time. Edward Pickersgill was called for supper but did not arrive

immediately. When he finally did arrive, about ten minutes late, supper was well underway. With anger in his voice, this petty tyrant demanded to know why he had not been informed that supper was ready. The comrade who had called him began to try to remind him that he had in fact been informed. At this point Edward Pickersgill got furious. He accused the comrade of speaking so quietly that he hadn't heard the call. Although Edward Pickersgill was actually deaf in one ear, psychosomatic deafness sometimes affected both ears when it suited his purposes! Having denounced the comrade, Edward Pickersgill stormed out of the room.

After the incident, some comrades felt bad about the fact that they had noticed the petty tyrant's absence at supper but had not enquired as to where he was or whether he had been called. The fact was that his absence from supper was not that unusual at this point in time because he quite often slept through it. Two comrades, however, on their own initiative, called a meeting to discuss this question and make self-criticism.

Those comrades who attended were subjected to the spectacle of Edward Pickersgill sitting through the meeting with a contemptuous look on his face, whining that the incident had put him off his food. At the same time he indicated in a sneering manner that the comrades should stop wasting their time discussing and get back to work. As a result, the comrades who called the meeting were made to look like fools and their initiative was directly suppressed and trampled underfoot. Further, they were made to feel this way by the person who originally created the uproar that they were trying to settle.

This tyrant also attempted to suppress political discussion about his relationship with one woman comrade in his faction, following the announcement of this comrade's pregnancy in February, 1978. Shortly after Edward Pickersgill told the Collective that he was the father of this child, meetings were held to discuss the political ramifications of this affair and to assess its impact on the Collective's life and work.

Some of the questions dealt with included: Was sexual promiscuity widespread in the Collective? Did Edward Pickersgill's affair with this comrade affect his relationship to her as leading member to ordinary member? A number of other questions were also posed which were of fundamental importance to the life and work of the Collective.

By his own conscious decision, Edward Pickersgill did not participate in any of the meetings at which these questions were raised. He gave no indication or explanation of why he did not attend the discussions.

During the course of this investigation, the majority of Collective members met one afternoon without any leading comrades present. On their own initiative they held discussion on the political questions coming out of Edward Pickersgill's relationship with this woman comrade. This was not a secret meeting. It was announced to the whole Collective that this meeting would be taking place.

The meeting was lively and produced many incisive questions which, it was decided, should be presented to the leadership in writing. After the meeting, a verbal report was also given to the leadership of the Collective. After listening to a small part of the report, the petty tyrant began denouncing the organizer of the meeting and the reporters, for creating a faction inside the Collective by holding a meeting without the leadership in attendance. The majority of Collective members were also branded as mindless morons during the criticism by remarks such as: "How the hell do you expect to get any clarity on these questions without the leadership present?"

Edward Pickersgill's fear of the Collective picking up his rotten scent, led him to suppress discussion of these questions. Launching into his usual pattern of vile slanders and frenzied criticism Edward Pickersgill tried to suppress the initiative of Collective members and sap their enthusiasm to pursue things further.

Later on Edward Pickersgill more clearly stated exactly who he

thought should and shouldn't have been present at the meeting. He said that the woman comrade concerned shouldn't have been at the meeting, while he should have been invited. His enormous arrogance was revealed once more in the fact that he felt that the meeting was worthless if he wasn't leading it. Any other leading comrade would not do.

He also insulted the woman comrade involved by stating she was incapable of contributing anything useful to the meeting. He further indicated that the meeting was bound to be a burden on her. Since he refused to listen to the full report of the meeting, he had not heard that this comrade was, in fact, a lively, enthusiastic participant at this meeting. She was as anxious as anybody else to aim some pointed questions in the direction of Edward Pickersgill.

Edward Pickersgill had absolutely no faith in the membership of the Collective. However he did fear their united strength. His denunciation of this meeting was prompted by his fear that any real investigation of the questions of sexual promiscuity would expose him clearly as a factionalist criminal.

The result of these conscious attacks was to stifle the initiative of the majority of the Collective. To openly meet and discuss was directly suppressed and the members of the Collective were cast into the role of factionalists engaged in a conspiracy!

In his "Talk At An Enlarged Working Conference Convened By The Central Committee Of The Communist Party Of China" Mao Zedong discusses the necessity for democracy. He explains that people must be free to voice their opinions and that without this democracy, unity and centralism will be sham, empty and incorrect.

Mao Zedong wrote: "Don't we have many difficulties right now? It is impossible to overcome these difficulties unless we rely on the masses and arouse the enthusiasm of the masses and the cadres. But if you don't explain the situation to the masses and the cadres, open your hearts to them and let them voice their opinions, if they are still afraid of you and don't dare speak, it will be impossible to arouse their enthusiasm. I said in 1957 that we should create a political situation in which we have both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness. We should create such a political situation both inside and outside the Party. Otherwise it will be impossible to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. We cannot overcome difficulties without democracy. Of course, it's even more impossible to do so without centralism. But if there's no democracy there won't be any centralism.

"Without democracy there can't be correct centralism because centralism can't be established when people have divergent views and don't have unity of understanding. What is meant by centralism? First, there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity of understanding, of policy, plan, command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through centralism. But if all those concerned are still not clear about the problems, if their opinions are still unexpressed or their anger is still not vented, how can you achieve this unity through centralism?"

DEVELOPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE BLOCKED

In his essay, "On New Democracy", Mao Zedong wrote: "Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution."

Alive Magazine is an anti-imperialist cultural magazine. It has an important role to play in the development of a truly revolutionary culture in Canada. As Mao Zedong states, revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon.

Edward Pickersgill's contempt for the writing and artistic ability of other members of the Collective was a real, disruptive force inside the organization. His personal arrogance with regards to his own creative abilities made it very difficult for other comrades to

feel confident of their work or to strive to better their abilities. Edward Pickersgill persistently suppressed the attempts of others to become better anti-imperialist writers and artists and so disrupted the development of a truly revolutionary culture.

Edward Pickersgill suppressed the initiative of comrades working in the Collective's editorial unit in a very direct and brutal way. Layout of the magazine was in Edward Pickersgill's hands and he used this position to repeatedly turn aside contributions from other Collective members on the basis that there was no more room. This rejection of certain material on the basis of space was a constant feature of life for the editorial workers. Interestingly enough, there was always room in the magazine for Edward Pickersgill's own writing.

This dichotomy between the way Edward Pickersgill's writing always went into the magazine while other comrades' writing was often rejected, was designed to try to demoralize the editorial workers and break their spirit. He painted a vile picture comparing his "natural" abilities as a skilled writer who could produce brilliance without effort, to the hard working editorial workers who struggled away and produced some mediocre articles which were just about acceptable for publication in Alive Magazine.

However these vile slanders did not carry far in reality. It was clear after the formation of the editorial unit that, while the unit had produced whole issues of Alive without any writing contributions from the "maestro" himself, Edward Pickersgill never wrote a whole issue of Alive Magazine. To any materialist it is obvious that Collective editorial workers were the driving force behind writing in the magazine.

Edward Pickersgill also worked to undermine the leading comrade in the editorial unit. Special programs designed to assist comrades with their writing were unilaterally disrupted by Edward Pickersgill. As the unit worked hard to weld itself into a cohesive force, Edward Pickersgill undermined these attempts by pulling comrades out of the unit on his own whim, without discussion. The leading comrade in the unit was never informed of these moves before they happened and was never given the chance to express an opinion.

One clear example of Edward Pickersgill's disruption of the editorial unit was seen in the development of a new column in Alive Magazine containing articles against the two superpowers. The column "United Front Against The Two Superpowers" had been run previously in Alive but had been replaced in issue #118 by the column "Soviet Union: Greatest Threat For World War". Edward Pickersgill requested that a new column called "United Front Against The Two Superpowers" be written.

This column was prepared for issue #119 of Alive Magazine and rejected by Edward Pickersgill on the grounds that it laid too much emphasis on Soviet social-imperialism. He stated that this would give credence to the Bainzites and other groups' view that supporters of the three worlds theory were soft-soaping U.S. imperialism.

This ignoramus never seemed to clearly grasp that the Bainzites will attack anything progressive without reason. To devote ourselves to trying to stave off attacks by these reactionaries is an absolute waste of time. The correctness or incorrectness of Alive's political line is in no way determined by the response of characters like the Bainzites.

Having had the first column rejected, the editorial workers prepared a second column, for issue #120 of Alive, which was divided 50-50 between opposition to Soviet social-imperialism and U.S. imperialism. Edward Pickersgill rejected this column on the basis that it was too short and contained too little material on U.S. imperialism.

The leading comrade in the editorial unit asked for the unpublished column to be returned. He looked at the column and saw that it was in fact very short and dealt only with Soviet-social imperialism. Confused, the comrade approached the writer of the articles. The writer took one look at the copy and explained that only half of what he had written was there. Half of the copy was

now missing.

This was followed up with members of the technical unit. On investigation it was found that only half of the column had been typeset because the typesetter only received half of the material. Interestingly enough the missing portions of the column contained those articles opposing U.S. imperialism.

When confronted with the fact that half of the column was missing, Edward Pickersgill told the comrades that he would look around for the missing half and give it to them as soon as he found it. Over the next week, comrades continued to ask him about the missing half of the column. He quickly became irritated with these constant questions and his replies were given in a tone of "what the hell are you bothering me with all this for?"

Two more columns were prepared, one for issue #121 and one for issue #122. Edward Pickersgill did not put either of these two into the magazine and so the editorial writers simply stopped writing the column.

A couple of months after Edward Pickersgill split from the Collective, the comrades found the missing half of the one column. The pages were neatly folded and tucked inside one of the books in Edward Pickersgill's room. He had hidden them! Clearly there were no depths to which this tyrant would not sink in disrupting the work of the editorial unit.

YOUNG SHOOTS STAMPED DOWN

Lu Hsun was the first great figure of China's modern cultural revolution. In his essay "On New Democracy", Mao Zedong wrote: "Lu Hsun was the greatest and the most courageous standard-bearer of this new cultural force. The chief commander of China's cultural revolution, he was not only a great man of letters but a great thinker and revolutionary. Lu Hsun was a man of unyielding integrity, free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness; this quality is invaluable among colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Representing the great majority of the nation, Lu Hsun breached and stormed the enemy citadel; on the cultural front he was the bravest and most correct, the firmest, the most loyal and the most ardent national hero, a hero without parallel in our history. The road he took was the very road of China's new national culture."

In the struggle to develop a new national culture in China, Lu Hsun spent a great deal of time with youth, encouraging their work and giving them advice. Lu Hsun's spirit to serve the revolution and support the new and young is captured in his own words. In 1929, he wrote: "As long as I can raise one flower, I have no objection to serving as the grass that rots to form compost."

In 1936, Lu Hsun wrote a preface to a collection of new, progressive poems entitled "The Children's Pagoda". He stated: "The Children's Pagoda' is not coming out to compete with our usual run of modern poets, but for another reason. This book is a glimmer in the east, an arrow whistling through the forest, a bud at the end of winter, the first step in the army's advance, a banner of love for the pioneers, a monument of hate for the despoilers. This collection cannot compare with any so-called mature, polished, serene or profound works; for these poems belong to an utterly different world."

Lu Hsun expressed similar sentiments in introducing an exhibition of progressive art work in 1931. He wrote: "Actually in recent years there have been no real artists in China. Those known as 'artists' win a name not for their art but rather for their qualifications and the titles of their works, which they deliberately make exotic, ambiguous, bizarre or imposing, tricking and awing people into thinking them terrific. However, the age is progressing ceaselessly, and here now stand works by new, young and unknown artists whose sober outlook and determined efforts have enabled these vigorous new shoots to emerge from the brambles and grow steadily.

"Of course, this work is very juvenile. But precisely because it is juvenile, herein lies the hope".

It is this spirit which the Alive Production Collective is working to emulate in Alive Magazine. The magazine is produced under the slogan, "Anti-imperialist cultural work in the spirit of Norman Bethune and Lu Hsun!"

The comrades in the Collective are genuinely committed to the development of a new, anti-imperialist culture in Canada. Lu Hsun provides an inspiring example to us in this work.



Candid contempt? No, Edward Pickersgill struck this pose, saying to cameraman: "Here, get a shot of me like this."

Edward Pickersgill, however, trampled on the spirit of Lu Hsun. He worked hard to try and crush young shoots of the new culture whenever they emerged. He was unsuccessful because although young and tender, these shoots had deep roots. When crushed they sprouted again. In the final analysis, Edward Pickersgill's attempts to crush these shoots proved futile.

Edward Pickersgill's attempts to stifle initiative and crush new developments were clearly visible on the question of poetry. For years the Collective has struggled hard to publish vibrant, new revolutionary poetry in the magazine. Early in 1978, groups were actually organized involving both potential and already active, revolutionary poets. Discussion was enthusiastic, and quickly these groups began to produce good, revolutionary poetry. These groups were becoming a real force in Alive's cultural work.

In words Edward Pickersgill was "thrilled" with these developments. In reality he was disgruntled and upset.

Inside the Collective, two comrades who had never written poetry before became enthused by the new developments on this front. With determination they sat down to work at producing their own poems.

Over the years Edward Pickersgill has periodically snooped around in comrades' personal possessions in a sneaky cop-like manner, looking for "evidence" against the comrades to be used in future struggles. This thief used to actually steal personal papers and belongings from comrades without informing anybody.

On one of his raids on comrades' personal effects, Edward Pickersgill found some half-finished attempts at poems by the two comrades mentioned above. With complete contempt for the spirit of these comrades, Edward Pickersgill laughed at these crude and

simple attempts to write poetry. He then tore up these, the only copies of the poems, and threw them away!

Edward Pickersgill took the same contemptuous attitude towards an attempt to produce progressive art. It has been recognized for a long time by the Collective that there is a great need to develop revolutionary art and revolutionary artists. In the past, attempts to do this were stamped upon by the petty tyrant who worked to try to crush the comrades' spirit.

Early in 1978 a new comrade began to make great strides in developing revolutionary artworks under the leadership of the editorial unit leader. Edward Pickersgill was furious and decided to try and snuff out this flame. He tried to insist that this comrade should be developed as a writer rather than an artist. When this failed he tried to move the comrade under the control of the technical unit of which he was the leader. This campaign, had it been successful, would have directly suppressed this young artist's initiative. It would also have been one more failure for the Collective in its attempts to develop revolutionary art work.

When neither of these two approaches worked, Edward Pickersgill began to refuse to put the comrade's work in the magazine. Although one cartoon was published, many more lay untouched.

The fact that poetry and art continued to develop despite Edward Pickersgill's attempts at suppression is a striking testament to the spirit of the Collective. Although repeatedly crushed, these young shoots continued to sprout. With Edward Pickersgill gone these shoots can now grow and produce flowers, flowers of revolutionary culture.

SECTARIANISM

In his essay "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas In The Party", Mao Zedong addressed the question of the "small group" mentality. He wrote: "Some comrades consider only the interests of their own small group and ignore the general interest. Although on the surface this does not seem to be the pursuit of personal interests, in reality it exemplifies the narrowest individualism and has a strong corrosive and centrifugal effect."

This "small group" mentality or selfish departmentalism, is an expression of sectarianism. In his essay "Rectify The Party's Style Of Work", Mao Zedong wrote: "We must oppose the tendency towards selfish departmentalism by which the interests of one's own unit are looked after to the exclusion of those of others. Whoever is indifferent to the difficulties of others, refuses to transfer cadres to other units on request, or releases only the inferior ones, 'using the neighbour's field as an outlet for his overflow', and does not give the slightest consideration to other departments, localities or people — such a person is a selfish departmentalist who has entirely lost the spirit of communism. Lack of consideration for the whole and complete indifference to other departments, localities and people are characteristics of a selfish departmentalist. We must intensify our efforts to educate such persons and to make them understand that selfish departmentalism is a sectarian tendency which will become very dangerous, if allowed to develop."

Edward Pickersgill upheld such selfish departmentalism inside the Collective. He viewed each Collective work unit as having its own discipline which superceded overall Collective discipline. In his eyes, the work unit which he led, the Bethune Unit, was his personal domain. The members of the Bethune Unit were personally responsible to him for all aspects of their lives. It was Edward Pickersgill's stated opinion that the contradiction between his unit's discipline and the discipline of other Collective work units was irreconcilable.

These incorrect ideas were most clearly expressed shortly before Edward Pickersgill split from the Collective. Two married comrades who had lived separately for a period of time were making plans to get back together. Edward Pickersgill received reports of these plans and approached the woman comrade. "You should seriously consider the fact", he told her, "that if you get back

together you'll be the only couple in the Collective with one partner in the Bethune Unit and the other in the Caudwell Unit."

He tried to insult the woman by pontificating that there was "a very real reason" for these different unit memberships.

It just wasn't possible to have a sexual social relationship with a person who was a member of one of the other core magazine production work units. "You'd be under two different disciplines," he said.

Undeterred, the two comrades went on with their plans to get back together. One evening, the woman comrade approached her husband in a Collective work area and tried to arrange a discussion. He told her that he was going to be very busy with work assignments that evening. They agreed to try to meet the following day.

Edward Pickersgill overheard this exchange and followed the woman comrade into another room. He harshly demanded, "What the hell were you talking to your husband about?"

She replied, "Just organizing a discussion."

Edward Pickersgill then issued the warning, "You should watch yourself because when you start to interfere with the schedule of members of the Bethune Unit, you're going to have to reckon with me." With that he abruptly walked from the room.

Later Edward Pickersgill told this comrade that even when she and her husband got back together, this didn't mean that her husband would be going home every evening. At the time her husband was living in what was literally a "Bethune Unit house". Only Bethune Unit members lived in this house. Edward Pickersgill had engineered this situation over the course of the preceding months. He told the woman comrade that he planned on ordering her husband to sleep in the Bethune Unit house on some evenings. His point was that it was him who had the ultimate authority over her husband's life.

Of course, not only did Edward Pickersgill put forward that Bethune Unit discipline was separate from the discipline of other units, but he also maintained that it was a better discipline. His fallacious line was that the Bethune Unit had a "hard-nosed discipline" tempered in regular class struggle.

In actual fact the Bethune Unit was Edward Pickersgill's personal forum for exercising hegemony over the lives of Collective members. He conspired to consolidate his faction within the Bethune Unit membership. He exploited women comrades as sexual commodities. He ignored democratic thrusts from the ordinary honest membership, or arrogantly trampled upon their initiatives. He isolated Bethune Unit members from other members of the Collective. He actively fostered a small group mentality both within the Bethune Unit and in other units in the Collective.

It is interesting to note that although such sectarianism served Edward Pickersgill's own ends to a certain extent it also presented him with certain difficulties. He was not a member of certain key units, such as the editorial unit, and so his interference was somewhat blocked in certain areas of the work. However, as explained in the previous section, he simply reverted to more blatantly disruptive manoeuvres in these situations. So he would unilaterally move comrades in and out of units he was not a member of, overrule programs developed within these units and generally harass the comrades.

Through this sectarianism, Edward Pickersgill hoped to keep the Collective divided, crush initiative, and bring the comrades "into line".

INDIVIDUALISM AND INITIATIVE TREATED AS SYNONYMS

Edward Pickersgill constantly denounced those who dared to take up initiative as "individualists". He used this tactic as his last ditch attempt to crush democracy and initiative.

Within the Bethune Unit, comrades demonstrated initiative in numerous ways. For example, comrades took care of organizing to get materials needed for the work from suppliers. These comrades

were branded as "individualists" as "thanks" for their services by Edward Pickersgill.

Edward Pickersgill's favourite line was that the reason that individuals had problems and that Collective programs failed, was that the comrades were not carrying out his instructions properly. Even when he issued contradictory instructions, which was a quite frequent occurrence, comrades were criticized for not carrying them out properly!

This petty tyrant used to tell comrades to check with him before embarking on a program or carrying forward with a piece of work. When the comrades did check with him, however, they were accused of "seeking permission" and not taking initiative. If, under fire, the comrades dared to remind Edward Pickersgill of his original instruction they were accused of applying what he said too mechanically. Somewhat chastened, and very confused, the comrades would go away, take the initiative and discover later that they were again under attack by this madman for not checking with him. In this situation, the comrades would find themselves subjected to another scathing attack, this time for "individualism"!

As a result of these spontaneous attacks, the difference between taking initiative and individualism was completely blurred for many Collective members. The degree of confusion on this question of individualism was reflected by the fact that comrades actually called for discussion on the distinction between these two concepts. Of course, this discussion was blocked by the petty tyrant himself. In this particular case you were damned if you took initiative, and you were damned if you didn't! The petty tyrant arrogantly ran roughshod over the Collective members, standing as judge and jury on who had committed the crime of "individualism" and who was simply taking up initiative.

Initiative taken up by one comrade in the area of finances was quite openly crushed. The comrade was new to this area of the work. The comrade's work developed well until she ran into some problems on which she needed guidance. Rather than muddle her way through she took the initiative to bring the problems to the attention of Edward Pickersgill, who was leading this area of the work. When she received no actual assistance, the comrade took the initiative to present her problems, in a calm and open way to the

Lu Hsun Unit, of which she was a member, and to the Collective at large. Along with the problems, the comrade outlined a number of possible solutions.

Rather than assist the comrade to move forward, Edward Pickersgill immediately seized on the opportunity as a perfect time to try to break her spirit. He launched a withering campaign of criticism against her "individualism", her "personalizing" of the problems involved in finances and administration, and her "panic" in face of problems. The comrade was portrayed, in this attack, as a raving, hysterical paranoiac. He contemptuously denounced her honest attempt to inform the Collective of her problems in the finances work by accusing her of breaking the discipline of the Lu Hsun Unit by presenting a document to the Collective before discussion and approval by the unit. This document was only released after it became apparent that the comrade was going to get no assistance from Edward Pickersgill or from the Lu Hsun Unit under his guidance.

This petty tyrant's final decision was to take the comrade off the financial and administration work completely, denying her any opportunity to resolve the contradictions at hand. Because of this ridiculous decision the comrade was robbed of valuable experience and her initiative was cruelly suppressed. Besides rubbing the comrade's face in the dirt, this petty tyrant was preparing conditions for his own takeover of the finance and administration work. The success of this plan was an essential part of his criminal desire to steal \$18,000 from the Collective.

It is a glaring exposure of Edward Pickersgill's rotten line on releasing initiative that so many comrades in the Collective were confused on the difference between "individualism" and "taking initiative". These two concepts have little in common. Confusion only arose on this question because of Edward Pickersgill.

Taking initiative can be simply defined as doing something correct without being told to do so. The problem encountered in clearly grasping this concept was that what was "correct" was determined by Edward Pickersgill's whim. Whatever he wanted to be done was, by definition, "correct".

Edward Pickersgill's personal whim became the determining factor in distinguishing "individualism" from taking initiative.

PART ELEVEN

Edward Pickersgill Had a Degenerate Lifestyle and Style of Work

EDWARD PICKERSGILL'S INEVITABLE DEGENERATION

In his "Preface To The Life Of Ernst Thaelmann", Georgi Dimitrov wrote, "A true revolutionary and proletarian leader is formed in the fire of the class struggle and by making Marxism-Leninism his own.

"It is not enough to have a revolutionary temperament,—one has to understand how to handle the weapon of revolutionary theory.

"It is not enough to know theory — one must also forge oneself a strong character with Bolshevik steadfastness.

"It is not enough to know what ought to be done — one must also have the courage to carry it out.

"One must always be ready to do anything, at any cost, which is of real service to the working class.

"One must be capable of subordinating one's whole personal life to the interests of the proletariat."

This quote describing the characteristics of a true revolutionary leader provides a glaring and revealing antithesis to the actual practice of Edward Pickersgill. This man, who dared to call himself a "revolutionary leader", knew nothing of the "fire of the class struggle" nor of the need to embrace Marxism-Leninism as a "weapon of revolutionary theory". His was the theory of bourgeois individualism and the practice of decadent self-indulgence.

Edward Pickersgill did not have the "Bolshevik steadfastness" characteristic of true revolutionary leaders, but instead entertained the slovenly habits of an indolent bourgeois. He replaced courage with arrogance; the arrogance of the master towards his slave, of the employer towards his employee. Entrenched in bourgeois ideology, he dominated others to enrich his own personal lifestyle. This despicable character was ready to betray the working class at the drop of a hat.

Over the past few years and particularly over the six months prior to his split from the Collective, Edward Pickersgill's lifestyle and style of work degenerated rapidly. This degeneration was visible in all aspects of his life and work and was a direct result of his lack of interest in, and lack of commitment to, anti-imperialist politics. The contradiction between these revolutionary anti-imperialist politics and his own bourgeois political line became so intense that the only way he could continue to exist inside the Collective was by literally dissociating himself from the life of the organization and taking up an individual pattern of isolation. So his personal lifestyle and style of work within the Collective degenerated quickly.

The degeneration of Edward Pickersgill's lifestyle and style of work exactly parallels the degeneration in his political line and in