

# PROLETARIAN UNITY



Theoretical and political journal  
of the Marxist-Leninist Organization  
of Canada IN STRUGGLE!

No. 20 (Vol. 4, no. 2) February-March 1980

## Who is preparing for war?



I WANT YOU  
FOR U.S. ARMY

The Quebec  
national movement  
in the 1960s

## Note from the editor

### Our readers' opinion of the journal (continued)

In issue no. 19 we started to publish excerpts from the replies received to the questionnaire about the journal published in issue no. 16. We continue in this issue. The focus this time is on the form of the articles, style, and how arguments are made to demarcate from opportunist trends. Comments also touch on graphic work on the cover and inside plus the range of topics readers feel we should be dealing with.

Before we get into it, we'd like to make one thing clear. Publishing these examples of the replies to the questionnaire by no means exhausts the debate on the role of the journal. On the contrary, as you will notice in the replies published below, our readers do not share a common understanding of what the role should be a theoretical and political journal like ours. Generally, everybody is agreed that the work done to date has been largely positive. Most people also criticize the traces of an academic approach and the still underdeveloped ability of the journal to be on top of and respond to current issues.

However, beyond that opinions differ. Some people think that the journal should be covering current events in a day-to-day way. They would like the journal to be like the newspaper *IN STRUGGLE!* except it would go into things in more depth. Reactions to the articles of a more theoretical nature were also sharply divided.

Those are but some examples of the divergence of views. It is clear that there is a lot more to be said before we have finished the current debate on the role of the journal. We would like to get comments from our readers on this policy. We also hope that readers will continue to send in criticisms of journal articles and new suggestions. It is by working closely with our present and future readers that we will be able to make *PROLETARIAN UNITY* into a journal which is able to deal with the questions which arise in the revolutionary struggle in Canada and around the world.

#### The editorial board of *PROLETARIAN UNITY* On the form the articles take

"The issue is not so much how long the articles are as how "heavy" they are. Articles should be as long as is necessary to explain the problem they are addressing and to demonstrate the analysis of it. If that means giving something exhaustive treatment, so be it. Long articles, however, should be prefaced by résumés... That would be especially helpful for people who are not used to heavy reading."

"I don't think that the articles could really be shortened much and personally I am not in favour of it. It is a theoretical journal, a propaganda organ. It is where we read material that we cannot usually find in the classic works of Marxism or the newspaper... I think that we should be able to take the time (and space) necessary in the journal to properly explain and document our ideas. The newspaper cannot be expected to do that..."

"Often I find the journal completely confusing, composed of many words which I cannot understand and phrased in sentences which I cannot grasp... It has not been through lack of trying that I have tried to use the *PU* in the above way, but have found time and again blocks in the style in which it is being done. That is not to say I have learned nothing from the articles that I have read but that most of them seem to jump from a position of a person who feels their audience is as advanced as they are."

"There have been notable improvements in the past issue or two. Reading the journal is a difficult task for those who are not

used to reading. I notice also a tendency sometimes to beat around the bush."

"The articles should be shorter in general, by writers developing a more concise and "popular" writing style, even in expressing complex ideas. Always think about how a militant would talk in explaining these ideas to his workmates."

#### How to criticize erroneous viewpoints

"There is just one more serious thing which must be criticized about the journal and that is the tone of voice it sometimes takes in criticizing other groups or individuals... These articles often contain what I consider to be sarcasm at its worst. We do not want to ridicule ideas or personalities but rather to show those individuals and other people that our point of view is correct. When you become sarcastic towards ideas people react negatively and often do not give your arguments the consideration they deserve."

#### Layout

Generally our readers agree that the present 8 1/2 x 11 format of the journal should be maintained. Everyone likes the more recent covers and whole-heartedly condemns the white covers with just the titles of articles on them. However, people stressed that there was still room for further improvements:

"I find the journal is rather sparing in its use of illustrations (photos and graphics). Even if it is a theoretical journal, it should be as airy as possible to make it easier to read (especially for those who have difficulty reading) and to attract the attention of readers or potential readers."

"I think that it would be worthwhile to illustrate the articles more with photos that drive home what is in the articles themselves, "lighten up" the work of reading and attract attention."

#### Suggestions for topics

There isn't room here to go over all the suggestions made by readers for topics we should deal with. Let's simply say that the list contains a lot of current issues that readers would like to see an in-depth analysis done on (the trade-union movement, the economic crisis in Canada and the world, the political situation in Southeast Asia and in Africa, the struggle of Native peoples, etc.). Readers also want the journal to continue to delve further into the major programmatic issues, especially as relates to socialism, the role of the party, people's democracies and war. People also want to see more criticisms of the main revisionist programmes being propagated in Canada.

"We perhaps could give more attention to criticizing the theoretical works of the nationalist-revisionist trend in English Canada."

"I would like to see the journal keep its present priorities, but also give a good analysis of the concrete development of the economic crisis in Canada."

"I would like to see more information on the struggles going on in other countries, the conditions in which they are waging their revolution, etc., just like what was done with Iran."

"It would be worthwhile, I think, to print articles on culture and the role of proletarian and progressive culture, the counter-culture, the disco scene and everything which is influencing young people."

## Inside

2

Editorial:  
Who does the crisis really hurt?

5

Letters

8

The imperialists are preparing war on the backs of the people

18

The Quebec national movement in the 1960s

28

The struggle against class collaboration in the labour movement in Canada

38

The CLC and the Canadian labour movement

42

The unity of the international Marxist-Leninist movement: A political question for today

48

The Workers Communist Party unveils its constitution

52

Commodity production and the rise of capitalism

63

Books in review

66

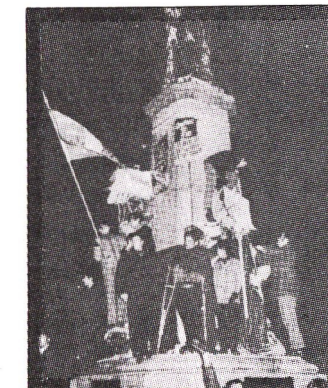
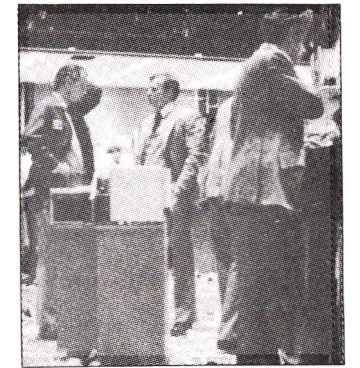
International Communist Movement



The imperialists opened the decade of the 1980s with the Soviet Union's armed invasion of Afghanistan and U.S. threats of aggression against Iran. The United States wasted no time in responding to the Soviet offensive. The new "Carter doctrine" kicked off a new round of preparations by all the imperialist powers for a new generalized conflict on a world scale. **page 8**

## Editorial

With a rate of inflation hitting the 20% mark in the United States, bourgeois economists are evoking more and more the possibility of an economic recession in Canada. At a time when the level of production and investment is stagnating, capitalists are raking in more profits than ever before in recent years. **Page 2**



With the wording of the referendum question, the Parti Québécois openly admitted to the Quebec people that it put little stock in national rights apart from their usefulness at the bargaining table. Has the PQ already forgotten the massive struggles waged by the people against national oppression? **page 18**



The year got off to a bad start for the labour movement, with the imprisonment of the president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the Michelin bill in Nova Scotia. The labour bosses will be called to account for all these betrayals. It is high time the labour movement got rid of all the McDermotts who are still all too present within its ranks. **page 28**

## Who does the crisis really hurt?

Pierre Elliott Trudeau is back in power after a nine-month interlude of government by the Progressive Conservatives, but political observers all agree that there is no indication of significant changes in Canada's economic situation. During the election campaign, a CBC reporter took the time to work out the possible consequences of the different parties' policies on the rate of inflation, unemployment, the public debt, and so on. Significantly, the results were very similar: while Liberal, Tory or NDP policies might change a percentage point or two here or there, there was a definite and over-all trend towards higher unemployment and inflation and a larger public debt, regardless of which party took power.

The economic situation in Canada is getting steadily worse, a fact that is becoming plainer and plainer despite (or because of?) all that was said during the recent election campaign. There is no longer any doubt that Canada, like nearly all other Western capitalist countries, is bogged down in one of the worst crises in its history.

As might be expected, the United States has taken the lead. "Is inflation out of control?" trumpeted the U.S. magazine Newsweek on the front page of a recent issue. The rate of inflation in the United States has reached 20%. The U.S. economy has been in a recession since 1979. Recently, an economist from the executive committee of Salomon Brothers, a well-known firm of brokers, freely described the situation as a "national emergency".

And when the United States gets a cold, Canada sneezes. The trend in Canada today is similar to what is happening with our southern neighbour. The Conference Board has predicted a rate of growth for the economy of 1.5% in 1980, less than half of the corresponding rate for 1979. Even in 1979, the rate of utilization of the country's productive capacity — the factories, machinery, etc. — had begun to drop. The result was a rise in

the rate of unemployment, which reached close to 10%.

As a matter of fact, Canada has been in the throes of a protracted recession since 1974, when the rate of utilization of productive capacity attained a record high of 93%. Since then, the rate has fluctuated up and down — mostly down. Furthermore, between 1975 and 1977, the annual rate of growth of fixed investments dropped from 22.3% to 9.5%. At the end of 1978, the rate had edged up to 10.5%. But taking into account the rate of inflation, which hovered around 10%, this represented in fact almost no real growth. So to all intents and purposes, the Canadian economy has been stagnating for several years now. New investments serve chiefly to maintain previous levels of production. This means that there is now little or no real growth in social wealth in Canada.

In contrast to what one might expect, however, this situation has not had bad effects on profits. Since the beginning of the recession, there has been an astounding increase in the profits made by capitalists.

Although the level of production has remained stagnant, corporation profits rose from 2.9% in 1976 to 10.1% in 1977 and 17.7% in 1978. In absolute figures, corporate profits rose from \$10.8 billion in 1972 to \$26.06 billion in 1978. Interest and investment income grew from \$4.58 billion in 1972 to \$15.17 billion in 1978. And these figures only reflect profits declared for tax purposes throughout these years. They do not take into account the many subsidies granted to private enterprise by the federal and provincial governments — for instance, the federal government's commitment to foot the bill for 25% of the building costs for new installations in the pulp and paper industry for the next five years.

The capitalists' profits are up, but not as a result of more production, for production is stagnating. The increase in profits is the result of more and

more intensive exploitation of the working class. In other words, in recent years there has been a direct transfer of part of the collective social wealth from the pockets of the workers into the pockets of the capitalists.

In 1972, profits represented 19.3% of national income in Canada. In 1976, the 20% of the population with the lowest incomes shared 4.1% of all income, while the 20% with the highest incomes enjoyed 43.4% of all income. There is no doubt that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

More and more, this is the situation in which the Canadian economy finds itself. The reduction in working people's purchasing power means that the economy stagnates and production is cut back. The result is a recession. The only solution the capitalists have for the crisis is to impoverish the masses of working people even further. They have done so by taking extensive advantage of the steady upward spiral in consumer prices. For while the capitalists can raise prices regularly and whenever they want to cover inflation, the working class signs collective agreements that determine their wages for two or three years at a time; and in recent years, increases in wages have very often lagged behind the rate of inflation. In recent years as well, the devaluation of the Canadian dollar has made Canadian products more competitive on the world market, but it has also meant that the masses of working people must pay more for imported goods.

More recently, interest rates have attained unprecedented heights. The consequence of this has been to further limit workers' access to and use of consumer credit. The extensive use of consumer credit has contributed to artificially boosting demand for goods since the end of World War Two. So higher interest rates will inevitably worsen the recession in coming years. This was recently confirmed by the bourgeois media, which announced the most serious drop in the business of the construction industry since World War Two.

\* \* \*

Economic stagnation has also meant heightened competition among monopolies. When production

is not expanding, the capitalists have no choice but to redivide existing markets through all kinds of financial operations. The profits made by the

monopolies and the handouts they get from the State have been used precisely to drive smaller capitalists to bankruptcy, acquire subsidiaries from competitors and concentrate capital even further. The best-known example of this is the Thomson family's purchase of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Free Press newspaper chain.



With capitalists competing fiercely among themselves, it is not surprising to see even the leaders of the Liberal Party taking up the economic nationalism that has long been a favorite theme of the NDP. Since 1972, the proportion of their total profits paid to Canadian shareholders by the big monopolies has dropped from 22.5% to 13% in 1978. For similar reasons, Herb Gray, the minister of industry and commerce in the new Trudeau government, is now in a great hurry to renegotiate the auto pact. Immediately after he was appointed to the cabinet, he rushed off to meet with top managers at Chrysler to invite them to invest more in Canada if they want the financial aid they so desperately need from the Canadian government.

There is an upsurge of Canadian nationalism, but there is also Quebec nationalism. For instance, last year the Fédération des caisses d'entraide and Québécois (now headed up by the Hamel family from the Lac St. Jean region) battled with Air Canada and Laidlaw of Hamilton for control of Nordair. They wanted to merge it with Québécois and create a Québécois monopoly in air transport. The PQ's economic nationalism also consists in promoting the small businesses that are supposed to be "innovative" and encouraging concentration.

## Note from the editor

Dear readers,

A few months ago, we asked you to send us your comments and criticisms of the journal to help us improve its contents, style and presentation. Today, we are again asking for your help. This time we would like to receive your comments and criticisms of the propaganda pamphlets published by IN STRUGGLE!. During the summer of 1980, the editorial board of PROLETARIAN UNITY will be reviewing and evaluating the major pamphlets published by our Organization in the past year or two. We will be examining these four pamphlets in

Significantly, nearly half of all recent bankruptcies in Canada have occurred in Quebec.

\* \* \*

This is the real meaning of both Canadian and Quebec economic nationalism. It reflects steadily growing rivalry between capitalists for the redistribution of markets and profits — profits that are the direct result of the impoverishment of the masses of working people. Can the proletariat have an interest in a "Made in Canada" or "Made in Quebec" economy, as the Canadian and Quebec nationalists would have us think? No. The capitalists have much more down-to-earth concerns. They measure the effects of nationalism in hard cash. The capitalists can be American, Canadian or Québécois: it does not make any difference whatsoever to the crisis situation in which they are caught, dragging down the proletariat and working people along with them. The current crisis is not a result of policies that favour capitalists of one nationality over those of another to a greater or lesser extent. It is the result of the contradictions inherent in capitalism. This is why economic nationalism is in no way a solution. On the contrary, it is a danger, for it threatens to hitch the working-class movement to the coattails of its "own" bourgeoisie.

particular: **The CPC(M-L), a revisionist organization of agents-provocateurs; The CCL(M-L), the voice of social-chauvinism in Canada; Uphold the revolutionary unity of the workers of all nations and national minorities; and Men and women of the working class: one enemy, one fight!**

We sincerely hope you will respond to our appeal with the same enthusiasm with which you answered the questionnaire about the journal.

**The editorial board of  
PROLETARIAN UNITY**

## Letters

### "National-cultural autonomy" or "territorial autonomy"?

Dear comrades,

I am writing to ask if the journal could clarify some theoretical points raised in the course of the coverage of the nationalities questions in the newspaper IN STRUGGLE!

My first question concerns what used to be referred to as "national-cultural autonomy" in the time of Lenin and Stalin, which they consistently criticized as an opportunist solution to the national question. "National-cultural autonomy" meant, as I understand it, the division of certain legislative and administrative functions along national lines, particularly in the sphere of cultural and educational affairs.

This was a not uncommon opportunist solution among the multinational countries of central and eastern Europe (e.g. Austria, Russia) in the first part of the century. It was criticized by the revolutionary workers and their leaders as a nationalist solution to divide the workers to the profit of the capitalists.

Even if no one today raises the slogan of "national-cultural autonomy" by that name, from what I can see certain trends leading toward the same content are emerging in Canadian political life.

For example, Trudeau's "multiculturalism" was a very timid and restricted move in this direction. But I think we can also see trends toward this arising in the movement of the oppressed nationalities.

For example, even if it is not universal, the demand is sometimes heard in the Franco-Ontarian movement for a **separate French school board**, in addition to French language instruction (unless I am wrong, this is the system which already exist in Quebec, where there are separate boards along religious-national lines).

Likewise, the question was posed for me when I read the article on page 10 in no. 161

of the newspaper IN STRUGGLE! on Native peoples in B.C. The article reproduces without comment a statement that "we must get at the real core — the lack of self-government, self-determination."

The idea expressed here is ambiguous, and could lead in either of two directions:

— To the establishment of regional and local self-governing bodies (municipalities, etc) on a **territorial** basis, arranged in such a way that the local areas where Indians constituted the majority of the local population would be recognized as an administrative district of one type or another... I believe this is the meaning of **local** (ie territorial) self-government.

— Or, it could lead to **national** self-government, to the constitution of local administrative districts on strictly national lines. I believe that this is precisely what is meant by "national-cultural autonomy", as opposed to the traditional communist stand of local or regional (territorial) autonomy.

To illustrate the difference, I give a hypothetical example (the fact I have to give hypothetical example is, I know, a reflection of my own ignorance): say there is a northern B.C. fishing town where Indians constitute a majority of the population. Is the solution for the workers to have national autonomy for the Indians alone, which implies separate administration for "Indians" and "others, mainly white", which implies a "racial-national means test" to determine one's eligibility for one administration or another?

What our solution I think should be is to demand, if necessary, a redivision of administrative boundaries so that town lines reflected the more or less communities.

My question also extends to the question of treaties and status vs. non-status Indians. We speak against arbitrary government rules which exclude certain women from "official status". Should we not also be opposed to "official status" as well? Isn't this also another form of institutionalized national division?

Same thing for the question of reserves and land claims. Will it help to develop the unity of the working class and the emancipation of Native peoples to give strong support to the demands concerning the land

claims of different national groups? The success of this struggle is bound to lead us in coming years to all kinds of feuding over what criteria of "racial-national" purity are necessary to share in the benefits (meagre as we know they are) of the claims.

I guess my main point is that I consider that many of the solutions to their oppression put forward by the minority nationalities go along nationalist lines. It is clear to me that we must actively defend their legitimate **rights**. But at the same time we are obliged to comment on their **demands** from the standpoint of the interests of the working class of all nationalities to always show the **independent interests of the workers**.

In the case of Quebec, we are not shy about doing this, although many workers support independence. We defend the right of the Quebec nation to separate, but do broad agitational work against separation among Quebec workers. We call the independence movement a bourgeois movement, and show how it represents the interests of Quebec monopolies.

I find we do not always apply the same point of view — to show the workers' independent interests in the question — when it comes to demands and struggles outside Quebec.

In closing, I would like to say that I fully agree with the fundamental stand on the nationalities question adopted at the Third Congress of the MLOC IN STRUGGLE!, which showed that for workers' unity we must fight for the absolute equality of nations and languages. My question is more on how to correctly apply this stand to some problems we meet as revolutionary militants in Canada today.

A member of IN STRUGGLE!  
in Ontario

## Democracy, Dictatorship and Communist Practice Today

*Editor's note: This letter from a comrade in Vancouver begins with some questions on a number of issues related to democracy un-*

der socialism, such as the role of the State and the army. (On these questions, see also the letter in no.19 of PROLETARIAN UNITY, on "Did socialism exist in the U.S.S.R. and Albania?", as well as the editors' reply.) The reader suggests a very concrete way of approaching these questions.

...We can go only so far, today, in discussing democracy and dictatorship as it should be built after the seizure of state power. Your article ("Proletarian democracy and dictatorship under socialism" in no.14 of PU) correctly insists that what is important is to grasp the general principles firmly. I am in agreement with the general principles you uphold — as far as I can tell at this point. I think the questions I raised above may demonstrate the difficulty of coming to agreement on general principles **alone** that are to be applied at some future date. Therefore, I also look to see how IN STRUGGLE! deals with democracy and dictatorship today. Also, how we deal with these questions now will influence the way we deal with them under socialism.

So let's take a look at the newspaper. Around the flour mill workers and postal workers struggle, whatever the specific event, the orientation given consistently argues that, to be successful, the masses of workers must more and more: 1) debate and decide the course of action to be taken instead of leaving this in the hands of a small group of leaders, and 2) participate consciously in the struggles (ie. speak to other workers groups, to the public, etc.) instead of being used merely as cannon fodder. An important practice which accompanies the above is that, on questions of debate within the workers' movement, IN STRUGGLE! exposes the arguments of the different tendencies, attempting to show where they lead and why their analysis is wrong. This approach encourages as much as possible that the workers decide for themselves instead of accepting **any** direction on faith. Finally, the paper often points out that the class collaborationist line of the union bosses requires them to stifle the rank and file through anti-democratic practices if the union bosses want to see their line dominate.

All these things can be summed up by saying that IN STRUGGLE! promotes the greatest possible participation and control by the working masses in their organizations and struggles in order that they can be

successful in winning their immediate demands. Also, that more and more the communist viewpoint and democracy are on one side of every question, while capitalism is on the other. Aren't these the beginnings of the proletarian democracy we need to build under socialism?

That these practices are being pursued by IN STRUGGLE! I find consistent with the theoretical point of view advanced in "Proletarian democracy and dictatorship under socialism". Therefore I am encouraged to think the dictatorship of the proletariat will indeed follow the path of persuasion among the people when we do get there. Also, the more that we develop ways and means of proletarian democracy now, the better they can be expanded and maintained later....

A reader from Vancouver

## Imperialism and Revolution

I was very pleased to read the first paragraph on p.35 of PROLETARIAN UNITY No. 16 in the article on Hoxha's book, **Imperialism and Revolution**. I have always been uncomfortable with the attitude towards the great leaders, which are referred to as if they must never be questioned or criticized.

It seems to me that an attitude that seems to say "Stalin (or any other of the great leaders) must not be questioned, he was the greatest leader the proletariat ever had, everything he did was perfect" smacks of idealism and is devoid of any idea of the real meaning of dialectic materialism. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao were great men, but men and as such subject to errors and weaknesses; as far as I am concerned that is what makes them that much greater, for what they accomplished they did in the struggle against their own weaknesses and despite them.

Marxism-Leninism and the proletariat are much better served when events and people are evaluated scientifically, without wearing idealistic glasses which blind us to errors in this or that person or in this or that event. How can practice teach us if we are not ready to question it? Do we not risk

making the same errors over and over again if we don't examine our practice (by "our" I mean revolutionary Marxist-Leninist practice), looking for the source of our errors, even examining the principles to see if we applied them correctly, understood them thoroughly, etc.? We might even be forced to question the validity of some of the principles we put forward, if enough practice and experience piles up to warrant it.

I hope that you will continue to publish articles on the practice of the international movement, on the communist international and on the questions raised on Mao and revisionism, in order that we may all learn from the past how to apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete reality of today.

Yours very truly,  
A sympathizer

## Concerning our article on the PLO in PROLETARIAN UNITY, no. 19

For someone who does not claim to be evaluating this period, Charles Gagnon is not shy about drawing hasty conclusions about the last 35 years of the international communist movement. Thus in PROLETARIAN UNITY no. 19, p. 27, he mentions that the U.S.S.R. supported the creation of the Zionist state of Israel at the UN. Then, without any further proof, he infers that this contributed to the degeneration of the Communist Party of Palestine into a mouthpiece of Zionism. If we want to review history, let us do it seriously and state all the facts.

- In 1946, the Soviet press was still insisting on the links between Zionism and British imperialism. Together with the Arabs, they opposed the immigration of the survivors of Nazi camps to Palestine and the continuation of the British Mandate in that country.

- In 1947, the Russian delegation at the U.N. staunchly defended the thesis that British troops should immediately get out of Egypt and Sudan. They had supported all Arab demands since 1945.

- At the U.N General Assembly on May 14, 1947, the Soviet delegate said he was in favour of the partition of Palestine if the establishment of an "independent, mixed and democratic Jewish-Arab state" proved impossible.

- Stalin's U.S.S.R. criticized the Arab States that opposed this project in the name of Pan-Arab nationalism. However, the U.S.S.R.'s basic hostility towards Zionism did not abate.

- The U.S.S.R. was one of the first countries to recognize the new State of Israel in 1948. However, the pro-Western option taken up by the State of Israel and the basic anti-Zionism of the Soviet regime were insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of close ties between these two governments. Relations between the two States began to deteriorate in 1950, and were broken off for the first time in 1953.

Well, these are the facts, now what do we make of them? Bourgeois authors say that the U.S.S.R.'s support for the creation of Israel was a "spectacular reversal", an about-face, but that Stalin had no scruples when it came time to sacrifice the most sacred principles of Marxist ideology for reasons of State. They explained his reversal by opportunist considerations such as the fact that most Zionist leaders came from the strong Jewish community that existed in the U.S.S.R., or from his hope that the Israeli State would be less influenced by the United States, etc.

And what do Marxist-Leninists think of this? No one has said it openly, but all have come to the conclusion that Stalin and the U.S.S.R. committed an enormous error, an error that they don't dare talk about openly but to which they can allude once in a while in a "theoretical" article on Palestine.

If they think that Stalin made an error on this point, let them have the honesty to say so. Then they could try to show in what the U.S.S.R. made a mistake at that time, and what the roots and consequences of this error are. You can stick whatever label you want on me, but I believe, until someone proves the contrary, that the U.S.S.R.'s position on Palestine was correct, internationalist and in conformity with the principle of the right of self-determination for nations. And unproven allusions by Charles Gagnon are not what will make me change my mind.

Several articles must have been written in the communist press at the time to justify this position of the socialist camp, and their authors were not all silly fools. Why don't you publish and criticize them? The world did not start with IN STRUGGLE!, and many communists have considered the questions that still concern us. Perhaps if you undertook this type of scientific procedure, you would then publish less superficial and irrelevant remarks than those in the article in PROLETARIAN UNITY on Palestine.

\* \* \*

By the way, with regard to the causes of the degeneration of the communist parties in the Arab countries, one can be sure that the dissolution of the Comintern opened the door to the development of nationalism in these parties. Without claiming to be an expert, I would simply like to point out that the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union elaborated theories to justify the almost unconditional support for the Arabs by the U.S.S.R. and its satellites. This congress gave a privileged role to the national bourgeoisie in independent third-world countries. The criticisms of Pan-Arabism (the Arab answer to Zionism) were a thing of the past; Nasser the nationalist became "Comrade Nasser". One heard Khrushchev and Ulbricht take turns pronouncing themselves totally in favour of "Arab Socialism", liberator and emancipator of Islam's people. While totally aligning himself with Nasser and the Baas national socialists and fanatical anti-communists, Khrushchev unashamedly abandoned all support for the communist parties. One can imagine the ideological confusion this must have provoked in Arab communist ranks.

One can also imagine that the unconditional support given to Palestine nationalists by Marxist-Leninists of the world since that time has not helped the reconstruction of the Communist Party in Palestine, nor in Israel, nor in the other Arab countries.

A reader in Regina

## Answer

The letter which we reproduce above is more interesting for the few facts it brings to light on the positions of the U.S.S.R.

around the creation of Israel than for the criticism it makes of Marxist-Leninists' positions on... Stalin!

We thank the reader for taking the trouble to give us this information; PROLETARIAN UNITY's readers, on the other hand, will be able to judge if this information is sufficient to put the conclusions drawn in our article on Palestine into question. We don't think so.

First, the aim of the article was not to evaluate Stalin's work, nor to make an articulated judgement of the positions of the U.S.S.R. on the creation of Israel. What we wanted to do was to show that for several years, at least since the Second World War, nationalism has marked the actions of the communist movement. Despite the virulent criticism he makes of us, we believe that the reader from Regina shares our point of view when we see the criticism he makes of Marxist-Leninists (all of them, no doubt!) because they support "Palestinian nationalism" today, and that, still according to the reader, the U.S.S.R. supported all Arab grievances and demands from 1945 to 1947. In short, the comrade's reasoning is not always easy to follow.

Second, we don't understand at all how the reader can state, without flinching, that all Marxist-Leninists consider that Stalin made an "enormous error" when Israel was created. The enormous error in the present case is made by the reader from Regina, who reduces the positions of the Marxist-Leninist movement to what he thinks are those of IN STRUGGLE!

\* \* \*

Our Organization has never claimed to be the only interpreter of Marxism-Leninism nor the spokesperson of world Marxist-Leninist forces. Moreover, we freely open our pages to our readers, communist or not, for we think it has been proven that they can contribute to the formulation of correct positions. IN STRUGGLE! does not refuse debate nor polemics. But polemics should not be confused with an accumulation of confused remarks, aggressively delivered. We therefore invite the reader from Regina to restate his arguments, for his first letter has not convinced us.

C.G.

# The imperialists are preparing war on the backs of the people

**"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force." (\*)**

President Carter's declaration just after Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviet imperialists is clear. The American bourgeoisie will stop at nothing to maintain world hegemony. The defeat in Vietnam, Watergate, that's all in the past. The much vaunted defence of "human rights", which had been combined with the defence of "America's vital interests", has been shown up for what it is: the preparation to invade Iran, the reactivation of the aggressive subversive role of the CIA and its coups d'etat, and the beginning of the re-establishment of conscription and obligatory military service in the U.S. The Western press hasn't balked about suggesting that the third world war might be on the horizon.

In the past, the Americans have landed their Marines in Santo Domingo and elsewhere. Russian tanks have paraded in Budapest and Czechoslovakia. The Americans have organized coups d'etat in Iran, Latin America and South Vietnam, while the Russians were doing the same thing in Ethiopia and Yemen. Today the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan, are full of Russian tanks, just like yesterday Saigon was being bombarded by American B-52's. American aid has been a lock and key for several countries. Soviet assistance in Angola, Vietnam and elsewhere amounts to the same thing — a way for this growing imperialist power to spread its tentacles.

Today there is increasing talk that a third world war is on the horizon. But, in fact, wars between imperialist powers have never let up. Since the

end of World War II, contradictions between imperialist powers have been growing, threatening people of the world with war.

At the end of World War II, the imperialists perpetuated the idea that wars and crises could be avoided. It's true that for a certain time, serious crises of capitalism were put off. Today that is no longer possible. The end is in sight to the practice of exporting the crisis to less developed countries, which are now demanding their own share of the market. The artificial growth in government expenses of the State apparatus and on war preparations have made inflation into a phenomenon which even the most knowledgeable economists realize they can't kill. In the medium term, inflation means growing poverty for the masses. It means capitalists can't sell what they produce and increase profits. The result: recession



**"An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region ... will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force."**

in production, instability in currency which fluctuates for the smallest reason, the devaluation of the American dollar.

To get out of this situation, imperialists have always gone the same route: increasing rivalry to grab new markets. That's why weapons produced by the imperialists since the last war could today find a use in a general war.

With the invasion of Afghanistan, the imperialists have gone beyond increasing military expenditures to stimulate production. Now, they've started open preparations for a no-holds-barred war. This is clear from the new Soviet offensive and the Carter doctrine.

1. New York Times, Jan. 1, 1980

## The Soviet strategy

The U.S.S.R. has a major advantage over its American rivals. It doesn't have a history of being allied with the very reactionary bourgeois and feudal classes around the world. This means the U.S.S.R. hasn't found itself as a target of revolutionary struggles. So it means the Russians can forge alliances with national liberation movements, providing them with diplomatic support in international organizations and military hardware. This support rapidly becomes blackmail, leading to corrupting the revolutionary movement from within and slowly but surely deflecting it away from its initial aims.

Look at what happened when the U.S.S.R. formed an alliance with Angola's MPLA, the Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola, which was fighting Portuguese colonialism. When the country was freed, the MPLA found itself for all practical purposes bound hand and

foot to Moscow. Today, the Angolan economy is entirely dependent on the U.S.S.R., and the Angolan leadership stays in power with the help of 15,000 Soviet troops. Ethiopia is a variation on the same basic theme: a clique of careerist military officers were quick to seize the chance to co-opt the popular revolt aimed at the corrupt regime of Emperor Haile Selassie.

In Vietnam, as well, the involvement of the U.S.S.R. in the victory of the Vietnamese people has to be paid for today: the Soviets are getting all sorts of economic and military concessions. (\*)

In Nicaragua, Soviet and Cuban "aid" has been in high profile since the victory of the Sandinistas. In Southern Africa and Palestine, the Russian revisionists are up to their same tricks: making sure liberation movements become bridgeheads for their expansionist policies.

But this policy of the Soviet bourgeoisie, hidden behind "aid", has been successful in supplanting the previously entrenched imperialist powers. It's also been successful in directly subjugating the revisionist countries of the Warsaw Pact. With the invasion of Afghanistan, it's gone one step further. No longer is it a case of infiltration and co-option of a resistance movement. Rather it's a question of squarely preventing the overthrow of a regime threatened by guerillas who had already taken control of some of the country outside of the capital of Kabul. So the tanks and the 100,000 soldiers are in fact **an occupation force leading up to an annexation of Afghanistan** to the Russian empire. The Moscow move was made all the easier by the fact that American attention was completely focused on preparing to intervene militarily in Iran.

(\*) For more on this see *Vietnam: the dangerous path of collaboration with Soviet imperialism*, in **PROLETARIAN UNITY**, vol. 4, no. 1, December 1979-January 1980, p. 12

## The American response: "The Carter doctrine"

The American response was immediate. Carter declared that the U.S.A. must stay "the strongest of all

nations". (2) Just as the Afghanistan invasion is an important milestone in Russian policy, the Carter doctrine

plays the same role for the Americans. Jimmy Carter unveiled the thrust of this policy on January 23, during his State of the Union address:

2. *Ibid.*



**Soviet tanks outside Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan.**

"Three basic developments have helped to shape our challenges:

— The steady growth and increased projection of Soviet military power beyond its own borders;

— The overwhelming dependence of the industrial democracies on oil, supplies from the Middle East; and

— The press of social, religious, economic and political change in many nations of the developing world, exemplified by the revolution in Iran." (3)

Of these three factors, the con-

tinual growth of Soviet expansion is viewed as the central danger to American hegemony. That's why Carter's response is in line with the three following priorities:

1) resisting all attempts to threaten or takeover the Middle East, through military force if necessary, and re-establishing American "stability" in that region.

2) rallying the NATO alliance and other Western countries more closely around the American offensive;

3) making the American people accept war preparations.

In other words, the Americans intend to reply to the Soviet offensive blow for blow, with an open and systematic preparation for war.

To understand this military escalation on both sides, it is essential to see that the Soviet move into Afghanistan poses sharply a vital strategic issue for both imperialist camps. It is the question of who is to control the oil-rich area of the Middle East; more precisely, it is the issue of the Soviet **threat** to existing American control in these areas.

3. *Ibid.*

## The Middle East: a strategic area

The U.S.S.R., of course, hasn't yet touched as much as a drop of the oil destined for the Western imperialists. But for imperialists, it's not only important to have natural resources. It's also important to threaten the resources of rivals. And at a time when the crisis is increasingly pushing the imperialists towards war, oil has become a strategic commodity. It affects the very ability to engage in imperialist war. That's why Washington jumped, even though Afghanistan has no oil:

"The region now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance. It contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Strait of Hormuz — a waterway through which much of the free world's oil must flow. The Soviet Union is now attempting to consolidate a strategic position that poses a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil." (4)

Carter adds:

"Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force." (5)

In asking Congress to approve a "strong budget for military defence, without any reduction", Carter also spoke of the "capability to deploy U.S. military forces rapidly to distant areas." (6) That means the Pentagon wants to be able to occupy any country, no matter how remote. To match the Soviet offensive, the Americans plan to increase and expand their bases in the Persian Gulf and North Africa.

Calling on other western imperialist powers to get involved in the new American offensive, Carter has the following definition of his political aims in the Middle East and in Asia:

"...to persuade Iranian leaders that the real danger to their nation lies to the north from Soviet troops in Afghanistan, and that the unwarranted Iranian quarrel with us

hampers their response to this greater danger." (7)

"We are now engaged in further negotiations to provide full autonomy for the people of the West Bank and Gaza, and to preserve the peace and security of Israel." (8)

"I am also working, along with other nations, to provide additional military and economic aid for Pakistan." (9)

In other words, Carter is preparing the ground so he can intervene directly in the Middle East and strengthen U.S. alliances with the existing regimes.

The U.S. is up against a Soviet Union which has an active military presence in Afghanistan and which has been developing a network of influence in the region. North Yemen used to be fiercely pro-American. Now it has accepted arms shipments from the Russians. Ethiopia is benefiting from the "aid" of 4,000 Soviet military and civil personnel, 2,000 experts from the German

4. *Ibid.*  
5. *Ibid.*  
6. *Ibid.*  
7. *Ibid.*  
8. *Ibid.*  
9. *Ibid.*



Democratic Republic (East Germany) and 13,000 Cuban military advisors. In 1979, the U.S.S.R. signed a "friendship pact" with South Yemen, which went into COMECON as an observer. Aden, the nerve centre of the exit from the Red Sea, along with Djibouti, now

harbours a half-dozen units of the Soviet fleet and a squadron of MIG's on a permanent basis.

As well, the U.S.S.R. has a presence in several national movements in the region. In January 1980, the Palestine Liberation Organiza-

tion (PLO), Libya, Syria and South Yemen, all of which receive Soviet aid, issued a statement which in veiled terms supported the invasion of Afghanistan. A few weeks later, most of them contradicted themselves at the Islamic Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan.

## Reverberations from the Iranian revolution

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan wasn't the only thing to disturb traditional American alliances in the Middle East. The Iranian revolution has sent shock waves through the region. For example, Saudi Arabia recently decided not to accept American military bases even though it had condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

When the Shah was in power, American imperialism had three pillars supporting it in the area. First, the colonial and expansionist state of Israel, a creation of imperialism ready to support the extreme-right wherever it needs help: in Lebanon,

South Africa, Rhodesia, Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique (when they were controlled by Portuguese colonialists). Second, there was the region's policeman, Iran, now stripped of all its ancient Persian splendour, not to mention its arms and oil. Third, there was Saudi Arabia, a monarchy, a symbol of Arab feudalism and the main reservoir for Western supplies of oil.

In this three-headed alliance, the Shah played a central role. The Shah shied away from defining Iran as an Arab nation, so he got away with recognizing Israel, and making cozy alliances between the Israeli secret service and SAVAK — with the CIA

sometimes along for the ride. Out of this deal, Israel got the oil it needed to fuel the tanks and planes that bomb Palestinian refugee camps. On the other hand, Iran, a Moslem monarchy, could keep the regions' Arab kings and sultans in line by helping them crush the domestic popular revolts against national oppression and feudalism. The Shah, for example, took charge of putting down the Kurds and the Omanis.

The Shah was a lynchpin between Israeli terrorism and Arab feudalism. For him, it was an easy role to play, since he was an expert in both terrorism and feudalism.

So American imperialism was left with the job of getting Israeli colonialism together with Arab reactionaries to snuff out the Palestinian

armed struggle, feared and hated by both Israeli and Arab reactionaries. That's why Sadat agreed to the Camp David Accords, a very nice plan which overlooked only one thing: the revolt and courage of the masses, both in Palestine and in the heart of imperial Iran itself.

So in that sense, the Iranian revolution threw a major wrench into American plans.

In Saudi Arabia, there are 300,000 Shi'ite Moslems supplying 35% of the manpower for the important oil corporation, Aramco. There are 75,000 Palestinians in Saudi Arabia. On November 27, 1979, the country witnessed major demonstrations in solidarity with Iran and versus the United States. The authorities sent 20,000 troops to meet the protesters, and there were reports that five people died. The spectacular takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the social upheaval and agitation rife in Saudi Arabia. In the wake of the Iranian revolution, the various struggles against Israeli colonialism, American imperialism and the Arab monarchies are coming together. It's like a contagious disease, which

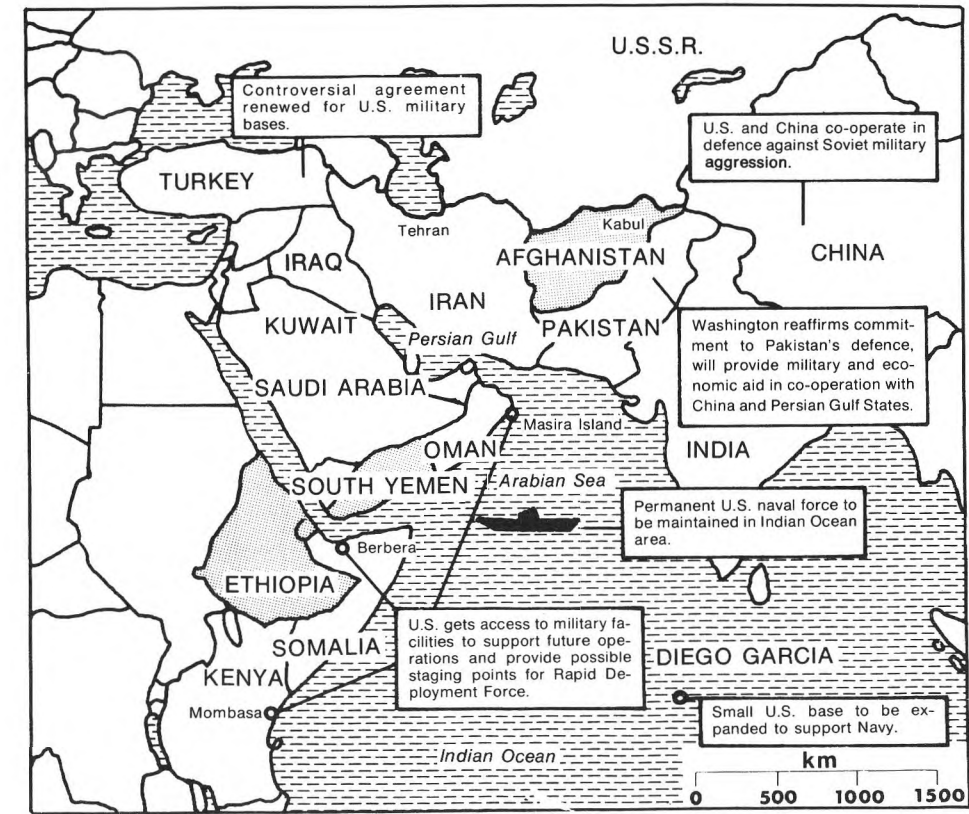
could spread to places like Kuwait, where Shi'ites make up one third of the population, and in Bahrain, where they make up 60% of the people while the ruling family is from the Sunni sect.

So the oil monarchs are triply hit by the downfall of the Shah. First, because the Shah's army was the nightstick against mass revolt and external threats. Second, because the fallout from the Iranian revolt was a direct threat to their reactionary rules. Finally, given the defeat of the Shah, a supposedly solid regime, the Americans could decide to intervene directly over their heads to ensure the security of Western oil supplies. Up to now the U.S. has always relied on intermediaries to do its dirty work.

That is why Saudi Arabia is not too happy with the Carter Doctrine. First, that country's monarch holds the U.S. responsible for the Shah's downfall and the consequent weakening of all monarchies. As well, with a mobile American force of 100,000 ready to intervene anywhere in the world and with the Americans looking around for new places to station their bases in the region, Saudi Arabia is afraid of losing its

role as the area's cop. The Arab regimes realize that their oil wells could well be occupied directly by American marines. And, what is more, with the American decision to freeze Iranian assets in the U.S., a move qualified as a dangerous precedent by the oil minister of the Arab Emirates, the oil kings fear their petro-dollars could disappear like a mirage in the desert.

Hence the whimpers of independence on the part of Arab monarchs. With the Shah gone, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are rivals for taking over the pivotal spot in the Gulf coalition. Last April, Saudi Arabia called for compulsory military service. A military base is being built for \$8.5 billion dollars, and it plans to supply \$100 million for arms in Oman. All these petro-arms are, of course, ultimately part of the weapons arsenal of American imperialism. Certainly, there are signs of growing independent-mindedness in some countries and the alliances with them have become somewhat unstable. However, the United States has a hammer lock on most countries in the region. Most are thoroughly bound to their master.



## The ripples from Camp David

Finally, to fill in the rest of the picture, keep in mind that Carter intends to "resolve all aspects of the Palestinian question". Because it is obvious that the Camp David conspiracy and the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt appear to have failed to rally the Arab regimes despite Sadat's willingness to replace the Shah as regional policeman.

Israel is more and more isolated in the world. It is on the verge of bankruptcy, with an inflation rate of 115% in 1979 and 60% of its budget

devoted to defence and debt payment. In addition, its balance of payments deficit in 1979 was \$15 billion.

Israeli colonialism is American imperialism's main base of support in the area. But it's becoming expensive. Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory have strengthened Palestinian unity around the PLO. Israeli support for the Christian extreme-right in Lebanon has pushed many Lebanese into a practical alliance with the Palestinians. The Israeli occupation of land in

Jordan and Syria has thrust these countries towards the U.S.S.R. and Europe. Israel's alliance with the racists in South Africa and Rhodesia has brought on revolt in Africa against the U.S. and the Zionists. The occupation of Jerusalem by the Zionists has been a direct provocation to Saudi Arabia. The American monopolies are not benefiting very much from all this. Some of them are beginning to wonder whether Israeli colonialism isn't an obstacle for the neo-colonial policy of creating financial dependence, which has served them well to date. That's why several European countries have made overtures to the PLO. All this has led to division within the American bourgeoisie, and Carter knows this very well. The White House wants to cut down Israeli expansionism while keeping the peace and security of Israel intact, because Israel is the American blockhouse in the area. At the same time, Washington would be ready to recognize an autonomous Palestinian territory in exchange for PLO recognition of Israel. The U.S. would then offer aid to the new Palestinian State, which would be under the wing of the Israeli army. That way, the Americans could counter the risk of increased Soviet presence in the Middle East. But the drama is still being acted out, and the Americans aren't taking chances. They're preparing things so they can intervene directly if need be, if the Middle Eastern allies become a little too stubborn or start cozying up to the Russians. To prepare this, the U.S. has had to strengthen the unity of NATO and its bloc of Western countries.



Given the crisis conditions prevailing today, oil has become a major issue for all the Imperialists. And oil is why the Middle East is of such strategic importance in time of war.

## European imperialism and the Carter Doctrine

The West has to "act in harmony but not in unison". That's what the British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington said, capturing in that phrase the dominant feeling among

the Allies of the U.S. But there are important variations on the theme when it comes to different Western governments. For the Americans, the key focus in countering the Rus-

sian threat is building up NATO, the aggressive military pact with its Western allies.

To do that, the U.S. must make its role of leader of the Western world firm and absolutely incontestable. Like bandits eager to get in on the

10. Le monde, Feb. 5, 1980



loot, all the Western powers are rushing to back the U.S. and NATO.

Despite the words of Lord Carrington, his country is more or less singing along with the U.S. The Thatcher government, just like the Clark government in Canada before it lost the last election, has chosen to follow the U.S.A.'s line to a tee. France and Germany have in fact been the loudest in saying they want "Europe to have its say on the global strategy of the Western world", (11) dixit Gensher, Foreign Affairs minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany).

Does this imply that these two countries are less imperialist, less aggressive and less reactionary than the United States? Not in the least.

Indeed, the common declaration signed by France and Germany, at the beginning of February, along with their clear condemnation of the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Afghanistan, amount to firmly supporting NATO. But by declaring that "detente could not resist another shock of this type", (12) the declaration also points up the fact that France and Germany are giving themselves another chance before severing the economic links that have enabled them to export capital and commodities to revisionist countries. This fact is important since the penetration of East European markets helped minimize the effects of the crisis for Germany and France whereas other countries, like the U.S.A., were not in this situation. France and Germany are thus trying to protect this comparative advantage while taking an active part in preparing the Western bloc for war. There you have the true meaning of Europe's "independence". We must, however, note the fact that all the European imperialists do not defend this policy to the same extent. The fact that the European Parliament voted in favour of boycotting the Moscow Olympics with the U.S.A. is a sign of these differences.

Even in West Germany, the point of view defended by the social-



Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs Huang Hua visits Afghan refugees, in a show of all-out support for the U.S. war preparations.

democratic government is not un-animously supported. For instance, the candidate of the Christian-democrat opposition in Parliament, Strauss, is campaigning to solidify the agreement with Washington. It should also be noted that West Germany, like Japan, has been under the U.S.A.'s trusteeship since its defeat in the Second World War. Consequently, not only does American imperialism have military bases on German territory — as it does in Canada, as a matter of fact — but it has also stocked nuclear weapons there and plans to install Pershing-2 missiles for 1983. These missiles will, of course, be aimed at the U.S.S.R.

As Gensher indicated, "Europe's security cannot be guaranteed without the help of the United States. This fact is something we should all be conscious of". (13) While stressing that West Germany would back the U.S.A. if they decided to boycott the Moscow Olympic Games, Gensher added:

"If Germany depends on American solidarity for a free Berlin, then the Germans cannot refuse to support the Americans." (14)

Apart from this rather timid last pitch to give "detente" one last chance, the communiqué signed by France and Germany contains

another gloss on the Carter doctrine. It reads that "the countries truly committed to non-alignment... have a definite role to play for peace and world stability" and that "the European powers have particular responsibilities in unison with their allies" to guarantee "the fundamental balances." (15)

These "responsibilities" boil down to maintaining and broadening their own dependence chain in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

An Elysée communiqué produced after France's intervention in Gafsa (\*) stated:

"France remains deeply committed to the political stability of the Mediterranean, to the independence and stability of states, especially Tunisia." (16)

In other words, France, the old colonial power, is keeping a close eye on North Africa and on French-

(\*) It seems that a guerilla attack was stated in circumstances that remain unclear against this Tunisian city. Libya was accused of taking part in the attack and France provided logistical support for the Tunisian army.

- 11. Ibid.
- 12. Le Monde, Feb. 6, 1980
- 13. Le Monde, Feb. 5, 1980
- 14. Ibid.
- 15. Le Monde, Feb. 6, 1980
- 16. Le Monde, Feb. 3 and 4, 1980

speaking Africa generally. It wants to keep the neo-colonial, ultra reactionary and repressive regimes like Tunisia and Morocco in power. France has even gone so far as to copy the Soviet caper in Kabul by ousting puppets that aren't useful to them anymore. That's what happened in the Central African Republic. This is what France has in mind when it speaks of "non-alignment"; the possibility of all "secondary" imperialists maintaining their own zones of hegemony while playing an active role in preparing war against the Russian empire alongside the U.S.A.

Japan's position could be analysed in about the same way, for this country is caught between its economic interests in Iran and the

U.S.S.R., and its political and military dependence on the U.S.A. Twelve per cent of Japan's oil comes from Iran and Japan is presently participating in the construction of a gigantic petro-chemical complex in Iran that is evaluated at \$3.3 billion. The situation is about the same with their Soviet neighbour that provides natural resources for Japan and is on the look out for capital to develop them. Though Habib, an advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State, maintains that "fundamentally, the Japanese government seeks to prove its solidarity with the other industrialized countries to the utmost" (17), it is evident that Japan will not translate its solidarity into actions as long as the U.S.A. has not given it solid economic guarantees.

It is thus easier to understand why Carter has put such emphasis on the "reconciliation" with Iran. He hopes to get the nationalist bourgeois that are presently governing the country back into the lap of American imperialism. This also explains the importance Carter has given to China. The links between China and the U.S.A. are presented as the guarantee of "peace and stability in Asia and the Western Pacific". Japanese imperialism in particular has staked a lot on the opening up of the Chinese market, especially its oil resources, to pull itself out of the tight position it is in.

17. Le Monde, Jan. 20 and 21, 1980

## The people are the ones who pay for this policy

The third and last aspect of the Carter doctrine is the mobilization of the people for war. "To be strong abroad, we must remain strong at home." (18) This is the creed of all imperialist bourgeoisies. Carter intends to apply it in full, backing up his attacks on the masses with a formidable chauvinist campaign.

"In response to the abhorrent act in Iran, our nation has been aroused and unified as never before in peacetime efforts and sacrifice." (19)

Carter is taking advantage of this "unification" of the nation to urge the people to further "efforts and sacrifice". (20) He has proposed an energy programme that, like the Clark budget in Canada, will probably mean a substantial reduction in the workers' purchasing power. At the same time, he has promised to reduce the deficit in the budget. Given that the military is getting more money for its budget, this inevitably means cutbacks in social services. Carter also evoked a "historic national accord with organized labour to restrain pay in-

creases in a fair fight against inflation". (21)

Carter has attacked one of the great victories of the movement against the war in Vietnam, which had succeeded in abolishing the draft. He has demanded that "we begin registration so that we will be able to meet future mobilization needs rapidly if they arise". (22) He also wants to reverse the measures taken to ensure some control over the CIA after the Watergate scandal. He is planning the full-scale resumption of the CIA's subversive campaigns:

"We need to remove unwarranted restraints on our ability to collect intelligence.... An effective intelligence capability is vital to our nation's security." (23)

The current presidential election campaign in the United States illustrates clearly that the U.S. bourgeoisie wants more than ever to persuade the American people to accept its policy of war and crisis measures.

The U.S. bourgeoisie wants nothing to do with Kennedy's timid reforms. It has made this quite clear

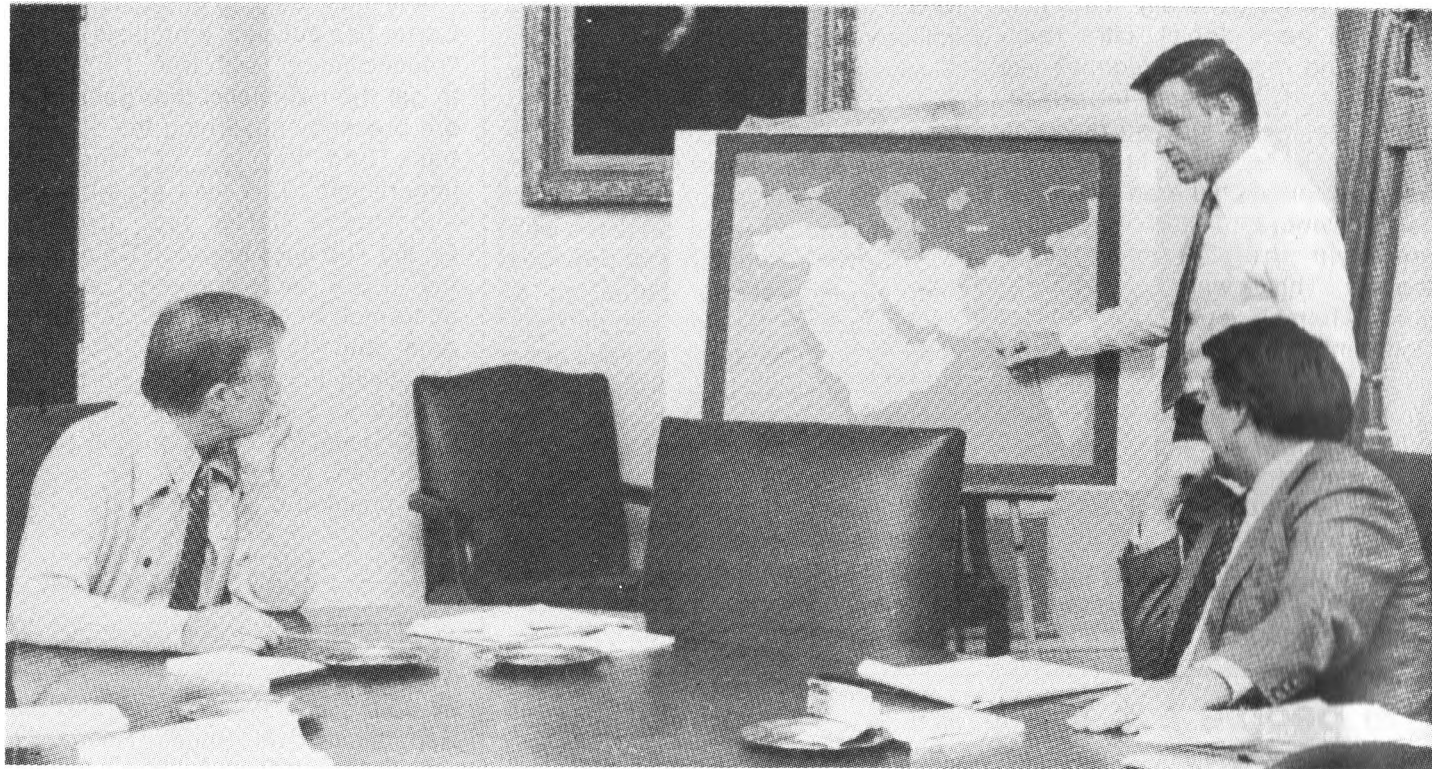
by opting openly for Carter and his Republican rival, Ronald Reagan, a well-known reactionary.

It is thus obvious that American workers are the ones who are going to shoulder the burden of the U.S. bourgeoisie's policy of war. And in Canada, it is Canadian workers who will pay the price of the same policy practised by Canadian capitalists. For even though they do not necessarily agree on how to divide up the loot within the country, they quickly find themselves very much in agreement when it comes to joining Washington in its anti-Iranian crusade and building up the Canadian army and NATO.

- 18. New York Times, Jan. 24, 1980
- 19. Ibid.
- 20. Ibid.
- 21. Ibid.
- 22. Ibid.
- 23. Ibid.

### Ronald Reagan





## A policy that leads to an even more serious crisis

In terms of the economy, this new upsurge in U.S. militarism is an attempt on the part of the U.S. bourgeoisie to solve the economic crisis and consolidate its profits with more military spending. On the eve of a recession and at a time when the U.S. dollar continues its downward spiral, the military has had its budget substantially boosted. For the first time since 1969, the increase in the military budget is greater than the increase in the gross national product. There is a good chance this measure will stimulate temporary economic recovery in the United States and its allies caught up in the same trend. At the same time, the "oil crisis", which has already resulted in considerably higher profits for U.S. oil companies, will probably be used to further consolidate profits. But the billions of dollars poured into unproductive spending during the Vietnam war was one of the major causes of the inflationary crisis that has plagued the economy ever since. So in the

longer run, the inevitable result of the new programme of military spending combined with the artificial boosting of energy prices will be to bring about the conditions of an even more disastrous collapse of the economy and even worse inflation. Unless, of course, the war and the wide-scale destruction of the means of production that war would mean allow the victors to enter a new period of "paradise for profits"...

For this is the law of imperialism. War is only the political and military extension of the economic war between the big monopoly groups whose political representatives are the great-power States. Just as the big monopolies grow stronger through the failure and bankruptcy of their competitors, so the big

imperialist powers are strengthened through the defeat of weaker imperialist powers. In both cases, these battles between bandits are waged at the expense of the working class and people. Fifty million deaths in World War II were the price paid so that the U.S. imperialists could profit from the weakened position of European and Japanese imperialists.

Now, once again, the world has become too "small" and the masses of the people too poor for the capitalist industrial machine to continue to operate at the same rhythm and with the same rate of profit.

This is why war for the control of new countries, new markets and new natural resources is the only possible solution to the crisis for U.S. and Russian imperialists and their allies, all of them up to their ears in debt and armed to the teeth.

## Should the proletariat choose either camp?

It should be clear that Western imperialism, headed up by the

United States, intends to retaliate against Soviet imperialism's offen-

sive by stepping up its preparations for war. To do so, the United States plans to consolidate a broad network of reactionary alliances whose purpose is to keep a tight rein on the peoples of the world. For there is no doubt that the working class of the imperialist countries and the oppressed peoples in general are the ones who are going to bear the burden of imperialism's new militarist policy.

This new situation has provided all the opportunists and phoney socialists with a suitable occasion to endorse either the invasion of Afghanistan or the new strategy of Western imperialism. And it must be admitted that the latter camp is much more numerous. For instance, the official representative of Chinese revisionism in Canada, the Workers Communist Party (WCP), launched its election campaign by reproaching Joe Clark and the Progressive Conservatives with having been "soft on Soviet aggression".<sup>(24)</sup> This, from the "only party that defends a foreign policy independent of the U.S. and Soviet superpower".<sup>(25)</sup> Has the WCP forgotten that its own programme calls for Canada's withdrawal from NATO and NORAD?

But the WCP has simply done that bourgeois nationalists usually do. With an election on the horizon, they proclaim loud and clear its country's independence; but the day after, they are the first to argue that we have to defend the interests of Canadian imperialists in alliance with U.S. imperialism. The WCP has not broken any new ground in doing this. Prime Minister Mackenzie King did the same in the aftermath of the 1940 election, when he ignored his election promises and proceeded to introduce conscription. Ed Broadbent acted in a similar way in the recent election campaign, when he promised the capitalists of Canada that he would modify the NDP's programme to eliminate the demand in it for Canada's withdrawal from NATO. According to Broadbent, this is an "outdated" demand that no longer corresponds to the reality of the situation today. But of course, this does not prevent him from fighting U.S. monopolies.

If the proletariat follows this path, it inevitably condemns itself to serving sooner or later as cannon fodder for the imperialist war machine. It also condemns itself to accepting the crisis measures that invariably accompany a policy of war.

It is true that Canadian imperialists have not yet begun work to conscript the people, as is the case in the United States. But do we have to wait until they start doing so to react? Definitely not. The Canadian bourgeoisie has already begun to increase military budgets. It has already undertaken a vast campaign of support for the U.S. war effort. It is no coincidence that Trudeau took the time on election night to remind the Canadian people that our neighbour to the south was "Canada's best friend". It is time for the proletariat to stand up and make its voice heard in opposition to this policy.

The imperialists want to prepare the people for war. Their message is clear. We must prepare to say no. We must say no to higher military budgets, no to any suggestion of cutbacks in any field, no to the chauvinist campaign for the defence of the "free world".

We are not being alarmist. But it is vital to understand where the interests of the proletariat lie in all this. And their interests lie with the peoples of the world, not with the imperialists.

24. *The Forge*, Vol. 5, no. 3, p. 3  
25. *The Forge*, Vol. 5, no. 4, p. 2



# The Quebec national movement in the 1960s



Demonstration against Bill 63 in 1969.

The PQ government is gearing up for the question that it will put to the Quebec people in a few months. After years of waiting, we finally know what the question will be. It will ask Quebecers to give the government a mandate to negotiate a sovereignty which is dependent on how far the federal government is willing to go in agreeing to an economic association with Quebec. And as if that was not enough, the PQ was careful to add that, in any event, the answer to the question could not be used to change Quebec's political status. The people will only be able to vote on a substantive proposal after one has been agreed upon by the bourgeoisies of Quebec and English Canada after years of negotiation.

Many people are angry at the wording of the question and the wheeling and dealing that went on before it was decided upon. Federalists and even long-time separatists like Pierre Bourgault and Pierre Vallières (\*) have come out strongly against the gross political opportunism behind this manoeuvre. Quebec has never once had an opportunity to decide on its political future — on whether or not it wishes to be part of Canada — in the one hundred and thirteen years since Confederation. Now that the PQ is in power, it too has opted to put off this choice until some later date.

The referendum question is, for many, the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back. The actual question that has now been unveiled is, however, simply the logical conclusion of the way the PQ has evolved since its founding in 1968. Its subsequent

evolution has dashed the hopes that it once raised in the population.

The progressive activists, students, women and workers who took to the streets throughout Quebec in the late '60s to demonstrate their anger at national oppression are justified in feeling greatly let down. The PQ's game has become unmistakably clear. It wants to use the vast movement against national oppression to further the interests of the Quebec francophone bourgeoisie. The Quebec people today see what it means for interests to be served as the national rights that they fought for are treated as just so many bargaining points.

The results of the past 20 years of struggle against national oppression in Quebec may look pretty grim to a lot of people. It is extremely important, however, to understand why the mass struggle against national oppression has become a simple electoral bargaining point. We must draw the lessons from this and ensure that history does not repeat itself.

That is the basic aim of this article. We will go back over the main events of the Quebec national movement in the sixties and look at the factors that allowed the PQ to become the undisputed leader of the struggle against national oppression in Quebec.

The PQ's option began, as it so willingly admits, in the early sixties with what has become to known as the Quiet Revolution.

(\*) Bourgault and Vallières have been major figures in the Quebec national movement. Bourgault was the leader of the Ralliement pour l'indépendance nationale (one of the first separatist parties) in the '60s and later joined the PQ. Vallières belonged to the FLQ and later joined the PQ.

## "Masters in our own house"

The Quiet Revolution refers to that period in Quebec history when the Duplessis Union Nationale regime was replaced by Jean Lesage's Liberals and the "powerful team" ("équipe du tonnerre").

The changes wrought by the Quiet Revolution have their origins in Canada's economic development following the Second World War. Canadian capitalism escaped unscathed from the war. It even provided "aid" to help Europe rebuild. Canada went through a period of rapid growth. This was the age of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the opening of mines in Shefferville, Gagnon and elsewhere in the Quebec northeast, the development of asbestos mining, etc. At the same time, there was a massive influx of U.S. capital into Canada. From 1950 to 1960, U.S. investment in Canada increased by 250%. The class structure in Quebec was modified substantially by these changes. The rural regions were gradually emptied as people moved to the cities. Agriculture lost its traditional dominant place to industry, mining and especially to the service sector. The Duplessis regime, whose traditional support had come mainly from the farmers, was gradually weakened as its clientele disappeared. This period of economic development raised new hopes amongst Quebec capitalists. At the same time, new strata of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie appeared which were the main forces involved in bringing about the significant changes that took place in the sixties.

The early sixties not only saw a change in the party in power. During this period the bourgeois State also carried through the adaptation to the new needs of an expanding capitalism which had been begun as soon as the war was over. This was especially true for the provincial level of the State in Quebec. The Quebec State apparatus went through a tremendous period of modernization, particularly in the education, social affairs, economic and financial sectors.

The Lesage government's reform in the economic sphere had the most long-term effects. In 1961, the Economic Council of Quebec was given the mandate of defining a plan for economic development. The plan it developed was reflected in the main economic reforms undertaken by the Liberal government between 1961 and 1966.

The centrepiece of the plan was the nationalization of the electric utilities in 1962. The main architect was René Lévesque.

The nationalization of electricity gave the State control of a powerful lever of economic development. Hydro-Quebec is now the biggest State-owned monopoly in the country.

At the same time, the nationalization of electricity made an enormous amount of capital available for more profitable sectors. Francophones in

the Quebec bourgeoisie were the beneficiaries of about one third of the spending by Hydro-Quebec in 1964. (\*) The huge Power Corporation holding company acquired enough cash from these transactions to diversify its operations considerably.

The Quebec government created the Caisse de dépôts et de placements (an investment corporation) in 1965 to administer the funds collected by the pension and crap insurance fund. By the summer of 1969, one million dollar per working day was flowing into the Caisse.

These transformations, as well as the ones taking place in social ser-

\_\_\_\_\_

(\*) According to data in Carol Jobin's book, *Les enjeux économiques de la nationalisation de l'électricité*, Ed. Albert Saint Martin, Montréal, 1978, p. 114.



In 1960, René Lévesque spoke to the convention of the Quebec Federation of Labour, seeking workers' support for the Quiet Revolution.

vices and education, increased substantially the number of people working for the State. There was simultaneously a growth in numbers and a proletarianization of the jobs in the civil service.

This short recap of the main achievements of the Quiet Revolution shows one thing clearly: the Quebec bourgeoisie started the sixties in a highly ambitious mood. Their plans continually came up against obstacles due to the federal structure. This was especially true at that time because the federal government was trying to broaden its jurisdiction into fields that had previously been reserved for the

provinces. This happened in communications, natural resources, etc. The Lesage government had conflicts with the federal government over several questions. The Quebec pension scheme was created after Lesage refused to participate in the Canada Pension Plan. His government went through many rounds of constitutional negotiations in order to get more power for Quebec.

It is no accident that the PQ now says that Quebec must continue what was started with the Quiet Revolution. The Quebec bourgeoisie has seen the tremendous possibilities for economic development that political power would give them.

## “A workers’ Quebec”, “Quebec for the Quebecois”

The two slogans, “A workers’ Quebec” and “Quebec for the Quebecois”, sum up the two main tendencies that characterized the movement and that increasingly came into conflict with one another. These slogans became the rallying cry for hundreds of thousands of workers, young people and women. They organized to demand an end to national oppression, for the right to speak French at work and for an end to chauvinism, discrimination and the privileges of the English-Canadian nation.

The national movement dovetailed with the growth in labour struggles against capitalist exploitation and for union rights. It also intersected with student struggles for the freedom of expression and against an educational system designed to produce unemployed people and docile workers. It merged with internationalist support the Indochinese people, Blacks in the United States, etc.

\* \* \*

In November 1962, the then president of CN, Donald Gordon, stated that he had no use or need for francophones in the company. This chauvinist statement unleashed

demonstrations throughout Quebec. The first FLQ wave occurred in 1963 with a few bombings of statues of the Queen and of Dollard des Ormeaux. When the Queen visited Quebec City in 1964, the police savagely attacked the crowd in what has come to be known as “billyclub Saturday”. The struggle against national oppression in Quebec was becoming sharper. The movement was restricted, however, to certain elements of the petty bourgeoisie at that time. The Queen and other symbols of anglophone domination were attacked, not the capitalists. The nationalist movement then had little interest in the struggle of the working class. On the contrary, the union leaderships were completely behind Lesage’s reforms and were highly suspicious of the nationalist movement which was associated in the popular mind with the stone age Duplessis regime.

The Ralliement pour l’indépendance nationale (RIN) was founded during this initial period in 1962. It was the first party in Quebec that openly called for independence. There was nothing revolutionary about its programme, however. It wanted to break all federal ties in order to ensure the development of a genuinely independent Quebec

A more important aspect of these changes, however, is the unprecedented upsurge in all social, national and labour struggles that they engendered. Practically all classes became very active and put forward their demands. The struggle against national oppression gave birth to a vast national movement encompassing broad sectors of the labor movement, youth, women and the petty bourgeoisie. The movement reached a peak in the late sixties, but the Quebec nationalist movement had already begun to make itself felt in the beginning of the decade.

capitalism. The RIN had only minor influence (it only received 8% of the popular vote in the 1966 provincial election), and did not succeed in penetrating the labour movement. In fact, part of the labour movement (the Quebec Federation of Labour — QFL) backed the highly federalist NDP which had been created by the CCF and the CLC in 1960.

The independence movement had very little influence in the labour movement in the early sixties. That is why it never really got off the ground.

It was only later that the once marginal Quebec national movement gained real strength and won over broad sectors of the Quebec population. The movement was to become more radical. At the same time, it would claim that the national question was the key to solving all the contradictions within the labour movement and Quebec society as a whole.

\* \* \*

The illusion of the Quiet Revolution had begun to fade fast by the mid-sixties. Economic recession came in 1966 and lasted until 1970. Unemployment rose from 4.7% to nearly 8% in those years and inflation rose above 3%. It was time for the Quebec government to put an end to its “reforms” and the Quebec people realized that they had been tricked once again.

The Laurendeau-Dunton Bilingualism and Biculturalism Royal

Commission released data showing that francophone Quebecers were increasingly being discriminated against on the labour market and at work. Only Italian immigrants and Native peoples had lower incomes. English universities and colleges had disgusting financial privileges and forced assimilation was a real problem linked inexorably to the economic conditions. On top of all that, great preparations were underway to celebrate the centenary of the national oppression of Quebec.

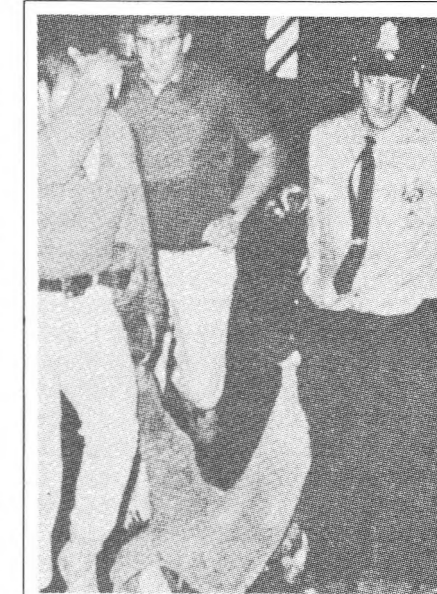
Civil servants who won the right to strike in 1966 were met with back-to-work legislation, government-decreed settlements and injunctions whenever they tried to exercise their right to strike. Their leaders were even jailed. The parity committees (composed of union and government representatives) created during the Quiet Revolution did nothing to change the situation. Students and graduates were faced with unemployment, and while in school often had to live under economic conditions below the official poverty level. The collaboration between the Quebec student union (UGEQ — Union générale des étudiants du Québec) and the Department of Education to improve the loan and bursary system did no good. Quebecers had been promised that they would become “masters in their own house”. In fact, the house belonged to the capitalists where they were very much the masters. Here again, the creation of Quebec State monopolies didn’t improve matters any.

Quebec workers and working people thus saw that the reformism of the Quiet Revolution was a failure. The realization was a hard blow. As a result, all the working-class and popular struggles related to the struggle against national oppression were radicalized.

Between 1966 and 1970, the number and impact of strikes grew steadily. The struggles in the public sector played a leading role in this movement.

At the St. Jean Baptiste Day celebrations in 1968 (June 24 is Quebec’s national holiday), hundreds of militant nationalists from the RIN and other organizations attacked the reviewing stand

for the day’s parade with a hail of paving stones. Besides the usual local elite, guests on the reviewing stand included a much more notable target: Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, prime minister of Canada. For weeks, Trudeau had been fighting an election campaign on one main issue — his denial of the existence of the Quebec nation. The day after the St. Jean Baptiste Day confrontation, he won the general election. The year 1968 was also a year of student unrest, as occupations swept all the CEGEPs (community colleges) where the nationalist movement was very influential.



**On June 1968, nationalist demonstrators attacked the reviewing stand for the St. Jean Baptiste Day parade in Montreal. On of the guests of honour on the stand who braved the demonstrators was Prime Minister Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, who was to win the general election the next day. The demonstration met with violent repression.**

An event in the spring of 1968 illustrated best the turn taken by the national movement in these years. That spring, there was a huge demonstration in front of McGill, the English-language university in Montreal.

Thousands and thousands of people participated in the demonstration, which was originally organized by the Front de liberation populaire

(FLP — popular liberation front), a self-styled socialist organization, around the theme of “McGill to the workers”. The FLP did all the basic work of mobilizing and organizing for the demonstration. It condemned the privileges of this institution in comparison to the French universities, and further denounced the fact that McGill was a centre of higher learning for the future leaders of the country and the future executives of Canadian and U.S. companies.

A few days before the date fixed for the demonstration, the leadership of the movement was taken over by the Ligue d’intégration scolaire (LIS — League for integration of the schools), a reactionary nationalist organization that had made a name for itself in confrontations with Italian immigrants in the Montreal suburb of St. Leonard on the issue of French unilingualism. From that point on, the slogan of “McGill to the workers” was abandoned in favour of “McGill français” (Make McGill French). The thousands of marchers who filled Sherbrooke St. in Montreal to demonstrate against a university that serves the capitalists and enjoys discriminatory privileges found themselves headed up by leaders who had nothing to do with the working-class movement and who had no interest in the struggle against capitalism. These leaders wanted to turn a struggle against privileges into a struggle to make McGill a strictly French university, in the name of the purity of the French language throughout the territory of Quebec. It was a good preview of the way the movement was to be co-opted and used in the coming years.

In 1969, the tens of thousands of demonstrators had become hundreds of thousands, demonstrating this time against Bill 63. Bill 63 gave the parents the choice of the language in which their children were to be educated. But in practice, it in no way affected the privileges attached to the English language in the field of education and economic life. In contrast to the previous period, the labour movement took part in these demonstrations and the various labour bodies took a stand against Bill 63.

In October, 1969, the Montreal municipal police went on strike. During the strike, the garages of Murray Hill, an English-Canadian monopoly, were ransacked by demonstrators from the Mouvement de libération du taxi (Taxi liberation movement). The demonstration grew into a riot that overflowed into the surrounding neighbourhoods of the city. One demonstrator was killed. (\*) Authorities were preparing to call in the army before the situation calmed down.

Events like these came to characterize the political struggle in Quebec more and more up until the crisis of October 1970. In its manifesto during the October crisis, the FLQ no longer attacked the Queen and her symbols. Instead, it attacked business leaders, the stock exchange and politicians. It received a sympathetic hearing from many Quebecers.

As this brief overview indicates, the people who fought against national oppression in the 1960s were not the parliamentary politicians nor the cabinet ministers and their negotiators at federal-provincial conferences. The battle against national oppression was fought by the people fighting in the streets. The victories against national discrimination were all won through struggle, and only through struggle. Workers at the General Motors plant in Ste. Thérèse (just outside



In front of the national assembly in Quebec City, during the demonstrations against Bill 63.

Montreal) did not win the right to work in French thanks to some PQ members of the national assembly. They won it through struggle, by mobilizing the workers.

We do not often hear about these important events that marked the struggle against national oppression all through the 1960s. It is as if the hundreds and thousands of people who demonstrated and protested during this period have been forgotten, along with the repression the State used against them. The PQ's White Paper on sovereignty-association, for instance, totally ignores this entire phase of the struggle against national oppression in Quebec. Instead, the White Paper plays up the epic struggles of the Bourassa government for "a new division of powers that would have given constitutional recognition to the Quebec nation and guaranteed it the means to satisfy its aspirations". (1) The PQ has probably forgotten that the same Bourassa government called in the Canadian army to its rescue in 1970 and that its very own very Quebecois police violently suppressed the demonstrations of June 24, 1968, Murray Hill, etc. But what else is to be expected from a party whose historic role has been to sabotage all popular movements of struggle against national oppression? We will come back to this later on.

This history of this period also shows that in all the demonstrations, in all the occupations and other protests, the movement of struggle against national oppression came to be linked more and more closely to the workers' struggles. In working-class struggles, the battle was for national rights and against US and Canadian multinationals. In the battles against national oppression, the goal was to free the nation so that

## A new trend emerges: "Independence and socialism"

On the eve of the Quiet Revolution, relatively few people defended the idea of political independence for Quebec apart from a handful nostalgic for France, the mother country, and the admiring disciples

Quebec could belong to the workers. This was the outlook that lay behind the popular mobilizations — the idea of the struggle for **independence and socialism**. This can be seen in the history of the RIN from 1966 on.

The history of the RIN is a history of splits. In the RIN, overtly bourgeois figures like Marcel Chaput rubbed shoulders with proponents of electoral tactics and "pragmatic" independence like Pierre Bourgault as well as with radical socialist "independantistes" who wanted to use the RIN to fight for the workers' interests. They were the ones who organized the big demonstrations that often ended in confrontations with the forces of law and order, as was the case with the June 24 demonstration in 1968. The RIN was constantly torn between electoral tactics and more radical political action based on the belief that independence was simply one step towards putting an end to capitalism. Those who joined the RIN did so as much to promote the idea of independence for Quebec as to defend the working-class movement and fight against national oppression.

Up until then, the idea of independence had been defended by fervent reactionaries. Why, then, did it become an idea capable of mobilizing the working-class and progressive movement on a wide scale in the 1960's? Why is it that in the 1960s the movement for independence came to be seen as the solution not only to national oppression but also to the exploitation of workers?

(\*) It was later discovered that this person was a policeman who had infiltrated the ranks of the demonstrators.

1. *Quebec-Canada: A New Deal; the Quebec government proposal for a new partnership between equals: sovereignty-association*, Editeur officiel du Québec, p. 39

of Canon Lionel Groulx. (\*) The movement had no real social basis

(\*) A nationalist Quebec historian, Groulx wrote a number of books, including *Notre maître le passé* (The past is our master). Politically, he was openly sympathetic to Salazar's fascists in Portugal.

in Quebec society. It was limited to the narrow circle of those who read the journal *Laurentie* and the membership of the Alliance laurentienne, organized around Victor Barbeau. The Alliance laurentienne was made up of former supporters of Duplessis who were disappointed by Duplessis' partial failure in his attempts to make all fiscal matters a purely Quebec jurisdiction. They saw the independence of Quebec as a powerful economic lever and as a way of achieving a national consensus — as the fascist Salazar had done in Portugal.

But the situation changed considerably in the 1960s. The old style of nationalism tended more and more to be associated with the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

An initial factor in these changes was the influence in Quebec of the vast decolonization movement in Asia and Africa. Dozens of countries in these continents were aspiring to independence and rejecting the colonial yoke. Their methods often included armed struggle against imperialism. Their example had a profound effect on the young nationalists in Quebec, who at the time, were looking for a solution to the historic national oppression of Quebec. Indeed it was to varying degrees an inspiration for the youth movement all around the world. In the intellectual circles of the period, attempts were made to apply the theories that arose out of this revolutionary movement to the situation in Quebec. Quebec was compared to Algeria, and the government in Ottawa to French colonial domination. This was the source of the idea that Quebec is a colony of Canadian and U.S. imperialism, an idea that is still defended by some people today. But the analogy-making wasn't confined to Quebec. Similar parallels were drawn in the rest of the country, where Canada was often seen as a colony of the United States. The imperialist nature of the Canadian bourgeoisie (some of it French-speaking) was simply forgotten. In a later period, the movement of Blacks in the United States was also to have considerable influence on progressive Quebec organizations — take, for instance,

the title of Pierre Vallières' well-known book, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* (White Niggers of America).

These were the formative influences on the first progressive militants in Quebec in the 1960s who were to have such a considerable impact on the national struggle and to found the first organizations calling themselves socialist. Another important factor was the absence of the Communist Party of Canada, a party that had never had much real influence in Quebec. By the 1960s the CP was already thoroughly nationalist and revisionist and had been for many years.

In 1960, Raoul Roy (a former member of the CP) pioneered by founding the *Revue socialiste* and *Action socialiste pour l'indépendance du Québec* (Socialist action for the independence of Quebec). The immediate impact of *Revue socialiste* was very limited. Nonetheless, it formulated a thesis that has continued to have political influence until today. The *Revue socialiste* asserted that "the destiny of French-speaking workers is inseparably tied to the fate of the (French-) Canadian nation... In the capitalist system, Quebec will be gradually swamped and buried by waves of imperialist, expansionist, bourgeois colonization..." (2)

The thesis of the struggle for independence and socialism really began to exert influence among youth and in intellectual circles in Quebec with the founding of the journal *Parti Pris*.

*Parti Pris* appeared in October 1963. Its creation was a demarcation with another tendency that had influenced political circles opposed to the Duplessis regime — the group around the magazine *Cité libre*, which included Trudeau. Unlike *Cité libre*, *Parti Pris* openly affirmed the progressive nature of nationalism. It took a stand in favour a vaguely-defined socialism and the independence of Quebec. The new trend was beginning to take shape. More specifically, *Parti Pris* supported independence first, and eventually socialism, to be achieved through a process that was never very clear. The magazine's stand



The magazine *Parti pris* was the first to defend the need to support the nationalist bourgeoisie in Quebec as a means of achieving independence and socialism.

launched the first round of a debate that is still a very real question in progressive circles: should independence be supported, even if it means supporting the bourgeoisie, in order to help advance the struggle for socialism?

In 1964, Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon founded the journal *Revolutions québécoise* to demarcate from the group around *Parti Pris*. The journal quite correctly reproached *Parti Pris* for "believing that it would be easier to supplant the French-Canadian national bourgeoisie after separation". (3) Although it continued to defend the need to fight simultaneously for independence and socialism, *Revolutions québécoise* was the first voice to refute the idea that it could be in the interests of the working-class movement to support a bourgeois party. This first, embryonic demarcation gave rise to two forms of political action.

*Parti Pris* spawned the Mouvement de libération populaire (MLP

2. *Manifeste politique — programmatic proposals — in the Revue socialiste*, no. 1, April 1959, pp. 14-15.

3. Jean Rochefort, "Aux camarades de *Parti Pris*", in *Revolutions québécoise*, Vol. 1, no. 3, November 1964, p. 13

— movement of popular liberation), whose entire existence was dedicated to trying to move the Parti socialiste du Québec (PSQ) (\*) and the Ralliement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN) to the "left". In the early 1970s, a number of people were to try the same tactic with the PQ, or at least to give it "critical" support. We will come back to the practical results of this point of view later on. (Note that some defenders of this point of view are today firmly installed in jobs with the PQ government.)

At the same time, however, various organizations gradually began to raise the question of a revolutionary organization for the

working-class movement and try to demarcate from nationalism. In 1966, some activists joined the FLQ, which from that time on attacked symbols of the capitalist exploitation of Quebec. The Front de libération populaire was created in 1968 and existed until 1970. It also posed the question of a political organization for the working-class movement.

The newspaper collective that founded IN STRUGGLE! (L'Equipe du journal EN LUTTE!) grew out of this political trend. It was founded in 1972, precisely on the basis of a demarcation from bourgeois nationalism and social democracy. It was not until its first congress, however, that IN STRUGGLE! re-

jected any kind of project for Quebec independence, even independence embellished with "socialism", and undertook to build a communist party capable of uniting all the struggles of the entire Canadian proletariat.

Of course, all this did not happen without some confusion, setbacks and hesitations. But by the end of the 1960s, it was becoming clear that those who had banked on "critical support" for nationalism or social democracy had failed miserably. The PQ was to be the most striking example of this failure.

(\*) A social-democratic party founded in 1963, after a split in the Quebec wing of the NDP.

## The Quiet Co-option

At the beginning of the 1960s, the Quebec Liberal Party personified and dominated the nationalist movement in Quebec with its slogan of "Masters in our own house". But in the following years, the movement increasingly abandoned the parliamentary field and took up more radical forms of struggle. Neither Daniel Johnson (leader of the Union nationale and premier in the late 1960s) with his "Equality or independence" nor Robert Bourassa (Liberal premier in the early 1970s) with his "cultural sovereignty" were able to check it.

The Quiet Revolution had revealed the State apparatus's immense possibilities for developing indigenous capital. In its historical and current form the federal link has always hindered the full and complete development of French-speaking capitalists in Quebec. What was needed was to modify the political structure to make it reflect the new developments of indigenous capital and enable it to achieve new successes. The Lesage government understood that, and undertook a whole series of constitutional negotiations for a new sharing of powers between Ottawa and Quebec City.

But the nationalist movement had no time to lose in negotiations. It put obvious pressure on the most nationalist members of the Lesage

government. The national movement was a very powerful force, but it basically lacked any unified leadership. On the other hand, the constitutional negotiations held little promise of rapid, tangible results. As has often happened in the history of Quebec, bourgeois politicians realized that the popular movement could be used to exert very considerable pressure. They therefore set about acquiring the leadership of the movement to use it to satisfy their demands.

When René Lévesque split with

the Quebec Liberal Party, it was the first time a well-known bourgeois politician endorsed the thesis of Quebec independence — "sovereignty" — in the framework of an attempt to preserve the Canadian market — "association". Lévesque was indeed the perfect choice for the role: a journalist extremely popular with the people, he had supported the asbestos strikers in 1949 and played a leading part in the strike of the journalists at the French CBC network in 1959. But above all, he was known as the person who had nationalized hydro-electric power.

René Lévesque published a manifesto, **Option Québec**, and

**The Parti Québécois gradually built itself into the unchallenged leader of the popular movement of struggle against national oppression.**



founded the Mouvement souveraineté-association which was to become the PQ in 1968. At the time, very few bourgeois dared to associate with an independence movement that was much too closely identified with workers' struggles and which furthermore called for a break with the Canadian market, which was essential to the development of these same bourgeois.

The PQ had its work cut out for it: its mission was to co-opt the vigorous popular movement by holding out the hope of workers' liberation after independence and an end to national oppression through the acquisition of "political sovereignty". By doing so, it would make it into a movement that was acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who signed **Option Québec** said as much in a more complex way when they stated, "*The social nourishes the national until the national appears to be the indispensable key to social well-being.*" (4)

Between 1968 and 1970, the PQ swallowed up all the nationalist forces in Quebec. The first to rally to it was the Ralliement national (RN), an **Indépendantiste** party created as a result of a split in the Social Credit. It was soon followed by the RIN, whose radicalism displeased Lévesque. The RIN was forced to dissolve and its members rallied to the PQ on an individual basis. Caught up in the trend, **Parti Pris** suspended publication in 1968. A number of the advocates of critical support for the RIN turned to critical support for the PQ. In 1970, the former FLQ militant Pierre Vallières joined the PQ, invoking the "urgent need to choose".

At the same time, the PQ took advantage of the internal dissension that was to lead to the dissolution of the FLP and the total disarray among progressive forces in the wake of the repression around October 1970. The PQ also began to establish links with high-level union brass. Jean Gérin-Lajoie and Théo Gagné of the Steelworkers and Emile Boudreau of the QFL were among the founders and leading supporters of the PQ.

To succeed in drawing all these people, the group of former Liberals around René Lévesque had to make some concessions and perpetuate

the illusion that the party could indeed put an end to national oppression in Quebec and bring about the liberation of the workers. The party was not yet in power, so it could allow itself the "luxury" of more democratic structures that attracted a more radical fringe with hopes of moving the party "left".

The PQ's programme basically repeated the theses of **Option Québec** on the development of Quebecois capital, the Caisses populaires Desjardins and State enterprises. But in order to appeal to an audience that for a number of years had been identifying independence with the rejection of capitalism, the PQ's programme also had to reflect the pro-worker feelings and anti-imperialist aspirations of its new members.

Today, it is hard to believe that the 1971 version of the PQ's programme stated:

*"We salute the liberation struggles of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. We condemn the exploitation of the resources of the Third World by North American and European capitalists. We denounce the wheelers and dealers who, in the context of the French-language community, serve as agents of imperialism."* (5)

This isn't quite what René Lévesque said two years ago when French head of State Giscard d'Estaing awarded him the Legion of honour.

The programme went on to list a whole series of promises that a sovereign and associated Quebec committed itself to carrying out: social justice; opposition to neo-colonialism, withdrawal from NATO and NORAD.

In terms of labour's rights, the programme reiterated the need to "*eliminate the outdated restrictions that still hinder the growth of trade unionism.*" (6)

The same period saw PQ members of the national assembly Robert Burns and Claude Charron brave the decision of the party's national executive and take part in the demonstration to support the workers of La Presse (a Montreal daily) in 1971. The PQ reproached the Bourassa government with its intransigent attitude towards the Com-

mon Front and even participated in the May Day demonstration for 1973. And in the union bodies, people were taking stands in favour of "democratic socialism" in the CNTU and "Quebecois socialism" in the QFL.

But all this did not last long. After one or two programmes, the time the PQ needed to acquire the image of the leader of the entire struggle against national oppression in Quebec all such references disappeared, René Lévesque has referred to this period as "*that immaturity which inevitably affects a young party, and more especially a party for change.*" (7) A very convenient "immaturity", which ensured the PQ broad support among the popular masses. But it was still a handicap in winning the approval of the bourgeoisie.

It is a matter of history that the PQ soon acquired political "maturity". The team of former Liberals surrounding Lévesque rapidly decided that it was time to tighten up the operation and put an end to illusions.

The programme was gradually changed, especially on the question of achieving sovereignty. The idea of making a unilateral declaration of sovereignty as soon as the party took power was abandoned. Claude Morin (the PQ's new strategist and another former member of the Lesage government) introduced the idea of a first referendum. It gained acceptance even before the party convention had an opportunity to take a stand on the idea. Party leaders wrote in 1973, "*Today I am voting for the only group that is ready to form a real government. In 1975, I will decide the future of Quebec in a referendum. One step at a time.*" (8) This was the position adopted by the party convention in 1975. In its White Paper published in November 1979, the PQ said, "*A YES vote by Quebecers would thus be, in fact, a*

4. Jean Blais, preface to *Option Québec*, Editions de l'homme, Montreal, 1968, p. 12

5. *Le programme officiel du Parti québécois*, Montreal, 1971, p. 28.

6. *Programme officiel du Parti québécois*, Montreal, 1968, p. 31

7. René Lévesque, *La passion du Québec*, Editions Québec/Amérique, Montreal, 1978, p. 118

8. Quoted by Vera Murray in *Le Parti québécois: de la formation à la prise de pouvoir*, Montreal, 1979, p. 20

mandate given to the Quebec government to make this new agreement a reality through negotiations." (9) Today, a second referendum is promised to really decide the political status of Quebec... if, of course, the PQ is re-elected in the meantime.

The illusions cultivated by the PQ lasted just long enough to tame the Quebec national movement and win the support of a large sector of the labour movement for the PQ. But to do so, it had to give the impression that it wanted to put an end to national oppression through political independence and promote the emancipation of the workers. The PQ thus sabotaged the development of the struggles against national oppression and made the movement respectable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie.

For today it has become clear that the PQ has no solution for the

problem of national oppression apart from the continuation of the same constitutional negotiations that have been dragging on for 20 years now. Not only that: the PQ has in practice held back the entire movement of struggle against national oppression. It channelled all the dynamic forces of the 1960s into support for a bourgeois party. It replaced the force and power of numbers and mobilization with the ballot box. The result is that today, there are no more organized demonstrations against the manifestations of national oppression. Yet this national oppression is still very real — the PQ has not conquered it away.

In today's context, it is much easier for the federal government to brandish the threat of a pan-Canadian referendum than it would have been in the 1960s. Privileges for the English-speaking in jobs, the denial of the right to work in one's

own language, the dual network of Catholic and Protestant schools that favours English schools — all this is still a part of the reality of Quebec, and it is important to remember it.

But some things have changed in Quebec. The Federation des caisses populaires Desjardins, for example, now ranks seventh among all non-manufacturing businesses in Quebec. Hydro-Quebec is exporting technology abroad, and even to China. Vachon's cookies and cakes are more and more popular. These things have changed, but that is about the whole list.

Why was a movement that shook all the classes of Quebec society co-opted in this way? Why are most struggles against national oppression today almost entirely left up to PQ cabinet ministers and high-ranking civil servants? These are questions that need to be answered.

9. Quebec-Canada: A New Deal, op. cit., p. 77

## Must history repeat itself?

It is easy — too easy — to explain the co-option of the Quebec national movement in the 1960s by the skilful manoeuvring of the PQ and its leaders. There is more to it than that. Otherwise, it would mean that with a bit of intelligence, someone who came along at the right point in history could sabotage any people's struggle. No, the explanation must be sought in the very orientation that dominated the struggle against national oppression throughout these years.

It is true that the epic battles of the period 1967-1970 were not led by any political party. But it is also true that, despite the various trends and tendencies that were present or that clashed in that movement, it was dominated by one major tendency: the struggle for independence and socialism. All the groups that played a substantial role in these struggles agreed on at least one basic assumption: the need to achieve independence and socialism in Quebec.

At first, **Parti Pris** and others

believed that it was necessary to achieve independence first, and then socialism. As a result, neither was achieved. This was the kind of argumentation that was used to channel the efforts of hundreds of progressive people into support for a bourgeois party. Socialism was always put off until "later". It was never a struggle to be begun right away.

And even if the PQ or another party had really wanted to make independence a reality, it would not have been a change for the better in the conditions of the struggle for socialism. Once the bourgeoisie in Quebec headed up an independent State, it would be no more interested in proletarian revolution than was the bourgeoisie of Canada as a whole. It would be ready to suppress the struggle of the proletariat, just as the Canadian army did in October 1970.

The hollowness of the very idea is illustrated by what some of its most ardent defenders in the 1960s have become today. Pierre Maheu, a

former leader of **Parti Pris**, wrote the first draft of the PQ's White Paper in 1979. Gérald Godin, another member of the **Parti Pris** circle, is a PQ member of the national assembly. Andrée Feretti, a former leader of the FLP, is still in the PQ, in its "left" wing. Claude Charron, a former leader of UGEQ (the Quebec student association) is the PQ's parliamentary leader.

Today, fewer and fewer people still believe that independence is a step forward in the struggle for socialism, and the PQ is largely responsible for this evolution.

We are not alone in summing up and evaluating the past twenty years of the struggle against national oppression in Quebec. Others have been doing so as well, although they do not necessarily reach the same conclusions as we do. There are, for instance, the Trotskyist organizations, as well as the authors of the recent **Appel pour un Québec socialiste, démocratique et indépendant** (Call for an independent, democratic, socialist Quebec), signed by Yvon Charbonneau (former president of the Centrale des enseignants du Québec — CEQ); Lucie Dagenais of the CNTU; Jacques Dofny and Alfred Dubuc,

former members of the PSQ; G. Raymond Laliberté (another former president of the CEQ); and Marcel Pépin (formerly president of the CN-TU).

The authors of this call suggest the formation of a "political organization of Quebec workers". They observe (quite rightly), *Alongside the proponents of the constitutional status quo and those who advocate certain reforms in the federal system, we have a Quebec government which has already transformed into "association" a sovereignty that Quebec has not yet conquered.* (10) They concluded: *"Far from contradicting each other, as has often been suggested, "these two dimensions of the same project (independence and socialism — ed. note) are intertwined. For we believe that while the Quebecois can only achieve socialism in the framework of the political independence of their national territory, it is also true that only a socialist political organization can establish the balance of forces necessary to fully liberate Quebec."* (11)

They propose to achieve independence and socialism simultaneously in Quebec. The idea is appealing, but it is just as un-historical and erroneous as the previous version.

The authors of this call have just reached the same conclusion that **Révolution québécoise** came to — fifteen years ago. It took them twelve years of experience with the PQ, and the co-option of the popular movement of the 1960s, before they woke up. Today, the thesis they put forward has lost its audience in the working-class movement. Today, the current of unity within the Canadian proletariat in the struggle against capitalism has begun to be a force to be reckoned with. And now they are reviving a programme that is nothing new, a programme that the revolutionary movement discarded in the early 1970s.

History has proven that independence is not the objective interests of either the French-speaking bourgeoisie in Quebec or, more especially, the Quebec



Above left: Gérald Godin, formerly a member of *Parti pris* and formerly a defender of independence and "socialism" for Quebec. Today he is an MNA for the PQ. (Above right) Pierre Vallières, a former member of the FLQ who joined the PQ in 1970.

proletariat. Must history repeat itself to make them understand that the popular movement of the 1960s and 1970s has been confronted with the entire Canadian bourgeoisie, both English-speaking and French-speaking? That the cause of its numerous failures lies precisely in the fact that the Quebec working-class movement stood alone in its confrontation with a bourgeoisie that dominated the country from St. John's to the Yukon? If the Quebecois fight for an independent, socialist Quebec, and the Dene nation for an independent and socialist Northwest Territories, and if the Acadians, the Inuit and other fight similar battles, who will benefit? The very class they are trying to fight.

This is not the way to make a "breach in the bourgeois Canadian State". (12) This is not the way to put an end to national oppression, for national oppression is the result of the domination of a capitalist minority over the entire Canadian territory. The task of Canadian workers is to attack the root of the problem. The Canadian proletariat will not win victories in either the struggle against capitalism or the struggle against national oppression if it fights in dispersed formation against the same enemy. All it will do is make a "breach" in its own ranks.

\* \* \*

The "independence and socialism" thesis must be judged on the basis of history, and not in purely theoretical terms. And history has shown that the struggle against national oppression has been victorious when the proletariat rejected all compromises, all proposals of alliances with its bourgeoisie for the sake of the unity of the nation. It is not the task of the Quebec proletariat to unite the nation around any kind of battle for independence whatsoever. The struggle against Quebec's national oppression must be waged against the entire Canadian bourgeoisie, including its French-speaking component. It must be waged against those who have suppressed it for years and years. The Quebec proletariat will continue to carry out this task by rooting out the basic cause of national oppression — capitalism.

To do so, Quebec workers must unite with the only class whose interests lie unreservedly in eliminating both national oppression and capitalism — the multinational working class across Canada.

10. Y. Charbonneau, L. Dagenais, J. Dofny, A. Dubuc, G.R. Laliberté, M. Pépin, *Appel pour un Québec socialiste, démocratique, indépendant*, mimeographed text., November 1979, p. 9

11. *Ibid.*, p. 10

12. *Ibid.* p. 11

# The struggle against class collaboration in the labour movement in Canada

The following article aims to make known the main struggles waged within the Canadian labour movement against class collaboration. It also criticizes the industrial strategy of the NDP and the labour bosses (the labour aristocracy's pet project) and shows how this strategy is in fact a threat to the working class. The article winds up by drawing the perspectives of the struggle to come.



Nadine Hunt told the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour convention in 1979: "We are accused of not having supported workers' struggles; we are accused of conciliating with the NDP government; we are accused of not mobilizing our forces around the important issues on the labour and political scene..."

## Growing resistance to class collaboration

When Nadine Hunt, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL), opens the SFL's convention with these words, "We are accused of not having supported workers' struggles; we are accused of conciliating with the NDP government; we are accused of not mobilizing our forces over the important issues on the labour and political scene...", you can bet your life that something is going on.

Shortly before the SFL's convention, at the other end of the country, Gerald Yetman, president of the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL), started his opening convention speech with a similar violent attack on those who dared criticize the NSFL's leadership. Yetman had barely finished when a delegate rose to his feet and said, "Do you mean that we have no right to criticize you? You have to account to us for your actions." Needless to say, this intervention was warmly applauded by the other delegates present.

These two examples give us a good idea of the situation that is presently developing in varying

degrees throughout the Canadian labour movement. The fact that the top brass of the labour hierarchy are forced to defend themselves is a relatively new phenomenon. Why, even Dennis McDermott, president of the CLC, was forced to spend a good part of last autumn in hiding, trying to steer clear of the provincial federation conventions because he was afraid of having to confront the rank and file!

All this indicates that the movement of resistance within the working class is growing stronger. We must learn to spot this movement even when circumstances seem to be relatively calm, even when the union bosses seem to have things well in hand.

## Facts that some would like to ignore

It is not because it did not stand up and fight that the working class has suffered setbacks. On the contrary, the most recent statistics show that during the first eight months of 1979, the number of man-days "lost" because of strikes or lockouts was 25% higher than in 1978. Already in

1978, the statistics were twice as high as those of 1977, which was a year marked by very few strikes notably because of the Wage Control Act. The working class in Canada is thus once again reaching the records it set in 1975-76 which made Canada one of the countries with the most strikes in the world.

No, the working class's problem is not its lack of combativity. The working class wants to fight and fight it does. But what have the union bosses done in all these struggles?

You can be sure that they have good reason to shy away from criticism.

In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association (SGEA), which was battling the NDP government over working hours, called for support time and time again. Yet the SFL's executive paid no heed. They were probably too busy conversing with the cabinet ministers and the deputy ministers whom they regularly meet on the 21 government committees in which the federation participates. Or perhaps they were too busy thinking about participating in another 13 committees and a couple of board of directors of a few Crown corporations.

But let's be fair. The SFL did support three struggles last year and it went all out. Why, it didn't balk at meeting with MLAs and municipal

councillors. It even organized ONE picket line!

In Ontario, over half the strikes were battles for union recognition, which was being violently attacked by the capitalists and their police. What did the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) do? It courageously wrote a brief to the provincial government containing 18 recommendations to ensure social peace. Better still, Cliff Pilkey himself, president of the OFL, met with the province's attorney-general to tell him straight out that public funds should not be used to break strikes!

Are these all special cases? No. These examples are just a few of the many that illustrate how the union bosses throughout the country have hindered the counter-attack and led it up blind alleys.

## The postal workers' struggle — a catalyst

For a growing number of workers, betrayals of this kind are unacceptable. Support for the postal workers' struggle in particular played an important role in unifying this opposition to a certain extent. For example, during all the federation conventions that were held last autumn, delegates voted with enthusiasm to support the postal

In the past two years, the postal workers' struggle has become a unifying force for the entire movement of opposition to class collaboration.



Today, the postal workers' leader Jean-Claude Parrot is behind bars for three months, for having defended the workers. The people responsible for this situation are to be found within the labour movement itself...

workers. Even the most corrupt union bureaucrats, who didn't lift a finger to help the postal workers when they most needed it, are now trying to pass themselves off as the champions of the postal workers' struggle. It now seems that no one participated in the meeting of the CLC executive where it unanimously decided to withdraw all support for the postal workers. Like many other labour bosses, Louis Laberge, president of the Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL), claims that he supported CUPW all the way. And it is precisely over the issue of support for CUPW that the convention of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) demanded McDermott's resignation as CLC president. The delegates also clearly pointed out that they would also have the head of all those who followed in McDermott's footsteps by betraying workers' immediate struggles. This fact explains why, following the CUPE convention, the labour bosses at the OFL and B.C. Federation of Labour conventions



separated the question of McDermott's resignation from that of support for CUPW. They didn't want to face another move like the one that had taken place during the CUPE convention.

It is no mere coincidence that CUPW struggle is still on the agenda after more than a year and a half, or that it has become a rallying point for the opposition movement to the point of shaking the very foundations of the labour bureaucracy. If the CUPW struggle was able to do all this, it is because it clearly revealed the gap that exists between the interests of the labour bosses and the rank and file's interests. Besides revealing how the labour bosses betrayed the workers' immediate struggles, the postal workers' struggle clearly posed the question of whom unions should serve. Should they defend workers' interests? Or should they be used to compromise with the ruling class and its State? This question of the role of labour organizations immediately raised the question of the practically historic support of the Canadian labour movement for the NDP and its social-democratic line. These events help us understand the main areas in which resistance to class collaboration is growing in the labour movement.

### Betrays that cannot be tolerated any longer

The events around the postal workers' struggle in October 1978 and those that followed it give us a good idea of the strength of the opposition movement, a movement that has scored many points against class collaboration. The spineless resolutions that were sent back to the federation executives to be beefed up are legion. During the many conventions, workers refused to adopt resolutions that only amounted to wishful thinking, that proposed no concrete fightback actions. The union bosses at the CUPE convention, afraid of being totally shown up for what they really are, were forced to draft a plan of action for the upcoming year the day



At the 1979 convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour, the women's struggle was a major concern.

before the convention ended. QFL workers rejected a resolution submitted by the executive aimed at accepting certain restrictions on the right to strike. In Ontario, convention delegates were not satisfied with a general resolution of support for the Boise-Cascade strikers, and they teamed it up with concrete means of support, including the creation of a committee to develop support for the struggle. In Nova Scotia, delegates mandated the executive to declare a general strike against the Michelin Bill. In other words, everywhere the opposition movement rallied around concrete calls to fight back and to support striking workers, two things that the labour bosses never mentioned in the past year. They had better things to do...

### The women's struggle takes on growing importance

The development of the struggle of working women has played an important role in the growing fightback movement of the working class in Canada. Working women played an active role in many a bitter struggle

in the past year — in the Quebec Common Front, at Fleck, Puretex or Radio Shack in Ontario. This fact was reflected in many union conventions during which issues affecting women workers were widely debated. For example, during the British Columbia Federation of Labour (BCFL) convention, these were important points on the agenda: equal work, equal pay; recognition of the right to free abortion; the struggle against the discrimination exercised against Native women; and the struggle against male chauvinism within the unions themselves. The QFL convention voted a resolution opposing the exploitation of women who work at home. The OFL denounced the exploitation of domestic servants.

But on this question, as on many others, workers had to fight the labour bosses and their class collaboration. In April 1978, delegates to the annual working women's convention of the SFL criticized the federation's support to the NDP as well as its lukewarm defence of the interests of working women. In April 1979, three hundred working women of the OFL met the labour bosses head on by voting a resolution to defend the right to

strike and to support the postal workers.

The working women's opposition was so strong that the labour bosses had to scurry around and put forward affirmative action committees. In doing so, they tried to put the emphasis on the individual promotion of women to higher ranks rather than on the collective struggle to defend their rights.

### Tripartism is dead, long live tripartism!

In 1978, the CLC convention clearly rejected tripartism. This, however, did not stop the CLC executive from quietly taking part in 23 tripartite committees with the government and the capitalists. Each provincial labour federation followed the same line. The federation executives even launched a campaign to spruce up tripartism's

**On what issues have the labour bosses mobilized the labour movement in the past year? What do they do with their time when they do not support workers' struggles?**

tarnished image and get the working class to accept it. In Saskatchewan, labour bosses attributed the increase of the minimum wage to tripartism. In Nova Scotia, they tried to pass off the gains won by the Dalhousie University workers' strike as the result of the union bosses' participation in the Labour-Management Committee, a tripartite committee. But the workers soon set the facts straight: if gains were won, it was because workers mobilized their forces on the picket lines even though the union bosses would have nothing to do with this strategy... In Ontario, the OFL's education committee has been mandated to establish the list of all the union members participating in government committees (in which the employer also participates, in certain cases). The situation is apparently so "developed", the committee has evaluated that it will need two years to make up the list! CUPE president Grave Hartman has tried to pass tripartism off in another way.

According to Hartman, "the 1978 CLC convention rejected economic tripartism but not social tripartism". This little play on words has allowed her to justify her participation in a health and safety tripartite committee. This just goes to show that, depending on the issues at stake, it is possible to collaborate with the ruling class... As for QFL president Louis Laberge, he also has the honour of chatting regularly with representatives of Alcan and Noranda Mines at the National Productivity Institute (Institut national de productivité), created by the Parti Quebecois.

This offensive in favour of tripartism is clearly the work of the upper spheres of the labour hierarchy; but it too has come up against the workers' resistance, as last autumn's conventions showed. In many regions, like British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and at many conventions, like CUPE's, tripartism was vigorously denounced and many resolutions condemned it. But the danger of slowly but surely sliding into the tripartite trap is still present. Nonetheless, workers have not missed a chance to counter it.

### The NDP for sale

The same thing applies to support for the NDP. The union bosses certainly went all out to sell the idea to the workers. Throughout the election campaign in the spring of 1979, the whole union apparatus of each and every single federation, minus the QFL, was mobilized to build NDP support.

Not only was the rank and file's money invested in the NDP's election campaign, but most union staffers completely abandoned support for struggles to concentrate all their energies on the election campaign! The order of the day was, "Don't fight, vote!" This is how many workers learned what support for the NDP meant in practice.

Other myths about the NDP have also started to crumble. A few months ago, union bosses still maintained that only the NDP in power could guarantee that the workers' right to strike would not be touched. This myth came down with a thud



when the NDP government in Saskatchewan stood by while striking government employees were forced back to work. The union bosses also defended the same idea when it came to cutbacks. But today, the labour movement is increasingly conscious that the situation is no different for them where the NDP is in power. This explains why a relatively strong movement of opposition to support for the NDP has started to develop within the ranks of the labour movement. Within CUPE, and in Saskatchewan in particular, this movement is quite strong. The NDP's anti-worker actions are unmasking it more and more. Even though this has not provoked the complete rejection of support for the NDP, it has at least turned this support into conditional support. This marks an important break from the NDP for the labour movement. The union bosses' propaganda campaign is proof of this.

Another good indication that the opposition movement is real is the fact that the union bureaucrats have been forced to modify their tactic. The NDP has thus gone from the "workers' party" to the "party that isn't perfect" (!). By doing this, the union bureaucrats are now putting the emphasis more on the necessity for workers to actively participate in the party itself to transform it from within. This new tactic boils down to implicitly admitting that the NDP is often miles away from the interests of the working class.

In Quebec, support for the Parti Quebecois has also been transformed into a more critical stance. Needless to say, the PQ's anti-worker legislation in Quebec is no more popular than the NDP's in Saskatchewan. In Ontario, the union bosses are trying to prove that supporting the NDP does not automatically imply sabotaging struggles and going all out for electoralist tactics. All these are signs that there exists a movement of opposition to the NDP within the working class.

### Democracy and class collaboration

In the context of the workers' opposition to some major points of the

union bosses' programme, the struggle for union democracy has become particularly important and acute. On one side, the union bosses defend their hegemony over the labour movement and are even trying to strengthen it. This is why they are increasingly using anti-democratic measures to crush the opposition. On the other side, the opposition movement is trying to make itself heard to influence the labour movement.

In Saskatchewan, the SFL executive has held many meetings behind closed doors over the past year. It was out of reach of the rank and file the minute an issue remotely implied a controversial debate.

During the conventions themselves, union democracy was constantly under attack. In British Columbia, delegates were carefully chosen and each one's vote closely controlled. Everywhere, convention documents, which are sometimes, very long, were only given to the delegates when they registered. This made it very difficult to prepare and organize the delegates who were opposed to the union bosses' line.

Generally speaking, the movement of opposition succeeded in countering the manoeuvres aimed at limiting union democracy. This same movement has also put forward propositions to broaden union democracy: the creation of union newspapers that would publicize workers' struggles and unify them, increased control over the actions of elected union representatives, a greater representativity of the different tendencies on federation committees and executives. The question at stake is clear: union members must have the possibility of controlling their own organizations and opposing the class collaboration line which still dominates them.

### The national question

Anti-democratism isn't just a question of manipulating votes and conventions. Anti-democratism is also all the efforts made by union leaders to keep workers from debating fundamental questions like the national question. In Manitoba, for example, delegates had to listen silently to a speech by Don

Montgomery, CLC secretary-treasurer, on the merits of a united and federalist Canada without having the possibility of replying to Montgomery's gibberish.

Even though union leaders did their best to keep the national question off the conventions' agendas, many delegates brought it up during the conventions themselves. The CUPE convention denounced the idea of holding a Canada-wide referendum. In Manitoba, a resolution of support for the Quebec Common Front workers was adopted. In British Columbia, the Surrey Teachers' Association (STA) adopted a resolution recognizing "Quebec's right to self-determination up to and including separation if the people of Quebec so decide." The STA also called on the British Columbia Teachers' Association to take up this resolution and to send it to all the local teachers' unions in Quebec. The struggles of the Native peoples were also supported by many conventions, notably in Manitoba and British Columbia.

But if we were to base our evaluation solely on the union conventions, we would be inclined to say that the labour movement in English Canada is hardly preoccupied by the national question. This, however, would not be a correct evaluation because the union conventions prove in fact that the labour bosses adopted a policy of silence on the Quebec question even though many local unions had submitted resolutions supporting Quebec's national rights. These resolutions never made it to the convention floor. Instead, union leaders prepared the ground to mobilize the labour movement behind the chauvinist People to People Petition. It is thus premature to conclude that this vital question for the unity of the labour movement in Canada has been settled once and for all.

### Strengthen the movement of opposition

On all counts, the movement against class collaboration is growing steadily and workers are becoming more and more conscious that the line put forward by the union



In Saskatchewan, government employees struck and confronted the NDP government.

bosses is responsible for the setbacks that the working class has suffered recently.

The struggle between the opposition movement and the union bosses becomes very intense at times because the latter are more united than ever across the country to counter the movement that threatens their very existence. Unfortunately, the movement of opposition is far from being as well-organized as its rival. More often than not, this movement has no leadership and is not organized. This seriously handicaps its capacity to fight back. As a matter of fact, this movement is only really organized in Saskatchewan, where it revolves around the Trade Union Group (TUG). (\*) During the last SFL convention, the TUG won the support of nearly half the delegates present.

As for the union bosses, they are not isolated individuals. They can rely on the unwavering support of the labour aristocracy whose interests they defend. In Saskatchewan, they made sure that no supporter of the opposition movement was elected to the SFL's executive committee. Consequently, nearly half the delegates were left

without any real representation on the executive committee. It just goes to show how far the union bosses are ready to go to maintain their control over the labour movement...

The union bosses' repeated calls for unity in the last few months are in fact a lot of hot air. As far as they're concerned, unity means accepting their line of class collaboration and their hegemony over the labour movement. In practice, this implies repressing progressive and communist workers, raiding other unions and violently attacking all the independent and progressive unions that refuse to buckle under. In British Columbia, the labour bosses had no second thoughts about attacking the Association of University and College Employees (AUCE). In Saskatchewan, they zeroed in on the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). In Quebec, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU) was the target.

The movement of opposition fought back against all these attacks in the name of unity, a unity quite different from the one put forward by the union bosses. For the movement of opposition, the word unity implies the unity of the working class in its

struggle against the attacks of the ruling class, regardless of union affiliation.

Not with standing the fact that the opposition movement against class collaboration has experienced real and important developments in the last period, it is still true that the collaborators, those who betray the struggles of the working class, still control the labour movement. In Saskatchewan where, as we mentioned previously, the opposition movement is best organized, Nadine Hunt and her clique are still at the head of the SFL. In 1978, CLC delegates got rid of Joe Morris and criticized tripartism. Today, on the eve of the CLC convention, they have to get rid of Dennis McDermott and the same policy of tripartism that has been applied for the last two years, despite the rank and file's objections. It also seems that, following the CUPE convention, the union bosses succeeded in dissociating the demand for McDermott's resignation from support for the postal workers and the issue of McDermott's class collaboration policy.

These facts must help us understand that, today more than ever, workers must continue to build and to strengthen the movement of opposition that has surfaced within their ranks. The opposition movement is faced with the task of rejecting not only McDermott but also all those who are planning to pick up where he left off by pursuing the same bourgeois policy that has dominated the labour movement for years. This is why it is particularly important to clearly identify the class project put forward by the union bosses.

### The class project defended by the union bosses

The different aspects of the union bosses' practice that we have just discussed didn't simply fall out of the blue. The union bosses have not

(\*) The TUG is a coalition of a number of local unions within the SFL. It is organized on the basis of a platform of opposition to collaboration and to the labour movement's unconditional support for the NDP. It calls for greater support for labour's struggles and trade-union democracy.

betrayed the working class time and time again simply on passing whims. On the contrary, their actions are guided by a solid logic. The fact is that union bosses are much more preoccupied by the good health of Canada's economy than by the lot of the working class in this country. But they can't come out and say it quite as crudely as that because they have to reckon with the existence and force of the opposition movement. This is why the union bosses have opted for using the real problems faced by the masses to boost their project as the miracle solution to all these problems. Union bosses talk a lot about cutbacks, unemployment, inflation. As a matter of fact, they talk about them more than ever before... But they talk about these problems in a way that permits them to co-opt the struggles being waged, to canalize them to their own advantage.

There are two ways of looking at today's problems. Take cutbacks, for example. Massive struggles can be waged and direct actions taken against all measures that restrict services to force the ruling class to re-establish and improve them; or, as the union bosses are fond of doing, these same struggles can be used to put forward the necessity of reinforcing the bourgeois State, its role in the country's economy, etc. When it comes to factory shutdowns, workers can demonstrate against them, stage occupations, demand that the ruling class give them compensation benefits; or they can adopt the union bosses' strategy in such situations, which consists in putting forward energy policies that will make the Canadian bourgeoisie more competitive and that will ensure its economic development.

The union bosses' programme boils down to one thing: industrial strategy. Its most recent and most elaborate expression is to be found in a document entitled **Statement on Economic Nationalism and Foreign Ownership**, published by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL). When we say that the union bosses put their industrial strategy forward as THE solution to all problems, we are neither joking nor exaggerating the situation. The above-mentioned documents sums up in a nutshell

what this strategy is supposed to bring workers today, under a capitalist system:

*"... full employment in a growing economy; reasonable price stability; redistribution of rising incomes; environmental and job safety protection; social measures to do away with ill health, insecurity and want; and an improvement in the quality of life."* (1).

It should also be added that this same industrial strategy is also supposed to solve the Quebec national question since, according to the union bosses, Quebec's problem is one of insufficient economic development that their industrial strategy would, of course, transform. In other words, the union bosses' industrial strategy is in fact an important manoeuvre to give imperialism a new facelift.

And by a flick of their industrial wand, the union bosses co-opt all the struggles against unemployment and cutbacks, and for indexation and occupational health and safety, just to mention a few... Who needs to go out in the streets to battle for rights and living conditions? The union bosses' industrial strategy is a better and safer way of solving all those problems. As the OFL document explains, the key to solving the workers' problems is a review of in-

vestment policy; increased intervention by the State to regulate economic cycles and avoid crises; more severe control of foreign investments; greater "public" control over the multinationals' activities; nationalization of different sectors of the economy, including natural resources; the reinforcement of Petro-Canada and a national energy strategy; more rules and regulations for private enterprises; encouragement of Canadian investors; a more competitive Canadian economy by developing and diversifying secondary industry; renegotiation of international free-trade agreements...

To hear them go on this way, you would swear that you were witnessing a discussion between finance ministers and businessmen to figure out the best way to increase their capital and measure up to foreign competition.

But that's exactly what the union bosses' industrial strategy boils down to. The problems of the working class? Never heard of them... They are mentioned once in a while to get the people to support their plan of development for Canadian imperialism. The union bosses are racking their brains for solutions to

1. Ontario Federation of Labour, *Statement on Economic Nationalism and Foreign Ownership*, Document submitted to the 1979 OFL Convention, November 27-30, 1979, p. 2

**At their last convention, workers of the Canadian Union of Public Employees demanded McDermott's resignation.**



the problems of... productivity and economic planning.

Today, our country, like countries throughout the world, is racked by one of the most severe crises of our time and the privileges of yesteryear are increasingly threatened, notably in Ontario. So the labour aristocracy has had to choose its camp. Indeed the fate of this stratum of the proletariat is hopelessly bound up with the fate of Canadian imperialism. For the labour aristocracy and its representatives in the labour movement, the development of Canada's competitive position on world markets implies that the imperialists may throw a few more crumbs their way. Canada's economic development implies increased privileges, better wages, greater powers in the organization of work and the possibility for some to take a seat in Parliament or on a government committee. But for most workers, the project of the labour aristocracy can only mean more exploitation and the loss of their most fundamental rights; for the labour aristocracy, that small stratum of the Canadian working class, only gains privileges for services rendered to imperialism by repressing the struggles of the working class for better wages, by imposing social peace on the whole labour movement whether workers like it or not.

You can be sure that the union bosses will never explain the situation this way. Instead, they do their very best to convince workers that their destiny depends on the prosperity of their "very own" ruling class. This incredibly opportunist idea is the very basis of the union bosses' power. It explains their whole line and practice. The union bosses' strategy is consciously directed against proletarian revolution. If the struggle against class collaboration is to succeed, it will have to root out all traces of this point of view.

What does the union bosses' industrial strategy really mean for the working class?

Support for an industrial strategy that aims to make Canada more competitive can only lead to one thing: sabotaging workers' struggles. Why? Because, under capitalism, a country is not made

more competitive chiefly by investing more correctly; it is done first and foremost by exploiting the working class even more, by lowering its wages, by speeding up production lines. A look at what the union bosses are doing in regard to the project of making the CN-CP more profitable is enough to convince us of this truth. At CN-CP, the union bosses fully support the State's project to make this company more competitive even if it implies that hundreds of workers will be laid off. In Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, the NDP is behind the project to make the Sydney steelworks more profitable even if in this case as well hundreds of workers will be laid off. Imperialism can only become more competitive by increasingly exploiting the working class. No wonder the NDP has important programmes to ensure the greater mobility of the work force. In this context, the objectives set by an industrial strategy lead directly to stifling resistance. Have you ever seen a country become more competitive because of the number of working-class struggles in that country? Quite the contrary.

It should also be understood that protecting and developing Canada's capacity to compete with other imperialist powers leads directly to national oppression. The union bosses are being consistent when they support the chauvinist People to People Petition. To reap the most profits from the country's natural resources and to compete on international markets, Canadian capitalists need a strong and united country. There must be no roadblocks to the pipelines in Northern Canada, and the doors must also be opened wide for mining operators. Nothing could be further from the capitalists' concerns than the national rights of the Native peoples.

The development of capitalism in Canada has always depended on the capitalists' capacity to maintain a united market within the country and to control the country's natural resources. The repression of the Metis in the West gives us a good idea of how far the ruling class is ready to go to ensure this. Whether it is said outright or not, the develop-

ment of the country's natural resources and industry at present implies that in practice all the obstacles that stand in the way are to be bulldozed. Consequently, the Canadian bourgeoisie denies the national rights of the Native peoples, plunders their natural resources, destroys their society, stamps out their traditions and reduces the Native peoples to unemployment and welfare. The development of natural resources also implies maintaining lower wages in Quebec, job discrimination and above all, denying the Quebec nation's right to self-determination.

Of course, these positions are inevitably and directly opposed to the support that the labour movement has expressed for the rights of nations and national minorities in Canada. The result of the union bosses' strategy is evident and we must understand its full implications: this strategy corresponds to the division of the labour movement, a division much more real and important than the one that McDermott has tried to pass off as the work of the opposition movement and the communists.

Ultimately, if the working class ends up adopting the point of view that its destiny is linked to the fate of "its very own" bourgeoisie and that it must work to maintain Canadian imperialism's capacity to compete on the world market, it will necessarily support the ruling class when it trades its peaceful methods of competition for another form: war. This is not simply a hypothesis. It is a fact that past experience has confirmed. The union bosses have always been the champions of imperialist war within the workers' movement, as the AFL-CIO leaders in the United States are proving once again by adhering to the "Carter doctrine".

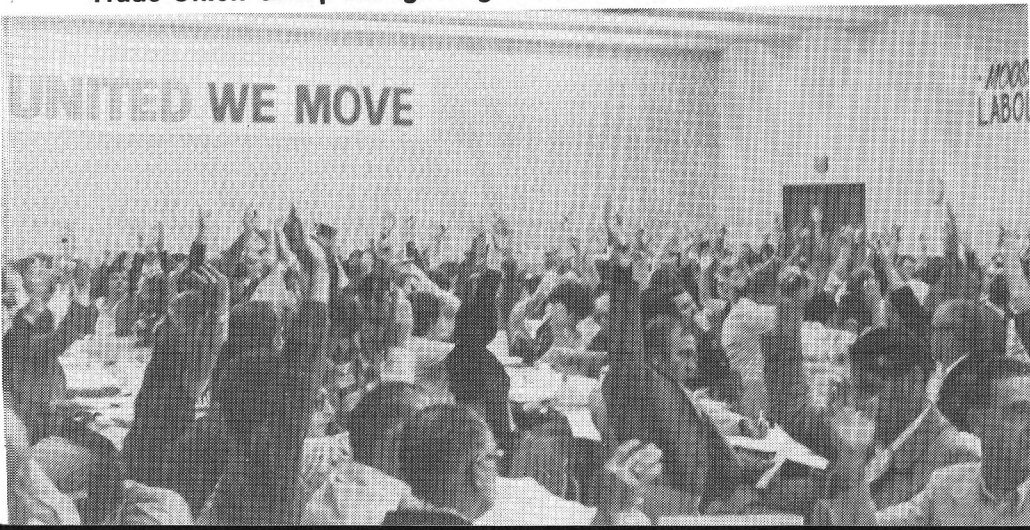
Another fact that the union bosses don't mention about their industrial strategy is that it leads directly to tripartism. They talk a lot about planning investments, planning this and that, planning everything and anything. As a matter of fact, planning is an important part of their whole industrial strategy. This is why they have planned that the labour movement will manage a part of the country's economy. And there you

have the explanation for all their briefs and their participation in government committees. Their industrial strategy implies not only the planning of capital but also the planning of the labour movement. These manoeuvres have won union bosses important political privileges when it comes to taking decisions on tripartite committees. The price of these privileges? A domesticated labour movement that will not alter their "plans".

Another aspect of the union bosses' industrial strategy is that it destroys the very *raison d'être* of local unions. Experience has taught us that an industrial strategy is thought out and applied by the big brass of union hierarchy. Only specialists and technocrats have a say in the matter. Consequently, decision-making powers are transferred from the base to the top where these "important questions" are dealt with. To support the union bosses' industrial strategy is to support their undemocratic plan which consists in taking the maximum of powers away from local unions and placing them in the hands of a powerful central apparatus. From that day on, wages, indexation, cutbacks and other important questions are only discussed at the top and decisions are reached by consulting the State and the capitalists.

Last but not least, this industrial strategy can only be put into practice by the State. So an appropriate political party must be in power to ensure it... And the NDP is the answer, of course. This is why the industrial strategy defended by the union bosses goes hand in hand with unconditional support for the NDP.

**The 1979 convention of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, where the Trade Union Group brought together and organized the opposition forces.**



In the labour movement at present, the perspective of an industrial strategy has met with little opposition. Some campaigns, like the one to save Petro-Canada or Sysco in Nova Scotia, have even been somewhat successful. Union bosses like Shirley Carr of the CLC regularly play the card of Canadian nationalism to sell their project. These union bosses were eloquent to defend Canada's economy against the "big bad foreigners" and try to bring workers to their feet by shouting, "well, if they're not satisfied, they can just leave."

Meanwhile, they succeed in hiding the fact that their current betrayal of working-class struggles is closely linked to their industrial strategy. The betrayals of working-class struggles, undemocratic behaviour, tripartism, the denial of national rights and support for the NDP are all manifestations of the application of the union bosses' industrial strategy and of the point of view on which it is based.

Within the labour movement itself, the question of industrial strategy is not seen in the same way. The union bosses want to manage the country's imperialist economy. Workers, on the other hand, are desperately looking for a solution to unemployment, inflation and cutbacks. That's when the union bosses arrive on the scene with their miracle solution to all problems; and at first glance, workers are inclined to think that it could work. This is why it still has not met with strong opposition.

To develop this opposition, the working class cannot rely on all the opportunist groups that claim to offer an alternative to the union bosses' policies.

What did the Communist Party of Canada (CP) have to say about the union bosses' proposed industrial strategy during the OFL convention in November 1979? They declared that though it was an excellent document, it needed a few extra little things like something on energy policies, a couple more nationalizations and, of course, in a bow to radicalism, more planned actions. What this amounts to is that the CP fundamentally agrees with the industrial strategy, but is bothered by a couple of commas.

As for the Workers Communist Party (WCP), it gave just about the same answer. Its delegate at the OFL convention declared that the industrial strategy document was "interesting", and he seemed quite taken by its anti-U.S. imperialism approach. He also thought that a few minor points needed to be changed: according to the WCP, the Auto Pact should not be renegotiated but simply "scrapped". As for the rest, everything was fine, especially the part about saving Petro Canada...

### The proletarian line in the labour movement

Though it is dispersed, the movement of opposition to class collaboration is clearly alive and well. It has forced the traitors and opportunists either to unmask themselves or to humour workers in an attempt to co-opt the opposition movement.

Workers are quite right to say that their gains were won through their bitter struggles and not by courting the government. This is a correct evaluation of reality and it is contrary to the one put forward by the union bosses. As far as the latter are concerned, the struggles waged by the working class are practically useless if they don't have some friends in Parliament. Those are practically the very words of the "very combative" Shirley Carr of the CLC. Workers must make sure that at the other end of the line (in Parliament) "attentive ears" are listening. For the union bosses, the ballot box means everything and struggles nothing. Why, in Manitoba, they even went so

far as to call the postal workers reactionary because they did not want to involve themselves in politics by... working for the NDP's election campaign!

The opposition movement has seen how the ballot-box solution is a hoax. But how can workers oppose it? What can they propose instead? When progressives are confronted with union bosses who are increasingly calling on workers to "get involved in politics", they often refuse to support the NDP unconditionally and reject any political commitment, unless it involves a strike or picket line.

These attitudes are understandable. In the last 40 years the working class has been served a steady diet of bourgeois policies. It has been submitted to the most sordid electoral strategy made up of wheeling and dealing, illusions on the power of the ballot box, lies, about-faces, broken promises and empty praise. For the last 40 years, this is what politics have meant for the working class under the leadership of the CCF, the NDP, the CP and the union bosses.

Workers are more than justified in rejecting this type of politics. They must, however, realize that this same policy is also made of class collaboration, tripartism and undemocratic behaviour, that this same policy leads to betraying working-class struggles, to oppressing nations and to dividing the proletariat. This is the very essence of the bourgeois policy in trade unions.

Today, the opposition movement must work for a total break with the bourgeois policy that dominates the labour movement. It must break with the support given to this policy, whether it is conditional or not, for this support seeks to tie workers to the exploiters' coattails. To oppose this policy, workers must not become apolitical; on the contrary, they must become actively involved in the struggle to ensure the triumph of the proletarian line within the labour movement and greater victories for the working class. The possibilities for doing this are numerous.

Already the labour movement has started to reject the tripartism that

the union bosses often defend in a roundabout way. Workers should continue to reject tripartism by clearly identifying the policy defended by all the McDermotts of the labour movement.

Workers should also not be fooled by the NDP's and the union bureaucrats' apparent silence on the Quebec national question. Behind this silence lurks support for the bourgeoisie's chauvinist policy and petitions like the People to People Petition. Workers must do all they can to ensure that this question is discussed by the rank and file, and not simply relegated to the big brass of the CLC. Workers should oppose the position that puts forward the division of the labour movement and the unity of the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie by defending a position that recognizes in practice the right of the Quebec nation to self-determination, up to and including separation if it so decides. Workers must defend the only unity that serves their interests, the unity of the working class throughout the country. Chauvinist campaigns must be countered with working-class campaigns, with messages defending Quebec's right to self-determination, with concrete support for Quebecois workers, etc.

This unity is all the more important at a time when the Canadian State is stepping up political repression and its attacks on the labour movement's most fundamental rights: the right to strike, to negotiate and to organize. Today, the postal workers' leader Jean-Claude Parrot is behind bars for three months. There are people who are responsible for this situation and they will have to account for it to the workers. The workers' united fightback against all forms of political repression implies that they will have to reject those who have collaborated with the ruling class in exercising this repression. And the NDP is at the top of the class when it comes to this.

Recent events in the world have given all the bourgeois parties, the NDP included, the possibility of really cozying up to the ruling class by supporting its war preparations, like the reinforcement of the Canadian army and of the NATO forces. The

workers' opposition movement must take a clear stand against these actions. It must show that it in no way intends to support any imperialist aggression and that it has no intention whatsoever of approving the Canadian government's support for the United States' war policies. The U.S. government has already announced preparations for the draft and the Canadian government is preparing the ground to get people to accept cutbacks, social peace and restricted rights in the name of the "defence of the free world". Workers should make their voices heard and tell the capitalists and their parties that there will never be a "free world" for workers as long as capitalism exists. Workers have no intention of sacrificing their rights on the altar of Canadian imperialism.

If workers act any other way, if they limit their actions to their immediate struggles and their combativity without addressing the question of political power, if they believe that an independent programme for the labour movement will be enough to topple the bourgeois line that reigns supreme within it, then they are wrong. To do this would amount to leaving political matters up to the ruling class, the NDP, the Liberals, the Tories, the CP. It amounts to letting the union bosses run the labour movement. It amounts to condemning the working class to never being anything other than an opposition that defends its rights by marching in the streets while its enemy holds political power and controls the State apparatus with its police, courts and laws.

This is why the question of the necessity of a proletarian party for the working class is a question that has a lot to do with today's struggles. The necessity of a proletarian party stems directly from these struggles and appears as the only possible answer to all the questions being raised by the opposition movement concerning the path that workers should follow.

So the next time a union boss says "Get involved in politics", answer him: "You bet your life we're going to get involved. But it won't be in your type of politics. We're going to get involved to smash your politics to smithereens!"

# The CLC in the Canadian labour movement

To round out the preceding article on class collaboration in unions in Canada, we are including in this issue a factual portrayal of the Canadian labour movement. The publication of this article also coincides with the upcoming convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC).

This article presents essential statistical information on the union movement in Canada in general, and on the CLC in particular. In addition, we are presenting a brief description of how the CLC functions, information on its provincial federations of labour and some additional details on the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) — the largest member union of the CLC, as well as the one which has placed the "Dump McDermott" issue squarely on the agenda. Of course, like any brief selection of facts and figures, this article has its limits; and we invite readers seeking further information of this kind on the Canadian union movement to take note of and to consult the reference documents used in the preparation of this article.

## Union membership in Canada

In 1978, the most recent year for which we have statistics, there were about 3.3 million unionized workers in Canada. This represented 39% of paid workers (excluding those in agriculture) that year. Although the 1970s were a period of steady growth in union membership, this has not always been the situation in Canada: during the 1920s and 1930s, union membership was declining or stagnant; the 1940s were years of most rapid growth, with union membership almost tripling over the decade; in the 1950s, growth was much slower, and in the 1960s there was relative stagnation again. (1)

The rate of unionization varies from one industry to the next. For example, in 1977 the highest rates were to be found in fishing (88% of paid workers), public administration (69%), construction (58%), transportation, communications and other

utilities (53%) and in forestry (50%); the lowest rates were in financial institutions (2%), retailing and wholesaling (8%), and in service industries (22%). (2)

The number of women in the union movement has been rapidly growing in recent years: in the last

15 years their number has tripled, and over the post-war period, the number of women union members has multiplied by ten times. Yet in 1977, women only represented 28% of union membership although they accounted for 38% of the labour force. This reflects the fact that women are often restricted to marginal sectors of the economy where exploitation is more intense. (3)

The table 1 presents the distribution of union membership by province, in 1977.

Canadian unions accounted for 53% of union membership in 1978, and American unions (the "internationals") for 47%. (5) Note that the presence of American unions in

1. *Labour Canada, Labour Organizations in Canada 1978, Table I. The 1976-77 edition of this publication presents union membership statistics dating back to 1911.*
2. *Statistics Canada (71-202), Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act (CALURA) 1977: Part II-Labour Unions, p.77*
3. *CALURA, op. cit., p.48*



**Table 1**  
Distribution of union membership by province, 1977

Province	members	%
Newfoundland	57,000	2.0
Prince Edward Island	8,500	0.3
Nova Scotia	82,000	2.9
New Brunswick	69,000	2.4
Quebec	779,000	27.6
Ontario	1,057,000	37.5
Manitoba	118,000	4.2
Saskatchewan	77,000	2.7
Alberta	179,000	6.4
British Columbia	390,000	13.8
Yukon	2,000	0.1
Northwest Terr.	3,500	0.1
<b>Canada</b>	<b>2,822,000</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: from Tables 15A and 15B in CALURA 1977; Statistics-Canada (71-202).

Canada has been constantly declining since the Second World War: for example, in 1949, they had 70% of union membership in Canada. Their presence is particularly strong in construction, trade, mines and oils, manufacturing and in forestry. (6) (See table 2)

## The Canadian Labour Congress

**Table 2**  
Union membership by congress affiliation, 1978

Congress	members	%
Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)	2,204,000	67.2
Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU)	178,000	5.4
Centrale des Syndicats Democratiques (CSD)	38,000	1.2
Canadian Council of Unions (CCU)	26,000	0.8
AFL-CIO, only	11,000	0.3
Independent unions	822,000	25.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,278,000</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Labour Canada, *Labour Organizations in Canada 1978, Table 2*

The CLC was born in 1956, the result of the merger of the Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Congress of Labour, the two largest labour bodies at the time.

These two congresses were linked respectively to the American Federation of Labour (AFL) and to the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) in the United States, and their merger followed closely behind the same process in the U.S.A.

which had resulted in AFL-CIO. The CLC, while maintaining many important links with the AFL-CIO, especially through the international unions which dominate it, remains basically independent. It concentrates its attention on labour struggles, politics, the economy and social reform in Canada; and on international questions, the CLC sometimes takes positions which contradict those of the AFL-CIO. (For example, the CLC continues to play an active role in the 60-million-member International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, while the AFL-CIO has withdrawn.)

When it comes to the NDP, however, the CLC's links are very close. A resolution at the CLC's 1958 convention called for the creation of the NDP, and at the NDP's founding convention in 1961 over 35% of the delegates were from the CLC. Since that time, the leader of the NDP is invited to speak at every CLC convention, important financial support comes from the CLC and some of its member unions (especially the Steelworkers and the United Auto Workers) and the labour bosses assure the NDP an important source of manpower during elections. And since McDermott's election to the presidency in 1978, the formal links have become much more open and active.

In 1978, the CLC was composed of 74 international unions (66% of the individuals in unions affiliated to the CLC), and 23 Canadian unions (34% of affiliated membership). There were also 111 unions with 13,000 members directly chartered to the CLC. Together, that makes 2.2 million workers distributed in about

4. Note that this figure is lower than the figure of 3.3 million given previously, and which is the one to retain. The differences are not only due to the fact that one statistic is for 1977 and the other for 1978, but also because they come from two different federal ministries. CALURA's figures exclude certain marginal unions in their compilations, but this should not have much effect on the distribution of union membership among the provinces.

5. *Labour Organizations in Canada 1978, op.cit., Table 3.*

6. *CALURA, op.cit., p.77*

8500 union locals. (7) Finally, the CLC is composed of 10 provincial labour federations, and in 1978, of 118 local labour councils. (8)

The following comparisons of budgets provide some indications of the capacities of the different types of elements within the CLC.

Canadian Labour Congress	\$4,500,000
Ontario Federation of Labour	\$850,000
Canadian Union of Public Employees	\$10,300,000

Source: Financial Reports of CLC, OFL, CUPE.

The Convention of the CLC elects 20 officers who, together with a representative of each of the provincial labour federations (usually the president), make up the Executive Council, the highest authority of the CLC between conventions. This Council is required to meet at least four times a year. In addition, there is the Executive Committee, a more practical decision-making authority made up of the executive and the six general vice-presidents, which meets at least six times per year. The executive, which deals with day-to-day problems, is composed of the president (salary of \$50,000, not counting expenses), a secretary-treasurer (\$46,500) and two executive vice-presidents (\$45,000 each). (9)

The convention, which is the CLC's highest decision-making body, meets every two years and brings together about 2500 delegates. Each union local can send one delegate, and if it has more than 1000 members, an additional delegate for every 1000. Each affiliated union, provincial federation and local labour council can each

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)	231,000
United Steelworkers of America (USWA)	199,000
Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)	154,000
United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)	130,000
National Union of Provincial Govt. Employees (NUPGE)	128,000
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA)	89,000
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)	64,000
Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)	61,000
International Woodworkers of America (IWA)	57,000
Canadian Paperworkers Union (CPU)	57,000
Service Employees International Union of Canada (SEIU)	55,000
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)	54,000
Retail Clerk's International Association (RCIA)	52,000
Canadian Food and Allied Workers (CFAW)	50,000

send two delegates, and the four members of the executive are automatically delegates. Typically, about 95% of the delegates are sent by the union locals. (See Table 4)

The 14 largest unions account for 63% of the CLC's membership. Of course, it is not always the biggest unions that have the greatest influence on the development of the labour movement: for example, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) only has 23,000 members. (See Table 5)

The federations are definitely subordinate bodies to the CLC. Their legal existence depends on the CLC, which grants them a charter and which has the authority to suspend a federation or to dissolve it and withdraw its charter.

Article XV, section 3, of the CLC's Constitution states that the executive council of the CLC basically has authority over all aspects of a federation's activities. It "shall issue rules governing the conduct, activities, affairs, finances and property of federations of labour and local labour councils and providing procedures for the discipline of such bodies or their of-

ficers". The executive council's decisions can be appealed at the convention, but they remain in full force until that time. (10)

7. *Labour Organizations...*, op. cit., Table 4; and CALURA, p.44  
 8. *Ibid.*  
 9. CLC, *Constitution* (1976 edition)  
 10. *Ibid.*

Newfoundland	35,000
Prince Edward Island	3,000
Nova Scotia	55,000
New Brunswick	41,000
Quebec	284,000
Ontario	715,000
Manitoba	73,000
Saskatchewan	54,000
Alberta	96,000
British Columbia	215,000

Source: Labour Canada, *Labour Organizations in Canada*, 1978.

province	locals	members
Newfoundland	29	3,700
Prince Edward Island	16	1,200
Nova Scotia	82	7,000
New Brunswick	131	16,000
Quebec	219	43,000
Ontario	478	98,000
Manitoba	72	15,000
Saskatchewan	151	14,000
Alberta	88	21,000
British Columbia	118	26,000
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1384</b>	<b>243,000</b>

Source: Statistics Canada (71-202 Supplement): CALURA, 1977.

The Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL) is, however, an exception. As a result of a constant struggle waged by the QFL since the early 1960s, they now have a special status which, in many respects, gives the QFL powers that are similar to that of a central labour body. A comparison of its budget with that of the OFL provides an indication of this difference in status: in 1978, the OFL's budget was only 13% higher than the QFL's, while it had more than 2½ times as many members.

In 1967, the QFL adopted a constitution which broke with the model established by the CLC for the federations. This constitution is in some important respects a declaration of autonomy, and it was only very recently approved by the CLC. (11) This constitution defines the QFL's Convention as its highest decision-making body, while in the OFL, for example, the Executive Council of the CLC can not only over-rule decisions of the OFL executive, but can also over-rule decisions requiring a two-thirds majority at the OFL Convention. (12)

In 1973, the QFL decided to begin to accept that groups of workers who had broken away from their in-

ternational union could be affiliated directly to it (electrical, textile, chemicals and petroleum, breweries, pulp and paper, communications, radio and TV, etc.). The other federations are only permitted to accept organizations already affiliated to the CLC as members.

In 1974, "delegates at the CLC convention voted almost unanimously (85%), and despite the fierce opposition of all CLC officers, to grant us (the QFL) the transfer of jurisdiction we demanded (education and labour councils) as well as a formula of perequation". (13) This meant that labour councils were henceforth to be under the control of the QFL rather than the CLC, and the same applied for trade-union education. It also meant that, in 1979, the CLC gave the QFL a \$44,000 subsidy.

But despite the convention's decision, the leadership of the CLC managed to put off the application of this decision for four years. At the QFL's 1977 convention, a resolution condemning the CLC leadership's "intransigent attitude" in stalling on this decision was passed. (14) And it was finally only under the pressure of the 1978 convention of the CLC,

where the resolution on the Quebec national question was an issue over which the QFL was threatening to leave the CLC, that the CLC leadership agreed to grant the special status in practice... and coincidentally, a compromise resolution on Quebec was passed which was vigorously defended by QFL president Louis Laberge and Steelworkers' provincial director Jean Gérin-Lajoie.

## The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

CUPE was created in 1963 through a merger of public sector unions. By 1975, it had become the largest union in Canada. The Table 6 indicates its number of locals and members by province in 1977.

CUPE's members are employed right across Canada, in the public service (municipal, provincial and federal) and in the para-public sector (schools, hospitals, libraries, State enterprises, etc.). Forty per cent of its members are women, and 40% of its membership comes from Ontario.

The unionization of manual workers in public services (transport, electricity, gas, etc.) dates back to about the same time as for workers doing similar work in the private sector—about 40 years. But the unionization of civil servants (municipal, provincial and federal), is quite a recent phenomenon, dating back to the 1960s (Saskatchewan: 1943; Quebec: 1964; federal: 1967; British Columbia: 1973; etc.). Yet by 1977, 69% of the workers of the public services were unionized, the highest level for any major sector of the Canadian economy.

11. QFL, "La FTQ et la Question Nationale" (1979 Convention document), p.7  
 12. OFL, *Constitution* (1979), See Articles VI:2, II:2, XI.  
 13. "La FTQ et la Question Nationale", op.cit., p.7  
 14. QFL, *le Monde Ouvrier* (Jan. 1978); special issue on the 15th Convention, p.10

# The unity of the international Marxist-Leninist movement: A political question for today

Where are the Marxist-Leninists in Iran and in Afghanistan capable of offering a real alternative to the "Islamic revolution"? Where is the Marxist-Leninist party in these countries which is supposed to lead the revolution towards the victory of socialism? And in any case, who wants your Russian-style socialism? Thanks, but no thanks! Afghanistan is getting a taste of it and I'd rather keep what little "freedom" we have under capitalism than to lose everything. These are the questions, doubts and scepticism which we hear regularly, when we are not faced with outright opposition to what is wrongly identified as socialism. Imperialism's offensive at all levels — with its solid allies among the reformists and revisionists — has, for the moment, succeeded in turning the struggles of the peoples away from the path of proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism.

As the imperialist bourgeoisies' war preparations become an increasing reality, the proletariat and peoples find themselves without real proletarian leadership on an international scale capable of guiding their struggles to a decisive victory over imperialism. Nevertheless, the forces which are resolutely working for the victory of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat — the only path capable of assuring total liberation from the capitalist system of exploitation — are to be found in the Marxist-Leninist movement as it exists and is developing in several countries.

What is the current situation within the International Marxist-Leninist movement? Does it really influence the course of events and the development of class struggle in each country and on a world scale? How are its main contradictions and its major weaknesses going to be resolved? Today's communists must give the proletariat answers to these questions because it is about time that socialism cease to be a vague aspiration which we will "inevitably" attain one day or another, despite the just as "inevitable" reversals and detours.

## A movement which exists but is dispersed

We have only to point out the lack of influence of the international communist movement on support for the main revolutionary struggles in recent years — Iran, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Zimbabwe, for example — to recognize that, despite the solidarity organized by many Marxist-Leninists around the world, their efforts have not been able to break through the wall of silence

surrounding the struggles of these peoples. They have not been able to unmask the lies of the bourgeois press. They have been even less able to thwart the booby-trapped aid offered by the imperialist powers burning with impatience to replace the dominant imperialists.

It must be pointed out that in many countries in Africa and the Middle East, the influence of Marxists-Leninists is still very weak, when it is not inexistent, especially in the face of attempts by the Soviet revisionists to place revolutionary



liberation movements under their thumbs.

If we turn our attention to the capitalist or imperialist countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Canada or the United States, we have to admit that the influence of the Marxist-Leninist point of view among the proletariat and the masses is still very limited in comparison to the influence of social democracy and modern revisionism.

But at the same time, we would be denying reality if we didn't recognize the existence of Marxist-Leninist forces in a large number of countries. Although their influence in the class struggle is still very limited (there are a few exceptions, and notably that of the Party of Labour of Albania, which is leading the struggle to build socialism), these forces do exist and are developing in the revolutionary struggle. In Iran, several Marxist-Leninist organizations are playing an important role in

the armed struggle of the Kurdish peasants both through their agitation within the Persian nation and their work to counter the chauvinist campaign being waged by the regime in power. They have also developed their influence among oil workers and students. Iranian Marxist-Leninists are not united within a single organization and on the basis of a common programme, but twelve organizations have begun to hold regular conferences with the goal of building the unity of Marxist-Leninists. (1) In Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil, Chile and other Latin American countries, Marxist-Leninists exist and are very actively involved in the struggle against U.S. imperialism and its manoeuvres to "democratize" military regimes. In some cases, they are engaged in armed struggle alongside peasants and workers. (2) In Tunisia, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Senegal, Angola and elsewhere in Africa, the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement is an increasingly concrete reality at various levels, going from relatively simple propaganda activities to active involvement in the struggle against suppression of workers and their unions, as was recently reported in the newspaper IN STRUGGLE! with regard to the struggle in Tunisia. (3)

Without enumerating all the countries where we are aware that Marxist-Leninist forces exist, one thing is clear: the international Marxist-Leninist movement is an increasingly concrete and dynamic reality in the struggles of the proletariat and the peoples of the world.

But at the same time, another thing stands out just as clearly for those who take the trouble to analyse reality as it exists, and that is the state of disunity and division of this movement in many countries such as Iran, France, England, Italy, the United States and Turkey, to name just a few. This state of division coincides with its weakness in the face of the bourgeoisie and its reformist and revisionist agents. And more important still, the international communist movement as a whole is largely unable to act as a

unified and organized political force on an international scale against imperialism. It is not at present a force whose programme and action constitute a powerful arm in the hands of the struggling proletariat and peoples.

Evidently, this weakness and dispersion is a result of the struggle which the bourgeoisie successfully waged against the communist movement, including its witch-hunt in the thirties, forties and fifties. But there is also the fact that the communist movement degenerated and that the vast majority of parties which had been communist, starting with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik), were transformed into instruments of policies of pacification and collaboration with the bourgeoisie and imperialism leaving the working-class movement disoriented to continue the struggle for socialism. And even if the idea of rebuilding the communist movement was put forward and the struggle against revisionism waged for a long time, we cannot say that communists around the world have systematically undertaken the work of rebuilding their unity. In other words, they have not taken up the task of rebuilding the movement as a real force, as a political and organizational force, and not just as a force which denounces reactionary and reformist ideas around the world.

## Combat viewpoints which oppose unity

It might seem like an exaggeration to talk about disunity at the present time and to insist on this characteristic within the international communist movement when from year to year, from six months to six months, the international communist movement seems to be winning victories against all new forms of revisionism and opportunism. Yesterday, it was the victory over the so-called "three worlds theory"; more recently it was against "Mao Zedong" Thought"; and increasingly it has become the struggle against those who

"denigrate" Stalin... and perhaps that's how it will continue until "a perfect identity of views" is attained... at least among a certain number of communists in the world. And in fact, there exists a tendency within the international communist movement which denies the existence of Marxist-Leninist organizations outside of those which fully share the conclusions which this tendency comes up with every six months.

The Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) (PCE(M-L)) is one of the organizations which is often in the vanguard of new "principled demarcations" within the international communist movement. After reading the papers on the situation in this movement written in preparation for its Third Congress held in November 1979, we would naturally be led to conclude that the type of struggle against revisionism which would best serve the unity of communists and the interests of the international proletariat at this time would be a struggle which consists of attacking Mao Zedong Thought and of placing Joseph Stalin on a pedestal.

*"In its sessions devoted to the study of the international situation,*

1. In February 1980, IN STRUGGLE! published a pamphlet in English and French on the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian people. It is entitled *Behind the headlines: Religious war or people's revolution in Iran*. The pamphlet includes reprints of articles which appeared in the newspaper IN STRUGGLE! following a trip to Iran by a militant of our Organization a few months ago. The pamphlet includes many facts about the positions and activities of Marxist-Leninist organizations in Iran as well as an editorial from the Union of Iranian Communists dated April, 1979 on "The revolution in Iran and its political developments".
2. Several publications by Latin and Central American Marxist-Leninist are available at the l'Etincelle and Spark bookstores. The majority are only available in Spanish, but some have been translated into French or English.
3. Here we are particularly referring to the publication of organs such as *La Flamme* published by the Communist Party of Dahomey; *ECH-CHOOLA* published by the Tunisian Communist (Marxist-Leninist) Group *ECH-CHOOLA*; *Le Proletaire* published by the Union of Communist Struggle of Upper Volta, a country where there is another organization which claims to be Marxist-Leninist, the Voltaic Revolutionary Communist Party. As for the struggle waged by the Tunisian communists, refer to issue 182 (November 27, 1979) of IN STRUGGLE!

our Congress paid particular attention to analysing, unmasking and denouncing Mao Zedong Thought as a revisionist and anti-Marxist trend whose goal is to undermine and hinder as much as possible the victorious development of the international Marxist-Leninist movement; we consider that resolutely denouncing and combatting Maoism is today a question of vital importance for Marxist-Leninists." (4)

In addition to this, we find its logical counterpart:

"The Third Congress considers that, at this time, the question of comrade Stalin constitutes a decisive element which separates authentic revolutionaries from revisionists and counter-revolutionaries." (5)

The CPE(M-L) isn't the only organization which considers matters in this way. Similar affirmations can be found in the press of many other Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations, including that of the Party of Labour of Albania. It's one thing to conclude that Mao wasn't a Marxist-Leninist — something which is somewhat questionable given that many of the analyses on this subject are far from reflecting a materialist point of view on the history of the Chinese revolution — but it is quite another to impose this condemnation (accompanied with the glorification of Stalin) as a criterion for demarcating Marxism-Leninism from revisionism. If we are to judge by the effects of these positions and the actions which they lead to — especially at the Anti-imperialist Youth Camp in Spain last summer (6) — they lead not to unity but to continual division on the basis of political and ideological demarcations which have all the appearances of being intransigent in the defence of Marxism-Leninism and the struggle against revisionism. But, curiously, they see all criticism as provocation or betrayal. The PCE(M-L)'s November 1979 Congress took up the responsibility (with the parties of the world) of preparing conditions for a new communist international. (7) But if this new international is

judged on the basis of past actions and avowed intentions, there is serious danger that it lead to the consolidation of a faction of the international communist movement rather than sealing the political and organizational unity of all communists in the world. And it is also likely that this take place in isolation from the international proletariat.

In addition to this tendency within the movement, there is another tendency, its complete opposite. This tendency is composed of parties and organizations which are trying to consolidate their unity on the basis of the defence of Mao Zedong Thought and the fight against the "opportunists and revisionists of the PLA and its supporters". There is no lack of name-calling in this kind of struggle.

The clearest defence of this point of view is to be found in the positions of an American organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States (RCPUSA):

"The Second Congress of our Party called for stepped up efforts to make contact, carry on struggle and build principled unity with Marxist-Leninist forces in other countries, on the basis of drawing and upholding clear lines of demarcation...At the same time with the full flowering (weeding?) of opportunist tendencies in the line of the Albanian Party and its degeneration into counter-revolution, we have not only taken up the task of resolutely upholding the immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung against attacks from this quarter, but have begun to make a thorough (and continuing) criticism of the dogmatorevisionism of the Albanian Party and its hangers-on... the number of organizationa and parties that have taken a clear stand in support of Mao Tsetung and his contributions to Marxism-Leninism while opposing and exposing the revisionist rulers of China is growing. But, at the same time, the contacts and level of unity, in theory and practice, among these forces (and some we may not even know of as yet) are still extremely primitive. For both these positive

and negative reasons, the need for a qualitative leap in this situation stands out very starkly...It calls for step by step (but constantly advancing) progress toward ongoing and concrete unity in theory and practice, on every level — ideological, political and organizational." (8)

At the current time, the RCPUSA's reaction might seem extreme, but it is nevertheless an expression of a trend within the international communist movement which is also trying to consolidate itself by imposing criteria for demarcation which are supposed to be decisive for the reconstruction of the unity of communists. But behind these superficial references to this or that leader are hidden important positions on the building of socialism, the role of the party, its links with the masses and the role of the international. Unfortunately, these trends want communists to adhere to their understanding of these crucial questions without debate, and on the sole basis of blind faith in individuals who are certainly not completely exempt from all error.

4. Message from the Third Congress to fraternal parties, published in *Vanguardia Obrera*, organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain (M-L), November 10-16, 1979, p. 11 (our translation)
5. Resolution of the Third Congress on Stalin, published in *Vanguardia Obrera*, op. cit. p. 12 (our translation)
6. IN STRUGGLE! reported on these events in its newspaper, issue 174 (October 2, 1979). The organizers of the camp, which brought together youth organizations linked to a certain number of European Marxist-Leninist parties, prevented Marxist-Leninist and anti-imperialist organizations from having access to this camp and denied their right to distribute their points of view. The organizers refused to allow points of view opposed to theirs on the question of Mao, for example, to be openly expressed at the camp. The organizers even called on the police and physically attacked the "undesirables" to get them to leave.
7. See, for example, *Vanguardia Obrera*, November 10-16, 1979, p. 17. The need to rebuild a new international was also reaffirmed by other organizations present at the CPS(M-L)'s Third Congress, notably in messages from the Communist Party of Japan (left) and the Communist Party of Germany (Marxist-Leninist).
8. Documents of the Third Plenary Session of the Second Central Committee of the RCPUSA, published in *Revolution*, organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States, Vol. 4, no. 10-11, October-November, 1979, p. 11



## Putting the struggle against revisionism onto its feet

It should come as no big surprise that besides these trends, there are other Marxist-Leninist organizations which question the very existence of an international communist movement. The discovery of mistakes in the lines and activities of certain parties becomes a pretext for questioning whether or not they are Marxist-Leninist, and this in a surprisingly simplistic way. In the end there are no Marxist-Leninists but oneself because the examination of the past and present of all the other parties reveals that they adopted erroneous positions, be it three, ten or twenty years ago! It's easy to guess what this kind of attitude with regard to the nature of the movement leads to: isolation and turning inwards, or support for a very small number of communists from other countries who, with oneself, defend the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism. The only thing left to do is to bottle Marxism-Leninism and send it out to sea.

Despite its weakness, and despite the negative characteristics described above, the communist movement exists. There are organizations which have a common adherence to Marxism-Leninism, which recognize the need for proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat to achieve socialism, and who are actively involved, to one degree or another, in class struggle. If one refuses to adopt an attitude which consists in saying: who's for Mao, who's against? Who's for Stalin, who's against?; it becomes clear that the international communist movement cannot be limited to "recognized" parties or tendencies which seem to be consolidated. It also becomes

clear that this narrow method for examining the movement, defining who belongs to it and imposing lines of demarcation (a poor substitute for not serving the genuine interests of communists and the international proletariat), is not shared by all and is even being increasingly fought.

In issue 180 of the newspaper IN STRUGGLE! (November 13, 1979), we published the position of Marxist-Leninists in Venezuela on the situation in the international communist (Marxist-Leninist) movement. Here are a few important excerpts:

"Concerning the ideological struggle that currently exists within the international Marxist-Leninist movement on the evaluation of Mao Zedong, we believe that this struggle should not be reduced to a simple positive or negative verdict on the personality and contributions of Mao Zedong. We feel that this ideological struggle should be an important step forward in clarifying the problem of the proletarian revolution as a whole. Marxist theory is required for this, not preconceived ideas. It is only in this way that we can contribute to consolidating and enriching Marxism-Leninism as the scientific theory of the proletariat and of proletarian revolution.

"In this struggle Marxist-Leninist parties must combat superficial analyses that lead to subjectivism and unilateralism. Moreover it is essential that Marxist-Leninist parties help each other in making these analyses. The kind of haste which results in taking statements as fundamental without taking into account the political practice which is developing must end. In order to study these and other problems facing the international communist movement, our organization's point of view is based on the community of Marxist-Leninist parties being guided by general principles which take a concrete form in each specific real situation. This means we must take into account the unequal and multiple development of our community of parties. To start from the assumption that un-



*animity would be possible on specific problems which are not directly linked to principles would deny the ideological struggle which exists within each party."* (9)

We basically share these reservations and criticisms. We share them because we find them to be a more materialist attitude for defending Marxism-Leninism, criticizing revisionism, and studying the teachings of history. It is an attitude which will enable us to genuinely speed up revisionism's defeat.

Sometimes the attitude adopted in the criticism of revisionism is linked to manifestations of sectarianism in the movement. There are many examples of incorrect ways of looking at the movement as it exists today and of examining its past. Take the example of China and its party. It is said that the Communist Party of China has fallen into revisionism and that this must be analysed. This leads to the conclusion that it didn't fall into revisionism just two years ago, and that if we look closely at the situation, we can see that already in 1935 opportunist and bourgeois ideas dominated this party. (10) This is the conclusion reached by the Party of Labour of Albania, the Communist Party of Spain (M-L) and several others, including the phoney Communist Party of Canada (M-L), which only a few years ago was the greatest fan of "our" chairman Mao and his thought in Canada. But this kind of conclusion isn't limited to the Communist Party of China which, we should point out, was a member of the Communist International until the latter's dissolution in 1943, and which was never expelled either.

This same type of analysis is repeated, this time with regard to the Communist Party of Vietnam. It is said that the Vietnamese party has chosen the path of collaboration with Soviet imperialism and that this must be analysed. This leads to the same kind of conclusions as in the case of China. The Communist Party of Vietnam was contaminated right from its very creation in the thirties. (11) We are not trying to deny that important questions are posed by these analyses. These questions must become the object of a collec-

tive struggle by Marxist-Leninists to draw lessons from our history so as to arrive at an articulate and complete criticism of revisionism. We ourselves have undertaken the study and analysis of revisionism and its particular forms in given periods of history, and our Central Committee has decided to publish a special pamphlet on this question in the months to come.

However, after reading certain analyses, we are sometimes led to wonder from what point of view the criticism of revisionism is being made and just where it is going. If studying revisionism was simply a matter of listing a certain number of quotations without trying to understand them in their historical context, in the countries they come from and on a world scale, then we would just have to take a few quotations from Lenin, use them out of their context, and state with all certainty that Lenin himself was a revisionist and that it was obvious that capitalism would inevitably be restored in the Soviet Union.

This method of analysis is a far cry from dialectical and historical materialism. Marxist-Leninists will not be able to make progress in the analysis and criticism of revisionism if they continue along this path. This kind of analysis is not consistent with the goal we are pursuing in the struggle against revisionism and for the unity of communists. This goal is to serve the interests of the international proletariat by objectively examining the mistakes and the positive lessons of history in order to draw out the teachings — the orientation and programme — whose application will ensure a decisive victory for the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and peoples against capitalism and imperialism.

### **On what basis and how will we achieve the unity of communists?**

If we reject positions which con-

sist in transforming Mao Zedong Thought or the question of Stalin into criteria for demarcation, it is not because we are trying to find a middle path somewhere between Mao and Stalin. Rather, it is because the task of communists is to resolve the central problems raised by the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Iran or Afghanistan; and these problems must be solved today. How would a definitive and complete judgement of Mao or Stalin advance the revolutionary struggle in Iran today?

If our goal is to unite communists in order to ensure the victory of the revolution, then the study of the contributions of Mao or Stalin or the other leaders of the proletariat must be undertaken with this goal in mind.

It is for this reason that we believe that Marxist-Leninists must unite around a communist programme and not around the contributions of this or that leader of the revolutionary proletariat.

In the Appeal from our Third Congress (held in March 1979), we stated that in order to rebuild their political and organizational unity, communists had to unite on the basis of a communist programme

9. *On the general revolutionary line, published in Que Hacer?, organ of the National Committee of the committees of popular struggle, Venezuela, special October 1979 edition, p. 10 (our translation)*

10. See Enver Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution*, editions "8 Nentori", Tirana 1979, particularly the second part which deals with a criticism of Chinese revisionism. This work is available in several languages. PLA publications are available at the Spark and l'Étincelle bookstores in English and French. The condemnation of Mao Zedong Thought is also put forward by the PCE(M-L), the Communist Party of Portugal (Reconstructed) since its last congress in the spring of 1979, the Communist Party of Dahomey, Le Parti communiste des ouvriers de France (the Communist Party of Workers of France), the Communist Party of Germany (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of the United States (Marxist-Leninist) and others.

11. See *Vietnam, aborted revolution!*, published in *Revolution* vol. 4, no. 7-8 (July-August, 1979) in English. Also published in Spanish in *Revolution*, vol. 4, no. 10-11, October-November 1979

for world revolution. (12) In our opinion, a new international has to be created on the basis of such a programme. The point of view which holds that communists must be united on the basis of a programme cannot be said to have a large following in the international communist movement. In fact, the majority of Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations talk more about a "general line", although they are fully aware that there are important differences over the content of this "general line". But if our Appeal proposes unity around a programme, it is not simply because we wanted to have an original position in opposition to unity based on the "general line". We based ourselves, in part, on the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on this question and on the history of the international communist movement itself during the period when it was united and organized within an international. We based ourselves as well on the political shortcomings which the international communist movement has periodically faced since it is no longer united around a common programme, but rather around a "general line", which more often than not, consists of an analysis of the immediate conjuncture and a criticism of the most recent forms of revisionism. We also based ourselves on the goal pursued in the struggle for the unity of communists, which is to make the international communist movement a political force capable of influencing events on an international scale and of leading the revolutionary and progressive forces of the world in the struggle for socialism. On this basis, it is more correct to struggle to ensure that the political instrument for the unity of communists is at the same time the political instrument for the revolutionary combat of the proletariat. The basis for the unity of communists will no longer be a "general line", but a very specific programme in which each word will become a razor-edged arm in the hands of the proletariat for the defeat of imperialism and revisionism and the victory of the revolutionary proletariat.

This programme remains to be

worked. It will be worked out through struggle at all levels: on the theoretical level; on the level of the teachings to be drawn from the history of the communist movement; on the level of the lessons to be drawn from the international communist movement today as it struggles to rebuild solid vanguard parties of the proletariat in different countries — not outside of class struggle, but in the very heat of the struggles of the proletariat and peoples; and on the level of the international solidarity of the proletariat of all nations and countries in the world. These different grounds for polemics and debates and for practical co-operation in the struggle will all contribute in varying degrees to moving us forward to the day when the conditions for the creation of a new communist international will be more favourable. But Marxist-Leninists will have to unite their efforts to achieve this. Both the Marxist-Leninists who condemn Mao and those who defend him must accept the possibility that their criteria are not criteria which serve the superior interests of the international proletariat. All of them must begin to consider the possible existence of communist forces in the world and even the possible existence of several organizations in the same country, outside of the relatively limited number of organizations which they have official relations with.

The entire international communist movement has to recognize its current weakness and accept collective debate and discussion. One possible form for this would be international conferences of Marxist-Leninists. The aim of this debate is not to seal precarious unity created overnight, but rather to examine collectively through frank and vigorous criticism the obstacles to a higher level of unity.

The international communist movement must first deal with the question of its unity: how and on what basis it will attain real unity among the communists of the world, given that they are currently divided, isolated and do not form a vanguard

force for revolution on an international scale.

Communist forces — parties, organizations and even small groups — exist around the world. They are not united, but they do exist. There are many political contradictions among them. They are organizationally dispersed and there are even efforts to consolidate the different tendencies which exist within the movement. But it is with all of these forces that IN STRUGGLE! intends to make a contribution to the construction of the political and organizational unity of the movement. We will not restrict ourselves to working with those forces with whom we totally agree from the start. This doesn't mean that we will abandon the criticism of errors we discover in the line or practice of other organizations, or in the history of the international communist movement. We will continue to wage criticism in a frank and open manner, for that has always been the attitude which has characterized the class which communists try to serve. But at the same time, the proletariat has another quality which is intrinsically linked to its situation as the only class which is revolutionary right to the end; and that quality is its spirit of unity, its solidarity which goes beyond borders, nationalities, and the divisions sown by the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Today's communists must take more inspiration from the proletariat — not by attenuating the criticism of revisionism, far from that — but by waging this criticism with the goal of uniting all genuine Marxist-Leninist forces existing in the world today. The unity of communists is a vital question. On it depends the real and thorough-going unity of the international proletariat.

12. See *For the political and organizational unity of the international communist movement, Appeal from the Third Congress of IN STRUGGLE! to communists (M-L) of the world, May 1979. IN STRUGGLE!'s positions on the struggle against revisionism and for the unity of Marxist-Leninists can also be found in no. 17-18 of the journal PROLETARIAN UNITY, which contains the documents from IN STRUGGLE!'s Third Congress (Political Report, Programme, Constitution, Appeal). The Appeal was also published in Spanish in February 1980.*

# The Workers Communist Party unveils its constitution

During the more than three years it existed, the Canadian Communist League (M-L) (CC(M-L)) never made its constitution public. This was probably a good gage of just how unimportant they saw it to be.

In fact, a closer look at how the League is organized shows that the constitution is quite important and helps us understand what's behind some of its public antics. How do you explain the League's working with the CNTU to raid in at least one factory and several hospitals? What lies behind its efforts to impose its leadership at all costs in community organizations? Why does the League use such undemocratic methods at union meetings? Let's take a look at the organizational principles and methods of leadership adopted by the League.

Luckily, at this point in time were able to get access to some of that information. We live in the era of the Workers Communist Party, which has just been created and presented publicly as the party of the working class. It would be unthinkable for such an organization not to publish its constitution. No one is going to join an organization that hides its organizational rules. Many people have experienced how undemocratic the capitalist parties are, and how they fail to implement their programme or the decisions made by the membership.

After we have taken a closer look at the WCP constitution, we will see that they might have been better off after all to keep it under wraps. A careful reading of the document shows what the WCP is basing itself on when it engages in its undemocratic gyrations in the mass movement. It also provides some clues as to why WCP members are so often unable to defend the party's line. Usually they manoeuvre quickly to avoid a debate or accomplish the same thing by shouting a few slogans that make little or no concrete sense.

What is especially evident in the WCP constitution is the organizational justification for the economism which is so characteristic of all its work. The WCP programme, of course, is a grocery list of demands for each separate category of workers. The tactical leadership provided by its members rarely goes beyond a factory-by-factory clutter of recipes. This localism is erected by the constitution into a principle. The vast majority of WCP members have but one role: to confine themselves to immediate struggles and to apply a line decided by others. They have little or no real opportunity to take a stand on the political line and programme of the party. There are no mechanisms to let them exercise their paper rights and maintain any real supervision or control over their leadership.

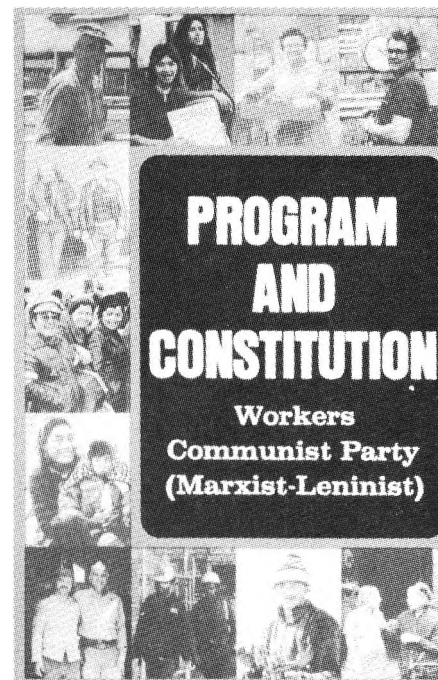
## What is a constitution for?

Contrary to what the WCP has stated recently, the constitution is much more than just "the basic rules of functioning of the Party". (1)

The constitution of a Marxist-Leninist organization is not just a

central instrument in its day-to-day functioning and the implementation of its policies. It is also an important part of its ideological and political line. You cannot separate off the line and programme of an organization from the means adopted to apply it.

Even more important, it is completely wrong to separate the implementation of the line from the



process of arriving at it. The constitution lays out the general rules for organizational structures and how things are to function. It sets out the basic structures and defines the rights and responsibilities of members and supporters for the express purpose of making it possible to attain the revolutionary objectives by accomplishing the requisite tasks. The formulation of the organization's political line is one of the most important of those tasks.

Thus the constitution is a daily guide to action for the whole organization. It is a tool which we should use regularly to judge our work and to resolve certain kinds of political problems.

Capitalist parties are characteristically undemocratic and usually ignore their own programme. They lack any real discipline and are plagued by factionalism and a morality which permits lying. The organized vanguard of the proletariat has its own organizational

1. *The Forge*, November 2 1979, p. 11.

rules. They correspond to its class interests and are designed to serve the accomplishment of its goals: overthrowing the capitalist State, establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and realizing communism.

The fundamental Marxist-Leninist organizational principle is democratic centralism. That means basically two things: centralization based on democracy; and the practice of democracy under a centralized leadership. (2)

These principles of democratic centralism are central to the process of developing a correct political line. One thing is sure: a line does not spring out of the heads of a few geniuses. It is the product of lessons drawn from the revolutionary practice of the entire organization and of the masses generally. Hence, there must be a viable democratic life in the proletarian party so that its line can be developed properly.

It is in the interest of the capitalist class to seek competition, factionalism and power struggles in its parties. Capitalist parties are thus inevitably undemocratic. The proletariat, on the contrary, needs extensive democracy. It is the only guarantee that there will be real unity in carrying out the class struggle.

Contrary to what we have all been told, democracy reaches its fullest flowering within the communist party. Democracy is not just a bunch of fine words in the party of the proletariat. It means the active participation of all members in the life of the organization. That participation exists from the point when the basic programme and policies are being hammered out to when they are put into practice. It operates when leaders are being elected and when the work of those leaders is being scrutinized by the membership. It continues from the implementation of policies through to the process of summing up the lessons to be drawn from that practice. Proletarian democracy means that everyone has the right to express their views and the obligation to implement the decisions reached by the majority or by the democratically elected leadership bodies.

This is why a communist organization cannot put up with the idea of having members who buy their membership card a week

before the party congress and who go home the day after without the slightest obligation to join all other members in implementing the policy decisions. Yet that is how bourgeois parties function.

This understanding of what real democracy is, underlies the approach taken by MLOC IN STRUGGLE! to the adoption of its programme at the Third Congress. A whole series of public conferences were held before the Congress. All members and probationers received copies of the documents that were to be debated several months in advance. All members and probationers were able to explain their views and put forward their proposals to the congress delegates, who were democratically elected in the cells. And all members are now required to implement the policies that came out of the congress, to apply them in a creative way to the conditions prevailing in their political work under the leadership of the elected Central Committee. The Central Committee has to account for its work regularly, generally by means of the organization's press.

The WCP's founding congress was completely at odds with this concept of democracy. There is only so much information available to us about that congress. We know, however, that in barely two days the delegates managed to adopt a programme, constitution and the political report from the outgoing (League) central committee. In that same 48 hours the delegates found the time to meet in workshops and to "exchange views and experiences" (3) outside the formal meeting times. There isn't a single bourgeois party or union convention in all of Canada that could have accomplished such a feat. But then the WCP constitution indeed promotes a very peculiar idea of democracy.

## A facade of democracy

No one would argue with the assertion that a key to real democracy is that the members of an organization must be able to actually exercise the rights they have on paper. The WCP constitution recognizes the right of all its members to "determine the political line of the Party,

and contribute to its development". (4) In theory "the cell is the basic organization of the WCP" and "all Party members belong to a cell". (5) The cell is thus necessarily the place where the members can participate in developing the line. The constitution is doubly clear on this, asserting that the cell has the responsibility to "contribute to developing the organization's political line, ensure the Marxist-Leninist education of its members and do political education of its sympathizers and the masses". (6)

But read on. The constitution also states that when the cell "has more than 8 members, (it) must be divided into base units". (7) The cell meetings only involve delegates from those base units (8) (\*).

Where then is it that all WCP members are supposed to exercise their paper rights in practice? The constitution goes on to say that in fact only the delegates get to take a stand on all matters and to decide on policies governing the work at cell meetings.

That one little rule may seem innocent enough. In fact, it constitutes a major impediment to the exercise of any real democracy. How can you talk of democracy in such an organization? In the WCP, most members do not have the right to take part in decision-making in their cell. They cannot scrutinize the issues and proposals and give their views on all matters affecting the party's work and internal life. They cannot elect their leaders, nor do they supervise the work of the elected leadership by requiring that they account regularly for their actions. Mind you, all of these rights exist in the WCP constitution. Only most members and all probationers

2. See "Democratic Centralism: a fundamental organizational principle of the proletarian party" in *PROLETARIAN UNITY* no. 19, December 1979-January 1980, p. 48.

3. *The Forge*, vol. 4, no. 30, September 7 1979, p. 6.

4. WCP Constitution, section one, article 3 (2), p. 173.

5. *Ibid.*, section 6, article 1 (1), p. 178.

6. *Ibid.*, section 6, article 3 (1), p. 179.

7. *Ibid.*, section 6, article 1 (4), p. 179.

8. *Ibid.*, section 6, article 2 (2), p. 179.

(\*) Incredible as it may seem, the sentence explaining this rule was left out of the English version of the WCP constitution. The sentence in French reads: "If a (cell) meeting is held the delegates to it are chosen to give a proportional representation from the different base units." ("Si une conférence est tenue, les délégués sont élus suivant une représentation proportionnelle des différentes unités").

are excluded from participation in the only body where those rights could be exercised by everyone: the cell.

This does more than just deny the rights of party members. It also liquidates the cells as the basic organizational unit of the party. It is difficult to figure out what the basic unit is in the WCP. Is it the cells, as the constitution states? Or is it what WCP refers to as the "base units", whose role, composition, responsibilities, etc., remain completely unspecified?

All communist parties recognize the cell as the basic unit. The cell is the medium through which the party develops close ties to the broad masses of people and implements its policies. The cells are also the means by which close links are maintained between the central leadership and all members, between the leadership and the masses.

In the WCP, the members cannot exercise their rights in practice. The cells are not a place where all members can employ their rights or oversee the party's work. They are a delegated level of decision-making which has had its basic function gutted. Those organizational measures lead willy-nilly to the WCP leadership getting further and further away from its rank-and-file members. When a chasm opens up between the leadership and the members, between the leadership and the masses, the way is clear for the development of bureaucracy. This means that the leadership gets further and further removed from the interests of the people.

It is not surprising that the WCP should end up like that. When democracy is stifled at the most basic level of organization in the party, the cells, democracy is necessarily undermined at every level. You can go ahead and be extremely democratic in selecting delegates to the district or regional bodies who then elect the delegates to the congress (as the WCP apparently does), but it is too late; the damage is already done. The whole elaborate structure totters on clay feet.

However, as we will see the cells are not the only place in which the WCP elevates lack of democracy into a principle.

## When the exception becomes the rule

One thing that really hits you when you read through the WCP constitution is the enormous number of exceptions which render one rule after another inoperative. Not only are the rights of members reduced to a formality. Special powers of the Central Committee are also tacked on in one article after another, especially to take care of all the "exceptions".

Thus the constitution says that the Congress is "the highest leading organ of the Party" and that it "elects the Central Committee... and determines the number of its members".<sup>(9)</sup> "No person who has not been a member in good standing for at least a year can be a member of the Central Committee."<sup>(10)</sup>

But all these fine principles may well be tossed aside at any time thanks to a very convenient additional rule which stipulates that "in exceptional circumstances (such as when another organization is rallied) comrades recently recruited into the Party can be... (coopted by the Central Committee)".<sup>(11)</sup> (\*)

This extra rule is in line with another "exception" written into the constitution which permits the Central Committee to "rule on exceptional cases where full rights can be accorded to a new member of the Party" who otherwise would "not have the right to vote, nor to be elected to any post such as secretary of the cell bureau, cell secretary or assistant secretary".<sup>(12)</sup>

That one speaks for itself. What a clever approach WCP has to laying out constitutional rules, with an exception anticipated for every rule. It could come in particularly handy during negotiations with some particularly "exceptional" people who were contemplating rallying to the vanguard party. You know the kind of people we mean, those who are eager to serve the cause of the proletariat as long, of course, as certain exceptional conditions can be created appropriate to their prominence and exceptional abilities such as letting them sit on the Central Committee.

All of these "exceptions" remind us of the way the capitalist parties are run. They try to get influential "personalities" to run for them by

promising cabinet posts, or if the party is not in power, some other kind of high post.

The mainstream bourgeois parties that hold office are not the only one to practice this kind of horse-trading. The CPC(M-L) is famous for it. It once promised a seat on its central committee to Jack Scott, a member of the Progressive Workers Movement in Vancouver if he would join up. The WCP has not invented anything new in opportunist tricks. There is perhaps just one exception (!), and that is its practice of tagging on exceptions after every second rule in its constitution so that opportunism can flourish.

The WCP constitution empowers the Central Committee to at any time "co-opt alternate members elected at the Congress as full members of the Central Committee. It can also appoint Party members as alternate members. The decisions must be ratified at the next Congress".<sup>(13)</sup>

Let's briefly run down some of the special powers granted to the WCP Central Committee:

- 1) the right to admit new members into the party by rallying one or several groups or organizations as a bloc — even though the constitution says elsewhere that admission to membership is an individual matter and the responsibility of the cells.
- 2) the right to grant the right to vote and be elected to someone who has not yet finished their six-month period of probationary membership.
- 3) the right to co-opt new alternate members onto the Central Committee.
- 4) the right to co-opt alternate members of the Central Committee as full members.

What is the point of affirming the principle that the Congress is the highest organ of leadership and that it "democratically" elects the members of the Central Committee, which acts as the highest leadership between congresses, if the Central Committee can simply modify or reverse all of those decisions at any

9. *Ibid.*, section 3, article 1, p. 176.

10. *Ibid.*, section 4, article 7, p. 177.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

12. *Ibid.*, section 1, article 5 and footnote, p. 175.

13. *Ibid.*, section 4, article 6, p. 177.

(\*) Again the words in the second set of brackets (coopted by the Central Committee) brackets are left out of the English version. In French: "co-optés par le Comité Central"

time? What can be done about all the new people it has named to the Central Committee when the time to account for all this is not until the Congress rolls around maybe three years later?

The powers the WCP has given to its Central Committee are not ones that might conceivably help it to apply the party programme creatively to the concrete conditions of the class struggle. They would not unite the party in implementing the Congress decisions either. Those powers are designed to allow the Central Committee to get around the Congress decisions, especially as it pertains to the election of the leadership. Those powers leave plenty of room for arbitrariness, élitism and power struggles between cliques.

## Institutionalized elitism

WCP members can "directly address all the higher bodies right up to the Central Committee". In fact they can go one better and address "the Chairman of the Central Committee". If they are disciplined they have the right to "appeal to the higher organ, right up to the Central Committee", but not up to the Congress.<sup>(14)</sup> The WCP in section 2 which sets forward the "organizational principles", forgets to mention anywhere that the Central Committee is subordinate to the Congress which elected it. And the Congress is supposed to be the "highest organ of party leadership". But something else has appeared on the scene to fulfil that role: none other than the Chairman Himself.

This is not the only conjuring act in the WCP repertoire, where the rabbit in the hat is in reality just a floppy-eared capitalist hierarchy. Nowhere in the constitution does it say that the Political Bureau must account for its work to the Central Committee that elected it. Nowhere is anything said about the Political Bureau directing the day-to-day political work in accordance with the decisions reached by the Central Committee. The Central Committee, after all, must be considered the highest level of leadership between Congresses because it has been elected for this purpose by the Congress.<sup>(15)</sup>

The WCP constitution does not specify this. It does, however, take

the time to detail how the Central Committee "directs all the party's work"<sup>(16)</sup>, the "Political Bureau directs the work of the Central Committee"<sup>(\*)</sup> and finally "the Chairman directs the work of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee".<sup>(17)</sup> Thus the Political Bureau is transformed in practice from a small executive body subordinate to the Central Committee into the highest leadership body between congresses. This hierarchical leadership, if we are to believe what we read in the WCP constitution, does not have to account for its actions to anyone.

The above is a perfect example of how the WCP understands centralism. It is for centralism without democracy, where any elected leadership body other than the cell is freed from having to account for its actions to anybody. There is no conception at all of a collective leadership. Power is concentrated into the hands of a few individuals. The constitution does not even specify any precise responsibility for the Central Committee. The only specific responsibility mentioned is that of making a few "appointments". Beyond that there is one general, theoretical affirmation that the Central Committee "directs all the party's work". In fact, the words "collective leadership" do not appear once in the whole WCP constitution.

Undoubtedly there have to be a few omissions here and there in order to permit the *de facto* pyramid structure to function. Thus there is no quorum fixed for Central Committee meetings. There is no mechanism outlined for delaying the convening of a congress. There is no minimum time limit by which time the agenda for the Congress must be made known. Indeed, it doesn't say anywhere that the WCP leadership is even obliged to inform all members of its "Party" what the agenda is.

Because of these "omissions", the WCP could hold a congress on a few day's or weeks' notice. It could hold up on distributing the agenda and relevant documents until the day of the Congress and give them only to delegates. All of this is eerily reminiscent of the practice of the labour bosses in union conventions and, of course, of the CPC(M-L).

The Forge was quite correct when it told its readers, "when centralism

is combined with democracy we come up with democratic centralism."<sup>(18)</sup> It just forget to add that democracy in the WCP is reduced to a parody of the real thing. Centralism, on the other hand, appears to be very real and alive and well. But then again, what kind of centralism and what discipline do they really manage to achieve when democracy is reduced to a few empty phrases?

## Robot discipline

WCP centralism, because it is not based on real democracy, is turned into its opposite: power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals thanks to a series of rules which all promote the same thing. Discipline goes from the top down and privileges go from the bottom up.

Such a systematic travesty of proletarian democracy is the perfect way to create a system of blind discipline founded primarily on the image the WCP would like to give itself. That discipline amounts to simple carrying out prescribed tasks and indefatigable repetition of the weekly pearls of wisdom laid down in *The Forge*.

There is nothing proletarian about that kind of discipline. It is based neither on revolutionary consciousness nor on full adherence to a revolutionary programme. In the WCP, as in all other revisionist groups, submission to the "higher organs" takes the place of revolutionary discipline. This is what explains the methods of work and leadership exhibited by WCP members: the contempt for the masses, the steady patter of lies and declamations, the harassment and physical attacks. In fact, WCP methods also include calling upon the forces of law and order from the capitalist State who also follow orders from an all-powerful hierarchy and who are, like the WCP, ready to use whatever means are necessary to accomplish their

14. *Ibid.*, section 1, article 3, (3) and (6), p. 173 and p. 174.

15. See *IN STRUGGLE! Constitution*, articles 5.8 and 5.9.

16. *WCP Constitution*, section 4, article 1, p. 177.

17. *Ibid.*, French version, section 4, article 3, p. 117.

18. *The Forge*, November 2 1979, p. 11

(\*) Yes, you guessed right. This sentence is left out of the English version. In French: "le Bureau politique dirige le travail du Comité central".

ends and to shut up their "adversaries".

Proletarian discipline should not be confused with the WCP's image of "efficiency". A capitalist army does not apply proletarian discipline. Yet it, too, is able to mobilize its forces into action quickly.

The distinguishing feature of proletarian discipline, in contrast to the bourgeois discipline prevailing in the ranks of the WCP, is that it is conscious. It is conscious because it is the product of real political unity achieved because all views are able to be expressed and real control is exercised by the entire organization over the levels of leadership it has elected.

Bourgeois discipline is based on the force of authority, on edicts and the policy of "accept it or else". It can never compete with the discipline of the politically conscious proletariat. Wherever blind discipline holds sway, you can bet that inevitably one day there will be splits, power struggles and bourgeois careerism. Where the conscious and freely-willed discipline of the proletariat prevails, there is a constant strengthening of the unity of thought and action that is necessary for the victory of the revolution.

The WCP has written itself a constitution which embodies the same undemocratic methods which characterize its mass work. It is a set of rules designed to buttress and aid in the implementation of its revisionist political programme. Both amount to a lot of empty rhetoric which tries to fool the working class and people of Canada and get them sidetracked from the revolutionary path.

The WCP constitution ensures that its members and its cells will be confined to carrying out immediate localized work. The important political questions are left in the hands of a few "thinkers". It is an organization divided into "doers" on one hand and "officers" on the other. It is an organization which cannot create the conditions for real democracy or centralism or proletarian discipline which are all indispensable to the working-class struggle.

The constitution of the former League verifies the assertion that the WCP refuses to fight against the politics of the bourgeoisie wherever it is, including within its own ranks.

## Commentaries on the Programme

# Commodity production and the rise of capitalism

After adopting the *Programme for the Proletarian Revolution* at its Third Congress, our Organization undertook the work of writing the *Commentaries on the Programme for the Proletarian Revolution*. It is a major work aimed at providing a detailed explanation of the foundations of the programme. As the following excerpts indicate, our purpose in writing the *Commentaries on IN STRUGGLE!'s Programme* was not simply to provide all those interested in Marxism-Leninism with a detailed explanation of our Organization's programme. We also aim at providing each person with a basic political primer. The primer, while closely related to the Programme, can also provide more extensive explanations of the principles that underlie the work done by communists.

The principles of Marxism-Leninism cannot be explained or understood without referring to the concrete analysis of the historical phenomena under study. Thus we have also tried especially hard to provide the *Commentaries'* reader with the concrete analyses that are the basis of our conclusions.

In the coming year, the journal PROLETARIAN UNITY will publish excerpts from the *Commentaries on the Programme*.

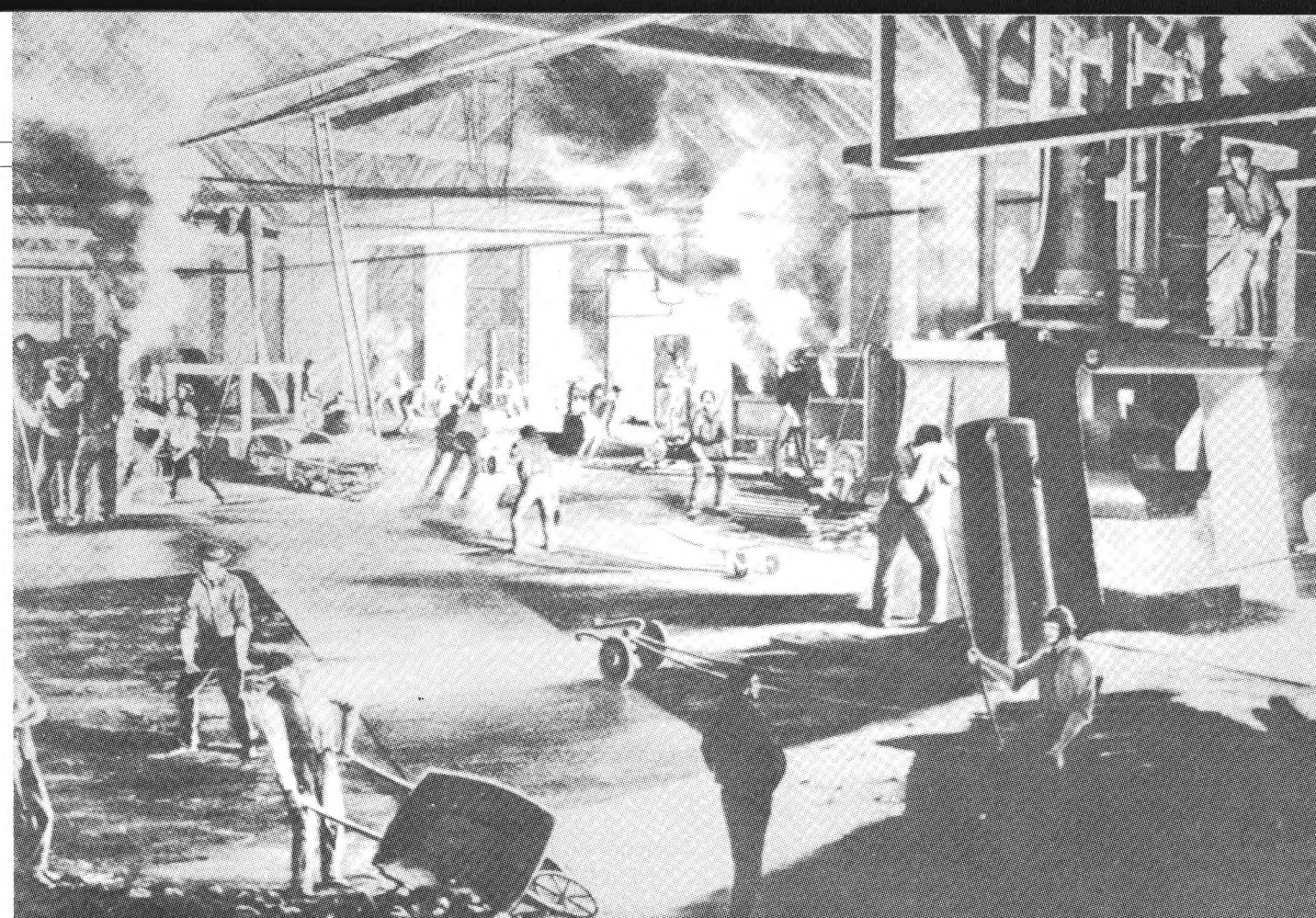
This will give readers important reference material for studying the major questions of the communist programme.

We hope that this new column will be of interest to all our readers. We also hope that it will be a means for new readers to become acquainted with the basics of Marxism-Leninism and our political programme and acquire a more scientific and thorough understanding of these matters. The texts published in this column should be studied by all those who are interested in Marxism-Leninism in one way or another. They should be criticized and used in study groups and education circles, as well as in schools and universities and anywhere else they prove to be useful.

We invite our readers to send us their comments on and criticisms of the *Commentaries*. This will help us to improve the final version of the *Commentaries*, which will eventually be published as a single text.

This first excerpt from the *Commentaries on the Programme for the Proletarian Revolution* sets out the conditions that gave rise to the capitalist mode of production through the historical development of commodity production. More specifically, its purpose is to explain what is meant in the first paragraph of Article 1 of the Programme when it says:

*In the 16th century, the capitalist mode of production began to emerge on the basis of commodity production. A minority of people — mainly rich merchants — gradually took over the principal means of production, more often than not through violence. This process led to the creation of the proletariat, the class made up of the people dis-*



Merchant capital was gradually transformed into industrial capital. This was the source of large-scale modern capitalist industry.

*possessed of the means of production and forced to sell their labour-power.*

Editor's note: We apologize to the reader for the references in the text that refer to unpublished material which precedes or follows this excerpt.

### 1.1 Commodity production under feudalism: simple commodity production

In discussing the mode of production based on slavery, we said that it was basically a **natural economy**. In that mode of production, the fruits of work are directly consumed by the people who produce them. But we also mentioned that the market and a kind of commodity production already existed under slavery.

Commodity production gradually

grew under feudalism, although it only became predominant with capitalism. What was commodity production under feudalism, and how did it develop?

**A) Commodities, the law of value and money**

We have already said that in **commodity production**, the producer works with the aim of **exchanging his product** for another product rather than consuming it himself. We have also pointed out how commodity production is inseparable from the **social division of labour**, which means that producers specialized in one kind of production have to exchange their products for others in order to satisfy their needs. But we have not yet explained what a **commodity** is and the laws governing the **exchange of commodities**.

A commodity is an object with two characteristics. It has both a **use value** and an **exchange value**.

A commodity has a use value because it is a product — shoes, clothing, wheat, tools and so on — that can satisfy a specific need. So the commodity has a **use value** for the consumer — its physical characteristics can satisfy a specific need. The use value of a commodity therefore stems from the physical nature of the object, the material it is composed of and its form.

But we said that a producer of commodities does not produce objects that he himself wants to consume. He produces to exchange. The producer is not chiefly interested in the use value of the object he produces. Instead, he is mainly interested in the use value of the product that he wants to acquire in exchange for his product. For example, someone who produces shoes may want some wheat. In this

case, what interests him is the use value of the wheat. And what interests the producer of the wheat in this case is the use value of the shoes. In other words, **commodities must have different use values in order to be exchanged**; otherwise, there is no point in exchanging them.

If one commodity can be exchanged for another, it means that they have **something in common**. This is often expressed by saying that a pair of shoes is worth a bag of wheat — or that a bag of wheat is worth a pair of shoes. Yet the wheat and the shoes are physically two very different things. So the common denominator of shoes and wheat is not a physical characteristic. The **common denominator** that allows two different products to be exchanged is their **exchange value**, their common **value** that makes exchange possible. But what can two things as different as shoes and wheat have in common?

The only thing they both have in common is that they are both the **fruit of man's work**. And if we can say that a pair of shoes is worth a bag of wheat, it is because there is a **quantitative** equivalence between the two. These two commodities can be exchanged because they contain the **same quantity of work**, the same quantity of the component they have in common — human labour.

Thus the value of a commodity can only be measured by the quantity of **labour time taken to produce it**. If a pair of shoes is worth a bag of wheat, it is because the same quantity of time is required to produce the two commodities. If producing a pair of shoes required twice the labour time required to produce a bag of wheat, a pair of shoes would be worth two bags of wheat.

Commodities thus have two

characteristics: they have both a use value and an exchange value. The labour required to produce a commodity also has two characteristics. Because it produces a given use value, it is **concrete labour**, and there are inherently different kinds of concrete labour. But the work of all the different commodity producers has one characteristic in common: it is an **expenditure of energy**. This expenditure of human energy in work is called **abstract labour**. The **abstract labour** in a commodity is the quantity of energy used by man to produce it. Generally speaking, this **quantity** is indicated in units of time — an hour, a day, a week, etc.

On the basis of what we have seen so far, it is the **amount of labour time** that determines the **amount of value** in a commodity. Does this mean that a commodity produced by someone who is lazy is worth more than another produced by someone who works quickly and efficiently? Not at all. For the value of a commodity is not determined by the **individual labour time** used by each producer; it is determined by the **socially necessary labour time** involved in producing each kind of commodity.

In other words, the value of a given commodity — for instance, a pair of shoes — is determined by the **average** amount of labour time required in a given society to produce the commodity. This **socially necessary labour time** has varied and still varies historically and geographically, because of the development of productive forces in different historical periods and places. This can be easily illustrated with a concrete example. Suppose that twelve hours of work are required to produce a pair of shoes. Suppose as well that by improving the tools used, it becomes possible to reduce the labour time required to produce

the shoes to six hours. As soon as society as a whole begins to make use of these improvements, the value of a pair of shoes will be half what it was, for the **social average** of the time necessary to produce the shoes will have been cut in half.

In calculating the value of a commodity, we have to take into account not only the real labour time but also the **intensity of the labour**. To measure the intensity of labour, all expenditures of human energy must be expressed in terms of a **basic unit** called **simple labour**. Simple labour is the **average** labour-power of men and women in a given society, without any special training or skills. Heavy work, requiring a greater than average expenditure of energy, or the work of a skilled worker or a technician, represent multiples of simple labour. For example, the work of this or that skilled worker may represent 1½ or 2 units of simple labour. This means that in one hour's work, this skilled worker creates 1½ or twice as much value. The labour of a skilled worker, a technician, etc., is called **complex labour**.

The explanation we have just given is a resumé of the labour theory of value. This theory allows us to understand the **law of value**, which is the **fundamental law of all commodity production**. This law can be formulated in the following way: **the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labour time required to produce it; and commodities can be exchanged when they are of equal value.**

Before concluding on this point, something should be said about money and its role in exchange. As we will see later on when we discuss the development of capitalism, it is very important to understand the role of money in commodity exchange.

Money is what is called a **universal equivalent**. It is a commodity that can be used to express the value of all other commodities. The **universal equivalent** is an improvement on direct exchange itself. Throughout history, different commodities such as cattle, tools, and so on, have been used as universal equivalents. But over time, it gradually became more convenient to use silver or gold as the universal equivalent.

When commodity A is exchanged for commodity B, the persons involved both refer to a third commodity C, which is the universal equivalent. They will say, for example, that 2 A = 1 C. And then, if 1 B = 1 C, they will say that two commodities A must be exchanged for one commodity B. As the universal equivalent, the commodity C can be used to express the value of all other commodities. Commodity C thus becomes the **currency**, the money. It is a reference point, a means of measuring value.

But the currency or money cannot be used in this way unless it is itself a commodity. In other words, it must itself have **value** if it is to be used as the universal equivalent.

Two final but very important remarks should be made.

First, it should be emphasized that commodities and the value of commodities are an expression of social relations, of relations between men. Commodity exchange implies a fairly extensive social division of labour. Historically, it emerged when men began to specialize in the production of different products, a development which meant that they were obliged to exchange products in order to ensure that each person had access to the basic necessities of life. As well, commodity exchange is an expression of social relations because the value of commodities

represents, not the human labour of an individual, but the **social average** of human labour in a given society, at a given point in history.

The second aspect that should be kept in mind is that **commodities and exchange value are historical categories**. They have not always existed. Furthermore, they have historically been of greater or lesser importance in the economic life of different societies. And as **historical categories**, they will not exist forever, as we will see later on when we discuss socialism and communism.

#### **B) Simple commodity production and the law of value**

A knowledge of the laws of commodity production and more especially of the law of value allows us to understand how conditions in the feudal mode of production gave rise to capitalism.

Historically, capitalism emerged at a given stage in the development of commodity production. It can be traced back to the basic form of commodity production, namely **simple commodity production**.

Under feudalism, the goods produced for exchange were the product of the work of small-scale handicraftsmen and peasants. Production was based on the **private ownership of the means of production and individual labour**. The commodity producer was an individual. He was the direct producer, and possessed the means of production — workshops, land, tools, cattle, etc.

This kind of production is called **simple commodity production**.

The small-scale commodity producer produces commodities (C) which he exchanges for money (M). The money (M) in turn allows him to obtain other commodities (C). The process of simple commodity production can be schematically expressed in the formula "C-M-C". Commodities are converted into money and the money into the commodities necessary to satisfy the basic needs of the producers.

But this description does not explain the development of commodity production. To do this, we have to examine the general movement of this kind of production, and in particular **the effect of the law of value on production**. The law of value is already at work in simple commodity production. It is important to examine how it works if we are to understand how the capitalist mode of production emerged.

Because the means of production are privately owned, and because their goods are produced for the market, small-scale commodity producers are necessarily in competition with one another.

This competition, which is inherent to commodity production, leads to growing social differences among small-scale commodity producers. The majority of them get poorer and poorer while a minority grows richer. The result is economic ruin for a great many of them, who have no further choice but to sell

**Commodity production is based on the law of value. The law of value says that the exchange value of commodities is determined by the socially necessary labour time required to produce the various commodities.**

their services to the richer producers.

But how does this happen? Because of the way the law of value works in commodity production. **The law of value performs three functions in commodity production.** Let's examine each of these three functions (not necessarily in order of importance).

**The first function of the law of value** in commodity production is to **regulate production** in the framework of an economy in which each producer produces on his own, with the sole goal of getting the best possible return on the sale of his commodities. These producers have no prior knowledge of the extent of the needs to be met with their production. Nor do they know how many producers are producing the same commodity. The result is **anarchy** in production which inevitably leads to a surplus of production in certain fields. Some sort of regulator of production is therefore necessary, and this role is played by the law of value.

The law of value **governs the allocation of social labour and the means of production among the various sectors of the commodity economy.** This regulating function works through the **fluctuations in the market prices of commodities.** Concretely, how does this occur?

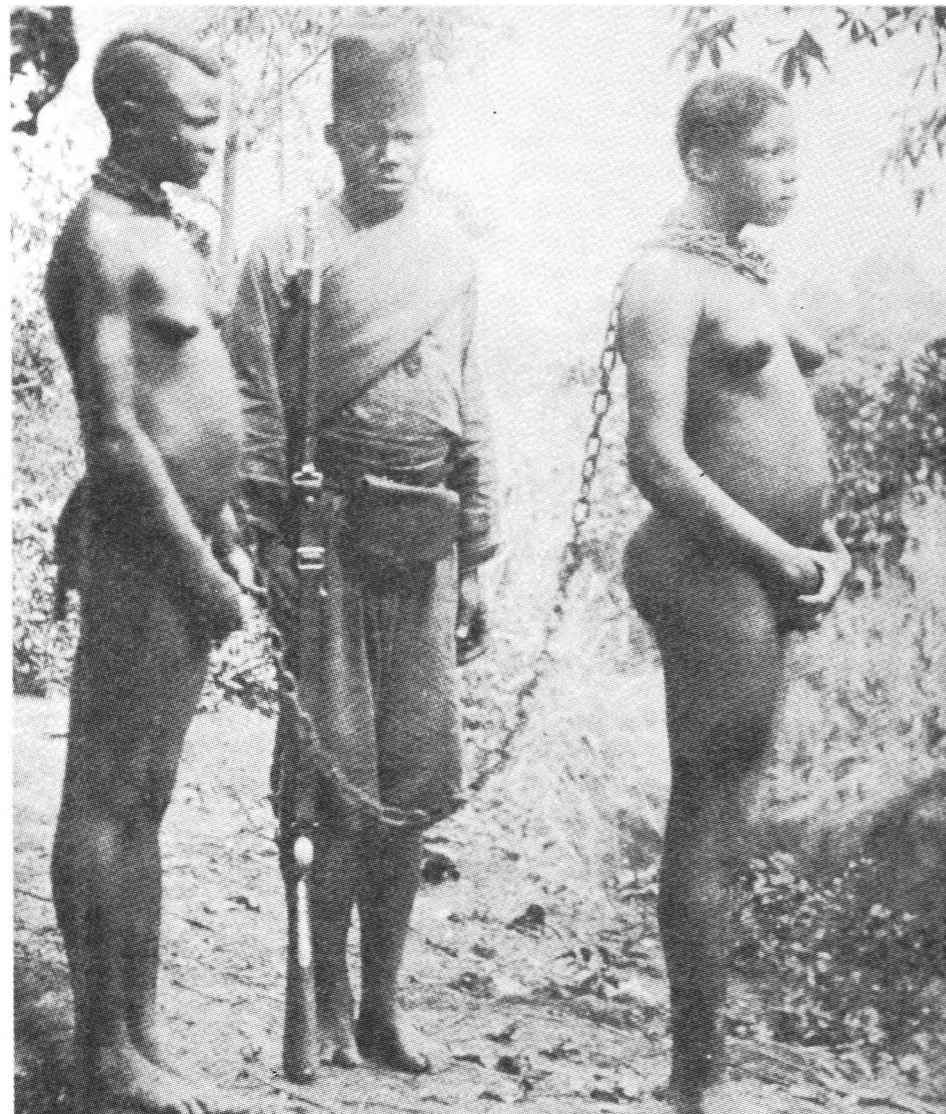
We have already seen that the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. When it is exchanged, this value is expressed in the **price of the commodity.** The price of a commodity is based on its value. But we know from everyday life that the prices of commodities fluctuate steadily. They rise or fall in accordance with the **supply and demand.** For instance, when the quantity of a commodity exceeds the demand, the commodity

producers lower their prices so as to dispose of their goods, and so the price of the commodity drops. This means that, although the price of a commodity is always based on its value, prices are always fluctuating and reflect values more or less exactly. But the basic relationship between value and price remains vital, for otherwise the producers could simply set the prices they liked for commodities, and the market would soon collapse.

The proof of the importance of

value in relation to prices is that when prices fall below the value of a commodity, commodity producers change sectors and begin producing another kind of commodity whose prices **correspond to or are superior to the value of the commodity.** By doing so, they can produce at a profit. This is how the law of value acts as a regulator of production in the context of anarchy and competition that characterizes all commodity production. This is also how the law of value governs the dis-

**The conquest of new colonies and slavery were the building blocks for the first fortunes that gave rise to the first industrial capitalists.**



tribution of social labour and the means of production among the various sectors of the commodity economy. Labour-power, the tools of production and the means of production are spontaneously allocated to the sectors where prices correspond to or are superior to the value of commodities. This process of "orderless motion" regulates commodity production.

**The second function of the law of value is to stimulate the development of productive forces and improve the productivity of labour.**

The productivity of labour is measured by the quantity of goods produced in a given period of time. The formula used to express this is:

$$\text{productivity of labour} = \frac{\text{number of goods}}{\text{labour time}}$$

In other words, the shorter the labour time required to produce a given quantity of commodities, the greater the productivity of labour. As we have already seen, the value of a commodity (and by extension, its price) is determined by the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. Thus each individual producer can make more profits than his competitors do by improving his conditions of production.

This is the phenomenon that leads to bankruptcy for many small-scale producers and prosperity for a minority in simple commodity production. Because the means of production are privately owned, the more profitable **techniques of production** are also privately owned. This constitutes a **restriction** on the development of **productive forces.** This process of **social differentiation of commodity producers** is the **third function of the law of value.** It is a function inherent to all commodity production.

## 1.2 The role of merchant capital in the development of capitalism

On the basis of what we have already gone through, we can see that **production becomes increasingly dependent on the market under feudalism.**

In the beginning under feudalism, the economy was **by and large a natural economy.** The peasant serfs and the handicraftsmen in the service of a feudal lord produced in part to satisfy the needs of their lord. Most of the production never reached the market, for it was consumed by the producer in the course of production and used to satisfy his direct needs.

But the market grew steadily under feudalism. A growing proportion of production was destined for the market. Urban centres and trade developed with the development of greater social division of labour. This social division of labour affected production: handicrafts began to be separated from strictly agricultural work, and the number of crafts grew as they became more specialized. But the social division of labour also resulted in a growing distinction between **production and exchange.** This was accompanied by the development of a merchant class that did not take part in production and that lived by buying and selling commodities. Its role was to ensure the social distribution of goods by means of the market. The modern capitalist class can be traced back chiefly to this class.

**A) Merchant capital and the domination of labour by capital in the era of mercantile capitalism**

**Merchant capital** was historically the first form of capital. The first, embryonic traces of it can be found at the time of slavery, but it was only towards the end of the period of feudalism that merchant capital really began to play a significant role in the economy. Let's have a closer look at what merchant capital is and how it comes to dominate labour.

In the beginning, the merchant was simply a middleman between the producer and the consumer. He handled a very wide range of products — both consumer goods and raw materials. He bought what the individual small-scale producers made and sold it on the market. He also provided the raw materials needed to produce the goods. His particular role in the process of social production endowed him with greater and greater importance, something which had a direct impact on production itself.

You see, the merchant was in a position to take advantage of the competition among individual small-scale producers. He tried to buy at the lowest possible price and sell at the highest. He placed orders with the small-scale producers (the peasants and the handicraftsmen) and thus directly influenced the kind and quantity of production. Small-scale producers gradually became more and more dependent on the merchant class. Indeed, small-scale production came to be **dominated** by merchant capital.

This domination of labour by merchant capital is what is known as the **indirect domination of labour by capital.** It is **indirect** because the merchant capitalist does not own the means of production. Handicraftsmen and peasants continue to own their means of production, but they gradually become **dependent** on the market and, consequent-

**To really take off, the capitalist mode of production needs to be able to rely on a large pool of workers dispossessed of all means of production. It also needs substantial wealth that can be invested in production. This first phase of capitalist accumulation is called primitive accumulation. It in fact means the looting of the colonies and the violent dispossession of the peasantry.**

ly, on the commercial bourgeoisie and merchant capital.

This kind of domination of labour is therefore different from the domination of the slave by his master or that of the serf by his lord. It is the first form of the domination of labour by capital, and is the source of capitalist relations of production. The development of these new relations of production gives rise to the social antagonisms that eventually lead to the abolition of the feudal mode of production.

On the basis of merchant capital, we can already define what capital is. For merchant capital has all the basic characteristics of capital in general.

We did not talk about capital in our discussion of simple commodity production. We talked about small-scale producers who exchange their goods on the market. We summed up the general form of this process with the formula "C-M-C": a commodity (C) is exchanged for money (M), and the money is then used to obtain another commodity (C). The commodity is converted into money, and then the money into a commodity. In this process, there is no increase in value at any point, for the two commodities have the same value.

With the emergence of merchant capital, the process is inverted. The starting point is no longer the sale of a commodity, but money. Before selling, and in order to sell, the merchant must purchase. In this case, the process is expressed in the

formula M-C-M, instead of C-M-C. The commercial capitalist has a certain amount of money (M). With this money, he buys a commodity (C) which he then sells for another sum of money (M). At the end of the process, the merchant must pocket a larger sum of money than he spent in the beginning; otherwise, he has come full circle and has not made any profit.

The merchant's goal is not to acquire and consume a commodity; his goal is to add to his initial capital. Money becomes capital when it is used for this purpose, in this process. In other words, it becomes capital when, instead of being spent to satisfy a need by consuming a commodity, it is spent to make more money through the exchange of commodities. The money a handicraftsman uses to buy commodities cannot be called capital, for he consumes these commodities himself. But the money used by a merchant does become capital, because in his case the purchase of a commodity is not the ultimate goal, but rather the means to add to his quantity of money.

When merchant capital predominated, the exploitation of labour by capital was achieved indirectly, through the small-scale producers' dependence on the commercial bourgeoisie. By buying commodities at prices below their real value, the commercial bourgeoisie in fact exploited the work of small-scale producers. Seen

in this way, capital is not a thing. It is a social relation, the exploitation of labour by the capitalist class.

So capital is more than a sum of money. It is a sum of money whose function is to reproduce and add to itself in the process of the production and circulation of commodities. Any sum of money, however considerable, that is not involved in this process is not capital. Capital can only be scientifically defined as a social relation. It is a social relation for two reasons: it sets in motion both exchange and the exploitation of labour, both of which are by definition social relations, and is developed through them.

Now let's look at how merchant capital becomes industrial capital and how labour comes to be dominated directly and totally by capital.

#### **B) The transformation of merchant capital into industrial capital**

With the growth of the market, small-scale handicraft production was no longer enough to meet the demand. More expensive tools of production became necessary, and more and more goods had to be produced. Merchant capital was chiefly responsible for developing new conditions of production to meet the demands of a constantly growing market.

In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, the European countries explored most of the globe. With the discovery of new routes to the Far East, and especially to China, and with the colonization of the Americas and the massive penetration of the African continent, the bourgeoisie greatly expanded its field of action. New markets were opened up, and the demand for finished goods thus increased. The problem was that the han-



**The development of merchant capitalism under feudalism gave rise to the working class.**

dicraftsmen were unable to satisfy the demand, due to their low productive potential.

So the merchant class, which was already providing small-scale producers with raw materials, began to provide them with tools of production as well. The handicraftsmen gradually became workers deprived of all control over their production and their means of production. They were thus reduced to simple wage-earners in the service of capitalists.

It is important to remember here that the competition between small-scale producers (handicraftsmen and peasants) was directly responsible for the bankruptcy of many of these small-scale producers. This provided the emerging bourgeoisie with a body of manpower deprived of any means of production. This manpower was available to be hired as wage workers in production to meet the growing demand of a steadily expanding market.

It was this development of production, stimulated by the

growth of the market, that created the necessary conditions for part of the merchant capital to be transformed into industrial capital. This transformation was to have an enormous impact on the rise of the capitalist mode of production. More specifically, this was the era when capital directly subjugated labour.

Former handicraftsmen and peasants who had been ruined were hired in the capitalists' workshops. This class of wage workers, deprived of the means of production, constituted the embryo of the working class as we know it today.

But all this occurred relatively slowly. A large amount of capital had to be invested in production as such before the capitalist mode of production could supplant handicraft production. In other words, the bourgeoisie first had to concentrate enormous sums of capital in its hands in the form of means of production and money capital. This concentration of capital in the hands of the emerging bourgeoisie is called the primitive accumulation of

capital. How is this primitive accumulation accomplished?

#### **1.3 The primitive accumulation of capital: the looting of the colonies and the expropriation of independent small-scale producers**

There are two main requirements for capitalist production:

- 1) a vast number of individually "free" workers, namely labourers who are neither slaves nor serfs tied to their lord's land, but who are deprived of the means of subsistence and compelled to sell their labour to the capitalists; and
- 2) the accumulation of the wealth that is absolutely essential in creating capitalist enterprises.

These two requirements were fulfilled through the violent expropriation of the peasantry and the looting of the colonies. In both cases, the most savage kinds of violence became the tools with

which the emerging bourgeoisie forged its prosperity.

#### A) The violent expropriation of the peasantry

Most of the first wave of the dispossessed who were to become the proletariat were peasants who had been expropriated and driven off their lands. Urban handicraftsmen driven to bankruptcy were also among the first wage workers, but the vast majority of the first proletarians subjected to capital came from the ranks of the peasantry.

To understand how this happened, we have to look at how capitalism developed in the countryside following the expansion of commodity production.

We have seen how simple commodity production made small-scale producers more and more dependent on the market. The market was the destination of the goods produced by handicraftsmen and on the farm. The growth of the market had a substantial impact on the feudal mode of production in the countryside. In particular, it sparked a process of social differentiation within the peasantry, dividing it into three categories: the rich peasantry, the poor peasantry, and the dispossessed peasants who became agricultural workers.

What happened in the cities also happened in the countryside: the competition inherent to commodity production caused social divisions and transformed some of the small-scale producers into workers dispossessed of the means of production. But in the countryside, this was accompanied by another development: the transformation of **rent paid in kind** into **money rent**. Let's look at this more closely.

Under feudalism, there were **three**

**forms of land rent**. These rents were **undisguised** forms of the feudal landowners' exploitation of the peasants. There was **labour rent**, which was also called the *corvée*: this was the prevailing system in the early feudal period, and required the peasant to work for free on the lord's lands a certain number of days a year. The second form was **rent in kind**, which required the peasant to regularly turn over to the lord part of his production (wheat, meat, vegetables, etc.). The third form to emerge was **money rent**, a system in which the peasant had to sell his products on the market and then hand over to the lord a certain portion of the money thus obtained.

**Money rent** was characteristic of the final stage of feudalism. It had the effect of speeding up the development of capitalist relations in the countryside. Since the peasants had to dispose of their production on the market, they were in competition with one another; and this competition led to the social differentiation and proletarianization already discussed. This was how capitalist production emerged in the countryside.

At the same time, feudal landowners were becoming capitalist exploiters. Some of them, for example, turned their lands into pasture and hired wage workers — a process whose logical outcome was the violent expropriation of the peasants. The history of England, the first country to undergo capitalist development, provides a good example of this.

In the case of England, the production of wool for the manufacturing of cloth was the immediate reason for the transformation of feudal holdings into capitalist businesses. For the feudal landowners, it was more profitable to raise sheep than to collect rents from a multitude of starving peasants. So they reposses-

sed peasant farms, demolished their homes and enclosed the fields with fences to make them suitable for raising livestock. In the 19th century, a series of laws known as the "Enclosure Acts" sanctioned and legalized this plundering of the peasant's means of production.

The peasants who were thus ruined and dispossessed wandered about the countryside looking for ways to keep alive. They were an easy prey for the up-and-coming capitalist entrepreneurs. To force them to submit to the capitalists, the State enacted legislation outlawing "vagabonds" and making them liable to heavy penalties up to and including death. Under Henry VIII in the 16th century, for example, 72,000 persons were executed for the crime of being "vagabonds". By the 18th century, they were no longer executed. Instead, they were shut in "workhouses" where the ruined peasants were broken to the discipline of wage work for the capitalists.

This was part of the source of the primitive accumulation that was so necessary to enable the capitalist mode of production to "take off".

#### B) The looting of the colonies

With the violent expropriation of the peasants, Capital could count on an abundant supply of cheap labour. With the conquest of the Americas, Africa and Asia, the bourgeoisie accumulated fabulous fortunes that it then used to stimulate capitalist production in Europe.

Colonial trade was in practice a great horn of plenty for the capitalists of the European continent, the cradle of the capitalist mode of production. When they took possession of the Americas,

the colonial powers reduced the indigenous peoples to a state of slavery. The peoples of what is today known as Latin America were forced to work the gold and silver mines. A number of these peoples — the Incas and the Mayas, for example — were the victims of what amounted to outright genocide. But the bourgeoisie of the time got richer and richer, and a major part of its fortune was put to work developing capitalist production in Europe.

This period of primitive accumulation is also known as the era of **mercantilism**, a stage in the development of capitalism when a country's wealth was measured by its reserves of gold and silver. The search for the precious metals drove the great trading companies and States to seek to steadily broaden their sphere of influence. This accumulation was the reason why the peoples of Latin America were reduced to slavery. The indigenous peoples were then replaced by black slaves kidnapped in Africa. Between 1686 and 1780, England (which was the centre of the slave trade) sold 2.3 million slaves to the United States. The number of those who perished at the hands of unspeakably brutal and barbarous slave hunters and slavers was several times greater than the number who reached the United States alive.

India is another example. Having conquered India, the British commercial bourgeoisie represented in the East India Company pillaged the territory. For a long while, India was the main field of the primitive

accumulation of capital for Britain. In the sixty years between 1757 and 1815, the East India Company extorted one billion pounds sterling from India. This vast and systematic plunder made India into a poverty-stricken, backward and starving country. In 1770, 10 million people, one-third of the population, died during a famine in the Indian State of Bengal as a result of this plundering.

The importance of the role of trade, and more especially colonial trade, in capitalist accumulation can also be illustrated by the phenomenal growth of foreign trade in the emerging capitalist countries. For instance, the volume of France's foreign trade grew by 400% from 1716 to 1789. Twenty-five per cent of all this trade was done with the colonies.

This entire period was marked by incessant wars, plundering, piracy and genocide. European capitalists grew rich through the sweat and blood of millions of men and women around the world. Expropriation, plunder and the ruin of the vast majority of small-scale producers made possible the accumulation of the wealth necessary for big capitalist production to take off. Marx analysed this process and the origins of primitive capitalist accumulation. He was very right when he wrote that "*Capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.*" (1)

#### 1.4 Capitalists and wage labourers

Everything we have seen so far

**The modern capitalist class was born chiefly out of the commercial bourgeoisie. By transforming its commercial capital into industrial capital, it took control of production.**

adds up to the origins, the history of the formation of capitalism as a mode of production. One of the very notable features of this history is the emergence of two new classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In order to understand clearly subsequent sections, it is important to first examine the characteristics of these two classes. For these two classes, their growth and their struggles, have been increasingly decisive in the history of humanity up until today.

The modern proletariat was born out of the ranks of the masses of small-scale producers in feudal times. The handicraftsmen and peasants ruined by competition and victims of expropriation by the commercial bourgeoisie and landowners were to constitute a new social class — the class of **wage workers, individually free** but all obliged to sell their labour-power to the capitalists in order to survive.

They are "free workers" because they are not the **property of owners**, as were slaves. Nor are they **producers tied to the lord's land**, as was the case under feudalism. The proletarian is said to be "free" because he is master of his own person, unlike the slave who belonged to someone else or the serf who was only partially free.

But the proletarian is also "free" in another sense: he is "**free of any means of production**". Unlike small-scale commodity producers (handicraftsmen and peasants), he does not possess the means of production. He is a **dispossessed producer**. As we have seen, this has not always been the case. Under feudalism, before the emergence of capitalism, most producers possessed the means of production. Capitalism is

1. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 23, p. 783. This is the last line of Vol. 1 of *Capital*.



characterized by the **brutal separation of the producer from the means of production**. The result of this separation is the creation of a new class, the class of the proletarians.

But, some will say, this separation of the producer from the means of production existed even before capitalism. It is true that in ancient Rome, for example, there was a **proletariat**, namely a population of poor people without any means of production. But there is a decisive difference between the dispossessed in ancient times and the modern proletariat, today's working class: this working class is not a population of poor and beggars without work; it is the very source of the wealth of the capitalist class. The difference is a fundamental one in the history of humanity. The modern working class is a fundamentally different class because of **its role in social production** and its **relationship to the means of production**. In a subsequent section we will examine the laws that govern the relations between Capital and Labour — the laws of capitalist exploitation. But it is important to emphasize right away the distinctive features of the modern proletariat as a dispossessed productive class: this class does not possess the means

of production; it must hire out its services to the capitalist in order to survive; and it has no control over production or the fruits of its work, for these are the exclusive property of the capitalists.

It is therefore impossible to understand what the bourgeoisie is as a social class without understanding its relations with the proletariat. Bourgeoisie and proletariat, Capital and Labour: two aspects of a single reality.

The bourgeoisie is the main class of possessors in the capitalist mode of production. In contrast to the feudal landowner, the bourgeoisie's economic activities are not oriented towards natural production to satisfy its needs. Its economic activities are oriented towards production for the market. Its goal is not **primarily** to possess an estate or a sum of money; its goal is to use its capital profitably and steadily increase the amount of that capital. Its god is profit. In **Capital**, Karl Marx quotes from a document written in 1860 to illustrate very vividly the role played by profit in capitalism:

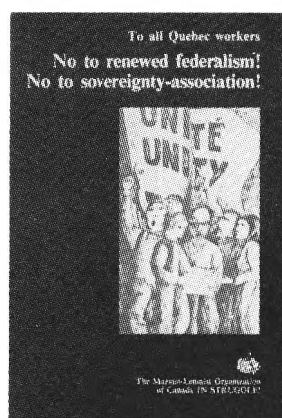
*"Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a*

*vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all that is here stated."* (2)

But although the bourgeoisie owns the means of production, controls the process of production and is the sole owner of the fruits of the work, it does not own the workers themselves. It **purchases** the services of the direct producers. It is therefore to its advantage to find a sufficient quantity of dispossessed but personally free producers. In the next chapter, we will see how this necessity of the free exploitation of wage workers was one of the causes of the bourgeois revolution and the fall of the feudal regime.

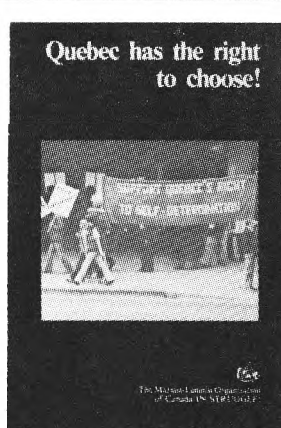
2. F.J. Dunning, *Trade Unions and Strikes: their Philosophy and Intentions* (London, 1860), pp. 335-36; quoted by Karl Marx in *Capital*, New York, International Publishers, Vol. 1, p. 760.

The last twenty years of struggle against national oppression in Quebec have clearly posed the question of the Quebec nation's political status. Yet, judging by its evasive question and anti-democratic rules, the PQ's referendum next spring is well on its way to being a colossal hoax. What attitude should the working class adopt in this situation? What interests really lie behind Ryan's "renewed federalism" and Lévesque's sovereignty-association?



Action is what is necessary more than ever, action that mobilizes, informs, action that exposes and discredits chauvinism and that sparks further action.

The main target of this action should be the campaign for Canadian unity. It is important to expose and condemn its demagoguery, its real goals and its consequences. The Canadian labour movement can no longer tolerate the fact that its leaders support this chauvinist campaign. There must be no unity with millionaires and monopolies! No unity with capital! We must put an end to this scandal!



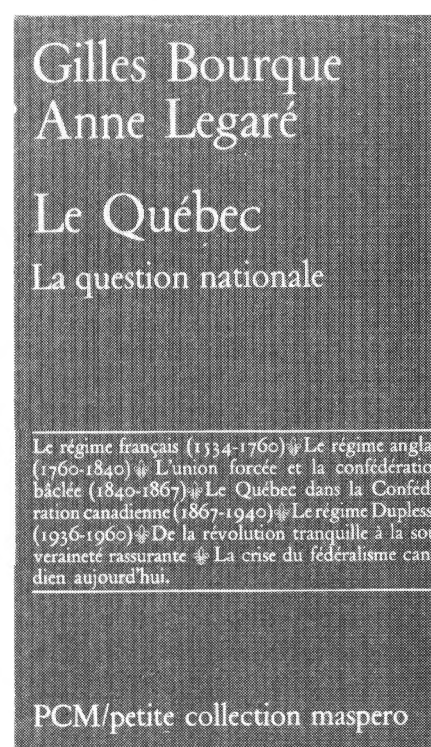
## Books in review

### Le Québec, La question nationale, by Gilles Bourque and Anne Légaré

Gilles Bourque and Anne Légaré quite correctly state at the very beginning of their work, **Le Québec, la question nationale**, (1) that "it is essential to insist on the historical dimension of present-day conflicts" (2) around the Quebec national question. This is why the authors attempt in this work to outline the major stages of development in Quebec history, from the French regime until today on the eve of the PQ government's referendum.

In spite of some important reserves, it is worth taking note of the publication of this work. In a period when slogans work against any rigorous understanding of the political debate in Canada, **Le Québec, la question nationale** has the advantage of being a well-documented historical work. The authors quite correctly attack the points of view of the nationalist historians (Groulx, Brunet and Séguin) who "explain" the inferior economic position of the Quebec people by the "destruction" of the French-speaking bourgeoisie at the time of the conquest in 1760. They completely smash the claims of the historians of the liberal school (Hamelin, Ouellet, etc.) who "explain" this inferior economic position by the "incapacity" of French-speaking people to master technological discoveries in the early days of capitalism.

The authors also devote one chapter (chapter 7, "De la révolution tranquille à la souveraineté rassurante") to an interesting analysis of the transformations which arose out of the Quiet Revolution through until the PQ took power. The authors expose the openly bourgeois nature of the PQ and successfully refute the thesis that this is a party of the petty bourgeoisie, and that consequently it is divided between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. With the help of the facts presented in this section of the book, the authors tend to prove the existence of a Quebec



bourgeoisie. Unfortunately, however, they say nothing of the political programme of this bourgeoisie.

The authors have a very clear position on the solution to the national oppression of the Quebec people:

*"The struggle to achieve complete national equality within the boundaries of a Quebec socialist State is in our opinion the goal which we must aim for in the process of the political organization of the working class in Quebec."* (3)

But here again, the authors say nothing about how the proletariat should go about reaching such a goal.

Bourque and Légaré's work has to be read with great care to spot the errors in the historical analysis which lead them to their closing call to action. For example, the well-documented study of the Canadian bourgeoisie leaves out a certain number of important facts.

Let us sum up the authors' theses. Canada is an imperialist country which historically came into being at the end of the feudal period and at the beginning of capitalism (between 1760 and 1867). It is a State built on the negation of the national rights of the

"minorities" and in which national oppression is both the policy of the dominating nation and the major cause of the "breaking up" of the country (resistance to national oppression). This is why Canada "has a structural tendency to breaking up". (4) "The Canadian bourgeoisie is not a national bourgeoisie" (5), since "it has never been able to impose its hegemony on the industrial level". (6)

On this point, there are a certain number of important errors in the analysis of the creation of the Canadian bourgeoisie. For example, the 1837-38 rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada is merely seen as a "movement... led by the petty bourgeoisie and supported by the peasantry and directed against the commercial bourgeoisie, the aristocracy and the colonial administration". (7) This is not erroneous, but the authors base their thesis exclusively on the class composition of the forces of the rebellion. They do not see the 1837-38 events as part of the process of bourgeois democratic revolution in Canada. They forget to take into account the class programme of this movement: the struggle for an independent bourgeois democratic State. This leads them to conclude that the independence of Canada was not the result of opposition to colonialism and to the semi-feudal regime, but rather that it was simply a concession of the British metropolis.

Unless we uphold — as the Communist Party of Canada (M-L) does — that bourgeois democratic revolution has not been completed in Canada, we have to admit that it must have begun and ended at some point. Many supposedly Marxist historians fascinated by the models of the American and French revolutions, are incapable of

1. Bourque, Gilles and Anne Légaré, *Le Québec, La question nationale*, Petite Collection Maspéro, Paris, 1979, 232 pages

2. *Ibid.*, p. 5

3. *Ibid.*, p. 231

4. *Ibid.*, p. 106

5. *Ibid.*, p. 107

6. *Ibid.*, p. 107

7. *Ibid.*, p. 69

grasping the specific features of the process by which the Canadian bourgeoisie was created. In Canada, the bourgeois democratic revolution took place during the second half of the nineteenth century, and even extended into this century. The Canadian bourgeoisie is the result of the integration of its (dominant) English-speaking elements and its (dominated) French-speaking elements, and Confederation in 1867 was the concrete political result of this integration. This bourgeoisie in turn then allied first with British imperialism (in the 19th century), and later with U.S. imperialism in the 20th century. (5)

However, it is difficult to understand why the Canadian bourgeoisie has hegemony over certain sectors of the

## L'Albanie sentinelle de Staline, by Jean Bertolino Disillusioned with socialism

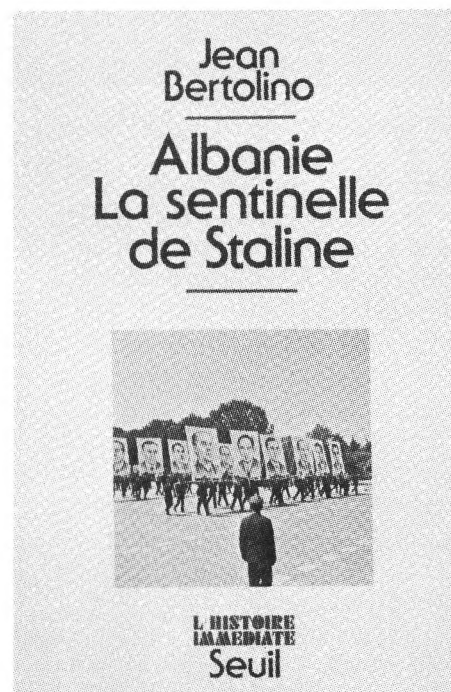
The book written by Jean Bertolino, a French reporter and writer, is presented as "a brilliant report, historical account and political essay. It is also the itinerary of a journalist who is passionately faithful to friendship. But, above all, to truth." (1)

It was during a visit to Albania, where he had been invited by the Albanian government to make a movie, that Jean Bertolino discovered the "truth". Bertolino went to Albania between 1976 and 1978 to make a political film on the relations between workers and peasants in that country. Bertolino and his colleagues wanted to make a realistic film, but were constantly confronted with continual objections on the part of the Albanian government, which wanted to present an idyllic vision of the life of Albanian workers and peasants.

The book's starting point is not without interest. We might have ex-

economy (trade, banking, financial institutions, etc.) and is dominated in others (especially in industry) if we do not understand this inter-imperialist alliance and its consequences.

We must be wary of any unilateral appreciation of the Canadian bourgeoisie which would inevitably lead to important strategic errors. By speaking of the "structural tendency to the breaking up of Canada", Bourque and Légaré imply that this break-up must occur before national oppression can be resolved. This conclusion is the result of a partial analysis of the Canadian bourgeoisie. The Canadian bourgeoisie is not only a class racked by numerous contradictions; it is also, and above all, a class whose interest it is to preserve its national market and to maintain its dic-



pected that this author, who does not hide his admiration for the achievements of the Albanian people since the revolution, would have presented us with a criticism of culture as it exists in this socialist country. We could have expected an explanation of the author's conception of realistic cinema which

tatorship over the entire Canadian proletariat and national oppression in the country.

If we understand this, we also understand that **Canadian workers as a whole** have a fundamental common interest: to overthrow the exploiting minority so as to put an end to capitalist exploitation as well as to national oppression — which, by the way, is not limited to the Quebec people. If we understand this, we also understand that, to solve national oppression, Canadian workers **as a whole** must attack the class that is responsible for it: the Canadian bourgeoisie.

8. See PROLETARIAN UNITY, Vol. 3, no. 1, February 1977, p. 12

serves the interests of workers and socialism.

But, the film-maker's frustrations got the better of him. Bertolino uses the differences he has with the Albanian comrades on the question of culture to draw conclusions which are not backed up by the facts he himself presents.

According to Bertolino, in Albania "the revolution will undoubtedly have to be fought again". (2) But if we put aside the subjective impressions which the author gathered during his visit and base ourselves on the facts, we come to the conclusion that the material which he presents in fact refutes the author's own conclusions.

For example, the author states that Albania is simply "a bureaucratic hell". (3) Why? Because there were recently "purges" in Albania, linked to the criticism of Chinese revisionism and the fact that some members of the PLA defended it. Because the PLA has a leader who seems to be "venerated like a saint, I don't dare say a god". (4) And especially because it's "evident" that party cadre are granted privileges just

1. Jean Bertolino, *Albanie la sentinelle de Staline*, Editions du Seuil, collection L'histoire immédiate, Paris, 1979, back cover (our translation)
2. *Ibid.*, p. 198
3. *Ibid.*, p. 207
4. *Ibid.*, p. 195

as they had in the U.S.S.R. at the time of Stalin.

But how is it that such "evident conclusions" are so often contradicted by the facts about Albania which Bertolino presents? Why have the "Albanian bureaucrats" reduced wage gaps in their country to a 1 to 2 ratio, (5) and why have they done so continually and progressively since the revolution? In fact the author himself states that Albania is "the most egalitarian State in the world" (6). How is it that for the past five years the theme which has dominated all discussions in Albania has been — curiously enough — the struggle against bureaucratism, and that "ministries which had a surplus of personnel were cut back to size" (7)?

How can you explain that in a country dominated by careerists there exist phenomena like voluntary mass mobilizations to solve the housing problem, a phenomenon which Bertolino claims to have witnessed personally? Finally, Bertolino evokes Engels to claim that the Albanian State is "an essentially capitalist repressive machine. The more it takes over the ownership of productive forces, the more it becomes capitalist in practice and the more it exploits the citizens...." If this were the case, how is it that the author was not able to show us even a few manifestations of the crisis which characterizes all capitalist economies, from that of Canada to that of the U.S.S.R. and including that of China today? On the contrary, he is forced to admit that there is neither unemployment nor inflation in Albania, and that the price of consumer goods hasn't risen in years although wages have been raised.

But Bertolino discovered even worse things during his visit. Hiding behind all the achievements of the Albanian people we find the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA), which manipulates everything. A very clever manipulator indeed, it was able to "manipulate" a revolution and an economy which it took out of the feudal era and into the industrial era in a few decades. What Bertolino in fact objects to is that everywhere where the masses are taking initiatives, we also find a communist party leading their efforts. What Bertolino does not understand is that what distinguishes the Albanian revolution from other uprisings of various peoples against their bourgeoisies in the thirties and forties is neither the genius of its people nor that of its leaders, but rather the fact that in Albania, the masses' revolt was led by a communist party which was closely linked to the masses and which based itself on Marxism-Leninism. This does not mean that this party has not made any mistakes, but rather that, until proof to the contrary, the party has been able to draw lessons from its mistakes and combat the revisionist tendencies which eventually won out in the Soviet and Chinese parties, and many others before them.

We have no intention of giving the impression that Albania is paradise on earth or that the PLA has never made any mistakes. Certain facts which Bertolino presents raise real questions for us. These facts include the prohibition of Mao's works, certain exaggerated references to the party leader and the tendencies of the leaders to present an idealistic vision of their country. But Bertolino does not try to analyse these

facts from a materialist point of view. Instead, he attacks one of the determining factors in the victories won by the Albanian people — the existence of the party that constitutes its leadership.

The appearances of objectivity in Bertolino's book should not deceive us. In practice, he is only legitimizing bourgeois propaganda which tries to make socialism seem like a dream which in fact only holds out the prospect of the return to the power of a new clique of dictators. The only thing which Bertolino proposes is disillusionment, basing himself on the real setbacks for socialism which have taken place in China and the U.S.S.R. Although workers must learn from these setbacks, they should not be a cause for disillusionment and pessimism. Rather, workers must learn to draw the lessons from these experiences so as to continue the struggle.

We must support Albania today. But this does not mean it never makes any mistakes. Rather, we must support it because it is a concrete example for workers around the world of a society which has rid itself of capitalist exploitation. It is a society which has been able to spare its people the crisis created by this system of exploitation.

We should be wary of those for whom, like Bertolino in the past, "all genuinely critical thinking about Albania seemed like a sacrilege" (8) and who, today, are the first to be disillusioned.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 49
6. *Ibid.*, p. 50
7. *Ibid.*, p. 191
8. *Ibid.*, p. 181

## Editor's note: Contribute to Books in review

*Books in review* is a new regular column. Its purpose is to review and criticize literary works as well as books on economics, politics, etc. We also intend to use the column to bring books and publications worth reading and knowing about to the attention of our readers and Canadian workers in general.

By themselves, the journalists of PROLETARIAN UNITY cannot cover all the books and publications we would like to bring to our readers' attention. We therefore invite our readers to bring to attention books that should be reviewed. We also invite them to submit their own reviews of books they think others should know about.

# The present situation and the Party's immediate political tasks

Tenth anniversary of the Bandera Roja Party of Venezuela

As part of an effort to familiarize readers with struggles being waged by Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations around the world, we are publishing excerpts from an important document by Venezuela's Bandera Roja Party.

The Bandera Roja Party is ten years old. It was formed in 1970, in the wake of the political battles linked to the guerilla movement which had been active in Venezuela in that period. The movement was able in those days to mobilize up to five or six thousand fighters in the city and countryside. In 1970, the Bandera Roja (Red Flag) party was founded in a demarcation from revisionism and the "foco" theories of Régis Debray, etc., which held that the class consciousness of the masses could be raised only by the armed action of small, isolated groups.

Today, the Bandera Roja Party has taken up the fight of demarcating from revisionism on the world level, including a demarcation with the Chinese revisionists. The Party has also been active in doing work around the communist programme within Venezuela. In doing this, the Party carries out various forms of struggle: armed struggle, exploiting all legal opportunities, agitation and propaganda in the working class and among the peasants.

The document excerpted below gives an idea of the Party's analysis and tactics during the country's last election in December, 1978. Venezuela is often called the "flower of democracy" in Latin America. The Bandera Roja Party comes to some conclusions from its own work, both its successes and its mistakes. The document gives a portrait of the conditions which our Venezuelan comrades have to deal with in their struggle. It talks about how they are working to make the communist programme a genuine alternative for the people of Venezuela.

(Excerpts from *The tenth anniversary of the Bandera Roja Party of Venezuela, January 20, 1970 — January 20, 1980, the National Political Committee, February 1979*)

## The present situation and the Party's immediate political tasks

1) The ruling class used the December election to strengthen and

legitimize the country's militarized democratic system. This pseudo-democratic circus that the bourgeoisie holds every five years is nothing but a plebiscite where the main bourgeois parties haggle over the control of the government. The main objective is to maintain the illusion that democratic rights really exist and that the people are the supreme masters of the country's destiny. The bourgeoisie uses the vote to reaffirm and legitimize its

## Venezuela at a glance

The world's third ranking producer of oil  
Population: 13 million  
Area: 900,000 km<sup>2</sup>

### Make-up of the population

White: 20%  
Metis: 65%  
Black: 8%  
Natives: 7%

### Income

5% of the active population controls 25% of all income.  
80% of the active population makes a monthly wage of less than 1,500 bolivares (approx: \$341).  
45% of the active population makes a monthly income of less than 700 bolivares (approx: \$162)  
The minimum monthly wage is 300 bolivares (approx: \$70)

### Standard of living

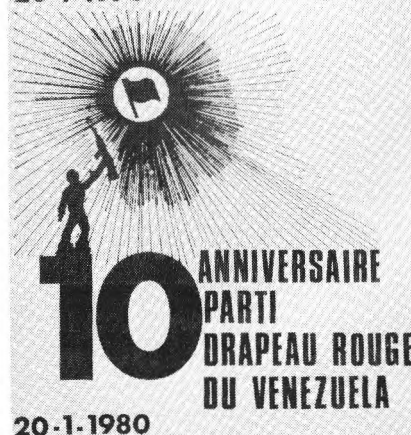
Number of unemployed: approximately one million.  
The official increase in the cost of living for 1979 was 40%.  
70% of the population doesn't get enough to eat.  
50% of the population suffers from malnutrition.

domination and to strengthen the illusion that the people can change the situation through the ballot box. This can be demonstrated by looking at the illusions and hopes raised in broad sectors of the population by Luis Herrera Campin's victory.

2) The high percentage of votes obtained by the bourgeois parties is a further confirmation of their success. It makes it look like they are the vehicles in which most people have confidence.

## DOCUMENTS

20-1-1970



Hence they appear to express the interests of the masses.

In fact, however, the big vote does not mean that the masses recognize the system or that they solidly support the bourgeois parties.

It is nevertheless true that bourgeois democratic illusions persist among broad sectors of the people. It is also true that they have not been convinced of the necessity and inevitability of destroying the militarized democratic colonial State. It is nonetheless a fact that broad sectors of the people are very sceptical about improving the lot of the exploited under the present system. There are many who vote for the Democratic Action Party (AD) or the Christian Democrats (COPEI) because they are the only concrete alternatives for a "meaningful vote" in terms of an electoral victory. Several factors have contributed to making it relatively easy for the bourgeoisie to manipulate the masses. For example, these parties use demagogic methods and alternately play the game of being "the opposition". They conduct massive and stupefying propaganda campaigns and are given immense resources from the State and the bourgeoisie. They elections take place in an atmosphere dominated by overt repression. At the same time, the so-called "left" parties

all advance a classically bourgeois-democratic and collaborationist policy line. Finally, the revolutionary organizations are still relatively weak and undeveloped. That is why a considerable number of people who oppose the system and who, by law, must vote, cast their ballot for one of the two bourgeois parties that have a chance of winning.

3) Different electoral results cannot be expected given the present stage of the class struggle in the country. A significant change could not occur because too many objective and subjective factors combine to prevent any alternative to the two main bourgeois parties.

The country's economic prosperity in recent years, the demagogic and populist policies of the bourgeois parties and the conciliatory and opportunist policies of the petty-bourgeois parties, not to mention the control that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties have over most cooperative associations, have made it possible to contain, slow down and often violently repress social conflicts. In a climate of relative social peace, the masses are easy prey for all kinds of reformist illusions. The bourgeois parties have used all bourgeois and State mechanisms to gain the greatest advantage from the situation.

This is combined with the fierce repression of revolutionary organizations. The revolutionaries, given their weakness, do not offer an immediate alternative capable of seizing State power. We should also mention that the sectarianism and conciliatory spirit that is present in the revolutionary movement have contributed to the situation described above and hold back the victorious development of revolutionary politics.

4) It is impossible to create a perspective of revolutionary power in the electoral arena. The entire weight of the political, economic, judicial and military-police apparatus is used to prevent a revolutionary model from being considered as a viable option with a chance of winning. This means that the bourgeoisie can play one party against the other and be assured of the masses' vote.

Only petty-bourgeois reformist solutions are possible under the electoral system. Looking at the recent experience in Chile, the effect of these solutions is to demobilize the masses considerably. Promising revolutionary solutions to the masses within the electoral process reduces revolutionary politics to promoting utter illusion. We will not convince the people of their own power by promoting petty-bourgeois reformist solutions as the path to their unity. On the contrary. The kind of unity built from false illusions dangled before the advanced elements will result in a confusion between the votes obtained and the real progress of the revolutionary movement.

It is only in the struggles of the masses (in their various forms) and in revolutionary propaganda for the seizure of power that revolutionary forces will be built up. It is on this basis that the masses will gain confidence in their own strength. This will not happen by accumulating votes on a reformist platform.

5) The high percentage of votes obtained by the bourgeois parties does indicate a gain for the militarized bourgeois democracy. In no way, however, does it mean that the system has been definitely consolidated. As we have stated in previous documents, Venezuelan society is experiencing a major crisis which cannot be resolved within the system. Only the violent revolutionary overthrow of the ruling classes and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of a democratic people's State can ensure we will get the changes we need in this country. The economic and social problems and the increasingly sharp contradictions within the society are signs of the system's tendency to instability and of the very critical periods that are on the way.

Given the present general crisis of the world-wide capitalist system, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie has been relatively free to manoeuvre because the country is an exporter of oil.

Venezuela has not been able to escape the international crisis, however. It has had effects in one way or another in the country and it has been an important element in the crisis in all fields of our society. The domination of



Students demonstrate against government repression.

imperialism over our country has allowed it to place part of the burden of its crisis on our shoulders. The effect has been felt throughout the economy since it is a dependent economy and is subject to the plans and decrees of the imperialist centre.

The country experienced a phase of prosperity and economic growth following the fall of the Betancourt government. That was a major factor in the stability of the militarized democratic system. The beginning of the period of economic stability coincided with the defeat of the revolutionaries, the split in the movement and the withdrawal from the revolutionary movement of those who had been its main leaders until then.

That is why there was a climate of relative stability (in other words, no immediate threat to the State) following Betancourt. The growing oil revenue made it possible to grant concessions to various social strata, to corrupt many working-class and mass leaders and to

smooth over many contradictions. This explains why mass protests were more limited than they would have been in a more dramatic situation. But despite the economic prosperity, working people were continually engaged in struggles to defend their wages and to improve their living conditions. A potential conflict situation was brewing, that loomed as a serious threat to the system's stability. This has a lot to do with the end of the period of economic growth, with the deterioration of the masses' living conditions and with all kinds of problems that came down on people's heads. This situation is also linked to the sharpening of contradictions within the bourgeoisie which originated with disputes over the distribution of oil revenue, the possibilities for profit, the productive sectors, the markets, etc.

The bourgeoisie tried, within the militarized democratic system, to slow down the growth of social conflict by combining concessions and demagoguery

with open repression. It even violated its own laws. This will continue for as long as possible, until such time as the bourgeoisie feels it necessary to break with formal democracy and resort to a military dictatorship.

There had been no such threats during the three previous presidential periods because the bourgeoisie was then able to manoeuvre freely. Now that this margin for manoeuvre has diminished and will continue to do so, the bourgeoisie may resort to a military dictatorship to smash workers' resistance to greater exploitation in a worsened situation.

Representative democracy is more stable in developed countries. Since their economies are more stable, they can export the burden of their crises to less developed countries. They can use reformist policies at home to cool out class contradictions.

Furthermore, the long period of peace experienced by the countries that

make superprofits from dependent countries has allowed them to build up a powerful labour aristocracy which plays its part in holding back the mass movement. However, the general crisis of capitalism on a world scale is beginning to have serious effects on many economies. The protest movement is beginning to grow, which could lead to intense class confrontations.

One of the most frequently-used arguments in defence of the idea that representative democracy has been consolidated is the high turnout at elections. This cavalierly puts aside the fact that voting is compulsory in these countries and that abstention is punished by law. These people also forget that opinion polls (and the pollsters' loyalty to the system is unquestionable) show that 51% of the people would abstain if the vote were not compulsory. Nor is the law the only threat. Campaigns are also mounted to pressure people who would otherwise not vote to do so.

Some people also talk about how civilized and peaceful voting is. They say nothing, however, about the military and police operations put into action at election time.

When we talk about the consolidation of bourgeois democracy, we mean the establishment of a representative democracy that would not totter with every fluctuation in the international situation. We mean democracy where mass protests would not be limited to bureaucratic representations to the State within the narrow limits of bourgeois "legality". We mean a democracy where class contradictions would not be allowed to simmer until they burst as they do in our society. Finally, we mean a bourgeois democracy without the vice and corruption that is everywhere in Venezuelan militarized democracy. We are talking about a democracy that is free from any immediate threat from the profound contradictions within it, contradictions which have scarcely been dented by the enormous oil revenues of recent years.

When we look at all these elements, we can conclude that not only is representative democracy not con-

solidated, but that, on the contrary, it has been weakened and discredited in the eyes of the masses. It is being criticized from all quarters as even the bourgeois apologists who extoll its perfection are forced to admit.

We should not confuse things aimed at legitimizing and temporarily strengthening the system with the actual consolidation of the system. This kind of confusion can only lead to pacifist and reformist conclusions which will put victory further off.

### COPEI's victory

1) Since the people had no alternative to the AD and COPEI parties, many of them voted for COPEI. This was a protest vote against the government that had brought greater economic and social problems, repression, and poverty in general. The AD candidates only promised increased repression and the COPEI candidates appeared to have policies more suitable for solving the most severe problems the people had to deal with. There were other particular factors also, such as the open allegiance and even personal identification of AD candidates with Romulo Betancourt that also diminished their chances of winning.

The high cost of living, the deterioration in public services, the scandalous misappropriation and embezzlement of public money, the stepped-up repression and the police scandals were all undoubtedly factors in the AD's electoral defeat.

2) COPEI's demagoguery and their exploitation of popular disenchantment with the Carlos Andres Perez (CAP) government was helped considerably by the support they received from other organizations. This gave the COPEI the image of being liberal and broadly-based, despite its basic weakness.

Another factor was the opportunist policies of the collaborationist left who concentrated their attack on AD and spared COPEI from criticism. They made a distinction between these two bourgeois parties and did not try to hide

their preference for a COPEI victory. Organizations like the Socialist League took the same opportunist stand. The Party for the Venezuelan Revolution joined Douglas Bravo in openly supporting a COPEI victory.

This policy of the collaborationist left and of certain revolutionary organizations was effected throughout the electoral period by promoting alliances with COPEI. Our party criticized this extensively because it did not educate the people. It hid the truth from the advanced sectors by playing along with bourgeois politics and its illusion of a "choice" between two parties.

3) The COPEI victory has not dislodged any of the ruling classes from power. We have always maintained that AD and COPEI served the same class interests — the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. They are the main political base of support for imperialist domination in our country. They are both fervent defenders of the neo-colonial State which is an instrument for maintaining the domination of our people. Both are intimately linked to the policies of North American imperialism and the other imperialist powers in the U.S.-dominated bloc. Both are reactionary, anti-people and repressive parties.

To think that real change is possible with such parties is a pure illusion. It has nothing in common with a scientific analysis. The only objective of any reform made in the structure or the superstructure is to strengthen the exploitation and oppression of our people. The aim is always to reinforce the country's dependence on imperialism and to try to save the system which becomes more threatened each day by its own contradictions....

### Abstentions in the election

1) Our tactic of calling for abstentions was correct and this will surely help us gather together the forces needed to seize power. The basic assumption we start with is that the masses' illusions of bourgeois democracy need to be broken down. A correct line

must be demarcated from both reformism and adventurism, and favour the unity of the people around a programme of immediate demands. It must expose reactionary, reformist and revisionist policies and continue to be relevant after the elections. We called on the people to increase their struggles for immediate demands and not to count on the election to resolve these problems. We stated that only the revolutionary struggle of all the people under the leadership of the revolutionary party would succeed in overthrowing the bourgeoisie and the landowners and in freeing us from imperialism. We maintained that there was little place for revolutionary utilisation of the bourgeois electoral process and parliament within the current militarized bourgeois democracy. Participation in the election would only help the bourgeois campaign to strengthen the system and reinforce electoralist illusions and reformist positions. The forces of the revolutionary movement will not be built up through parliamentarism or by participating in elections that offer nothing to the people.

Practice has now confirmed that the dream merchants peddling the idea that a massive vote for the left would make people more confident in the socialist forces did not contribute to building up the popular movement. The utter rout of the collaborationist left clearly demonstrated that.

Experience shows that we will not be able to educate the masses on anti-parliamentarism and on the necessity for violent revolution by playing the bourgeois electoral game or by adopting opportunist policies.

2) We did not reject opportunist and pragmatic policies and the possibilities of fleeting successes on a moralistic, principled or strategic basis. Rather, we did so on the basis of the analysis of the concrete situation and the relationship between the analysis and our strategy.

We knew in advance that there would not be a gigantic increase in abstentions, but we had no doubt that there would be a slight increase despite the massive electoral campaign, the obliga-

tion to vote and the various pressure tactics used by the system.

Spoiled ballots and abstentions rose to 15.6% in this election. There was a total of 928,978 abstentions or spoiled ballots in the presidential race and 971,670 in the congressional elections. Compared to the 1973 abstention rate of 6.7%, there was a 9% increase this time.

We do not doubt that errors made during the election explain some of these abstentions, but it is difficult to believe that this was the sole factor. In a country like ours where the abstention rate is very low, there can be no doubt that this high percentage shows that a considerable number of Venezuelans have lost confidence in representative democracy.

The people not enumerated, and there were many, can be added to this as well. The Supreme Electoral Council (SEC) did not give exact figures on the number of people not enumerated for the selection, but did indicate that there was around 100,000.

3) Right from the start, we worked hard at uniting the abstentionist forces and at giving them greater influence in the abstention campaign. The other organizations did not respond to our initiatives, however. Some simply placed



Demonstration against the rising cost of living in Venezuela.

little importance on this question and limited abstention to a simple political position. Others did not want to get involved in temporary alliances.

The lack of a desire for unity certainly weakened the abstentionist forces and limited the possibilities of better results.

We also made errors and there were some weaknesses in the application of the abstentionist policy including:

— our proposal was not developed enough in scope or depth;

— our campaign was limited and we lost the opportunity to make better use of the means available;

— there was a lack of a merciless ideological struggle against reformist and electoralist positions;

— there was a dependence on alliances in the campaign which limited the possibilities for moving some of our own tasks ahead;

— the electoralist and sectarian ideas of some comrades cast a damper on the success and enthusiastic development of our policy;

4) We should defend abstentions and continue the criticism of electoralism at every opportunity....

## Revolutionary tactics

1) The success the new government will have with its reformist tactics will depend greatly on the policies revolutionaries adopt and on how we react to and take advantage of the new government's changes in form and style.

There will not, in general, be any substantial shifts requiring alterations in the tactics developed to deal with the situation as it is now. The Party must, however, keep a close eye on the political situation and maintain flexibility in its application of the tactical line. It should be able to foresee any important changes in the political situation and be able to modify its tactic accordingly.

The Party will have to centre its activity in the immediate future in unmasking COPEI's policies, in fighting bourgeois-democratic illusions, in strengthening its links with the masses, in uniting the people in the struggle for immediate demands, in publicizing our general political line and in uniting the advanced sectors of the revolutionary classes in the struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a people's democratic State.

2) Our party's plan of action includes the people's main immediate demands. We will be successful in instigating and sharpening mass struggles by applying this plan. That is why we must make mass struggles a positive factor in our battle to isolate the bourgeois parties from the masses and to demonstrate the populist demagogy of these parties.

3) The fight against petty-bourgeois reformism, pacifism and conciliation is of vital importance in destroying the bourgeois-democratic illusions present in the masses. We have to link the struggle for immediate demands and reforms with revolutionary propaganda, with the struggle for people's democracy and with the education of advanced workers in Marxism-Leninism.

Our party is not a reformist party. It must never limit its struggle to reforms alone for whatever reason. This must be

kept in mind in all of the party's practical work, especially now when part of the party's tactics is based on inciting and raising mass struggles for economic, political and social demands. To lose sight of this or to lower our political programme in the hope of broadening struggles would lead us down the path of reformism and away from our general line.

4) The situation is now favourable for the masses to be receptive to revolutionary agitation. There are several factors which make this a good time for revolutionaries to successfully launch an intensive agitation and propaganda campaign. These factors include the many problems faced by the masses, the enemy's difficulty in manoeuvring freely, the grass roots pressure on the leadership of petty-bourgeois parties to make more protests, and demagogic electoralism which forces all parties to hide their real nature. We must overcome our organizational and political weaknesses and deploy all our resources to profit from these conditions and win partial victories. That is how we will strengthen the Party, improve its links with the masses, broaden alliances and reorganize and unite the entire mass movement.

5) The central point in our political activity should be to convince all the potentially revolutionary classes of revolutionary positions. Our policies, therefore, must be militant and broadly-based. We must learn to be both efficient and thoughtful in applying the principle of unity-struggle and reject sectarian or conciliatory ideas and practice.

The key element for achieving this is the upsurge of worker struggles and direct unity with the masses. This does not mean that we will look down on any struggle or that we will not seek all possible forms of agreement or accord with the leaderships of the left-wing parties and with co-operative organizations.

6) The struggle for democratic rights, against the encirclement of peasant zones, for workers' rights, for a price freeze, for wage increases, for the liberation of political prisoners and for

a general amnesty are the main demands that can initially put the new governments's demagogy about broadening democracy and favouring the poor to the test.

These struggles should not be limited to denunciations and formal agreements. Our main concern is that they mobilize the masses and that they spur the development of a broad mass movement against bourgeois politics. This will create a favourable climate for the masses to understand the correctness of the slogans for the seizure of power. They will learn through their own experience the futility of militarized bourgeois democracy.

7) The enemy's tactic of granting a few concessions to the masses, of making a few reforms to the system and of throwing a few crumbs to the petty-bourgeois parties must be fought. We must fight it with a policy of uniting the people in defence of their rights and for their demands and of uniting revolutionary and petty-bourgeois organizations around immediate struggles. We must also exploit all possibilities of mass mobilization that the enemy's tactics allow. We must also unmask all of the new government's demagogic measures and fight the illusions and hopes raised by Luis Herrera Campins.

8) Exposing the AD's demagogy has become particularly important because, in its role of "opposition", it will try to appropriate the leadership of mass struggles. The AD will be trying especially to put forward demands concerning the working class in order to maintain its domination over the labour movement. This is why it is extremely important to go beyond immediate demands. They must be linked with the revolutionary programme and strategy.

The National Political Committee  
of the Bandera Roja Party  
of Venezuela,  
Venezuela, February, 1979

(The English version of this article was translated by PROLETARIAN UNITY from a French translation published by the Bandera Roja Party of Venezuela.)

# Celebrate the Eleventh Anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines

The following article is the declaration of the International Association of Filipino Patriots (IAFP) to mark the eleventh anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines. This declaration was published in the January 1980 issue of the *Philippine Liberation Courier*. The IAFP has asked us to reproduce the declaration and it is with great enthusiasm that we do so, for the text has the advantage of giving our readers a good idea of the struggle of the Filipino people and of the role played by the Marxist-Leninists in this struggle. This information is given in a precise, concrete and relatively brief manner.

After having read this text, readers will realize why the bourgeois press has barely breathed a word on this situation in the Philippines. Silence is the best method that Western imperialists have of hiding their direct support of a fascist dictatorship and keeping a movement of solidarity with the Filipino people from developing throughout the world. Canadian imperialists are no exception to this rule. We must break through this wall of silence so that the struggle of the Filipino people is not isolated and ignored as the imperialists would like it to be. As well, the Filipino fighters have absolutely no outside help, while Carter has just promised to provide the Marcos regime with half a billion dollars worth of arms in the next five years. All financial aid, as modest as it may be, would be more than welcome. All donations can be sent to us and we will make sure that they reach our Filipino comrades.

1979 was a year of consolidation for the Communist Party of the Philippines. There were no dramatic mass actions, no sudden increase in the number of armed encounters. Instead, in farms and factories, slums and schools, party cadres worked hard to consolidate gains from preceding years. The surface quiet was deceptive. Underneath, the ground was being laid for even bigger mass actions in the future.

There are many reasons for us to celebrate the 11th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968. For more than a decade before that time, leftist forces were deprived of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines because of the revisionist policies of the Lava brothers clique. The re-establishment of the Party in 1968, therefore, meant the return of the Party to its vanguard role, the re-orientation of the Philippine revolution towards the correct line.

The beginning of the twelfth year of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is also the beginning of the decade of the eighties. As it faces the new decade, the party is armed with the knowledge that it has set firm roots in Philippine society from a preceding decade of struggle. At this time, ten years ago, the CPP had a few hundred cadre operating from a few places in the island of Luzon. Many party cadres

were petty bourgeois, urban youth. Today the CPP has thousands of predominantly worker and peasant cadres operating out of established guerrilla zones all over the country.

The decade of the seventies also saw many cadres fall in battle or into the clutches of Marcos' torturers. Many of the founders of the CPP now languish in prison. It is a tribute to the care with which they prepared others to take their place that not one step has been missed in the steady march of the Philippine revolution. The new leadership has clearly proven itself capable of guiding not just the continued growth of revolutionary forces, but also their consolidation into a solid base for faster and more sustained expansion in the future.

In the past three years, the twin tasks of expansion and consolidation have been guided by the document, **Our Urgent Tasks**, the crystallization of discussions at the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPP in December 1975. Drawing upon six years of lessons from the life of the party, "Our Urgent Tasks" provides guidelines for all areas of the Party's work. In reviewing the past year of the CPP therefore, it is only logical that **Our Urgent Tasks** should also be our guide.

## Conditions continue to deteriorate

The conditions for sustained growth of revolutionary forces were foreshadowed by events in 1979. The economy was in worst shape last year than in any other year in the seventies except 1974. The balance of trade is expected to be in deficit by as much as \$1.7 billion for 1979. The deepening recession in the U.S. and other developed countries promises an even bigger deficit in 1980. More importantly, a 23 percent inflation rate which is expected to go even higher in 1980 is sure to increase popular unrest.

The prospect for the rest of the decade is for continued deterioration of people's livelihood as Marcos integrates

the Philippine economy more and more closely to the worldwide system of international capitalism. In the coming period, this relationship will become even more exploitative as imperialism plots to transfer the impact of its deepening crisis to dependencies such as the Philippines.

For now, Marcos can keep the Philippine economy afloat by continuing to increase the country's now \$9.6 billion foreign debt. When the Carter administration agreed to provide Marcos with \$500 million in military aid in exchange for concluding a new U.S. bases agreement, it also agreed to provide him with the financial resources necessary to keep the economy from bankruptcy. But as Marcos' recent economic policies show, U.S. support has to be paid in terms of greater and greater exploitation of Filipino workers and natural resources, in terms of greater and greater U.S. control over the Philippine economy.

As the economy lurches from one crisis to the next, more and more sectors of the population are being victimized. As Marcos, his relatives and his cronies gobble up more and more sectors of the economy, even those sections of the business community who used to support Marcos have begun to turn against the regime. The increasing divisions in the Philippine ruling class are going to set the conditions for Marcos' downfall. Marcos may be a useful tool for U.S. interests today, but not at the expense of the destruction of the ruling class that has been so carefully nurtured by 50 years of U.S. colonial rule and 30 more years of neocolonial guidance.

The divisions in the Philippine ruling class were shown most clearly in 1979 in one widespread discussion of civil war and armed struggle among anti-Marcos elite elements in the Catholic Church and old society politicians. Marcos' latest sop to the myth of "normalization," the local elections scheduled for the end of January is certain to increase the ranks of anti-Marcos forces. Weeks before it is actually held, it has already been widely denounced as another Marcos farce.

For all of their talk of civil war and armed struggle, however, the anti-Marcos reactionaries have shown neither the inclination nor the capacity to lead the Filipino people in their struggle against the Marcos regime. They have chosen instead to engage in mindless terror and shameless pleading for the U.S. to replace Marcos with someone from their ranks. The task of leading the Filipino people's struggle against the dictatorship remains firmly in the hands of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

## The general line of the Philippine revolution

As the Philippine revolution moves into the decade of the eighties, the CPP is assured of the continuing validity of the general line for the Philippine revolution set 11 years ago at the time of its founding. Chairman Amado Guerrero summarized this line in the following manner.

"The character of the revolution is determined by its essential task, which is to liberate the people from foreign and feudal domination and establish an independent and democratic Philippines. Such a task can be accomplished only by waging armed struggle as the main form of revolutionary struggle and developing the broadest possible united front among the motive forces to isolate and destroy the target or enemy."

"At the helm of the motive forces is the proletariat. It takes on as its main ally, the peasantry whose demand for land is the main content of the people's democratic revolution and from which the main contingents of the people's army can be drawn. The basic alliance of the toiling masses of workers and peasants is the solid foundation for the united front which must win over the urban petty bourgeoisie firstly and the national bourgeoisie secondly."

"The perspective of the people's democratic revolution is socialism. The socialist revolution must begin upon the completion of the people's democratic revolution. Though we are ready to give concessions to the petty bourgeoisie and



national bourgeoisie in a period of transition, we shall no longer pass through a full stage of capitalist development as in the case of the old democratic revolutions before the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution."

"The targets of the revolution are the comprador big bourgeoisie and the landlord class. Our current revolutionary struggle against the Marcos fascist dictatorship is more than a struggle against the ruling clique. In the course of fighting this clique, we must develop the strength to weaken the entire ruling system and then topple it down in the end."

## The Party

One measure of the correctness of the general line of the Philippine revolution is the continued growth of the subjective forces of the revolution, the party, the people's army, the mass organizations and the local organs of political power. After expanding from less than a hundred in 1968 to a few thousand members on the eve of martial law in 1972, the growth of the party slowed down considerably.

Conditions of repression under martial law was only part of the problem. As Chairman Amado Guerrero put it in **Our Urgent Tasks**, "The fascist martial rule cannot be used as the main reason for the slow growth of the party. The structures of this tyrannical rule has been more than compensated for by the deep-going hatred and growing resistance of the broad masses of the people. In no year has the enemy struck down more than five percent of the membership of the party. The Party should be able to achieve a high rate of growth because it is small but composed mostly of cadres, if only we grasp the necessity and importance of mass members of the Party from the ranks of the workers and peasants."

One of the problems was the seemingly simple one of having a cumbersome party curriculum which was easy for candidates from the petty bourgeois class to pass but was too difficult for workers and peasants. Another problem was overemphasis on

building mass organizations without a corresponding, ongoing programme for integrating more advanced elements into the Party, a tendency that was particularly pronounced in urban Party units.

These problems were clearly identified at the 3rd Plenum of the CPP Central Committee in 1975. A program for correcting them was launched the following year with the release of **Our Urgent Tasks**. By 1979, the program had been implemented with enough success that the Party leadership can now confidently say that the pace of growth in Party membership has once again accelerated, and that the vast majority of Party members today come from peasant and worker backgrounds.

Considerable effort has also been devoted to the ideological consolidation of the Party. In the early years, the large number of petty bourgeois elements in the party created a situation where, as **Our Urgent Tasks** explained it, "The dogmatist tendencies more than the empiricist have been most prominent among those ideologically in error. Instead of making concrete investigations and analyses in linking with the masses, there are some of us who would rather rest content with parallelisms, analogies, quotations, and phrasemongering. There is even the notion that we do not deserve to be called revolutionaries if we cannot copy a successful revolution abroad."

These dogmatist tendencies have, in large part, been rectified in the past three years. In the past year, greater effort has been devoted to raising the theoretical level of Party members in order to assist those "who remain immersed in their own narrow and limited experience either because they are given no chance of developing ideologically or are merely browbeaten or who systematically react to the dogmatist tendency with avoidance of theoretical study."

## The new people's army

In the past year, the NPA successfully surmounted two large encirclement

campaigns by the Marcos military, one in Samar and another in the Cagayan Valley in northeastern Luzon. There have been other encirclement campaigns before. What made the past year's experience qualitatively different was the ease with which NPA units in these two areas surmounted these campaigns without any losses, without serious disruptions in the overall, regionwide level of political work.

These gains have been possible only because of the successful rectification of "left" adventurist errors in the work of some units in the countryside. "In cases of errors with disastrous results," **Our Urgent Tasks** explains, "the principal tendency has been adventurism or 'left' opportunism. With mass support wide or narrow but shallow, there are those who engage in military actions against enemy troops and then when the enemy reaction rises, they do not know where to go or the enemy catches up with them. They fail to recognize that to support and ensure the success of any important action, military or otherwise, requires painstaking mass work."

Success in rectifying these errors has not been limited to Samar and Cagayan Valley. In other regions, the hard-earned lessons of not allowing military actions to outpace the political work has been well-learned. In the Southern Tagalog region, for example, the NPA suffered several serious setbacks until the past year when the lesson of matching military work to the level of political and organizational work was finally learned. In June last year, the NPA flawlessly executed an ambush of Marcos military in Tagkawayan, Quezon, then successfully evaded the inevitable retaliatory military operation by melting into their by now well-organized barrios within the guerrilla zone.

Another aspect of the NPA's work in the past two years has been the consolidation of 20 small guerrilla fighting fronts into 13 larger and more secure fronts. In the process, NPA units have acquired greater manoeuvrability. The consolidation of larger and more secure fronts has also enabled regional leadership to meet more often and for greater nationwide coordination,

central leadership to meet with regional bodies. For an archipelagic country such as the Philippines, where islands are narrow and mountainous regions long rather than deep, the tying together of several fronts into larger ones is the first step toward the development of secure revolutionary base areas.

One key problem remains, that of securing enough arms for the tens of thousands who are anxious to fight for the people's army. In Samar alone, there are 10,000 fighters in the village militias but very few of these can be incorporated into regular units because of the continuing difficulty of securing modern weapons. Because of this, the task of moving the armed struggle from the substage to the main stage of the strategic defensive is going to take longer than initial plans called for.

## The mass organizations and local organs of political power

The consolidation of guerrilla fronts and the strengthening of the people's army are the result of the implementation of the guidelines for barrio organizing in **Our Urgent Tasks**. Here the error that required rectification was empiricism. "The error of haphazard organizing oftentimes characterized by lack or insufficiency of social investigation and by yielding membership in the barrio organizing committee to whomever are the initial contacts in a barrio, leads on to another error. The work of consolidation is not attended to. The basic mass organizations for peasants, workers, women, youth, children, and cultural activists are not organized and mobilized to ensure sustained all round mass support for the revolution."

The careful application of organizational guidelines set in **Our Urgent Tasks** has led to tremendous expansion of organized mass support for the revolution in the countryside. In Samar, for example, some 400,000 people out of the island's 1.2 million population have been organized into active support for the

NPA. With Marcos forces concentrated in northern Samar, NPA units easily shifted to other areas. More importantly, organizational work among the peasant masses continued even in refugee camps and a series of mass actions protesting military atrocities have caused considerable embarrassment to the dictatorship within the Philippines and abroad.

In Manila and other urban areas, greater attention was devoted to consolidating party units after a period of re-assessment. This period of re-assessment partly explains the absence of large mass actions in the past year. The primary problem was identified as early as 1976 in **Our Urgent Tasks**. In the cities, the document points out, "There is the 'left' opportunist notion prevalent among those of us in error that there can be no revolutionary struggle when there are no strikes, demonstrations and other conspicuous mass protest actions. They fail to recognize that it is perfectly revolutionary struggle to lay down the foundation for these higher forms of political action by doing solid organizational work among the masses."

The full implementation of guidelines set in the recent re-assessment still needs to be done. One of the problems is the greater effectiveness of Marcos' repressive apparatus in urban areas. In the past year, for example, a series of mass arrests starting in July and continuing into November, caused considerable disruptions in the work of various mass organizations. As the upsurge of the student movement in August 1979, showed, however, no amount of repression can stop the people's movement altogether.

## Onward to the eighties

Marcos declared martial law in 1972 in a vain attempt to stop the thrust of revolution spawned by the economic and political crisis of the sixties. He spent the rest of the decade attempting to stabilize the system of export-oriented industrialization that he and

his American masters had devised to surmount the crisis of the sixties. Because this "New Society" is in fact merely an elaboration of the basic neocolonial system set in place at the time of independence; because it is based on the intensification of the exploitation of the Filipino working masses; because it is based on even closer integration with the crisis-ridden international capitalist system, this "New Society" of Marcos has now brought the Philippines into an even deeper crisis than the one it was supposed to solve.

If martial law was imposed to solve the crisis of the late sixties which destroyed the old system of liberal democracy, what new system is U.S. imperialism and its local puppets going to devise to solve the crisis of the late seventies? Whatever the U.S. and its puppets cook up, whether it is "normalization" under Marcos, or his replacement with a combination of anti-Marcos reactionaries and the military, the tide of revolution cannot anymore be stopped. At the start of the last decade, the CPP was only a little more than a year old. Today, it has had more than a decade of rich experience in struggle and is much better prepared to guide the coming revolutionary upsurge.

Despite the still escalating levels of fascist repression, despite the difficulties of resurrecting the revolution from the setbacks caused by the revisionist Lava clique, the CPP successfully guided the revolution through the decade of the seventies. The Party, the New People's Army, the mass organizations and local organs of political power are firmly rooted among the masses throughout the country. Through correct application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought, through rigorous application of the dialectic of theory and practice, the Communist Party of the Philippines has firmly laid the ideological, political and organizational basis for the coming revolutionary upsurge in the decade of the eighties.

Philippine Liberation Courier,  
January 1980

## Subscribe to IN STRUGGLE! today

IN STRUGGLE! is the newspaper of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada EN LUTTE!/IN STRUGGLE!. It is published weekly in French and in English and is distributed across the country from Halifax to Vancouver. To publish a weekly newspaper, we greatly need the support of all Canadian workers and progressive people.

One of the most important forms of support is to subscribe to or sustain the newspaper, as this provides a stable income that we can count on to move forward.

The development of a communist press is an important part of building the Marxist-Leninist proletarian party and thus hammers another nail into the coffin of the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie.

### RATES:

- REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION:  \$10.00 for one year
- SUBSCRIPTION BY FIRST-CLASS MAIL:  \$15.00 for one year
- SUBSCRIPTION OUTSIDE CANADA:  \$15.00 for one year
- TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION:  \$2.00 for 8 issues
- SUPPORT SUBSCRIPTION:  any amount over \$10.00 a year
- SUBSCRIPTION TO THE PUBLICATIONS OF IN STRUGGLE!:  \$75.00 for one year

Enclosed is \$..... for a subscription beginning with issue number ..... and \$..... in financial support for the newspaper.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY .....

PROV/STATE/COUNTRY .....

OCCUPATION .....

PLACE OF WORK .....

Send money orders to the following address: IN STRUGGLE! c/o L'ÉTINCELLE Bookstore, 4933 de Grand Pré, Montreal, Quebec, CANADA or to one of the SPARK or L'ÉTINCELLE Bookstores; or contact the person distributing the newspaper.

## Suscribe to PROLETARIAN UNITY

PROLETARIAN UNITY is the political and theoretical journal of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!. It comes out once every three months and contains theoretical articles and analyses on all questions concerning the communist programme and proletarian revolution.

- Regular subscription:  \$5.00 for 1 year (4 issues)
- Subscription by first class mail or outside of Canada:  \$6.00 for 1 year (4 issues)
- Support subscription:  any amount above \$5.00 for one year (4 issues)

Enclosed is \$..... for a subscription beginning with issue number ..... and \$..... in financial support to the journal.

Send money orders to the following address: IN STRUGGLE!, Journal PROLETARIAN UNITY, c/o L'Étincelle Bookstore, 4933 de Grand Pré, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, or to one of the Spark or L'Étincelle Bookstores; or contact a person distributing the newspaper IN STRUGGLE!.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY .....

PROV/STATE/COUNTY .....

COUNTRY .....

OCCUPATION .....

PLACE OF WORK .....

## BOOKSTORES

### MONTREAL

#### LIBRAIRIE L'ÉTINCELLE

4933 de Grand Pré, Montréal, Que.  
tel: (514) 844-0756

(One block west of St. Denis, corner of St. Joseph  
Laurier metro, south exit on St. Joseph)

#### Hours:

Mon., Tues., Wed.: 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM  
Thursday, Friday: 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM  
Saturday: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

### VANCOUVER

#### THE SPARK

25, West Cordova, Vancouver, B.C.  
tel: (604) 681-7723

#### Hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
Saturday: 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

### QUEBEC

#### LIBRAIRIE L'ÉTINCELLE

110 St. Vallier West, Quebec, Que.  
P.O. Box 64, St. Sauveur  
tel: (418) 522-2186

#### Hours:

Mon., Tues., Wed.: 12:00 AM to 5:30 PM  
Thursday, Friday: 12:00 AM to 9:00 PM  
Saturday: 12:00 AM to 5:00 PM

### TORONTO

#### THE SPARK

2749 Dundas Street W., Toronto, Ont.  
tel: (416) 763-4413  
(½ mile north of Bloor)

#### Hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
Saturday: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM

## Pamphlets available

## Periodicals published by the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!

- *IN STRUGGLE!*, central organ of the Organization, published weekly in English and French and distributed across Canada. The newspaper IN STRUGGLE! also publishes supplements on current political questions as well as communist education pamphlets designed to give Marxist-Leninist principles as wide an audience as possible.
- *PROLETARIAN UNITY*, the Organization's theoretical journal published every two months in English and French.

- *Programme and Constitution of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!*, April, 1979.
- *The Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!*, including the Political Report, the Programme, the Constitution, and other documents, 3rd trimester 1979.
- *For the Proletarian Party*, October 1972.
- *Against Economism*, concerning the Comité de solidarité avec les luttes ouvrières (C.S.L.O.), September, 1975.
- *Towards the unity of Canadian Marxist-Leninists, Fight the sectarianism of the CCL(M-L)*, July, 1976.
- *The tasks of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement today*, (IN STRUGGLE!'s second anniversary speech, May 1975), March 1977.
- *The unity of the Marxist-Leninist Movement passes by the Intensification of the Struggle Against Opportunism*, communiqué from IN STRUGGLE!'s Central Committee, April 1977.
- *Against Right Opportunism in International Questions*, Declaration of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist Group IN STRUGGLE! on the occasion of the Third National Conference of Canadian Marxist-Leninists held in Montreal September 9, 10 and 11, 1977, September 1977.
- *No revolutionary party without a revolutionary program*, On the tasks of Canadian communists in the present situation, February, 1978.
- *For the unity of the Canadian proletariat*, Brief notes on the present conjuncture, April, 1977.
- *Manifesto Against Bill C-73 and Wage Controls*, March 1977.
- *Uphold the revolutionary unity of the workers of all nations and national minorities in Canada. Fight against national oppression*, March 1978.
- *Men and women of the proletariat: one enemy, one fight*, March, 1978.
- *The goals and work of Canadian communists in trade unions today*, May, 1978.
- *The CPC(M-L) a revisionist organization of agents-provocateurs*, June, 1978.
- *The CCL(M-L), the voice of social-chauvinism in Canada*, February, 1979.
- *Who is manipulating the unions?*, June 1979
- *Manifesto for the labour movement, Dump McDermott! Dump the bourgeois policy in trade unions!*, September 1979.
- *Religious war or people's revolution in Iran? Behind the headlines*, January 1980.
- *To all Quebec workers, No to renewed federalism! No to sovereignty-association!*, February 1980.
- *Quebec has the right to choose!* February 1980.

All documents are available in English and French. The Organization's Programme and Constitution are also available in Portuguese, Italian and Spanish.



# A new publication



## International Forum

In late April, the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE! will publish the first issue of **International Forum**, a new publication for the international communist movement. **International Forum** will be published three times a year. As its name suggests, the purpose of this new journal is to give international exposure and hearing to the greatest possible number of points of view found among the various communist forces in the world today. In this way, **International Forum** hopes to contribute to the advancement of the struggle against revisionism and for the unity of the international communist movement. This is why the journal will not restrict itself to making known the positions of simply **part** of the communist movement. It is committed to becoming an instrument of struggle and polemic so that communists will eventually come to the proletariat united around a single programme.

The first issue of **International Forum** will

contain the positions of as many parties and organizations as possible on the question of the unity of the international communist movement. It will include documents produced by the National Committee of the People's Struggle Committees of Venezuela; the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile; the Communist Party of Japan (Left); the Revolutionary Communist Party of the U.S.A.; the Marxist-Leninist Party of Austria; the journal *Albania Today*; the Communist Party of Portugal (reconstructed); the Communist Party of Ceylon; etc.

There will also be a regular column in **International Forum** on the international communist movement and its work. It will be a way of becoming acquainted with the positions of different parties and organizations around the world and their work in the revolutionary struggle in their respective countries.

**Don't miss the first issue of International Forum!**