

Introduction

"At the meeting, the enthusiasm and the number of people there really made the party something real for me, something that is really being built, and really proved as clear as day the League is the only real political alternative in Canada for the working class." (1)

It's "*as clear as day*"! This statement, which we assume was spontaneous, was reported in the newspaper *The Forge*, central organ of the group which has taken the name Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist), the CCL(M-L). It is a statement from a worker who attended one of the League's latest large meetings. The meeting, aimed at commemorating Mao Tsetung, in fact had as a central theme, the imminent war and the main danger which the USSR supposedly represents. Nothing had been spared to give the meeting all the necessary pomp and ceremony: a large hall in the Montreal Queen Elizabeth Hotel, an honorary rostrum with speakers' lectern, a very professional singing group, a colour film entitled "*The USSR, paper tiger*", surprise guests from abroad, etc. To give the impression that it is leading the working class in Canada, and that it is the living representative of Mao Tsetung in this country, the League decided to go all out. It's "*as clear as day*..." But besides appearances, besides the pretension, besides the showmanship, just what is it that's so clear?

"The more people eat, the fresher they are, the fresher they are, the more people eat." This publicity jingle which made Hygrade hotdogs so popular is — or so it seems — being raised to the level of a "political principle". "We can't be wrong, look how many of us there are, look how well organized we are". And, as the League's representative said at a previous meeting: "*China is red and will always be red*"... And, from one issue to the next, *The Forge* is there to remind us how the League is everywhere. Why, in its first weekly issue, *The Forge* even showed us how the League was the impetus behind the support for the courageous struggle of the Canadian postal workers, forced back to work by a despicable law: "*The League placed a lot of importance on the postal workers' strike*" (2). And behind the support given by the

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, you find the League! "*This was also the case in Quebec City, where teachers and hospital workers joined postal workers in a march October 24*" (3). And behind the support from the workers in Oshawa, Ontario? You guessed it, the League. And in Vancouver? Why, of course! And one thing which The Forge is emphatic about is that the militants of the League are doing communist education... And it's just amazing how The Forge is quoted around the world: in The Call, the central organ of the CP(M-L) of the USA, in Humanité Rouge of the PCMLF (France), in Clarté et l'Exploité of the PCMLB (Belgium), in Peking Review, etc., etc...

It's "*as clear as day the League is the only real political alternative in Canada for the working class*". If we were satisfied with appearances, with pomp and ceremony, pretension and labels, those might be words to close this pamphlet with; certain readers might be tempted to stop reading this pamphlet right away because things are so clear. Others, however, might just have a few questions to pose. Those who recall that this isn't the first time that there's been talk about a working-class party. Those who remember that the Communist Party of Canada, which formerly waged struggle against the Canadian bourgeoisie, also talked about collaborating with imperialism; it struggled against imperialism once the Second World War was imminent and, in a matter of years, transformed itself into the representative of imperialism. Those perhaps who remember that this isn't the first time that groups have claimed to be building a new communist party. After all, there was the Progressive Workers Movement, and the so-called Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist). For both these groups, it wasn't long before the struggle against revisionism was nothing but sloganeering designed, once again, to deceive the workers. And finally there are those who will remember that, in the past, some said that the Soviet Union was red and would always be red...

But what's the use of raising all these questions since the League has found a ready-made-reply — the "three worlds theory". And the League informs us that today, it is no longer sufficient to be a Marxist-Leninist, because now Marxism-Leninism must be completed and revised with the help of the prestige of a revolutionary leader, who — so it seems — was never as loquacious as he has become since he left us, leaving behind, so it seems, a last will and testament: the "three worlds theory". For some, just evoking Mao's name is justification for almost anything. This includes ten billion dollars in commercial agreements between China and the large Canadian monopolies; Hua Kuo-feng's embrace with the "father" of revisionism, Tito; hugging and kissing between the emperor and war criminal Hiro Hito and Teng Hsiao-ping; and "aide" promised by U.S. imperialism for energy development in

China, so that China can become a "great socialist power" before the end of the century. Others, however, might be moved to ask themselves a few questions about this outbreak of "naivety" on the part of the imperialist powers who are seemingly so enthusiastic about participating in the world revolution. And when the League affirms that: "*At the same time as it is vital for China to develop her foreign trade, for Canada, too, it is important to expand trade with socialist China to reduce our dependence on US imperialism*" (4), just what does this signify? That the struggle for the independence of Canada is part of the proletarian revolution? And that consequently, Canadian imperialism, by reinforcing "our" independence, is taking positive action, because it is thus favouring the conditions for its own overthrow?

At the very least, if it seems that it's "*as clear as day the League is the only real political alternative in Canada for the working class*", it also seems that the day in question will not be one of our sunniest. Because once you take away the finery, the appearance and the pretensions, and become a little more interested in the content, the League's "revolutionary strategy" seems "subtle", to say the least. So, if we have decided not to end this pamphlet here, it's because we think that it's worth the while, even for the Oshawa worker who found things so clear after attending the League's meeting, to examine the "subtleties" more closely and verify whether the "political alternative" erected by the League is really an alternative for the working class — and not one rather for the bourgeoisie.

For some, these questions on China's foreign policy and the League's positions on the international situation might seem remote. But they should ask themselves if these questions aren't perhaps related to the way in which the League works here in Canada in the working-class movement. Is the League's collaboration with the Canadian bourgeoisie on questions of international politics really so far removed from its sabotage of the political struggle against the bourgeoisie in Canada, from the fight against the Wage Control Act to the campaign against repression, not to mention its putschist moves in mass organizations and its police manoeuvres against IN STRUGGLE! militants?

How did things get to this point?

But before systematically criticizing this group and the trend which it is part of, there is an initial question which comes to mind: how did things get to this point? To answer this question, it might be useful to recall the historical context of the emergence of the new Marxist-Leninist movement in Canada. First, we must point out that the

betrayal of the old Communist Party of Canada does not just date back to the sixties and the major polemic between Khrushchev and the genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, like the Albanian and Chinese parties. It was at the time of the Second World War that the Canadian party lined up behind Canadian imperialism. Racing from one compromise to an entire compromised line, the CP finally abandoned proletarian internationalism and substituted bourgeois nationalism.

Socialist in words, chauvinist in practice, the CP ended up openly preaching class collaboration and the abandonment of the revolutionary struggle. For a certain time, it even went so far as to change its name, and was rebaptized as the "Labour Progressive Party" in order to make itself more acceptable to the bourgeoisie. And we know what this party has become today: a great defender of struggle, but only against the monopolies, and a great apostle of the struggle for Canadian independence and for a "truly" Canadian policy of capitalist nationalizations and economic reforms to reinforce "our" imperialist economy. We know as well, that the CP is a great defender of Soviet imperialism in our country, which is presented as a great defender of world peace and a model of socialism....

Attempts in the sixties to rebuild an M-L movement failed, and it wasn't until the early seventies that a new Marxist-Leninist movement was born. Its militants came for the most part from the first wave of people to reject the reformist dead-end of radical nationalism. Their desire to build a movement based on Marxist-Leninism and rooted in the working class led to the creation of a certain number of groups which claimed to be part of the struggle against modern revisionism, a revision whose headquarters were located at the Kremlin.

Within the young movement, the struggle was crystalized around the question of the party. There was confrontation between two positions: on one hand, there was the economist and revisionist position which in practice subordinated the struggle to rebuild the proletarian party to supposedly building links with the working class on the basis solely of immediate, economic struggles. Alongside this, the same people, and others, proposed the study of Marxism-Leninism behind closed doors, reserved only for the initiated few, cut off from the struggle of the masses. Small-group mentality reigned and the groups of the day looked inwards both ideologically and organizationally. On the other hand, there were people, in particular those in IN STRUGGLE!, for whom the task of rebuilding the party had precedence over everything else. They put forward that the main activity for communist groups had to be communist agitation and propaganda among the masses. They called for ideological struggle among those who claimed to be Marxist-Leninist and among the vanguard elements of the working class so as to

tear them away from the dominant influence of social-democracy and bourgeois nationalism.

It is this political line struggle which forms the backdrop for the birth of the Communist League in 1975. It was formed by the merger of three groups in Montreal. Up until their merger, these groups had been important defenders of the economist line, secondarizing communist agitation and propaganda and the struggle for the party. But from its creation, the new League was to present itself as the living rectification of the revisionist point of view on party building. So, apparently, it was a victory over revisionism.

But once you have recognized, formally at least, the necessity of the party, Marxism and revisionism must be demarcated on the basis of the questions of program. The League, whose sudden claim to the title of organization of Canadian Marxist-Leninists could only be equalled by its insistence in proclaiming to the four winds that it had the "correct" and "clear" line, was able, for some time, and still today for some people, to give the impression that revisionism had been defeated. However, an organization or party is not judged on the basis of its program and its actions. The League, despite the pomp and ceremony it has covered itself with, internationally and nationally, by presenting itself as the sole Marxist-Leninist alternative, has now revealed itself to be, and to always have been, from the same revisionist mold as its older revisionist brothers, the CP and the CPC(M-L). This mold takes its shape from repudiating the independent point of view of the proletariat. It unites the whole "people", including large factions of the bourgeoisie said to be "non-capitulationist", in the supreme struggle for the defence of imperialist Canada, threatened by one or the other of the super-powers. So, fundamentally, the League's line is only a new version, a new form, of the same revisionist betrayal, of the same path of collaboration with one's "own" bourgeoisie and of compromise with one or the other imperialist powers engaged in rivalry and war for the division and redivision of the world.

At the same time, the League's positions are not isolated, no more than the CP's positions were. Both of them correspond to the interests of the bourgeois class, on a national and international level. We cannot isolate the appearance of a social-chauvinist trend in Canada from its growth on an international scale. And more particularly, we cannot isolate it from the reactionary positions currently being put forward by the new leaders of the Communist Party of China. It is not a simple coincidence. It is rather the simultaneous appearance of opportunist positions corresponding to the interests of similar classes in different countries. At a time when the capitalist crisis is sharpening inter-imperialist rivalries, bringing with it the threat of a third world war, the

pernicious influence of bourgeois nationalism has once again appeared in communist ranks, acting as agent of corruption in the revolutionary movement and substituting the banner of class collaboration and chauvinism for proletarian revolution. This new chauvinist trend, which is fundamentally the same as all the revisionist betrayals which have struck the communist movement in the past, is one of the most treacherous, precisely because it fraudulently claims to represent the struggle against revisionism.

The League's so-called struggle against revisionism has today been revealed for what it is, the struggle against a State, an imperialist power, the USSR, to the profit of, and based on, the positions of other imperialist interests. But the revisionists who yesterday claimed to take inspiration from Lenin, and today from Mao, are forced to hide their real intentions, by trying to pass off their counter-revolutionary policy as a revolutionary one. That is why it is crucial to unmask their lies and to reinforce even further our determination to defend the independent point of view of the proletariat and its uncompromising struggle to bring down the bourgeois system.

(1) *The Forge*, 22-9-78, p. 9

(2) *The Forge*, 3-11-78, p. 6

(3) *ibid*, p. 6

(4) *The Forge*, 20-10-78, p. 12