

Pamphlet no 16

**MARXISM-LENINISM,
THE REVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE
OF THE PROLETARIAT**

The general crisis of capitalism and imperialism which we witness today is having increasingly disastrous effects on the world. This crisis results in the deterioration of the living and working conditions of the peoples of all the countries still subject to capitalist exploitation. But the struggles of the workers of all these countries are forever becoming more determined and more numerous. In Canada, the wave of resistance of the proletariat and of the masses has attained an unprecedented high since the 2nd World War. This movement is attaining new heights to resist the bourgeois State's organized offensive against workers' wages.

However the struggles of the Canadian proletariat are taking place without any guidance, or rather, without any revolutionary guidance. They are led by the reformist and collaborating trade union bosses. They are often taken over by bourgeois parties, such as the PQ, the NDP, the "Communist" Party of Canada ("C"PC) and other reformists of this kind. Despite its growing militancy, the Canadian workers' movement is undergoing a great deal of difficulty in finding its way out of the dead-end tunnel into which the capitalist have forced it. And what's more, the reformist and revisionist guiding lights that the workers' movement finds along its way, leads them blindly into some unknown, suffocating, dead-end twist of the tunnel. What the workers' movement needs is a strong beacon light to unfailingly guide it, as rapidly as possible, towards the exit of this tunnel of capitalist exploitation and oppression and into free, clean air. This strong beacon light is Marxism-Leninism.

The scientific theory of the proletariat to learn about the world

How did the Marxist-Leninist theory appear and develop in history?

Marxism was only able to appear with the development of capitalism, with the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Before capitalism, humanity went through three precise historical periods: primitive communal, slave, feudal, each period being characterized by a different method of production of the goods of society and by a different organization of the society itself.

When the factory (where a certain number of workers work for a boss in exchange for a salary) replaced the feudal-type workshops (where the artisans owned their means of production), the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were born, and with them, capitalism. With the expansion of the markets and the development of the means of communication and exchange in the 19th century, the factory gave way to big modern industry where industrial millionaires govern armies of workers who were at their service. These armies of workers lived in utter misery: women and children worked up to 16 hours a day, all were housed in filthy huts and were forced, in order to survive, to sell their laborpower at a pitiful price to the bourgeoisie, who owned the factories and controlled all the society.

It was by observing all of these facts that Karl Marx (1818-1883) discovered the historical laws which caused these phenomena to appear, the laws of capitalism, and that he revealed the inevitable process of the disappearance of capitalism, and of the arrival of communism. Marxism, therefore, was born at a very specific historical period that of capitalism as the dominant mode of production of the goods of society and as the mode of organization of the whole society. Marx could not elaborate on his scientific doctrine of capitalism before capitalist exploitation had appeared in history and before the struggles of the working class had caused the appearance of the social and political contradictions of the capitalist system.

V. Lenin (1870-1924), for his part, developed the study of capitalism at its highest stage, imperialism. He showed that towards the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, monopoly capitalism, that is when a handful of finance parasites dominate the big banks and industries and ruthlessly struggle for the conquest of foreign markets, becomes the principal characteristic of the present period of capitalism. The scientific theory of imperialism, found in one of Lenin's works, **Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism**, also brings together the basic elements of the struggle which Lenin led against the opportunist traitors. By distorting the Marxist theory of

the class struggle of the proletariat, these traitors brought the proletariat to tail the bourgeoisie, and even went so far as to ask the proletariat to serve as cannon fodder in order to defend the imperialist interests of the national bourgeoisie during the 1st World War. This is why, today, we no longer speak of Marxism to define the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, but of Marxism-Leninism.

The degeneration of the USSR since the middle of the 50s, the transformation of the first socialist country of the world into a new capitalist and imperialist power has caused the split of the international communist movement. On the one hand, there are the new revisionist traitors, Kruschev, Breznev, etc. who are communist only in name, and on the other hand, there are all the fighters loyal to Marxism-Leninism and the proletarian revolution, and among them is the president Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976), the great leader of the Chinese revolution and the loyal continuer of Marxist-Leninist thought. Besides leading the struggle against those new opportunists who betrayed the Russian and international proletariat by revising the Marxist-Leninist theory of the revolution, Mao Tse-tung contributed to the development of the theory of the revolution in countries oppressed by imperialism and, also, in those working to build socialism on the bases of Marxist-Leninist principles. That is why, today, the true Marxist-Leninists speak of "Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung thought".

Materialism and dialectics: The basis of the proletarian theory of knowledge:

Why do we say that Marxism is a scientific theory for studying the world and for understanding natural as well as economic, social, and political phenomena. To pose this question amounts to asking ourselves how Marxism teaches us to study the world that surrounds us.

Certain philosophers of Marx's time, such as the German philosopher, Hegel, studied nature as idealists. They claimed that the phenomena which we observe in nature are products of some force external to the phenomena themselves; that is, that these phenomena and all that characterizes them, are mere copies of preconceived ideas. Others, on the other hand, studied the natural phenomena in isolation one from another, without any link between them, and therefore, remained incapable of explaining their evolution, their development; these individuals are called metaphysicians.

Marx and F. Engels (1820-1895), (a companion of Marx who collaborated with him in some of his works and who continued his work after Marx's death), opposed idealism with the **materialist conception of the world**. They showed that nature is an objective reality which exists independently of our conscience and of our thought, and that thoughts are the products of the material world rather than the contrary — a product which is organized and systematized by a material organ, the brain of man.

The chemist, for example, can't produce a new product unless he has performed a series of long observations and experiments upon the already existing products. It is only by first discovering the scientific properties of this or that element of matter that the chemist can try new combinations of these elements in an attempt to produce a new product useful to society. It is, therefore, by starting with matter that man can understand and transform matter itself. By using experimental sciences, Marx and Engels showed that they are based on a process which by constantly renewing itself, develops the knowledge of man and his ability to act upon nature.

Marx and Engels taught us to see reality not only with a materialist point of view, but also with a dialectical point of view. They taught us to see things in relationship one to another, to see them in their motion, in their transformation. They gave us a method to analyse and to understand these transformations.

The dialectical method of knowledge consists in examining changes, not as being principally determined by causes external to objects and phenomena, but rather by what characterized the very essence of the objects. Take for example two different objects, an egg and a stone, which possess specific internal characteristics, and bring in an external factor, an equal quantity of heat for example. In one case, we will get a new object, a chicken, while in the other, we will remain with the same object, a rock. Therefore, what is decisive in the process of change, in the transformation of an object into a new object, are the internal conditions of that object itself. Moreover, all

transformations are a passage of quantity to quality. Thus, in our example, it is the increasing penetration of heat into the egg that, at a certain degree and after a certain amount of time, causes it to hatch and produce a chick.

But what characterized the internal conditions of things themselves, of natural, as well as social phenomena, which conditions constitute the basis of all change? It is the law of the inherent contradiction of things. In other words, it is the unity and the struggle of the contradictory aspects that make up a thing or a phenomenon. For example, what characterized capitalist society? On one hand, it is the unity of the 2 contradictory aspects of capitalist society, the unity between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; for without a bourgeoisie, there can be no proletariat, and without a proletariat, there can be no bourgeoisie. But this unity, always relative, exists in the precise relationship of the 2 aspects of the contradiction; a relationship in which the **bourgeois** aspect dominates the **proletarian** aspect. On the other hand, what characterized capitalist society is the struggle between these 2 contradictory aspects, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And at a certain level of development of this struggle, there comes a time when the two aspects of the contradiction, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, are overthrown and produce, by the same doing, a new society, the socialist society where the **proletarian** aspect dominates the **bourgeois** aspect. Therefore, it is the inherent contradiction of objects or of phenomena, or the law of opposites, which explains precisely what brings about every natural or social change. This is the fundamental law of dialectical materialism.

Contrary to the metaphysical theories that see the world in a static way, in a fixed state, Marxism teaches us to observe it in "a state of motion and of perpetual changes, where there is always something being born and developing, and something disintegrating and disappearing" (1). Contrary to the bourgeoisie and its idealist and conservative thinkers who, in order to camouflage and maintain their system of exploitation, declare that bourgeois "democracy" is the spearhead of the progress of humanity, Marxism teaches us that the fall of capitalism, the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist society into a socialist society, and then into a communist society is an objective law of history.

Thus, by getting rid of the idealist and metaphysical conceptions and of prejudicial ideas in philosophy, Marx and Engels united into a coherent whole the most advanced elements of classical German philosophy up until the 19th century. This coherent whole is dialectical materialism, that is, the only scientific method to study and understand the world that surrounds us.

Just like Marxism-Leninism supplies us with a method to study and understand natural phenomena, it also teaches us how to study and to understand the universal history of the world and of our own society. By applying the method of scientific analysis to the study of history and of society, the great leaders of the international Marxist-Leninist movement taught us that:

1. The economic system, that is the manner by which men are organized to produce the goods of the society, constitutes the basis of every society. **"The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life-process in general. It's not the consciousness of men which determines their being, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness"** (2).

2. **"Since the dissolution of the common ownership of land in primitive society, the whole history of mankind has been a history of class struggle, of struggles between exploiting and exploited classes."** (3)

Master and slave during the period of slavery, seigneurs and serfs under feudalism, bourgeoisie and proletariat ever since the beginning of capitalism. Capitalist society has not abolished class antagonisms, it has simply substituted new classes to the former ones. On the one hand, there is the bourgeoisie, a minority class which owns the factories, the means of communication, the banks, and which is in power and controls the entire society; on the other hand, there is the proletariat, a majority class which owns nothing but its labor-power,

Historical materialism: a proletarian conception of the history of society

Who are the theoreticians of scientific socialism?

and which is forced to sell it to the bourgeoisie in order to survive, and which produces all the social wealth.

But the Marxist-Leninist theory does not limit itself to the recognition of class struggle. Indeed many bourgeois thinkers have described this struggle before Marx. The fundamental, and at the same time revolutionary, discovery of Marx was that he showed that class struggle is the motor of history in all societies which are divided into classes, and that this struggle necessarily results in the dictatorship of the proletariat, then in the abolition of classes themselves. Engels said that class struggle **"has presently reached the stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer liberate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie) without at the same time liberating, once and for all, the whole society from exploitation, from oppression and from the class struggle"** (4).

The class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie leads to the destruction of capitalism, to the construction of socialism, and then, finally, to the establishment of communism. This is the most fundamental teaching of Marxist-Leninist theory. At the same time, Marxism-Leninism teaches us to examine and to act on all economic, social, and political events on the basis of this objective law of history.

3. The proletariat must get rid of bourgeois dictatorship by chasing the bourgeoisie from political power and by preventing it from regaining power in order to liberate itself and to liberate all of humanity from the yoke of capitalist exploitation. This is called the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat will only be able to achieve this task by exerting its revolutionary violence against the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will never offer political power to the proletariat on a golden platter. The examples of the Paris Commune in 1871, of Spain in 1936, of Chile in 1973, prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the armed forces of the bourgeoisie will always attempt to violently crush the struggles of the revolutionary people. Therefore, the violence of the proletariat isn't the invention of a "violent mind", but rather, a necessary condition to overthrow a class which is capable of unheard of violence in order to hang on to its power. This is why the revolutionary violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is a fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism.

4. To fulfill its historical mission, the proletariat must be armed with its own party, the Communist Marxist-Leninist Party, which will guide the action of the masses in their struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to build socialism.

Marxism-Leninism is, therefore, not a mere theory like the others. It constitutes in fact, the "theory and the programme" of a class, the proletariat. In the hands of the proletariat, this weapon is not only a theory to understand the world, but it becomes also an invincible material force to transform it.

If left on its own, would the workers' movement have been capable of elaborating this science of the proletarian revolution? Along with Lenin and Stalin (1879-1953) (a Bolshevik leader who, after the death of Lenin, struggled ceaselessly to consolidate and enlarge the dictatorship of the proletariat and to establish socialism in the USSR), we must reply no to this question. For, **"to elaborate on scientific socialism, it is necessary to be at the head of science, it is necessary to be armed with scientific knowledge and to know how to analyse in depth the laws of historical development. The working class, as long as it remains the working class, doesn't have the power to place itself at the head of Science, to make it progress and to analyse scientifically the historical laws: the working class has neither the time nor the means to do this. Scientific socialism "can only arise on the basis of profound scientific knowledge..."** says K. Kautsky (5). **The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia (K. Kautsky's italics). It was in the minds of individual members of that stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians..."** (6)

We must not look for the cause of this situation in a so-called incapacity of the workers to gain a scientific understanding of capitalism. On the contrary the workers are the ones who **assimilate**

Marxist-Leninist theory with the greatest ease. If they aren't able to **elaborate** this science, it's very simply that by being a class which is exploited and oppressed by the bourgeoisie, the working class is without the means of knowledge and the necessary conditions to do it.

If scientific socialism has been able to become the theory and the program of the international workers' movement, it is because the revolutionary intellectuals that elaborated it, such as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and the others understood that their historical role did not consist only in elaborating on scientific socialism, but consisted also, and especially, in introducing it into the working class and, in particular, into its vanguard, so that scientific socialism would truly become an efficient weapon in the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. If scientific socialism has become this forever more efficient weapon in the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, it is because, as a revolutionary theory, it is verified in the very practice of mass struggles and is constantly being enriched by new experiences.

Thus, Marx and Engels actively participated in the "Communist League" and drafted, at its request, in 1847, the famous **Communist Manifesto**, which became the revolutionary program of the international proletariat. Thus they founded, in 1864, the first "International Association of Workers", gathering together and uniting the workers' movement of various countries with the aim of forging a unique revolutionary tactic for the working class of all these countries.

In the same way, Lenin was the soul of the Bolshevik revolution. Not only did he lead practically all the stages of the Russian revolution, but he fought relentlessly the erroneous theories within the workers' movement and the Russian revolution. In particular, he struggled against the "economists" who bowed before the spontaneous workers' movement and who did not concern themselves with introducing socialist consciousness into the workers' movement from without.

In short, it is not only that all the theorists of socialism were not able to elaborate and develop the revolutionary theory of the proletariat without being very closely linked to the struggle itself, but they were also the great leaders of the class struggle of the proletariat at all the important stages of this struggle, on the national as well as on the international level.

To use Marxism-Leninism as a guide is, first of all, to struggle to create the proletarian Party

Marxist-Leninist theory would be without meaning, useless, if it did not help us to change the world and the society in which we live. Our objective isn't only to understand, that is, to become conscious that the bourgeoisie has us trapped in the tunnel of exploitation and wants to keep us there at all costs, but our objective is to get out of there as fast as possible. That is why we must use the beacon light of Marxism-Leninism and not the feeble candle-light of reformism; that is why we must grasp Marxist-Leninist theory to guide our struggle towards our complete liberation.

And so, what is the first thing to be done? How must we tackle this struggle? The first step of this struggle is the creation of the proletarian Party. Indeed, to assimilate this theory, you have to be organized to do it. Acquiring Marxist-Leninist principles and learning how to apply them correctly is a struggle. As in every struggle, and even more so in this one, whose objective is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat to build socialism, the organization of the proletariat is an absolute necessity.

This organization, this machine of the proletariat, that must lead it to accomplish its historical mission, is its own revolutionary party, bringing together the communist vanguard of the working class and working at rallying the Canadian masses to the socialist revolution. This Party has not yet been created in our country. It is to be built. And however much the so-called "Communist" Party of Canada (M-L) pro-

fesses to be this party, it is nevertheless, as IN STRUGGLE! has already shown (7), a group corroded with opportunism and not in the least bit Marxist-Leninist.

Opportunism, a trap we must overcome at all cost

To create the proletarian Party we have to correctly apply the Marxist-Leninist principles to the concrete situation of our country. We must, therefore avoid left opportunism or dogmatism, and especially right opportunism which we presently find in the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement in the form of economism.

Opportunism, be it left or right, results from the incorrect application of the Marxist-Leninist principles. Indeed, dogmatism and economism stem from the same error, that of understanding the revolutionary process in a unilateral way, that of not seeing, or refusing to see, the dialectical link between revolutionary theory and practice. For some, the theory is a dogma, replacing in a way the revolutionary action of the masses themselves. The dogmatists are satisfied with a sort of ridiculous repetition of the Marxist-Leninist principles, a repetition which results in a mechanical application of them without taking into consideration the concrete situation of our country.

For the others, the economists, Marxist-Leninist theory is practically useless as the Canadian workers' movement is able, according to them, to produce on its own, by its own struggles, the socialist consciousness and organization which is indispensable in order to reach the final goal consciously and as rapidly as possible. Thus, the economists reject, in practice, the necessity for workers to assimilate Marxist-Leninist theory, by decreasing the importance of communist agitation and propaganda among the masses and in their struggles. Often, they do nothing but glorify the spontaneous movement of the proletariat and they keep to the immediate advantages wrestled from the bourgeoisie and its dictator State.

Economism is the principal deviation within the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement. A principal deviation means the trap that most seriously threatens the struggle to rally advanced workers to communism and to bring them together in the same organization of struggle, the proletarian Party. The struggle for the creation of the Party requires a resolute battle against opportunism, and, in particular here, against economism. We must clearly identify and relentlessly fight all the manifestations of this major trap.

Struggle to unite Marxism-Leninism and the Canadian working-class movement

The Canadian proletariat, which is ferociously resisting the attacks of the bourgeoisie, is nevertheless cut from revolutionary theory and dominated by the reformist solutions of the bourgeoisie, such as bourgeois nationalism, social-democracy, revisionism. This is of course the result of the long domination of bourgeois and anti-communist ideas within the working class movement. But it is also the result of the historical treason of the "Communist" Party of Canada ("C"PC) which was once a revolutionary party, a proletarian party, but which has since completely abandoned its role of vanguard of the Canadian proletariat. Today, it is nothing more than a bourgeois reformist party, which even goes so far as to advocate, like its master thinkers in Moscow, "the peaceful passage to socialism".

What can we do in such a situation, or if you like, what is the central task of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement? It is to work at merging Marxism-Leninism, or scientific socialism, and the working-class movement, so that the Canadian proletariat and its theory constitute a coherent whole, and invincible material force which will take the form of the vanguard party, the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Canadian proletariat.

"What is scientific socialism without the working-class movement? A compass which, if left unused, will only grow rusty and then will have to be thrown overboard. What is the working-class movement without socialism? A ship without a compass which will reach

the other shore in any case, but would reach it much sooner and with less danger if it had a compass. Combine the two and you will get a splendid vessel, which will speed straight towards the other shore and reach its haven unharmed. Combine the working-class movement with socialism and you will get a Social-Democratic (communist today, ed. note) movement which will speed straight towards the "promised land".(8)

And how can we succeed in merging scientific socialism, Marxism-Leninism, and the Canadian workers movement if not by unfurling a vast activity of communist propaganda and agitation among the working masses with the aim of rallying the advanced elements to the only true solution for the Canadian proletariat and the people as a whole? It is to the success of this task that IN STRUGGLE! devotes all its energies.

Comrade workers!

The bourgeoisie tells us over and over again in barely veiled words that "workers aren't made to think"! It is the bosses who must do that! Workers must be content to obey the orders and follow the policies of the bosses. All that is cover-up and lies. We aren't machines! We are human beings! And what's more, human beings enamoured with justice and fraternity. Human beings burning with a profound desire to abolish the exploitation of man by man, to change this world where a bourgeois minority dominates and crushes a majority of exploited and oppressed.

Just like the carpenter is unable to build objects for our daily use without his toolbox, so the proletariat cannot go without its theory to accomplish the socialist revolution and to build a society rid of exploitation of man by man.

But where do we begin? We must first of all look at the tool that we are to use, learn how to use it, learn how to make it work every time we struggle against the exploiters, against their machine of repression, the bourgeois State, against their reformist parties, against their agent in the workers' and trade union movement. To secure this tool, Marxism-Leninism, IN STRUGGLE! has started to set up circles to give a Marxist-Leninist education to workers who want it.

Take hold of our revolutionary theory! Join the circles of IN STRUGGLE! Build the revolutionary Party of the Canadian proletariat, the Communist Marxist-Leninist Party!

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- 1) J. Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, p. 7
 - 2) K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 48-49
 - 3) Marx & Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, p. 13
 - 4) *Ibid*, p. 13
 - 5) Kautsky, Karl (1854-1939), one of the leaders and theoreticians of the German Communist Movement and of the 2nd International. Later, he joined the opportunists and became an enemy of the Russian Revolution and of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin.
 - 6) Briefly about the Disagreements in the Party, p. 101 (Vol. 1) Works, Stalin
 - 7) See the Special Issue/August 1976 of IN STRUGGLE! and IN STRUGGLE! no 48 (vol. 3, no. 7), 6 Nov. 1975, (only in French).
 - 8) Stalin, *Briefly About...*, p. 104