

August 10, 1976

To the Lexington Communist Collective:

This letter is in response to your circular, "Party Building at the Present Stage, A Proposal for Discussion", issued in July. It is our view that your proposal to create a 'non-partisan editorial board' and ML journal does not contribute to, but in fact detracts from, the Party building effort in the U.S. Our criticism of your proposal runs as follows:

1) Under the heading of 'Liquidationism' you state that Party building has been reduced to a question of "--when?", that instead of "...lines on party building adhered to by different tendencies we really (have) lines on why the party can't come into existence until some later date", that various tendencies have raised 'problems' only to "discourage attempts to organize the party", and that "...no one has ever put forward a detailed step by step plan and timetable explaining how the communist forces could unite to solve them". All the movement has been presented with, in your view, is a simple "no party -- party", that is, no party, then a declaration.

The assumptions you make here are entirely incorrect. The history of our movement shows clearly that every element that has taken a stand nationally on Party building has advocated one or another 'step by step' plan. The CL created the NCC. COUSML, as you know, had a definite plan, however unprincipled. The RU created first the Rainbow Coalition, and then the Programme Discussion Committees, issued its Draft Programme, conducted polemics against other tendencies, and so on, as essential points of its plan to create the RCP. The OL has put forward a definite plan for establishing its party, involving a basis of unity, several steps towards achieving ideological and organizational unity, and has even set a definite date for declaration. The Revolutionary Wing has its own steps and timetable. The WVO, MLOC, WC(ML) and so on have all put forward various plans for achieving the Party. So we see there is no lack of 'plans' in our movement. The problem before our movement has not been simply lack of plans, steps, or timetables; the problem before us has been the content of those proposals, of whether they advance the movement or drag it back. It is therefore incorrect to assume that no such plans have been put forward, that Party building has been reduced to "no party -- party", or simply to a question of "--when?". To assert this, as you do, is to fail to see what the movement has been doing for the past 5 years, and to 'overlook' the content of the struggles within it.

2) Under the heading of 'Sectarianism' you state that "...not a single group among us has ever seen developing unity among MLs as central to party building." If you mean "among us" groups in Kentucky, you may in fact have a point. But if you are talking in relation to groups in the national movement, you are very badly informed. Almost every published group in our movement has made some formal recognition of the necessity for unity of Marxist-Leninists in relation to Party building. The problem is not that this recognition is missing. The problem stems from how that unity is achieved, how the various tendencies define just who the Marxist-Leninists are, and how they should be united in order to create the Party. You may not believe that the various proposals that have been advanced in order to create 'unity among MLs' are correct; but it is something entirely different to state that such proposals simply do not exist. If you are going to make such assertions, you should first see whether or not they are true.

3) Under the heading of 'Dogmatism' you correctly state the need to develop a more thorough elaboration of the analysis, strategy and tactics of revolution in the U.S. But your reasoning behind this line is based on the assumption that everyone adheres to the same general principles and that the lack of strategy and tactics stems from the failure to apply ML concretely. While it is true that our movement lacks concrete analysis, it is incorrect to state that "everyone agrees on the same generalities" as if all organi-

zations adhered to the same basic ML principles. This assertion discounts the struggles within the movement that have occurred on questions of principle, over the RU's IWO's, over the national question in the U.S., over which classes and strata are allies of the proletariat, over the question of imperialist war, over the means to establish the Party, and so on, in short, over questions that challenge every group's understanding of Marxism-Leninism in relation to our own conditions. To make it appear, as you do, that the focus of struggle has been narrowed to issues like ERA is to ignore the major portion of struggle our movement has seen.

These three points --lack of plans, lack of proposals for unity of MLs, common adherence to the 'same generalities'-- amount to a reduction, a simplification of what has occurred in the movement to date. The only value of such simplification is that you are then able to create a stark contrast for your own 'plan', your own proposal for 'unity of MLs', and your own conception of how to apply Marxism-Leninism concretely. From our standpoint, you have achieved the justification for your 'plan' at the expense of distorting the movement's history, and your 'plan' bears the imprint of this. If you have made this error through simple lack of information or inability to understand the course of struggle within the movement, then you should learn to be more cautious before addressing the national movement before you have thoroughly and 'concretely' investigated it. As to your proposal:

4) You state that the proposed Editorial Board will have a "very minimum level of unity", will be drawn from all willing organizations, will be non-partisan and have its own discipline. If this is the case, your proposal can only lead you, 'step by step', towards open opportunism.

What you have proposed is both undesirable and naive. To create, in the first place, a journal that is to become the mouthpiece of the entire movement, a 'storehouse of various views', when the editorial board of that journal lacks a high level of unity, lacks firm and definite principles to guide its editorial policy, lacks the ability in principle to eliminate opportunist lines from the journal's pages, to create such a journal is to create a centre for opportunist elements who claim to be Marxist-Leninist. It is, in short, to duplicate the work of the Guardian, or to provide a 'theoretical journal' as a supplement to the Guardian. The only difference is that the Guardian has drawn its personnel from independent elements, and you propose to draw yours from established organizations. If your journal's Editorial Board is based, as you say, on the 'very minimum level of unity', a level you have not even defined, then there are in fact no grounds for excluding any tendency that claims to be ML. It should occur to you that it was precisely on the same basis that the CL called the NCC, that the COUSML was formed, and that the OL is presently attempting to rally the movement around. The 'very minimum level of unity' may be a sufficient basis for coalition work around specific, narrow issues; but for ongoing joint political work, especially work that is designed to create a 'leading centre', it is absolutely unprincipled. On the basis of unity you have described, the pages of the journal are liable to include every conceivable shade of opportunism.

What Lenin proposed for Iskra and Zarya was not that such publications merely reflect the movement or have unity around the lowest common denominator. He proposed that the editorial line be directed by a definite tendency, by that tendency which had proven itself the most capable, the most consistent, the most comprehensive, the most tested and dedicated to the development of the movement. The various shades of difference within the Russian movement were not simply to be given expression in the publications, the policy of the editorial board was not to be determined by the 'movement as a whole', by all and sundry. Just the opposite. All shades of view were to be determined, examined, and criticised from a definite perspective. The purpose of such publications is to provide direction and leadership for the movement, and this cannot be done if your starting point is the 'very minimum level of unity'. You must in fact strive for the highest level of unity in order to insure that such leadership is composed of the best and most tested elements in the movement.

Your statement shows that you suspect this is true, but in attempting to get from the 'very minimal level of unity' to the 'leading centre' you in fact only get further

into an impossible contradiction. Your Editorial Board is to be founded on minimal unity. Since it is the "property of the whole movement", and since everyone will be 'embarrassed' into participating, we can assume we will find around one table representatives from every organized unit within the movement. These people have been at each other's throats for some time, and so in order to prevent the predictable chaos you propose that the various representatives cut their organizational ties with their respective groups, promise to 'be good' and not advance the lines they were affiliated to hitherto, and subscribe to the discipline of the journal. Wishful thinking, to say the least. But what sort of discipline is this that the EB members are bound to? It cannot be discipline enforced by firm and definite ML principles, since the EB at this point has only the 'very minimal' principles. It can only be discipline of simple majority-rule among a wide range of viewpoints. Do you seriously believe it would be possible for the EB to develop on the basis of such 'loose' and unprincipled unity, on the basis of discipline that is in fact no discipline at all since it lacks the backbone of a high level of unity? Can you seriously think that the various participants will simply abandon their previous political affiliations, organizational sympathies and lines, or that this could be enforced through an unprincipled discipline? You are forced to make this absurd conclusion based on 'good intentions' simply because there is no other way for you to make heads or tails of an impossible situation you yourselves have proposed.

This absurdity is carried into your conception of the 'non-partisan' character of the EB. It should go without saying that the movement is composed of various tendencies, that each tendency or group of tendencies reflect definite class outlooks, that some express consolidated forms of opportunism, that some express spontaneous forms, that some have consistently developed towards ML despite errors and setbacks, that other have just as consistently developed away from ML, that the movement, in short, is not a level plane on which we all stand equal 'before the eyes of God'. This has been true of every movement in history, despite the efforts of Centrists and Trotskyites to put everyone in the same basket. There is no such thing as 'neutrality' in the movement. Every organization, formation or individual within it bears a partisan stamp. That is precisely as it should be, and part of our task as Marxist-Leninists is to clearly define those tendencies, isolate the opportunists and group together the principled ones. The 'non-partisan' character of the EB is in fact a myth since if the EB were to come about it would be impossible to eliminate the political strivings the participants would bring with them. Opportunist trends on the EB would seek each other out, gravitate around common positions, attempt to maintain a majority on the EB in order to have their lines adopted, and favor their organized counterparts in the movement. Principled elements (who would not be sitting on such a board in the first place) would attempt to do the same. In addition, the EB, by your own description, would itself become a political tendency, i.e. become partisan. The 'neutrality' you have proposed exists only in your imagination. In practice it can only lead to providing a cover for 'partisanship' in the direction of opportunism.

In short, the Editorial Board would be neither 'non-partisan' nor capable of developing into a leading centre. Its basis of unity, since what you have proposed is not a simple coalition but a pre-Party formation, would be thoroughly opportunist. You would achieve, not the unity of the Marxist-Leninist movement to create the Party, but the 'unity' of the movement's opportunist trends who would see in such an enterprise a means to exert their influence.

5) As to the content of the proposed journal, you list 4 main factors. The first states that the journal "...would be the property of the whole movement; not of a specific group." It should be clear from the above that such a journal in fact would not be the property 'of the whole movement', however many time its Editors declared it to be. To say 'property of the whole movement' amounts to saying it would be the property of both opportunists and MLs. In practice it would be the property of whatever general tendency (not necessarily a single group) that held the dominant position within the EB. If, as you say, "...a few groups can successfully establish the journal..." from the outset, then the journal is the property of those groups. To state otherwise is to ignore the most basic political realities. The movement does not operate on the basis of good intentions or altruistic declarations. It operates on definite political alignments, either based on principle or lack of principle.

Your second point states that the journal "...would be strictly theoretical; It would deal with general theoretical problems, not current events." It is hard to imagine what you mean by 'strictly theoretical', when you counterpose this to 'current events'. Even supposing your journal was the organ of your own group, it would be incorrect to juxtapose 'theoretical' articles to works on 'current events'. In fact it is the task of communist propaganda and theory, even in the form of a theoretical journal, to deal not only with 'planetary questions' but with current issues in class society. A particular current issue, a crisis in government, a particular strike, a particular event within petty bourgeois strata, and so on, are all valid and necessary material for Marxist-Leninist publications. Refer to the articles Lenin wrote for the theoretical journal Zarya; they were both 'theoretical' and current.

Your third point states that papers submitted to the journal "...would have to meet the highest standards of concrete analysis of concrete conditions." The question remains: given that the movement has yet to systematically produce such works (and not simply from lack of time), who will submit such worthy articles. Secondly, given the composition of the Editorial Board, who will determine which articles meet your "highest standards"? All that is necessary is for a particular article to run counter to the leanings of the EB's majority and it can 'fail' to meet the necessary high level. It should be clear that without clear principles, the policy of EB can be just as arbitrary as the groups it is composed of. If you are going to assert 'high standards' within the movement, it must be done by example and not simply by declaration. If you want to raise the level of analysis, then you must raise it yourselves, indicate to the movement by example just what you consider to be the 'highest standards' of concrete analysis. An article, work or polemic written at such a level would undoubtedly attract all the best elements within the movement, and stimulate others to follow the example you have set. As it is, you have only expressed a commonly felt need within the movement without yourselves even taking the elementary precaution to insure that your Proposal is equal to the 'high standards' you promise at some later date.

Your fourth point states that the proposed journal "...would appear at fairly long intervals; not weekly or monthly", but again this is only speculation of your part. Even supposing you created a viable journal of some sort, there is no reason to put any sort of 'long interval' in your guideline. It would always be preferable for substantial works to appear in our movement as often as possible, dependent only on the supply of material.

6) You state that the proposed journal "...would be the first step towards unifying the MLs in the US into a party." This is to be achieved, according to your plan, by the EB 'at a later point' summing up the struggles within itself and opening this 'two-line struggle' to the movement at large. A 'dominant line' will be asserted, and 'another central body representative of all the groups' will be formed to organize the movement around that line and hence around the Party building motion. This is such a 'strictly theoretical' approach it would be impossible to form a truly communist Party along these lines. In the first place, the EB would have to 'dialectically' pass from a free-for-all based on a 'very minimal level of unity' to a coherent grouping 'above' the movement. You have achieved this transformation in print through wishful thinking; in practice it could be achieved only through slight-of-hand. Secondly, there is no reason to believe that the struggles within such an EB would result in a 'clean' two-line struggle. Our movement has witnessed multi-line struggles, involving five or six participants, where in fact every single line has proven incorrect. On the other hand, we have had two-line struggles, as between the BWC and RU over the national question, in which both 'poles' of the struggle shared the identical petty bourgeois class base. Thirdly, the 'dominant line' is not necessarily the correct line, as has been proven by the history of our movement at one or another time. Following your line of reasoning, we would have to support the RCP since in fact it did organize the 'Party' around the 'dominant line', taking with it the majority of the organized movement. Fourthly, you propose that once this 'two-line struggle' has been opened, a central body representative of 'all the groups' will begin organizing the Party. But on what basis will 'all the groups' participate in such an effort if there is in fact two-line struggle. Aside from a 'dominant line' there will necessarily be a minority line, which in turn will be represented by a number of groups in the movement, who in turn may not at all be anxious to participate in a 'central body' which is organi-

zing around a 'dominant line' with which they have political differences. Your entire scheme is unworkable precisely because it is conceived on an unprincipled basis. It hangs together only by your good intentions.

Given the state of our movement, it is entirely understandable that the LCC should attempt to develop some 'solution'. It is under the same conditions that every political tendency has put forward its 'plan', for example, the MLOC's 'joint theoretical study' line, or the WC(ML)'s 'Iskra principle'. But such proposals must be carefully weighed, thoroughly investigated and criticised. It is the lack of such thorough investigation and thinking through of problems that has led to our present situation. The 'plans' that have been offered to the movement to date, despite how well-intended their authors may be, do not in fact contribute to Party building. In their present form they can only lead to creating several additional centres of opportunism. That is the logical outcome of the LCC proposal. In practice it would create an EB and journal that would claim to represent and be the common property of the entire movement; in reality it would represent only itself, only an additional trend within the movement, granting itself 'authority' it did not in fact possess.

If you wish to contribute to the development of the national movement, help set the 'highest standards', and join in the creation of a correct 'dominant line', then the obligation falls to you to raise the level of your own activity, set higher standards for yourselves, and develop the wherewithall to set an example for the movement as a whole. But our movement has no need of yet another 'plan' indicating how to go about setting up a leading centre. What we need is not more talk about 'high standards', 'concrete analysis', and so on. What we need is to see these things in action.

We are sending along a letter by the Guelph Workers Committee addressed to the journal Canadian Revolution. The CR, if you are not already familiar with it, is precisely the sort of journal you have proposed. It has since its inception served as a rallying point for opportunism in the Canadian movement, as is demonstrated both by its EB and the articles it reprints. Our position is identical to the GWC's.

CWG (ML)

a document which isn't favourable to it.

I am sending you the Melo Antunes document and that of COPCON, and the flyer for the demonstration of the 20th of August.

Forgive me if things are not very clear, but I am very tired. . . .

If you have some doubts about anything you can write and ask.

Your friend,

Maria,

Lisboa, Portugal

(Maria is a member of a Marxist-Leninist organization in Lisbon and a medical student.)

Dear *Canadian Revolution*,

Coming from several cities in the USA and Canada, several patriotic Indians held a three-day convention in Montreal in late June and founded a continent-wide association, called the Indian Peoples' Association in North America (IPANA).

It was a significant coincidence that the convention in Montreal began on the morning of June 27, 1975 when newspapers around the world carried front-page headlines announcing Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of "national emergency" in India, and large-scale arrests of people in opposition. While this act of the Gandhi government represented a major turning point in the political history of India, to the patriotic Indians who assembled in Montreal it did not come as a surprise. For many years they have been watching the gradual and steady erosion of democratic rights of the people of India, caused by the unresolved economic contradictions which were making it increasingly difficult for the rulers to rule in the consitiutional, democratic manner.

Many of the founding members of IPANA have been active, locally, in publicizing the repressive conditions in India and to lend support to genuine peoples' struggles in the homeland. Increasingly, however, a need was felt to bring all these groups and individuals together under one organization on a North American basis. The formation of IPANA will fulfil this need.

A Political Resolution was adopted in Montreal which would guide the organizational work and other activities of the Association. According to this Resolution, the main tasks facing the people of India are three: 1) to defeat the domination of the country by imperialism, mainly that of USSR and USA, which acts in collaboration of the big landlords and big capitalists; 2) to win genuine democracy for the vast majority of people; and 3) to attain decent economic conditions. The members of IPANA recognized these struggles of Indian people as their own and in order to support these struggles, IPANA has undertaken the following tasks:

1. to win the support of the broadest section of the compatriots resident in North America, and of other people, for the just struggle of the Indian people for genuine independence, democracy, and decent living conditions;
2. to consistently and patiently expose the detrimental consequences of the continuing domination of India's economy, politics, and culture by imperialist forces, namely USSR and USA;
3. to oppose and expose the growing repression of the Indian people by the state;
4. to oppose discrimination against Indians resident in North America; and
5. to support the struggles of the peoples and nations of the Third World against domination, exploitation and hegemony by the two superpowers.

IPANA will launch a news-and-analysis journal, called *New India Bulletin*. The first issue will appear in early August.

As far as the proclamation of "national emergency" in India is concerned, IPANA held a news conference in Montreal soon after its convention, where a public statement was released. A

copy of this statement, which reflects IPANA's views on the recent developments, is enclosed. It is hoped that you will publish it for the widest dissemination in North America.

IPANA is also launching a massive signature campaign on a petition, which will be handed over to Indian diplomatic offices in five major cities of North America on August 15 (anniversary of India's independence).

Those interested in the new journal, *New India Bulletin*, or in the petition, or in anyway supporting the struggles of the people of India, should contact the central office of IPANA, Box 37, Westmount Post Office, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Hari P. Sharma

Simon Fraser University

Burnaby 2, B.C.

Dear Comrades,

I would like to express my support and enthusiasm for the *Canadian Revolution* journal. The first issue is being widely-read and discussed by Marxist-Leninists in the Vancouver area. Many of us feel that your articles on Canadian political economy, the national question, the question of party-building and upcoming discussions on existing "left" political formations will constitute a vital beginning to a national debate and struggle amongst M-Lers on these questions. Hopefully, I, along with the people I am associated with on the *Western Voice* and in the teaching movement here in B.C., will be able to make some concrete contributions to these discussions on the pages of *Canadian Revolution*.

Enclosed is a cheque. Looking forward to No. 2. . . .

Bob Rosen

Vancouver

Dear Friends ★

This letter deals with the statement of "Political Unity and Policy of the Journal" and the editorial in the first issue of the journal, *Canadian Revolution*. We do not concern ourselves with the contents of the journal here as the working collective does not directly stand by the articles published in the journal. A Marxist - Leninist theoretical journal and debate are vitally important to the development and life of the revolutionary movement. Our differences concern the basis of unity of the journal, the function of the editorial board, and the role of a Marxist - Leninist publication.

The premises concerning the Canadian revolutionary movement, from which the journal operates are: (1) ". . . there is no revolutionary party giving leadership to the struggles of the working class in Canada (2) nor is there a great deal of unity among Marxist - Leninists on how to proceed". The goals of the journal are: (1) ". . . to facilitate ideological and political struggle and discussion (2) in order to lay the basis for Marxist - Leninists to achieve a common analysis, strategy and programme (3) to advance the goals of a socialist revolution in Canada." This letter is restricted to one question. Is the journal, *Canadian Revolution*, based upon their premises and working to achieve these goals, in actual fact, proceeding in accordance with the principles of Marxism - Leninism?

The answer is no. The journal, *Canadian Revolution*, has chosen an opportunist course in three ways: first, the political unity upon which the journal is based is designed for accomodation and not on clear Marxist - Leninist principles; second, the journal recognizes the lack of unity in the movement but instead of providing Marxist - Leninist leadership, it only provides a forum for debate and exercises leadership not upon clear proletarian ideology but upon diffuse and undefined petit-bourgeois ideology; and third, the journal explicitly denies any organizational leadership but in actual fact assumes that leadership. The crux of the matter seems to be confusion as to exactly *what are* the tasks of Marxist - Leninists and of the communist movement.

The general task of the communist movement at any stage of its development is to,

“... organize the class struggle, to point out its essential ultimate aim and to analyse the conditions that determine the methods by which this struggle should be conducted.” (Lenin, *CW*. Vol. 4, p. 327)

Communists are the ideological leaders of the proletariat in the struggle of our class against all classes which resist and stand in the way of the economic and social transformation of society. It is impossible to be the ideological leadership without investigation and analysis. This theoretical work,

“... must present an integral picture of our (Canadian) realities as a definite system of production relations, show that the exploitation and expropriation of the working people are essential under this system and show the way out of this system that is indicated by economic development.” (Lenin, *CW*. Vol. 1, p. 296)

This theoretical work must be directed to meet the needs of the on-going class struggle, the economic and political struggle. Also it is absolutely necessary to advocate and propagate an understanding of this revolutionary theory, Marxism - Leninism, within the working class. Only when revolutionary theory is grasped by the masses of Canadian workers will it become a material force. Leadership must be provided in organizing the working class; organizing to transform the present sporadic outbursts of rebellion and the limited but continual economic struggle into an organized and conscious political struggle against the bourgeois state. The goal of this struggle being the abolition of the social system based upon the private ownership of the means of production and the passing of political power into the hands of the working class for the organization of a socialist society under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The communist movement must advance on the three fronts: economic, political, and the theoretical, but

“The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, ‘Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.’ When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy.” (Mao, *Four Essays On Philosophy*, p. 58)

At this time, ‘creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory’ is the principal front in our movement. *Canadian Revolution* has placed itself in the center of the theoretical front. However, the statement of “Political Unity and Policy” of the journal gives no clear, precise and concrete, i.e. in reference to the Canadian situation, exposition of Marxist - Leninist principles. The statement of political unity is comprised of only the most general statements. These general statements lend themselves to any interpretation. For a journal of this type, or for any Marxist - Leninist literature, the general task is to broaden, deepen and guide our work. In order to fulfill this task, we must constantly and clearly explain the basic principles of Marxism - Leninism, the concrete situation, the resulting political strategy and tactics, and the tasks of Marxist - Leninists. On this basis, all deviations from and distortions of Marxism - Leninism, proletarian ideology, must be just as clearly explained and their class basis laid bare. This differentiation, this drawing of clear lines of demarcation, cannot be done by simply stating that we are opposed to this or that group or tendency. It must be done explicitly; for example, *Canadian Revolution* states that it is committed to combating opportunism, but there is no explanation of what groups in the Canadian movement are opportunist and why. Another example, *Canadian Revolution* states that there is no revolutionary party leading the struggle of the working class in Canada. However we are not given an explanation of why such a party is necessary, its role in the revolutionary movement or the basic

failings of the other groups that claim the title of the Marxist - Leninist party. The statement of political unity “amounts to talking with the aim of saying nothing.” (Lenin, *cw*. Vol 5, p. 360) This reflects the actual political unity of the journal which is not upon Marxist - Leninist principles and clear lines but upon accommodation of ideological differences and the blurring of class lines. Unity of any Marxist - Leninist organization, be it local or national, or around a theoretical journal or paper, must be upon a sound ideological basis; “. . . without a common ideological basis there can be no question of unity.” (Lenin, *cw*. Vol 5, p. 227) What is this ideological basis?

Marxist - Leninist theory, proletarian ideology, provides us with a broad historical perspective and a wealth of accumulated experience to draw upon and learn from. This theory guides us in analysing the concrete situation in Canada and in charting a revolutionary course. But

“. . . this theory provides only general guiding principles, which, in particular, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than Germany . . .” (Lenin, *C.W*. Vol. 4, p. 212)

and in Germany differently than Canada. The general principles of Marxism - Leninism must be applied to the concrete situation in Canada. “. . . the very gist, the living soul of Marxism — a concrete analysis of the concrete situation.” (Lenin, *cw*. Vol 31, p. 166.) Thus, the sound ideological unity of a Marxist - Leninist organization is not based upon general, abstracted principles but upon their application in the particular situation, the concrete analysis of the concrete situation. This development of principle, this creative application of the basic principles of Marxism - Leninism to the Canadian situation, this development of revolutionary theory, is the primary task in our movement at the present time. In this process it is necessary to go step by step, dealing with one question after another, continuously upholding the principles of Marxism - Leninism, and guarding against opportunism, the abandonment of principle. This is the process of establishing proletarian ideology in Canada. *Canadian Revolution's* political unity is not even based upon a clear statement of the basic general principles of Marxism - Leninism let alone their application in the Canadian situation. Solid ideological unity is upon the application of the basic principles of Marxism - Leninism in the concrete Canadian situation.

Canadian Revolution disregards the principles of Marxism - Leninism, disregards the drawing of clear class lines, and disregards a clear proletarian class position, in order to facilitate unity. This is a desertion of Marxism - Leninism for opportunism.

Canadian Revolution states that its first aim is to facilitate debate toward a common political line. The premise for the debate is that there is no correct political line, nor that there is even “a great deal of unity among Marxist - Leninists on how to proceed with the historical tasks with which we are faced.” But, *Canadian Revolution* does not itself define clear and precise points of unity on principles from which to guide and elevate this debate. As such, *Canadian Revolution* can only serve as a “forum” for independent (that is, “unaffiliated” with any proclaimed party) Marxist - Leninist groups and individuals.

Other aims of the journal are to “promote concrete analysis of concrete conditions in Canada, aid in the scientific summation of practice to advance theory, and promote the study and application of Marxism - Leninism”. This, according to the journal, is the solid basis for the debate. In total, what do we have: a forum for debate is provided, “analyses” are promoted, systematic summing up of practice is promoted, and an organization is built in order to establish and maintain regular contact with groups across Canada. The stated goal is to build an ideologically united revolutionary movement as the necessary prerequisite for the consolidation of the party. But may we add here, granted, with the possibility of crushing some peoples’ aspirations; first, that debate within the Canadian revolutionary movement has been

going on since before the founding of the CPC in 1921; second, that subjective sociology does research and analyses; and third, that economism has, at certain times, very outstanding and tangible success, which, from the "summing - up" point of view, can look pretty good if there is no revolutionary perspective. Debate, research and analyses upon a subjective basis and economism can all be done while proclaiming to be studying and applying Marxism-Leninism.

WHAT MATTERS IS THE *METHOD OF ANALYSIS*, THE *CONTENT AND DIRECTION OF THE DEBATE*, AND THE *NATURE, REVOLUTIONARY OR REFORMIST, OF THE PRACTICAL ACTIVITY*.

The role of the main contributors and editorial board of a Marxist - Leninist publication is to set and maintain debate on a scientific level, to illuminate the debate with the consistent and firm principles of Marxism - Leninism. The editorial board of *Canadian Revolution* throws this responsibility overboard and claims not to be the leadership. This refusal to provide Marxist - Leninist leadership while claiming to be a Marxist - Leninist theoretical journal is *Canadian Revolution's* second departure from Marxism - Leninism.

As we have seen, by its statement of political unity, *Canadian Revolution* defined its general purpose to be A) to provide a forum to foster debate; in order to B) lay the basis for Marxist - Leninists to "achieve a common analysis, strategy and programme. . ." . This is the first step for the journal in the process of party building. *Canadian Revolution* denies any assumption of leadership in the process, "The journal is not the center or the leadership of this process."

But in order to get at the heart of the matter, it is necessary to rely on the materialist method, as is necessary on every question. That is, it is not enough to look simply at what a person or group says, we must also look at what is being done, what the objective situation actually is. It is in practice that the truth of one's proclamations and statements is determined. How does *Canadian Revolution* stand the test of practice on the question of leadership in the proclaimed process of party - building? Is *Canadian Revolution's* claim objectively correct?

The fact is, *Canadian Revolution* does draw general boundaries around itself, thus separating and defining itself as a general tendency from various other consolidated groupings; *does* set priorities and guidelines for publication of material based on these boundaries; *does* choose articles based on these priorities and guidelines; *does* maintain the right to solicit articles in reply to articles it disagrees with; *does* work to build national distribution and thus national co-ordination. In spite of all this, we are expected to believe that *Canadian Revolution* is not actually providing leadership in the process of party-building.

What do we have here? Explicit denial and implicit assumption of leadership! But why this approach?

Canadian Revolution is fighting for the creation of the party; is trying to unite Marxist - Leninists through the necessary "pre-party debate"; and is building national organization through the production and distribution of the journal. This adds up to the fact that *Canadian Revolution* is a political organization, *is a center*; but, as we have shown above, a "Marxist - Leninist" center without principled Marxist - Leninist unity, without a principled ideological basis. Without this basis, *Canadian Revolution* must deny its leadership function; as anyone familiar with Marxism - Leninism knows ideological leadership cannot be provided without the concrete application of the guiding principles, and organizational unity cannot precede ideological unity.

Thus, the basis of unity of the journal is not upon a clear political line which sets aside this journal as a revolutionary journal, but upon a definite organizational, functional unity. Ideological and/or organizational unity based upon an undefined hazy conception or complete lack of the principles of Marxism - Leninism inhibits the growth and destroys the inner strength of any revolutionary movement. Within this haze you will find a

smattering of Marxist - Leninist phrases covering an overall framework of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology. The ruthless weeding out of the ideology of the proprietary classes is an absolutely necessary and continual process in order to establish the hegemony of proletarian ideology. Without ideological independence, firmly founded upon the principles of Marxism - Leninism, the political struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to establish and maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat, can never be successful. Ideological independence is established and maintained by not making compromises upon principles, but rather by strict adherence to principle, by clear definitive explanation of their application and by continually drawing clear lines of demarcation.

This task will be accomplished only if consistent principles leadership is provided; leadership that combats every deviation from the principles of Marxism - Leninism; leadership that fosters the elaboration of Marxism - Leninism in every direction; and leadership that while defending and elaborating Marxism - Leninism does so in a manner that continuously raises the class consciousness of the working class. The responsibility to provide this leadership, falls upon the shoulders of all those who have taken or will take the initiative to circulate any public statement. The editorial board of *Canadian Revolution* very definitely has this responsibility!

Does *Canadian Revolution* assume this responsibility? NO! The journal is providing ideological leadership, but *bourgeois ideological leadership, leadership denying and refusing to provide clear Marxist - Leninist ideological principles*. The political unity of the journal is one based upon the acceptance of the hegemony of bourgeois and petit - bourgeois ideology as the only feasible unity, the only unity possible, at the present time. *Canadian Revolution* has abandoned the arduous socialist road of struggle for the road offering the least resistance, the bourgeois road. Instead of solidifying itself upon a principled basis and then providing consistent Marxist - Leninist leadership, *Canadian Revolution* bows down and accommodates the lack of ideological unity in the statement of political unity.

Political opportunism, as such means "precisely a lack of definite and firm principles." (Lenin, *CW*, Vol. 5, p. 525) The most familiar manifestations of opportunism are those groups and individuals who constantly switch their political position or line in order to sway with the tide in the working class and/or communist movement. We are confronted with this type of opportunist at all stages of the development of the communist movement and the class struggle.

In the earliest stages of development of the communist movement, when there is little ideological clarity or unity, we are confronted with the most blatant form of opportunism — "ideological" unity on the lowest common denominator. This lowest common denominator is agreement on "Marxism - Leninism" minus any explanation of the basic principles in general or applied to our particular situation, Marxism - Leninism in name only. This unity is proposed as the only one feasible considering the level of the revolutionary movement. Tactical unity, unity with all those that can be united with to defeat a common foe, is used as a cover to sneak in unity without principles. This sham unity is substituted for principled unity in a whirl of hyperactivity, as the basis for a revolutionary organization. "Revolutionary" organization first and a struggle for unity within the organization later. Because of the general lack of experience and amateurishness at this stage, it is all too often the case that many comrades do not know how to combat even this most obvious form of opportunism, and fall into this trap themselves.

Canadian Revolution's denial of ideological and organizational leadership is a despicable subterfuge in order to slip around the Marxist - Leninist principle of organizational unity *only* upon a sound ideological basis. Remember — "without a common ideological basis there can be no question of unity."

There are no clear Marxist-Leninist principles elaborated as the basis for the development of the process that is already unfolding. This is an opportunist error, pure and simple. The first part of the error is to the right, i.e., acceptance of the low ideological level of our movement, acually perpetuating this low level by providing a forum for debate with no clear ideological leadership. This is right opportunism because it does not advance our movement in regard to what is demanded by the objective conditions. Our movement is in desperate need of a firm founding in the principles of Marxism - Leninism and the concrete analysis of the concrete conditions. But instead of pointing the way out of the morass by providing clear Marxist - Leninist ideological leadership, *Canadian Revolution* simply admits the weakness, points to the need, and says 'go at it comrades, we'll provide the paper'. The second part of the error is to the "left" i.e., providing organization leadership to a tendency with no ideological clarity or clearly stated principles of unity. This is left opportunism because on an organizational level it objectively moves ahead of the actual stage of development of our movement. National organization of Marxist - Leninist work within one united and real Marxist - Leninist party is always necessary, and has been on the agenda since the turn of the twentieth century. However, no *formal* aspects of the party, be it debate, theoretical journal, declaration of formation, official program, regular mass newspaper, etc., will automatically result in correct leadership and correct line. That will depend upon the *content* of these various aspects. Revolutionary content is possible only by strict adherence to the principles of Marxism - Leninism in our work. As we have noted, *Canadian Revolution* moves ahead toward national organization, but refuses to take responsibility for the nature of the content.

To sum up, *Canadian Revolution* makes the observation that there is little or no unity among Marxist - Leninists in the Canadian movement. Unity is a cherished goal for the revolutionary movement but unity of Marxist - Leninists is always on clearly defined principles. In order to achieve unity, the working collective publishing the journal must ignore the "paltry" principles of Marxism - Leninism and achieve "unity" under an umbrella of all encompassing declarations and statements in the negative. The editorial of volume 1 number 1 states "articles should be consistent with the stated editorial priorities and principles of the journal" but these stated principles are no where to be found. The statement of political unity is especially designed to accommodate any shade of opportunism, the only qualifying statement being non-affiliation to the presently consolidated political parties. On the basis of no position, no principles and no clear lines of demarcation, *Canadian Revolution* has taken the leadership in consolidating an organization in opposition to the existing parties.

It is high time to chart a new course: not petty - bourgeois ideology; not unity first, principles second but development of principle first, then unity; not unity of petty - bourgeois diffuseness; not accomodation and the blurring of differences but clear statement and principled struggle for resolution. The journal stands on petty - bourgeois ideology not proletarian ideology.

Does this mean that we think everyone working or associated with the journal is an "inherent opportunist". Of course not! What it means is that objectively, as it is presently structured, *Canadian Revolution* has made opportunist errors. As a whole, the journal has not made a thorough enough study of Marxism - Leninism and our situation; in trying to proceed to a higher stage, through uniting for unity's own sake. This error inhibits the further advance of our movement. Errors become opportunism in general only if they remain unanalyzed, and un-rectified. As we see it, the analysis, criticism, and rectification of these errors are the most immediate tasks before the journal.

Clearly defined unity based upon the main principles of Marxism - Leninism applied in the concrete historical situation in Canada must be struggled for and achieved by the editorial board as a *pre-requisite* to the publication of a journal which claims to carry the banner of Marxism - Leninism. This analysis, and the political line arising from it, does not have to be fully elaborated in order to begin publication of a journal, but there must be some clearly defined unity around the main questions facing the Canadian movement. We consider that this basis of unity should include such important points as the nature and place of Marxism - Leninism - Mao Tse-tung Thought in the development of modern history; the historic role of the working class; the role and function of the party of the proletariat; determination of and agreement on the principle contradiction in Canada; a general analysis of the state of the communist movement and the working - class movement at this time; and why the groups that call themselves communist parties are not in fact communist parties. This would be a minimum platform of unity from which a stronger basis could be accomplished.

Unity cannot be decreed; it must be struggled for. This applies to the revolutionary movement and the the working collective of the journal, *Canadian Revolution*. What must be upheld above all else is the conformity of the principles and platform of unity to the actual process of social and economic development. From this basis, the journal would be in a position to lead and guide the debate within the Canadian revolutionary movement in a Marxist - Leninist manner.

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