

REVOLUTIONARY



INITIATIVE

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VOLUME 1
2006-2009 IDEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS

Precursor to Revolutionary Initiative

The following document was drafted in the mid-2000s by the group that gave rise to **Revolutionary Initiative**. While it is a rather rudimentary document and by no means a program for the revolution, its significance stems from the fact that, for a period of time, its formulations provided sufficient ideological and political unity amongst a small core of proletarian revolutionaries to kickstart a Party-building process in Canada.

Through further study, experience in the mass struggle, and criticism and self-criticism, this "Basis of Unity" would come to be replaced by our "Theses on the Party Building Movement in Canada" and a series of more refined ideological, political, organizational, and historical documents to carry forward the party-building process.

However, this short ideological-political document demonstrates that not every question must or can be resolved before a group of proletarian revolutionaries begins carrying forward the practical work of rebuilding a genuine communist party.

"Basis of Unity"

To eventually form a genuine communist party of Canada, proletarian revolutionaries in Canada must unify around the following points:

INTERNATIONAL

1. *Recognition that imperialism is in strategic decline. Such recognition includes recognition of:*
 - a) The creation of a handful of secondary capitalist countries with remaining countries in some form of semi-feudalism. This implies both the relative and absolute increase in the size of the proletariat internationally and of the tightening of relations between the non-proletarian working-classes and the proletariat;
 - b) The spread of national liberation movements and formal decolonization since the second inter-imperialist war, i.e., of the impossibility of formal colonies existing except perhaps in the smallest countries;
 - c) Imperialism's need to undertake active measures to stabilize monopoly capitalism such as:
 - The fusion of the state and finance capital including state planning and systematic intervention in all significant areas of the economy;

- The perfection of the use of science in production, Taylorism, Fordism, and "post-Fordism";
 - The creation of the mass market in the imperialist homelands and the crucial place of marketing; and
 - The financialization of most areas of the economy through the stock and bond markets.
- d) That we are in the 4th, maybe transitioning to a 5th stage of imperialism characterized by:
 - The dominance of one imperialist power and the beginning of its imperial overstretch
 - The increased contradictions between it and the other imperialist powers
 - The assault on the "great compromise" in the imperialist countries beginning to reach its limits
 - The forced integration of "Third World" and "Second World" countries into the imperialist world market under the slogans of "trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization" beginning to reach its limits
 - The beginning of the reinvigoration of the working class movement in the imperialist countries
 - The beginning of the reinvigoration of the national liberation movements in "Third World" and "Second World" countries.

DOMESTIC

2. *Recognition that Canada is an imperialist country and the Canadian state is an imperialist state. This implies:*
 - a) That the socialist revolution is the current stage of the Canadian revolution;
 - b) That the proletariat is the leading and main force of the Canadian revolution;
 - c) That upon seizure of power, the proletariat must establish the dictatorship of the proletariat;
 - d) That during socialism, the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat must be waged until communism is reached; and
 - e) Recognition of the split in the Canadian working-class and the necessity of repudiation

of the labour aristocracy.

3. *Recognition that Canada is a multinational country within which are some oppressed nations. This implies recognition of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination including secession.*

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

4. *Recognition that in the current period, the principal form of struggle is revolutionary mass struggle, secondarily electoral struggle to prepare for armed struggle as the decisive form of struggle.*
5. *To create a mass movement under the leadership of the proletarian revolutionary organization. This implies:*
 - a) Extensive and intensive mass work by proletarian revolutionaries among the masses.
 - b) The creation and multiplication of whatever mass organizations are appropriate to be the link between the proletarian revolutionary organization and the working class masses.
 - c) The winning over of spontaneous working class organizations to the leadership of the proletarian vanguard.
 - d) The eventual winning over to the leadership of the proletarian vanguard of the vast bulk of the proletariat from social-democratic leadership.
 - e) The use of whatever form of struggle is effective.
 - f) The creation and spread of genuinely proletarian culture.
6. *To wield as a weapon of the proletariat the united front along the revolutionary class line with the proletariat as the main and basic force, and the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie as a positive force, while using all contradictions to split the imperialist bourgeoisie in order to mainly target that faction currently wielding state power. This should be distinguished from coalitions between mass organizations and the like.*
7. *To practice proletarian internationalism:*
 - a) Principally to wage the Canadian revolution.
 - b) Secondarily to build anti-imperialist solidarity with national liberation struggles around the world, especially those led by MLM parties. This includes:
 - Forging bilateral and multilateral links with all Marxist-Leninist, especially Maoist par-

ties and organizations.

- Extending all possible political and material support to national liberation struggles abroad, and especially promoting those led by MLM parties.
8. *Recognition of the necessity for resolute ideological struggle against all forms of opportunism, especially social democracy, modern revisionism, Trotskyism, Anarchism and Canadian nationalism.*
 9. *Forging step-by-step unity with all MLM forces in Canada and the basis of the scientific application of MLM to Canadian conditions.*

METHODS OF WORK

10. *To practice democratic centralism.*
11. *To practice the mass line within and outside the proletarian revolutionary organization.*
12. *To regularly practice criticism and self-criticism in the spirit of improving work.*

These 12 points summarize Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as applied to Canadian conditions.

The immediate tasks of proletarian revolutionaries include:

1. The summing up of the past experience of the Canadian revolutionary movement in order to draw lessons and overcome weaknesses.
2. Planting the seeds of mass work by proletarian revolutionaries among the masses using correct proletarian methods of work.
3. Analysis of Canadian class forces in order to develop a program for the Canadian revolution.
4. Discussion with all MLM forces in Canada to systematically build unity on a step-by-step basis in order to build one genuine communist party in Canada.

Theses on the Party Building Movement in Canada

Spring 2008 - RI Leading Organ

Introduction

The proletariat of Canada needs a genuine Communist Party. For more than half a century, the proletariat has been without a real vanguard Party. Instead, they have been disarmed, pacified and misled by revisionism, social democracy, Trotskyism, Anarchism and other counter-revolutionary trends that have sabotaged the development of a genuine revolutionary movement for the overthrow of monopoly capitalism. To build that movement and the fighting capacity of the proletariat, we need a Party, one that is rooted in struggle and guided by the most advanced form of proletarian ideology, namely Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Such a Party will not spontaneously spring out of the ground, nor be proclaimed from on high. It must be built through painstaking ideological and political struggle. Revolutionary Initiative seeks to encourage that process by putting forward our understanding of the international and domestic situation, the strategy and tactics to make revolution in Canada, and the correct methods of work to build a genuine Communist Party in Canada. We do this in the hope of building unity with all proletarian revolutionaries in Canada and advancing the Party building movement.

Theses on the International Context of the Canadian Revolution

Revolutions do not take place in a vacuum. While every revolution is ultimately a product of the internal contradictions of a given society, international contradictions can have a profound effect on the dynamics of that revolution. Each phase of history has its own unique characteristics that must be taken into account with respect to our strategy and tactics. The lessons drawn from previous revolutionary movements, both at home and abroad, are especially important.

While capitalism is incapable of moving to any higher stage of development than imperialism, the current phase of imperialism has distinct characteristics that set it apart from the imperialism studied by Lenin. The imperialist powers of Lenin's

era were in their ascendancy, having carved up the entire world into dominated colonies and semi-colonies. While their rates of profit were lower than during the era of competitive capitalism, they were comparatively easy to come by, with rapid technological innovation and super-profits extracted from the dominated Third World colonies. The imperialists were able to corrupt the upper stratum of the working class at home, buying themselves class peace and diverting working class struggle into opportunist reformism and social chauvinism.

Since then, imperialism has moved into a new phase, one of *strategic decline*. The oppressed nations have been brought into the world historical process of capitalist imperialism, with more sophisticated organized resistance, access to modern means of warfare, and national consciousness that refuses subjugation. Formal decolonization has created a handful of secondary capitalist countries with remaining countries in some form of semi-colonialism/semi-feudalism. This implies both the relative and absolute increase in the size of the proletariat internationally and of increasing unity between the non-proletarian working-classes and the proletariat. The spread of national liberation movements and formal decolonization since the second inter-imperialist war has made it extremely difficult for the imperialists to hold formal colonies except perhaps in the smallest countries. Once able to subjugate entire continents, today the imperialist powers have proven incapable of holding even the few miles of highway in Iraq between the so-called Green Zone and the main airport or hold back advancing national liberation movements in Nepal, the Philippines, or India. Breakthroughs by these and other second wave national liberation movements will further weaken imperialism, as whole sections of the world will be cut off from imperialist exploitation and the international division of labour.

Having run out of room to expand after the completion of reconstruction from the devastation of World War II, imperialism has been stagnant since the 1970s. They have been forced to adopt new measures to maintain even fairly low rates of profit and to stabilize the system. Contrary to the free-market, anti-government rhetoric of neoliberalism, this phase has seen the fusion of the state and finance capital, with the extensive use of state planning and systematic intervention in all significant areas of the economy to displace or mitigate crisis. They have sought to intensify their exploitation of the proletariat through the perfection of the use of science in production, with "post-Fordism", "just-in-time" delivery systems, and the like, as well as launching an assault on the "Great Compromise"

and contraction of the social wage. To prevent a crisis of over-production they have created a new form of mass market in the imperialist homelands, with increasing emphasis of individualized consumption, and identity-based niche marketing playing a crucial place in the economy. At the same time, the economy has been heavily financialized through the stock and bond markets, increasing the control of finance capital over the entire economy while undermining the productive capacity of the “real” economy. This has led to the increase in highly unstable speculative bubble economies, most recently in real estate and before that the dotcom start-up markets, as well as wild swings in commodities and currency values as financial speculation distorts the capitalist system as a whole. These bubble economies, once fairly rare phenomena, are now deliberately encouraged by the state as the only means for the monopoly bourgeoisie to recoup their losses from the collapse of the previous bubble.

This fourth stage of imperialism – which may be transitioning to a fifth stage – is characterized by the heightening of contradictions on multiple levels, including between the various imperialist powers. The unity of the Triad (USA, EU, and Japan) is increasingly strained, as is their unity with the second-tier imperialists in their camp. The contradictions between the Triad and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are also increasing, with Russia and China increasingly resistant to NATO expansionism.

China especially is increasing its imperial reach, quickly expanding its influence and exploitation of Africa and Latin America, putting it at odds with American and European imperialism. The changing fortunes of the various imperialist powers are leading to an inevitable redivision of the world, which can only take place either through proxy wars and/or a direct inter-imperialist war.

The offensive launched by the imperialists against the proletariat, both at home and abroad, has begun to reach its limits. While this stage has been dominated by a single imperialist power, the United States, we are starting to see the beginning of its imperial overstretch, with unexpected hardships in its military adventures and growing economic crisis at home. The assault on the “Great Compromise” in the imperialist countries has undermined the labour aristocracy and is beginning to reach its limits. The forced integration of “Third World” and “Second World” countries into the imperialist world market under the slogans of “trade and investment liberalization, deregulation and privatization” is also beginning to reach its limits, with an increasing number of formally oppressed na-

tions turning away from the dictates of the IMF and World Bank and asserting their national sovereignty.

This shift in the objective conditions has encouraged the reinvigoration of the working class movement in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movements in “Third World” and “Second World” countries. Party building movements are gaining ground in the belly of the beast for the first time in many decades. Maoist movements are advancing to higher stages, such as in Nepal, the Philippines, India, and other countries, and will eventually break the chains of imperialism at their weakest links.

Theses on the Domestic Context of the Canadian Revolution

While Canada is a part of the imperialist world order, our society has its own internal dynamics. It is critical that the Party building movement begin from a correct understanding of what constitutes our particular objective conditions and the primary contradictions of Canadian society.

The most fundamental point of unity must be based on the recognition that Canada is an imperialist country and the Canadian state is an imperialist state. While a second tier imperialist power and often working in league with other imperialist powers, Canada is currently a bourgeois democracy ruled by its own imperialist ruling class, and is independent of the United States or any other imperialist power.

As such, there is no need for a “democratic” stage to our revolution. The bourgeois line of “Canadian independence” or defence of our “national interests” must be combated and driven from the proletarian movement. As long as Canada is an imperialist state, our “national interests” are imperialist interests and must be defeated rather than defended.

The current stage of our revolution is the socialist revolution, directed against state monopoly capitalism with the proletariat as the leading and main force. Upon the seizure of power, the proletariat must establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and proceed immediately to the construction of the socialist order that will wage a continuing revolution that will dig out all remaining capitalist social relations until communism is reached.

To make revolution under imperialist conditions, it is also necessary to recognize that the proletariat itself is not homogeneous. Imperialism has created a split in the proletariat, between the main body of the proletariat and the labour aristocracy. The labour aristocracy includes the heads

of the trade unions and their bureaucracy, workers in the armaments industry, the imperialist-funded NGOs, and forms the social base of the NDP. It is this labour aristocracy that currently controls almost the entire working class movement and infects the working class with imperialist ideology. It will be an absolute necessity to repudiate the labour aristocracy, expose them as agents of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the labour movement, and win back the proletariat to the cause of revolution.

Imperialism has also stratified the proletariat. The lower stratum consists of proletarians that frequently endure long term unemployment or precarious employment, low wages, low rates of unionisation, and high rates of injuries and mental illness. They are the disposable workers most exploited by the imperialist system. This lower stratum is disproportionately made up of the youth, women, minority nationalities, and the First Nations. The upper stratum is composed the section of the working class whom the imperialist bourgeoisie has provided relatively high wages, stable employment, and high rates of unionisation. It is this stratum that is most prone to falling victim to petite-bourgeois aspirations, racial and national chauvinism and other forms of bourgeois ideology.

The second fundamental factor in the Canadian revolution is the national question. Canada is a multinational country within which there are oppressor and oppressed nations. These oppressed nations will never be liberated until the imperialist bourgeoisie is overthrown and a new society is established, one that is dedicated to the eradication of all forms of national chauvinism. In Canada, the main oppressor nation is the English Canadian nation and secondarily the French Canadian nation.

While the French nation historically was an oppressed nation, this is no longer the case. It no longer endures colonial or semi-colonial relations with English Canada, having developed a strong state, bourgeois democratic rights, and a ruling class that over time has been transformed from a comprador into an imperialist bourgeoisie. As such, an independent Quebec would achieve nothing for the proletariat of any nation in Canada. Instead it would only serve as a tool to extract concessions from the proletariat, both inside and outside Quebec, and unleash a new imperialist state on the world stage.

Much of Canada's Aboriginal population make up the oppressed nations of Canada. They endure the genocidal violence, exploitation, and policies of assimilation of European colonialism and great nation chauvinism that to this day continues

to violate the basic human and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples. The Aboriginal peoples that are ethnic groups rather than nations must be granted equal political, social, and cultural rights and liberated from the forces ethnic chauvinism. Those that are oppressed nations have the right to national self-determination, up to and including succession. This struggle should not be viewed as separate from the overall revolutionary movement, but rather as an integral component of that movement with its own special characteristics and particular stages to its development. While the proletariat of the English and French nations and minority ethnic groups are engaged in a struggle for socialism, the Aboriginal nations are also engaged in a struggle for national liberation. Every advance in the Aboriginal national liberation struggles will weaken and dismember the Canadian imperialist state, while the growing strength of the proletariat's struggle for socialism will create the objective conditions required for ultimate destruction of national chauvinism and the end to the internal colonialism of Canadian society. The proletariat must develop the strongest possible unity with the Aboriginal liberation movements, win over Aboriginal revolutionaries to the communist vanguard, and join forces in a powerful United Front against our common enemy, the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie. This will be an absolute requirement for the social transformation of Canada, for so long as there are oppressed nations within Canadian territory, socialism cannot be reached.

In addition to these basic problems in Canadian society, there are a variety of sectoral struggles. A sector is composed of any group with a common interest. Struggles based on gender, sexual minority status, ethnicity, disability, education – to name just a few – are not class neutral and affect each class differently. They are key points of struggle and will play an important role in the organization of the masses. These are struggles that the proletariat must lead.

Theses on Strategy and Tactics

The Mass Struggle

In order to make revolution, it is necessary to adopt the correct strategy and tactics appropriate to our objective conditions and to each stage of development of our revolutionary movement. In the current period, the principal form of struggle is revolutionary mass struggle and the building of a revolutionary mass movement. The masses must be organized, mobilized, and trained for political action independent of the parties and organizations of the bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy and won over to the leadership of the proletarian revolutionary or-

ganization. This will involve extensive and intensive mass work by proletarian revolutionaries among the masses and the development of the transmission belts between the proletarian revolutionary organization and the masses. New mass organizations must be created and multiplied around any appropriate struggle that will serve to link the proletarian revolutionary organization to the working class masses. Existing spontaneous mass organizations must be won over to the leadership of the vanguard through the creation of proletarian cores within those organizations as a step towards winning over the entire membership. Within the field of culture, revolutionary struggle must also take place through the development of a genuine proletarian culture.

The mass struggle must win over vast bulk of the proletariat to the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, constantly exposing, undermining and eventually displacing the forces of social democracy within the working class movement. The exact form that the various forms of revolutionary mass struggle will take cannot be predicted ahead of time and the proletarian revolutionary organization must make use of whatever form of struggle is effective.

Electoral Struggle

The secondary form of struggle at this stage is the electoral struggle. It is a secondary form because it will be a product of - and subordinate to - the interests of the revolutionary mass struggle. While under the current conditions the Communist Party should not run directly in elections, it is critical that the vanguard make use of the parliamentary fronts as another arena of struggle, to use the parliament as a tribune to denounce the system, to put forward the people's just demands, to both win concessions from the monopoly bourgeoisie and to prove to the masses the limitations inherent to bourgeois legality.

Currently, there are two erroneous lines within the working class movement regarding the use of the parliament. The first is the Rightist line of the revisionists that views the parliamentary struggle as the primary arena and downplays or negates the role of extra-parliamentary struggle. This position upholds the line of Khrushchevite revisionism, that it is possible to peacefully transition to socialism by winning a majority in the parliament, without the revolutionary struggle of the masses and the violent overthrow of the bourgeois state. At best, this opportunist line can only lead to the disarming of the proletariat and their subordination to bourgeois legality and the transformation of the revolutionary Party into a mere electoral block, begging for scraps from the table of the bourgeoisie. At worst,

it leaves the proletarian movement vulnerable to massacre, as in the cases of Chile and Indonesia.

The second erroneous line is ultra-left and rejects as a matter of principle any participation by the revolutionary movement in the parliamentary struggle. While correctly breaking with the opportunism of the revisionists, this ultra-left line makes a caricature of parliamentary struggle and runs ahead of the masses by calling for a total boycott of the parliament. While many proletarians may not vote, this does not signify a complete rejection of bourgeois legality, or even parliamentary struggle. Ultimately, this line (left in form but right in essence) can only benefit the bourgeoisie, as it would deprive the proletariat of a vital tribune and arena of struggle and leave that arena open to the revisionists and social democrats to reap the rewards of the growing revolutionary mass movement.

Armed Struggle

Powerful though they are, these forms of struggle alone will not be able to overthrow monopoly capitalism. They make up only the preparatory stage while the proletariat gathers its strength for the decisive form of struggle - the armed struggle. The revolutionary mass movement will increase in size and radicalism, passing from an economic struggle to a political struggle for state power, most likely after a ruinous inter-imperialist war has exposed the masses to the harsh realities of the imperialist system. In the context of an advanced capitalist country, this will mean an armed mass uprising of the people followed by a period of civil war. This insurrection will not happen spontaneously, nor without advanced preparation. It will not happen in a single grand day. As the movement grows and becomes increasingly radicalised it will be necessary for the workers to defend themselves against attacks by the state and its agents with force of arms. Workers must be organized into underground armed mass organizations and trained in the art of armed struggle. Combined with revolutionary work within the bourgeois military leading to the defection of professional soldiers to the side of the proletariat, these units will play a key role in the destruction of bourgeois state power. The mass movement must be won over to armed struggle, to the launching of insurrection against the state, the seizure of political power in as much of the territory of Canada as possible, and the prosecution of revolutionary civil war and war against any foreign intervention until the final victory of the new proletarian state.

The United Front

While a powerful class, the proletariat cannot afford to go it alone. In order to build the movement for revolution in Canada, the revolutionary proletariat must rally all of its potential allies and isolate the monopoly bourgeoisie as much as possible. To do this, the proletarian revolutionary organization must wield the weapon of the United Front - uniting with other classes without falling into the trap of liquidationism. This should be distinguished from coalitions between mass organizations and the like.

The United Front must always be organized along revolutionary class lines with the proletariat as the main and basic force. The proletariat must always keep its independent initiative, never surrendering leadership of the United Front or blurring the line between proletarian and non-proletarian organizations. After it has been won over to the leadership of the proletariat the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie will contribute to the United Front as a positive force. This United Front will then use all contradictions to split the imperialist bourgeoisie, weakening and isolating the enemy class as a whole by targeting that faction currently wielding state power.

Proletarian Internationalism

As proletarian revolutionaries operating in an imperialist country, we have an absolute duty to practice proletarian internationalism. The most fundamental interest of the international proletariat is the destruction of its greatest enemy - imperialism. As such, our primary duty is to remove Canadian imperialism from the world stage by breaking its power at home by waging revolution. In its place we must create a revolutionary state that will come to the aid of other revolutionary movements, make reparations for the sufferings inflicted on the world by the old social order, and act as a break on the remaining imperialist powers.

However, it is unlikely that the first break in imperialism will be at its centre where it is strongest. Rather, the imperialist chain will be broken at its weakest links where the global contradictions are the fiercest: in the dominated nations of the Third World. Any revolutionary breakthrough will weaken our common enemy - the imperialist bourgeoisie - and further shift the world balance of forces in favour of the proletariat. Therefore, our secondary duty is to build anti-imperialist solidarity with national liberation struggles around the world, especially those led by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. This especially includes forging bilateral and multilateral links with all Marxist-Leninist, especially Maoist parties and organiza-

tions. We must also extend all possible political and material support to national liberation struggles abroad, and especially promote exemplary movements led by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. This building of proletarian internationalism must happen at all levels, including at the mass level through the building of links between the mass movements.

Ideological Struggle

As we build the revolutionary movement, we must not fall into the petty-bourgeois methods of growth of attempting to uncritically rally all so-called "progressive" forces into a single movement. It will be absolutely necessary to wage resolute ideological struggle against all forms of opportunism, especially social democracy, modern revisionism, Trotskyism, Anarchism and Canadian nationalism. These lines run counter to the interests of the proletariat, are inherently counter-revolutionary, and must be exposed to the masses as such through painstaking ideological and organizational work.

Part of ideological struggle will also be in the identification and building of unity with all other Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces in Canada. Given the geographical size of the country and backwardness of our revolutionary movement, it is likely that there will be multiple pre-Party formations at varying stages of development in different parts of Canada. To make revolution it will be necessary for these forces to come together into a single genuine Communist Party in Canada. This unity must be forged through a systematic and step-by-step approach, always on the basis of the scientific application of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist to Canadian conditions. We must compare our programs, documents, and methods of work and work towards the highest form of unity possible.

Should differences manifest that would make unity unprincipled, it is the masses that will judge which line is correct and remove the barriers to unity.

Methods of Work

Waging revolution in Canada will require more than correct ideology. It will also require correct methods of work, both within the proletarian revolutionary organization and amongst the masses.

To ensure both the freedom of discussion and unity of action that will lead to correct methods of work, the organizational form of the proletarian revolutionary organization can only be democratic centralism - the combination of democratic decision making with conscious iron discipline. The minority must submit to the decisions of the majority. Lower organs are subordinate to higher organs. All leading

bodies must be subject to elections and periodic renewal. Without this form of democracy and discipline, the proletarian revolutionary organization cannot fulfil its role as the systematic and organized leadership the working class needs to make revolution.

To win over the masses to the side of revolution, our methods of work must always be guided by the principles of the mass line and mass perspective. The proletarian revolutionary organization must gather the scattered and unsystematic ideas of the masses, study them through the lens of proletarian ideology, and then return to the masses with these ideas in the form of a political line that will advance the interests of the masses and the revolutionary project as a whole. We do this because the masses are the true movers of history – it is they who will build the new society once they recognize, through their own lived experience, that revolution is necessary. The proletarian revolutionary organization must join with the struggles of the masses, bringing with them scientific ideology, and lead these struggles on the path to revolution.

For our methods of work to improve, it is vital that proletarian revolutionaries practice criticism and self-criticism. No matter how advanced we are in our political development, we are all still human.

We must maintain revolutionary humility and comradery. We all make errors in our work and have room for improvement. We must not fear recognizing our own mistakes, pointing out the mistakes of our comrades, or admitting our mistakes to the masses. Our criticism and self-criticism must always remain objective, comradely, and in the spirit of improving work. It is only in this way that we will develop – both as individuals and collectively.

Our Immediate Tasks

The above document summarizes our view of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as applied to Canadian conditions. The building of a genuine Communist Party in Canada will be a step-by-step process, of which this is only a very humble beginning. We must proceed with a clear understanding of our immediate tasks, the ones that will create the solid foundation upon which to build our revolutionary Party and mass movement.

While there has not been a genuine Communist Party in Canada for more than half a century, we still have a revolutionary tradition that must be understood. While the histories of the Bolsheviks, the Communist Party of China and others are important, it is likely that a Canadian Party-building movement will repeat Canadian mistakes rather

than Russian or Chinese mistakes. It is critical that the past experience of the Canadian revolutionary movement be summarized in order to draw lessons and overcome weaknesses. This would include the rise and fall into revisionism of the first Communist Party of Canada as well as the experience of other Party building movements that failed to reach the stage of becoming a vanguard Party.

We must also develop a correct understanding of the objective conditions in which the Canadian revolution will take place. We must develop an analysis of Canadian class forces in order to develop a program for the Canadian revolution. This would include the development of the Canadian mode of production, the history of the development of contradictions in Canadian society, as well as the current class structure of Canadian society. It is this knowledge that will be the signpost guiding us on the correct path for revolution in Canada and enable us to objectively identify our friends and enemies.

Proletarian revolutionaries cannot wait for the formation of a genuine Communist Party in Canada to begin the process of integration into the struggles of the masses. We must plant the seeds of mass work amongst the masses using correct proletarian methods of work immediately. At every stage, we must be grounded in the masses. There will be a dialectical relationship between the building of mass struggles and the development of the vanguard. Indeed, neither will develop without the other.

While at this stage there are likely multiple pre-Party formations or individual proletarian revolutionaries committed to building towards such formations, eventually there must be a single genuine Communist Party in Canada. All Marxist-Leninist-Maoist forces in Canada must come together to engage in discussions towards the systematic building of unity on a step-by-step basis. We must do this under the principle of equality and mutual respect regardless of the size of the organizations as numerical size does not guarantee correctness on any given question.

On with the Party-building movement in Canada!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

As the crisis advances, so to will movement for revolution

November 2008 - RI Leading Organ

Global capitalism has entered a crisis of historical levels, the worst seen since the financial collapse that led to the Great Depression. This crisis has already resulted in widespread production slowdowns, a freeze in capital investment, job losses, and an increase in the oppression and exploitation of the proletariat world-wide. What sets this recession apart from the usual cyclical crises produced by capitalism is not only its severity, but its origins. Unlike previous bubble collapses such as the dot-com crash of the 1990s this crisis is occurring in the very heart of the imperialist system, within monopoly finance capital. It has begun to spread outward to infect other areas of the economy and will result in widespread destruction of the means of production as plants in various industries scale back production or close shop entirely, as well as an acceleration of the process of capital concentration in the hands of the surviving monopolies.

These developments have proven the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist understanding of the moribund nature of the capitalist system. Finance capital, the dominant faction of the imperialist ruling class, has used its monopoly position to heavily distort the overall economy, greatly increasing the anarchy of production in the system as a whole. They were able to heavily concentrate capital in their hands, using it to create a speculative bubble detached from the real economy or any legitimate measure of value and drawing capital away from productive sectors of the economy. This reliance on speculative bubbles arises out of the stagnancy of the imperialist system, with rates of profit from productive investment on a continuous decline.

We are also seeing the acceleration of the tendency identified by Lenin and Mao for capital to merge with the state and the growth of the overall size of the state. Previously this took the form of marketing boards, economic planning departments, tax incentives, and the like to use central planning for the benefit of the monopoly capitalists struggling to maintain their dwindling profits and low levels of growth. With the private sector unable to provide capital investment, the state has

advanced to a more direct fusion with monopoly capital. Over the last few months, the United States and Britain have nationalised some of their largest financial institutions. With minimal debate and without public consultation, the federal government in Canada has committed to buying up to \$75 billion in insured mortgage funds from the big banks and has guaranteed another \$200 billion, which is even more egregious since the profits will remain in the hands of the banks if the debts pay off, and the Canadian people will be made to pay if they fail. The very architects of neo-liberalism are now abandoning their free market rhetoric and rapidly moving towards a corporatist position (although without any corresponding alteration of social relations).

Across the imperialist centre, states have exhibited a previously unseen level of international cooperation and coordination in pouring trillions of dollars into bailing out finance capitalists. With the spill-over of the crisis into the real economy, similar payments will likely be made to other sections of the monopoly ruling class. The United States has already promised \$25 billion for their auto sector and there are rising demands for similar pay-offs here. The Premier of Ontario is urging the federal government to get "more aggressive" and offer similar payments to the monopoly capitalists in the auto sector. The labour aristocracy is echoing that demand, with the CAW president writing, "Hardworking Canadians, who produce concrete goods and services, deserve government support at least as much as bankers and brokers do." While this sounds admirable, the CAW leadership is not calling for assistance to actual workers, but to the monopoly capitalists who own the auto industry. Meanwhile, the state is using the possibility of an auto sector bail-out to demand concessions from the union – shoring up monopoly capital's profit margin by increasing the rate of exploitation of the proletariat. All these measures have shown to the masses whose side the state is on. The masses have endured decades of cutbacks to their social wage, with every savage cut to funding for assistance to the unemployed, maintenance of social housing, health care, education, public transit, infrastructure, and every other concession won by the working class after decades of struggle, justified by the same refrain: we don't have the money. The federal government pleaded deficit and cut funding and downloaded services. The provinces pleaded deficit and cut funding and downloaded services. The municipalities blamed the downloading and hiked property taxes. Always with the excuse that they couldn't find the money. Yet now that it is the imperialists who are in financial difficulty, all of a sudden the money is found. The urgency that the state has

treated this crisis while ignoring the welfare of the people has exposed the allegiance of the politicians of all parties to the interests of monopoly capitalism. The masses are being saddled with the costs of the finance capital's short sighted greed but the executives responsible for the crisis are walking away with "golden parachutes" worth millions of dollars. Meanwhile, the people who were taken in by the finance capital's encouragement to take on wildly unrealistic levels of debt in the form of sub-prime mortgages and credit card debt are left with nothing.

Yet all indications are that even these billions upon billions of dollars will not be enough. While each new bail-out package has resulted in brief rallies on the stock market, the overall trajectory of the economy is still down. Private investors, with few opportunities for profitable and secure investments, are still hoarding their capital. Workers are scaling back their consumption to prepare for greater future insecurity. Unemployment in Canada is up to 6.2%, a number that is kept artificially low by statistical manipulation and the boost of 40,000 temporary state sector jobs to administer the 2008 Federal Elections. Meanwhile, 29,000 jobs were lost in the hotel and restaurant industry alone. Wages have been stagnant for a generation and will fall as the crisis worsens and the ranks of the unemployed increase.

All of this means that conditions for building a revolutionary movement in Canada are improving. As the economic crisis advances, the working class will be forced by objective conditions to defend themselves. As revolutionaries we must increase our efforts in developing mass struggles and exposing the current economic crisis as an inevitable product of imperialism. The justified anger of the masses must be directed into the formation of militant mass organizations, located in every arena of struggle and representing every sector of the proletariat and its allies, that can win concessions from the state while advancing the struggle against monopoly capitalism and for revolution. The proletariat needs higher forms of organization, the highest of which is its vanguard Party. We must take advantage of the current crisis to develop new proletarian revolutionaries, consolidate our ranks, and advance the movement to build a genuine Communist Party in Canada.

The masses in Canada will not be alone in advancing their struggle. All over the world, the crisis will push millions of people to advance their mass struggles and increase their support for the people's wars for national liberation in India, Nepal,

the Philippines, and Turkey, as well as light new fires across the semi-colonial, semi-feudal Third World. This can only weaken our mutual enemy, the imperialist ruling class, by reducing their areas of super-exploitation and choking them off from the profits necessary to buy off sections of the working class at home. It is of the utmost importance for the proletariat to increase its level of internationalism and render all possible assistance to our comrades struggling in the Third World.

Together, we can break the power of imperialism! Our enemy is getting weaker! We must get stronger!

On the United Front in Canada

November 2008 - RI Leading Organ

Introduction

If we are to create a new society, we must ask a fundamental question: who are our friends and who are our enemies?. We must understand which class forces can lead the revolution and which will play a supporting or vacillating role. We must also identify the class forces that are irredeemably opposed to revolution and will fight tooth and nail to defend the current system of exploitation and domination.

The former must be rallied into a powerful United Front to struggle against the latter and it is critical that we draw the correct line between the two camps. Too far to one side would water down the revolutionary movement and create a false unity with forces that are actually opposed to revolution.

Too far to the other would alienate class forces that would have otherwise supported the revolution, strengthening the enemy and weakening the forces for revolution.

What is Canadian Society?

Canadian society has reached the highest stage of development under capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Capital has been concentrated in the hands of gigantic monopolies that control nearly the entire economy and dominate the political and cultural superstructure of society. Finance capital is also highly centralized and forms the dominant faction of the monopoly capitalist class and is tightly connected with every other section of the economy. On the world stage, Canadian imperialism uses the export of capital and political and military intervention to exploit and dominate the semicolonial Third World nations.

While imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, it has its own particular phases of development. Imperialism in Canada has reached the final phase of development and is in strategic decline. This can be seen in the strengthening of the tendency towards stagnation, the growth in the size of the state, the fusion of monopoly capital with the state, and their increasing inability to control the restive semicolonies.

For Canadian society to develop to any higher stage, the abolition of capitalism will be an absolute necessity. The revolution in Canada will be socialist, whereby the proletariat will overthrow the bourgeoisie by force and establish its revolutionary dictatorship in order to abolish the class structure and advance towards communism. As Canada is not a dominated or exploited country, there will be no intermediary stage to the revolution, such as an antimopoly stage or a national democratic revolution.

The Two Great Classes: Proletariat and Monopoly Bourgeoisie

The primary contradiction in Canada is between the proletariat and the monopoly bourgeoisie. It is this contradiction that sets the ground on which all secondary contradictions play out and determines the form that they take. It is the playing out of this primary contradiction that will advance the development of Canadian society.

*The Monopoly Bourgeoisie:
The Enemy of the People*

While only a small percentage of the population, it is the monopoly bourgeoisie that dominates Canadian society. The resources they control are tremendous. As of 2001, major corporations with assets over \$25 million or annual revenues over \$100 million owned 80% of all business assets, with the top 25 alone controlling 41.2%. These major corporations expand not through competition on the marketplace, but by concentration of capital through mergers with other corporations. These mergers happen vertically, horizontally, and through conglomeration. In vertical integration, monopoly capital takes control of every stage of production, from extraction of raw resources, to production, to sales, all within a single economic unit. Horizontally, they merge with other monopolies in the same industry, creating still larger monopolies. In creating conglomerates, monopolies merge with companies in different areas of the economy, so that a mining firm, a telecommunications company and a sports league may fall within a single unit of monopoly capital. These various forms of capital concentration often happen simultaneously, creating smaller and smaller bodies of monopoly capitalists that are able to control ever increasing amounts of the entire economy and society.

Monopoly capital uses not just its overall size but also its strategic position within the economy to increase their control. Through the use of stock holding companies, monopoly capitalists “water”

their already massive wealth. Through a pyramid ownership structure, monopoly capitalists own holding companies that own controlling interests in other companies that own controlling interests in still more companies and so on down the line. For each step downwards, the monopoly capitalist directly owns a decreasing percentage of each company, yet their control remains total.

Not only is monopoly capital centralized through economic units, it is also tightly integrated through cross directorships and social relations. Members of this class generally sit on the boards of several different monopoly corporations simultaneously, creating linkages between formally separate economic units. They also frequent the same social clubs and associations and sponsor the same corporate think tanks. As such they have a clear view of their class interests, unencumbered by overly narrow parochial interests, and display a high degree of coordination and unity.

Within this overall unity, there are still contradictions between various sectors of monopoly capital. This may be based on their sector (industrial capital versus finance capital, monopoly capital of one region versus another, etc.), or their political affiliation (Liberals versus Conservatives), or any other question. The proletariat must make use of every possible contradiction within the ruling class to split their ranks, targeting the faction of the monopoly bourgeoisie currently wielding state power while exposing the opportunist opposition.

The Proletariat:

Main and Leading Force of the Revolution

The proletariat is the largest class in Canadian society as well as the main and leading force of the revolution. The proletariat is made up of all workers who are exploited by capitalism, as well as any of their spouses and dependants, old age pensioners and the reserve army of labour. It is this class that creates all value and has the most direct interest in the abolition of capitalism. As such, they are the most revolutionary class and the only one capable of leading the movement for socialist revolution in Canada.

The proletariat is not a homogeneous class. It is composed of a variety of sectors based on gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality and other factors that make for particular interests within the overall class framework. It is also stratified between upper and lower sections. The upper stratum are those with high paying jobs, decent benefits and a standard of living that liberals would consider "middle

class". This stratum is shrinking and rapidly finding their security and comfort being undermined by layoffs, export of jobs, stagnant wages, higher taxes, and\ other factors related to the decline of imperialism. The lower stratum is made up of workers for whom a hand to mouth desperate existence is the norm. While the lower stratum is more oppressed by capitalism and the upper stratum is susceptible to petty bourgeois aspirations, both strata make up the vast bulk of the proletariat and are objectively revolutionary.

There is a section of the working class that is not revolutionary. Imperialism has created a split in the working class between the great mass of the proletariat and the labour aristocracy. The imperialists use their exploitation of the Third World to extract superprofits, which they then use a portion to buy off a section of the working class at home. This labour aristocracy is composed of the heads of the trade union movement, the higher up bureaucrats in the trade union bureaucracy and some sections of the rank and file working class that directly benefit from imperialism, such as workers in the munitions industry. They are allied to the bourgeoisie and serve as their agents within the working class movement. They have an objective interest in maintaining imperialism and as such are a counterrevolutionary body within the proletariat. There can be no unity within the working class until this section has been exposed as opportunists and driven from the working class movement.

The United Front

Though it may be the numerical majority in Canadian society, the proletariat cannot "go-it-alone" in the struggle for socialism. Mao recognized that the proletariat has three historic weapons at its disposal in the class struggle against the bourgeoisie: (1) the Vanguard Party; (2) the People's Army; and (3) the United Front. The proletariat cannot successfully take the stage of history and build socialism without the existence and unity of these three forces. The proletariat must use the United Front to break the unity of the monopoly bourgeoisie with all the classes under its rule and with which it is in contradiction.

The United Front is the alliance between the proletariat and other classes in the movement for revolution. In an imperialist state like Canada, a state where the monopoly bourgeoisie is firmly established and dominates other sections of capital and the classes under it, the United Front will be used to rally all classes and peoples who stand in contradiction with the monopoly bourgeoisie and

are willing to fight for its defeat to the side of the proletariat. Therefore, the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard must have a clear understanding of the various classes in Canadian society, their objective interests, which ones will be allies in the struggle for revolution and on what terms.

The following are the potential allies of the proletariat, arranged from most to least reliable:

The Petty Bourgeoisie: Basic Ally of the Proletariat

The petty bourgeoisie are those that depend on selfemployed labour and/or small productive property ownership. They may employ a small number of workers, but they generally work alongside them and the majority of their income does not come from exploitation. They may be minor business people, shopkeepers, independent artisans, farmers, fishermen or professionals. Their standards of living vary greatly, from highly trained specialists whose consumption patterns approach that of the bourgeoisie to local shop keepers barely keeping their heads above water. While they are always under the threat of being proletarianized, at the same time they can identify with or aspire to become bourgeoisie. As such, they are an unstable and hesitant class, torn between the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The rise of monopoly capitalism has accelerated the destruction of the petty bourgeoisie and has created a contradiction between the monopoly bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. During the 19th century, while capitalism was still maturing in Canada, the majority of the population was petty bourgeois. They were the class leading the struggles against the semifeudal Family Compact and Chateau Clique and launching armed rebellions for bourgeois democracy. With the advance of capitalism and especially monopoly capitalism, this class declined both in income and as a percentage of the total population. Long established craft guilds (such as the shoemakers of the Sons of St. Crispin) were gradually wiped out. Family farms and fisheries were driven out of business or swallowed up by monopoly agribusiness. Formerly independent professions were proletarianized.

Even corner stores and coffee shops struggle to compete against franchises. It is this process that drives sections of the petty bourgeoisie to ally with the proletariat.

Having a wide range of skills, education and access to resources, the petty bourgeoisie will make a critical contribution to the United Front.

They are generally good at agitational propaganda work and engaging in mass activism. The most advanced elements of the petty bourgeoisie are capable of remoulding themselves into disciplined revolutionaries and become leaders both the above and underground components of the revolutionary movement. When large numbers of petty bourgeoisie come over to the side of revolution, imperialism will be discredited and further isolated from the proletariat.

*The Non-Imperialist Middle Bourgeoisie:
A Temporary and Vacillating Ally*

The nonimperialist middle bourgeoisie are an intermediate group between the two great classes. This section of the bourgeoisie still indirectly benefits from some elements of imperialism, through access to cheap migrant labour and imports of raw materials. However, this section of the bourgeoisie does not have any major stakes in foreign capital investments or the exploitation of the Third World. Unlike the monopoly bourgeoisie, the means of production under their control is entirely nationally based. They are blocked in their attempts to expand their capital by their inability to compete against the power of monopoly capital on the marketplace. The most optimal reforms for this section of capital would be strong antimonopoly, antitrust laws, strong protectionist laws that allowed a greater diversity of ownership and lesser concentration of capital within an overall capitalist framework. However, while the monopoly bourgeoisie dominates the state the middle bourgeoisie will be unable to win these concessions and displace the current class of imperialists. This leaves them resentful of the monopoly bourgeoisie and their state and makes them potential allies of the proletariat in their struggle against the imperialists.

While similar to the petty bourgeoisie in that they are in contradiction with the monopoly bourgeoisie, the middle bourgeoisie are an ally of a different type. Despite their contradiction with the monopoly bourgeoisie, the middle bourgeoisie are also in contradiction with the proletariat. The wealth of the middle bourgeoisie depends on the capitalist system and the exploitation of the proletariat. While they are frustrated by the power of the monopoly bourgeoisie and their stifling of competition, they are not against imperialism as such and dream of becoming the next group of monopoly bourgeoisie. This makes them distrustful of the proletarian movement and unlikely to ally with it wholeheartedly. They can be won over to fight against the current class of imperialists, but their allegiance will only last until it becomes apparent that the prole-

tariat will not allow them to become the new batch of imperialists.

Once the proletariat commences to “expropriate the expropriators”, most of the middle bourgeoisie will fall into the enemy camp, while a minority may be bought out and retained to assist in the process of socialist construction. As such, they can be only a temporary and vacillating ally of the proletariat and might only join the United Front on an informal basis.

It will be necessary to conduct further study on the middle bourgeoisie, to identify its right and left wings and who within this class are the friends and enemies of the proletariat, on what basis and for how long.

The United Front and the Proletarian Vanguard

There can be no United Front without the leadership of the proletariat with its most advanced detachment united under a genuine Communist Party. The Party is the General Staff of the working class – the proletariat’s class leadership materialized. It is the body responsible for leading the masses in making revolution and establishing a new society. As such, the Party is the highest form of organization and not just one organization amongst many in the United Front. For the proletariat to maintain its leadership of the United Front, its General Staff must be the leaders of the United Front.

This does not mean that the Party will dictate to its allies the policies of the United Front. This would not lead to genuine unity and would only alienate potential allies. The policies of the United Front must be arrived upon through deep and meaningful consultation with all allied forces, with decisions arrived upon through the consensus of all groups in the United Front. In this way the leading role of the Party will be maintained. Decision making by voting would subordinate the minority to the majority, violate the rights of the participating organizations and bury the leading role of the Party under the numerical dominance of the petty bourgeois organizations. This has been the experience of the International Communist Movement in the liberation fronts of Africa and Central America and led to the liquidation of the leading role of the proletariat within the United Front. The leadership of the Party and the socialist orientation of the United Front must be spelled out clearly and form the basis of unity of the United Front.

The United Front and the Pre-Party Stage of the

Party Building Movement

How can proletarian revolutionaries begin practising the united front tactic if there is not yet a vanguard party at the forefront of proletarian mass struggle? The formation of the three weapons of the proletariat will not occur as a linear process with one following the other. Their development will be connected dialectically, each reinforcing the other. It is not necessary to wait for the formation of the Party or for the full organization of the proletariat to begin practising the United Front tactic. In order to understand the nature of the united front tactic at the pre-Party stage of the Party building movement, we must first understand the character of proletarian revolutionary work at the pre-Party stage.

The Character of Work in the Pre-Party Stage of the Party Building Movement

First of all, the whole concept of the United Front as Georgi Dimitrov intended it is premised upon the leading role played by the proletariat. However, the proletariat, as the most oppressed and exploited class in an imperialist society, will only be able to wage successful revolutionary struggle when its advanced elements come together and provide leadership to the proletariat. However, in order to provide correct leadership, these advanced elements must be trained in mass organizing, gain an understanding of the history of proletarian revolutionary struggle, both in Canada and internationally, and develop correct proletarian ideology.

A small groups of proletarian revolutionaries, committed to building or joining a vanguard party, can begin the preparatory work necessary for revolution long before a vanguard party is established. What does this preparatory work consist of?

(a) A study of significant revolutionary movements of the past and advancing revolutionary movements of the present.

(b) A critical summation of the lessons of past struggles in Canada. It is the duty of communists to summarize the struggles they are closest to so that they can struggle with other advanced elements following incorrect and aberrant ideas and tactics, learn from strengths and overcome weaknesses.

(c) To produce a overview of the development of the Canadian mode of production and a history of class forces in Canada from founding to present day. This overview will clarify who are our friends and who are our enemies and the role they

play in Canadian society and in the movement for revolution. It will form the general line for the Party and the entire mass movement and must be propagated amongst the masses.

(d) Broad anti-imperialist and socialist agitation among the proletariat alongside mass movement-building around burning questions that concern the proletariat. One without the other will be insufficient, and will not develop the proletariat along revolutionary lines. Socialist propaganda without mass struggle is mere idealism and will not succeed in combating the anticommunist ideas that proletarians have adopted from the bourgeoisie. Mass struggle around the immediate concerns of the proletariat, and even successfully addressing some of those concerns, without promoting proletarian internationalism and exposing imperialism, is economism, and will only further entrench reformist ideas among the proletariat. Active work among the masses by proletarian revolutionaries is also a process whereby the latter learn from the former.

(e) The development of the spirit of proletarian internationalism amongst the masses and their organizations. This will involve strengthening the linkages between the various sectors of the masses and their revolutionary vanguard in Canada with their equivalents in the Third World that are organized under exemplary movements.

(f) A process of unity-struggle-unity with other revolutionary forces, whereby the lessons of the revolutionary forces are shared and exchanged, and tactical and strategic points of difference are overcome with respect to lessons learned in practice.

In the absence of a vanguard, it is up to proletarian revolutionaries today to congeal themselves into pre-party organizations and begin carrying out the above preparatory work in order to work towards building a genuine Communist Party in Canada. These areas of work occur simultaneously. Once a small group of advanced proletarians has come together and carry out enough summation and study in order to be able to settle on a basis of unity they carry forward with work based on a central plan. Next, these proletarians can begin carrying out mass work and agitating amongst the masses, disciplining themselves for revolutionary struggle and developing the mass line while training the masses in militant mass struggle. With more and more experience in mass struggle under the belt, the lessons of proletariat's history of struggle will begin to make more and more sense, and

a dialectic between study and practice can be developed. Unless the proletariat can be convinced that it can fight as a class for its basic needs, it will not fight as a class for revolutionary social change. This is an area of work that too many incipient and young communists neglect. Many skip this step and try to proceed directly to seeking unity with other revolutionary forces with whom there is little common foundation save for common ideological tendencies.

While a group of proletarian revolutionaries are accumulating more and more experiences in mass organizing they should begin a process of serious unity-struggle-unity with other MLM forces. MLM forces operating in different circumstances or conditions in a country may be able to share valuable lessons and experiences that one MLM grouping may have not been able to experience, and viceversa.

In this way, pre-Party formations that are geographically separated can begin to work towards the creation of a wellrounded common program for the Canadian revolution, without trying to rush towards a program that will only fall short if it is not based on the accumulated experiences of proletarian revolutionaries in concert from across the country.

The United Front Tactic in the Pre-Party Stage of the Party Building Movement

If the petty-bourgeoisie and other progressive allies are going to accept the leadership of the proletariat for revolutionary social change, there is much ideological work and struggle to be waged before this can become a possibility. The imperialist nature of Canadian society must be thoroughly exposed to the allies of the proletariat. The idea that progressive change can be attained through bourgeois legal and electoral means alone must be exposed as an impossibility. The progressive nature of the proletariat in this stage of history must be illustrated, especially by way of illustrating the most exemplary revolutionary movements in the world, which will ultimately make it more difficult for the imperialist bourgeoisie to go on the offensive against these revolutionary movements.

It is during the mass movement building preparatory phase of the party building movement that the united front as a tactic can be practised. During this period, while proletarian revolutionaries are consolidating their ranks and building mass struggles, the proletariat's allies will already be able to play a role in proletarian struggles. Just as the al-

lied classes that must be won over to the revolution will benefit from the revolution, the proletariat can win over allies who have a stake in short-term mass struggles. Every struggle of the proletariat at every stage of mobilization involves other classes that can be won over in a supporting role. When proletarian neighbourhoods are being bulldozed to make way for condo development, the local coffee shop owner will probably be driven out by Starbucks. If workers can not afford the prices at the big chain grocery stores, the local church, mosque, or synagogue could offer its space for a food coop. When the proletariat works to support the revolutionary movements of the Third World, academics can be organized to provide research data on the role of Canadian imperialism in those countries. Every struggle offers the chance to expose and oppose imperialism and rally the proletariat and its allies towards revolution.

Therefore, we see that the United Front tactic can be practised – in fact, must be practised – long before the coalescence of the vanguard party. A genuine proletarian vanguard is a vanguard whose elements are born of a certain level of proletarian struggle and ideological development and can genuinely lay claim to be able to lead and advance the struggle for revolution. By the time the vanguard is proclaimed, a certain section of the masses – proletarian and pettybourgeois – will have accepted the basic concepts of communism, proletarian internationalism, correct methods of struggle, and a repugnance with the monopoly bourgeoisie. This is the fertile terrain upon which the vanguard party will be constituted.

Genuine proletarian revolutionaries must take the necessary preparatory steps in order to proceed toward the construction of a genuine Communist Party in Canada. The United Front tactic cannot wait for the constitution of vanguard in order to begin being practised. At a time when the global economic situation is rapidly deteriorating, the proletariat needs to begin allying with its natural allies and intensify the fight for its welfare and rights. With monopoly capitalism entering a period of grave economic crisis not seen since the 1920s and 1930s, the proletariat, with or without a fullyfledged vanguard, must be prepared to beat back the rise of fascism as the monopoly bourgeoisie begins scrambling for means of preventing its economic crisis from transforming into a broader political and social crisis.

*The United Front as Practised by the
Communist Party of Canada*

In order to understand the correct application of the United Front to Canadian conditions, it is necessary to assess the United Front as practised by the first Communist Party of Canada in the 1930s. The CPC was the first Communist vanguard to be established in Canada and remains the most significant Party-building experience in our history. It was also the first Party in Canada to attempt to implement the United Front strategy. However, their policy was far removed from the policy as laid out by Dimitrov.

A revisionist current within the Party used their version of the United Front to implement a revisionist line, liquidate the vanguard Party along with its associated mass movement and place the leadership of the proletariat under the imperialist bourgeoisie. It was this perversion of the United Front that was the death knell of the first Party-building movement in Canada.

Over the course of the 1920s and 30s, the CPC built up the first large scale proletarian revolutionary organization in Canadian history. At a height of 16,000 members, the Party was surrounded by many times that in allied mass organizations, including the Canadian Labour Defence League, Women's Labour League, Young Communist League, Workers' Sports League, Progressive Farmers Education League, and the Workers Unity League. The Party enjoyed significant influence amongst Jews in Winnipeg, Finns in Northern Ontario, and Ukrainians in Western Canada. The Party also established a variety of cultural associations, such as ethnic choirs and summer camps. This revolutionary movement fought some of the most dramatic battles of the Depression era, including calling 90% of all strikes, coordinating massive demonstrations across the country and staging the On-To-Ottawa Trek along with other militant actions.

Despite these successes, the Party also had members who were disconnected from the masses and formed a growing revisionist current within the Party. There was insufficient emphasis on developing rank and file members into cadre, with the general level of ideological development in the Party remaining relatively low. Combined with divisions between mental and manual work in the Party this left many of the leadership positions in the hands of Party members with petty bourgeois backgrounds.

It was many of these leaders that formed the conservative trend, remaining standoffish from the masses, exhibiting petty bourgeois desires for "respectability" and opposing the militant action of the working class until it was presented to them as

a fait accompli.

From the very first report issued by the Canadian delegation on its return from the 7th Congress, the revisionist current was already twisting the United Front into a bourgeois democratic line. From a tactic for revolutionary class struggle, the United Front was transformed into an uncritical defence of bourgeois democracy and the liquidation of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. Gone was

Dimitrov's United Front based on material classes and their interests the "fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand, and the toiling peasantry and basic mass of the urban pettybourgeoisie."

Substituted was an idealist conception of the United Front as "all people who stand for peace, for democracy, for economic betterment against the reactionary oligarchy" (Toward a Canadian Peoples Front, p.13). This conception was broad enough to include almost anyone, regardless of their class background, including enemies of the working class, as long as they fit the vague qualification of being "progressive".

The United Front was no longer based on the struggle of the working class and its allies, with factory committees as its backbone, but solely a vehicle for parliamentary struggle. The "central problem" in building this idealism-based United Front was identified as "the question of how the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the trade unions, the farmers organizations and the Communist movement can be brought together into a broad united front party." (Toward a Canadian Peoples Front, p 21) This amorphous federated Party would be won through electoral agreements, exactly the kind of opportunist manoeuvring rejected time and again by Lenin and Dimitrov.

The leadership of the working class over the United Front was also abandoned, with the urban middle stratum taking on the role as the primary force against Fascism. The Party targeted its work on the organizations of the petty bourgeoisie, particularly the CCF, Merchants Associations, Universities, and various professional associations. The League Against Fascism and War, a coalition group of intellectuals devoted to propaganda work was considered to be of decisive importance. This resulted in an influx of petty bourgeois members that joined the Party more out of appreciation for the anti-fascism of the USSR rather than a commitment to proletarian revolution in Canada. This could only

bolster the revisionist current within the Party.

Instead of using the United Front against the monopoly bourgeoisie and targeting the faction currently wielding state power, the CPC openly allied with the Liberal Party under Mackenzie King, even while the Liberals held state power. The King government had jailed Communists and striking workers, raised taxes and reduced support for unemployed workers, expanded the labour camps system, clamped down on civil rights, and clearly backed the interests of monopoly capital. Yet the CPC hailed the re-election of Mackenzie King as "a setback for reaction in Canada" and urged the masses not to direct their forces against the government, as this would "open the path for the ultrareactionary Tories" (The Road Ahead, p.16-19).

By 1938, the United Front was broadened again, this time to even include "progressive" elements of the Conservative Party as "part of the great lineup of democratic forces" (Carr, A Democratic Front for Canada) While claiming that this move was necessary to prevent the rise of fascism in Canada, the Party placed the leadership of the working class under the parties of the the monopoly bourgeoisie – the very class that was the basis for fascism in the first place.

Having discarded the leading role of the working class and the primacy of the class struggle, the revisionists proceeded to liquidate the revolutionary movement. Instead of fighting against the ban on the CPC and asserting the leading role of the Party, the Party surrendered. The Party leadership declared that "the sinister spectre of Communism... stands in the way of victory" (Canada Needs a Party of Communists, p.30). The Party was liquidated in favour of the aboveground Labour Progressive Party, a propaganda party devoted to electoral struggle in accordance with bourgeois legality. The new LPP explicitly rejecting any means of struggle or winning support other than those used by the parties of the bourgeoisie, abandoning the Leninist principal of dual tactics. References to socialism and revolution were dropped and a no-strike policy was pushed in the factories. Mass organizations, including the Workers Unity League, were dissolved without consultation with the workers. Even after the destruction of the fascist powers, the Party continued its line of class collaboration – calling the reconstruction period "a new era of peace and democracy".

The LPP entered the post-WWII years on a weak foundation, without a clear ideological line and with a membership based in the hesitant and

vacillating petty bourgeoisie. Without a solid basis in the proletariat, the Party was left unprepared for the post-WWII rise in state repression against Communists and many of the petty bourgeois members deserted the movement. Those that remained became disoriented by the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism in the USSR, spy scandals in Canada, and other crises within the International Communist Movement (ICM), further devastating the ranks of the Party. The Party began its slide into obscurity from which it has never – and likely will never – recover.

Despite the overall negative experience of the United Front as practised by the first Communist Party of Canada, it is important to identify positive lessons from the first Party building movement in Canada for the current generation of proletarian revolutionaries. The error of the Party in this case was not in rallying the petty bourgeoisie, but in abandoning the proletariat. The petty bourgeoisie were key allies in the struggle against fascism and struggled in the mass movement on the side of anti-fascism and for the defence of the Soviet Union. A few, such as the revolutionary hero Norman Bethune, abandoned their class background and joined whole heartedly with the cause of the proletariat. These petty bourgeoisie elements could have been won over to the side of the proletariat without surrendering the leading role of the Party and proletarian class composition of its membership. There is need for further study of how the Party worked with other classes and on what basis they were able to win them over.

Conclusion

Identifying who are our friends and who are our enemies is of the utmost importance for our incipient revolutionary movement. Canada is an imperialist society, divided by the two great classes: the monopoly bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The basic class ally of the proletariat is the petty-bourgeoisie, while the nonimperialist middle bourgeoisie is a temporary and vacillating ally. These allies of the proletariat must be rallied by the Party into a United Front to aid the proletariat in its struggle for revolution.

It is a requirement that the building of the United Front be started immediately, even before the formation of a genuine Communist Party in Canada. Pre-Party formations must engage in struggle amongst the masses, advance their ideological work, and begin to rally all potential allies to the side of the proletariat.

The history of the Party building movement in Canada indicates that it is possible to win over the petty-bourgeoisie and sections of the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie to the side of the proletariat. It also shows that it is absolutely critical that this take place under the leadership of the proletariat and its vanguard Party. Any other road will lead to liquidationism and the destruction of the revolutionary movement.

By making use of the United Front, the proletariat may unite the broad majority against imperialists, take advantage of any contradictions in the enemy camp to split the opposition, targeting the faction currently wielding state power while discrediting the bourgeois opposition. In this way, the movement for revolution in Canada will advance until the proletariat is able to seize state power and build a new society.

Victory to the United Front against imperialism!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Long live the revolution!

Thoughts on the RCP Program

December 2008 - RI Leading Organ

Introduction

This document is a summation of our current assessment of the program of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada. It arises out of a series of discussions carried out within Revolutionary Initiative and with comrades from the RCP.

Our assessment must begin with the recognition that the purpose of Revolutionary Initiative is the formation of a single genuine Communist Party in Canada and that the RCP is currently the most advanced Party-building project in this country. It is guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, is sincerely committed to the revolutionary transformation of Canadian society and has overall made a positive contribution to the movement for revolution in Canada. As Maoists, we must analyse their program carefully, clearly assess its perceived strengths and weaknesses, and identify where our understanding of Canadian society and the path to revolution differs. Only in this way may we develop a better understanding of our own line, potential barriers to unity that must be overcome, and areas of study that require greater investigation. We must do this in the spirit of comradeship and revolutionary humility, with the understanding that in the end it will be the masses who decide which line is correct.

This assessment will take the form of a section-by-section analysis of the RCP program.

1. Our Plan of Action to Make Revolution

The first great strength of the RCP program is in its purpose. It is clearly a program to unite the vanguard and build a disciplined Party to lead the working class. In this respect it clearly avoids the errors of the Trotskyists in their attempt to build a revolutionary mass Party, which leads to a muddled political line based on unprincipled unity, the watering down of revolutionary ideology, and all the opportunism that these entail. While the Party must be able to lead the broad masses, it must take care to maintain its organizational and ideological cohesion. It also makes a clear division between the Party and the class that it leads, correctly understands the Party as being the General Staff of the proletariat. Armed with this understanding, the Party can combat any trends towards liquidationism that would surrender the role of the vanguard.

2. Our Ideology is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism

Another strength is the RCP's adherence to the most advanced form of proletarian ideology, namely Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The proletarian revolutionary movement must be guided by a correct scientific understanding, one that is based on the lessons of more than a century of revolutionary struggles combined with the creative application to local conditions and particular historical circumstances.

The RCP program correctly identifies the class on which the revolutionary Party must rely: the proletariat. It is the proletariat that is the most advanced and revolutionary class, the only one that will lead the revolutionary transformation of Canadian society. However, this class is not homogeneous, and is stratified between more and less privileged sections. It is this less privileged section that has the most immediate interest in revolution, is the least infected with bourgeois ideology, and will at least initially constitute the bulk of the revolutionary forces.

However, the Party cannot rely solely on this section of the proletariat. It must organize the bulk of the proletariat. While we must recognize the labour aristocracy as being bourgeois agents within the working class movement, the upper stratum of the proletariat are also objectively revolutionary and absolutely necessary to the socialist movement. While currently more susceptible to petite bourgeois aspirations and ideology, with the decline of imperialism they are facing a steady erosion of their more privileged position, with mass layoffs, union busting, and declining wages and deteriorating social conditions becoming the norm to imperialist society. This section of the working class is also the most skilled and disciplined of the proletariat, and most able to construct the future socialist society.

In addition to the proletariat, the Party will have to win over other classes and weld them together into the third great weapon of the proletariat (after the Party and the People's Army), the United Front. In addition to the bulk of the proletariat, the United Front will include in a supporting role some sections of the petite bourgeoisie. This includes professionals, academics, independent commodity producers such as farmers and fishermen, and independent property owners that do not exploit proletarian labour as the main part of their income. This class stands in objective contradiction to monopoly finance capital and will be a vital ally of the proletariat. They are an unstable and vacil-

lating class and must be won over to the revolution, otherwise they will be organized by the counter-revolutionaries against the proletariat and come out in favour of state repression during upsurges in struggle.

Another class that may be a temporary ally of the proletariat in the United Front will be some elements of the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie. This is the section of the bourgeoisie that is not a part of the monopoly capital ruling class and do not principally depend on imperialist exploitation of the Third World and the world market. The production that they control is entirely nationally based and they are generally opposed to the policies of globalization. Their expansion is regularly thwarted by the imperialists that use their position of dominance to prevent the development of any competitive capitalist rivals. While not a historically progressive class, winning them over to the revolutionary camp will play an important role in isolating and undercutting the room of manoeuvre of the ruling class, blunt their attacks on the proletariat and weaken the capitalist class as a whole.

For the proletariat to develop revolutionary ideology it is necessary to understand one of the primary bourgeois ideologies masquerading as proletarian ideology, namely modern revisionism. While the RCP program correctly analyses the rise of modern revisionism in the Bolshevik Party, it does not sufficiently address the origins of revisionism in the Canadian movement. With the rise of Khrushchev, the Bolshevik Party became the world headquarters of modern revisionism, actively promoting revisionism amongst the International Communist Movement. Yet the revisionist current was already dominant in the Canadian Party long before Khrushchev's coup. During WWII, the CPC dramatically changed its ideological and political line and adopted the so-called "Popular Front" strategy. While claiming to be the faithful implementation of the United Front strategy put forward by the Comintern under Dimitrov, the Popular Front strategy was a bourgeois democratic line that called for the liquidation of the Canadian revolutionary movement. Communist mass organizations and trade union centres were shut down and along with a drive towards bourgeois "respectability" the Party was purged of much of its genuinely proletarian members. The leadership of the proletariat was placed under Mackenzie King's Liberal Party, a party of the imperialist bourgeoisie. WWII was the deathknell of the first Communist Party in Canada, during which it ceased to be a revolutionary Party and slid into an obscurity from which it has never recovered. The process by which this occurred

deserves close scrutiny if we are to avoid repeating these errors.

3. Capitalism

The RCP program correctly identifies Canada as a major imperialist power, breaking with the bourgeois nationalism that infects much of the Canadian left. Many progressive groups incorrectly view Canada as a dominated country and focus much of their anti-imperialism on American imperialism, assuming (incorrectly) that Canada is oppressed by the United States. While Canada is a second tier imperialist power and occasionally at a disadvantage to American imperialism, overall it participates in the international division of labour as a dominating and exploiting imperial power. It frequently operates in concert with the United States on various imperial adventures, but it does so for its own interests. The Canadian state is not "holding the bully's coat". It is a bully in its own right and it is this reality that the RCP program exposes.

While imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, that stage has distinct phases, each with their own particular qualities that effect the strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution. The RCP program is overly focused on the conditions of global capitalism and lacks analysis of the particular historical stages of the Canadian mode of production. Of particular importance is an analysis of the current phase of Canadian imperialism, which is the phase of strategic decline. This phase is characterised by persistent and endemic economic stagnation, the financialisation of the economy, the expansion of overall size of the state and its increasing fusion with monopoly capital.

The program of the revolutionary Party must include an analysis of the persistent stagnation endemic to monopoly capitalism, the growing financialisation of the economy, and the susceptibility of imperialism to larger and larger crises. Otherwise, this may result strategic and tactical errors based on an overestimation of the stability of imperialism and a lack of attention for the need to prepare for major crises in the imperialist system. The tendency of monopoly capitalism towards persistent stagnation has forced the imperialists to bring in a greater role for state planning and management of the economy to stave off crisis, these measures have not been able to eliminate the inevitability of crisis. While they have been able to stave off minor crises, their methods – such as outsourcing of production and massive growth of the financial sector - have only delayed the inevitable and actually

increased the likelihood and severity of a major crisis. This negates much of the justification for the protracted people's war strategy, based as it is on the hypothesis that the imperialist system has more or less stabilised and secured itself against crises.

4. The battle of two big adversaries

Overall, we are in unity with the RCP on the primary contradiction in Canadian society as being between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is these two classes that form the antagonistic contradiction that makes up Canadian imperialist society. This formulation clarifies our struggle, breaking with the petite-bourgeois lines of the post-modernist and identity politics which fragments the struggle of the proletariat. It is the proletariat, composed of a variety of sectors, that will lead the struggle for socialism. Within this class, it is the lower stratum of the proletariat which is most revolutionary and upon whose interests the revolutionary Party must rely. This stratum is currently unorganized, ignored by the current trade union movement that only defends the interests of the upper stratum and the petite-bourgeoisie.

While priority must be given to the interests and the organization of the lower stratum of the proletariat, the revolutionary Party must organize and rely on the bulk of the proletariat, including its upper stratum. It is this upper stratum that is most critical to the functioning of imperialism and constitute the backbone of the entire economy. A key element of winning over this sector will be the transformation of the trade union movement. Currently under the control of the labour aristocracy, the existing trade unions can be considered yellow trade unions. It will be necessary to build new red trade unions with a red trade union centre to organize those sectors of the working class that are currently not organized.

However, this red trade union movement will not be able to displace the yellow trade unions. It will be necessary to enter the yellow unions and build cells of revolutionary mass activists within individual locals. Those cells will change the character of the individual locals from yellow to red and then spread out into other locals, gradually ousting the labour aristocracy and changing the union as a whole into a red trade union. The same process must continue, local by local and union by union, until the labour aristocracy have been driven from the working class movement.

5. The bourgeoisie

For the proletariat to liberate itself, it must identify and understand its opposite, the imperialist bourgeoisie. The imperialists understand this fact and try to the utmost to conceal its existence. Bourgeois nationalism only diverts the proletariat from its genuine struggle, while divisions by political jurisdictions (between federal, provincial, and municipal levels of the bourgeois state) are only used to hide the overall unity of the ruling class. The imperialists also deliberately intervene in the proletarian movement, buying off and co-opting sections of the movement through state hand-outs to ally workers organizations to this or that section of the bourgeoisie.

Although united overall, the bourgeoisie has its own internal contradictions. While the RCP program acknowledges these divisions within the ruling class, more work needs to be done on the exact structure of the bourgeoisie, its various factions, where the bourgeoisie is divided and upon what interests that division is based. In this way the proletarian movement can develop the correct tactics to split the bourgeoisie, directing its fire on the faction of currently wielding state power and exposing the opportunism of the bourgeois opposition.

6. The exploited proletariat

We have no disagreements on the main points in this section: The working class exists. It has not "vanished", but rather makes up the majority of the Canadian population and constitutes the main and leading force of the revolution. It is also stratified and contains its own internal contradictions.

Organizationally, the proletariat is dominated by the bourgeoisie and its agents within the working class movement. The Party must rely on the interests of the lower stratum of the working class, leading the bulk of the proletariat to act as a class in itself.

There is a need for further discussion on the use of debt as a means of supporting the upper stratum, how this is inherently unstable, and the role of debt as a means of seizing an additional cut of surplus value.

7. Against national oppression!

It is on the national question that the RCP has made a major contribution to the proletarian revolutionary movement in Canada that should not be underestimated, specifically the recognition that Quebec is an imperialist power. While the

French nation in Canada was once a dominated and exploited nation with a justified national liberation movement, since the late 1970's it has transformed itself into an imperialist nation with a strong state, an economy that is fully integrated into Canadian monopoly capitalism beyond its formerly subordinate position, and has the maximum of democratic rights that can be expected of a bourgeois society. It has developed its own imperialist ruling class that is engaged in the exploitation of the Third World.

Many of the so-called "revolutionary" or "progressive" organizations in Canada have a poor understanding of these changes in Quebec society and still hold to the line of independence for Quebec. This ignores the fact that the sovereigntist movement is (as the RCP correctly characterises it) a "100% bourgeois project" that would not achieve any advancement for the working class of any nation in Canada. While the right of nations to self determination up to and including succession is an iron principle of MLM, it must be considered in relation to the concrete context to which it applies. In the case of Quebec today, independence would only be used as an excuse to extract greater concessions from the working class and further embolden a new imperialist state on the world stage.

8. Women of the proletariat

While claiming to speak for all women, bourgeois feminism is incapable of addressing the social contradictions that oppress the majority of women as it cannot by its very nature address the question of class power or go beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality. Instead it relies on a false community of sisterhood that obscures the class division of society and puts forward a concept of patriarchy that no longer exists as a historical category. Patriarchy is a specific form of property and social relationship that has been destroyed by the development of imperialism. The strategic decline of imperialism has forced that system to rely more and more heavily on individualized consumption patterns, the expansion of wage-earning, the increased use of science in production, and other efforts which broke down patriarchal property and social relations. To maintain that there is a contradiction between all women and "the patriarchy" creates incorrect lines of struggle and will only hold back proletarian women from their genuine liberation. This line is mainly put forward by bourgeois or petite bourgeois elements in the women's movement, diverting women's struggles away from the fight against capitalism and diverting them towards the dead end of identity politics.

This is not to say that women do not face greater exploitation and oppression than men in the workplace and society at large. While patriarchy as a legal property relation no longer exists, women still face systematic oppression. There is need for greater detail on the forms of gender oppression that women experience today, with special emphasis placed on the forms of oppression that women face that hold back our female comrades from their full participation in the revolutionary movement.

Proletarian women still need feminism to liberate them from gender oppression, but it must be a feminism of a new type, a revolutionary feminism that organizes proletarian women to fight their sectoral oppression as a component of the general struggle against imperialism and for revolution.

Women have played central roles in many communist movements and national liberation struggles in India, Nepal, the Philippines, Peru, and within the Black Panther Party of the 1970s. For a new generation of female leaders to be developed, all vestiges of male chauvinism in our movement must be vigorously combated and special emphasis placed on the development of female proletarian revolutionaries.

The RCP program correctly calls for the creation of a revolutionary proletarian women's movement, however owing to the program's lack of attention to the question of the United Front, there is a lack of clarity on how the Party will develop this movement and what its relationship will be to the Party. The Party must form women's mass organizations that will carry forward the demands raised by the Party program, as well as demands raised by the masses themselves.

9. Our Goal: Communism

We are united with the RCP on the ultimate goal of the revolutionary Party – the transformation of Canadian imperialist society into a communist society. This shall be carried out through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of the socialist order as a transition stage to communism. This stage will necessitate the destruction of imperialism not only in Canada but world-wide and the uprooting of the "four ills" - all class distinctions, all relations of production upon which they rely, all social relations that correspond to those relations of production, and all ideas that result from those social relations. History has shown that this will be a protracted struggle, with ebbs and flows in the revolutionary tide. During the tran-

sition to communism class struggle will continue, both in Canada and against the remaining imperialist powers.

The bourgeoisie will of course resist this transition and their resistance will increase tenfold with their loss of state power. This resistance will take direct forms (such as economic sabotage, assassination of proletarian leaders, and other acts of terrorism), but will also be regenerated indirectly through the force of habit remaining from the old society and the continued existence of small production. New bourgeois forces will reconstitute themselves, some of them from within the revolutionary Party itself, especially from its highest levels. These bourgeois forces must be constantly struggled against, both by the revolutionary Party and by the masses until all vestiges of the old society are finally eliminated.

In addition to the measures listed by RCP, there are additional initiatives that will need to be undertaken by the proletarian state in the construction of socialism. First, there is the matter of how to deal with the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie. It is critical that the revolutionary state avoid driving any more sections of the population into the enemy camp than is absolutely necessary. Some sections of the non-imperialist middle bourgeoisie should be retained as managers or technical advisers of the enterprises they owned under the old society. Their income may be based on a fixed percentage of the enterprise's profits or a salary. This position will be non-inheritable to ensure that this remainder of the capitalist class will be eliminated within a generation. Others will be offered buy-out packages. In either case, this may place their income above the "communist maximum" but will undercut their opposition to the socialist transition and be in the overall best interest of the proletariat.

Secondly, there is a need for increased attention to the measures required for breaking Canada from the international division of labour. Canada is a second-tier imperialist society. It is fully integrated into the global imperialist system, both as an exploiter of Third World countries and as a branch plant economy of other imperialist powers, particularly the United States. As such, the construction of a national economy will involve significant changes to the Canadian means of production. With the liberation of significant sections of the planet from imperialist exploitation and the breaking of imperialism at home, Canada will no longer be able to rely on the Third World to provide cheap access to raw materials, foodstuffs and labour (located abroad or in Canada through the immigration of

highly skilled labour). The new proletarian state will be forced to develop a comprehensive national economy capable of supplying the fundamental needs of the population, with international trade playing a secondary and supplementary role. This will involve the retooling of branch plants for the purposes of centrally planned and nationally based industrial production, recovery of farm land from urban sprawl to produce regionally appropriate agricultural products, development of environmentally sustainable power generation, and massive increases in energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy and infrastructure.

The establishment of a national economy will also involve making reparations to the Third World for the imperialist exploitation carried out by the old society. The new proletarian state will inherit a debt of blood and capital that must be repaid. This will involve capital payments to nations formerly dominated by Canadian imperialism, the immediate cancellation of all foreign debts held by the former Canadian state and banks, transference of Canadian-owned fixed capital to the countries in which they are located, and the provision of technical expertise, exchange programs, and internationalist assistance to any Third World country that desires them. All of these measures will be carried out on the basis of the equality of nations, both big and small.

10. The Path of Revolution in Canada: PPW

The RCP correctly rejects the parliamentary cretinism of the revisionists, who claim that the socialist transformation of Canadian society can be carried out in accordance with bourgeois legality and the election of so-called Communists to the parliament of the bourgeoisie. There are ample historical examples that the expectation that the bourgeois state machinery can create a socialist society is a dangerous illusion that can end in only one of two ways: either the corruption of the Party and its reintegration into bourgeois society as revisionist agents of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement or a fascist counter-attack that massacres the revolutionary movement.

The decisive form of struggle will not occur on a single grand day. It will be part of a longer process of breaking with bourgeois legality that will not be absolutely distinct from protracted legal struggle. The revolutionary movement must block the state's constant attempts to reintegrate social resistance into bourgeois legality through the use of state funding for pseudo-mass organizations and the use of cooperative bodies between the state,

the bourgeoisie, and the organized working class. The Party must practice dual tactics at every stage of struggle. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the revolutionary movement to uphold the decisive role of armed struggle and the violent destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat must carefully prepare and plan for armed struggle, well in advance of the launching of armed struggle in its decisive phase. This will involve the creation of trained armed units that are capable of launching tactical offensives at the time of their choosing in order to defend the Party and the mass movement. These units will form the nucleus of the People's Army, an armed mass organization that will be organizationally distinct from the Party but always under its political leadership.

However, despite our agreement with much of the points raised by the RCP in favour of their strategic line, we cannot agree with their conclusion that Protracted People's War is the path to revolution in Canada or that armed struggle as a strategy should be launched in advance of the formation of a revolutionary mass movement. It is our view that the October Road remains the correct strategy for the seizure of power in the imperialist countries and that the RCP has only critiqued a straw-man version of the insurrection strategy.

The RCP overestimates the masses willingness to break with bourgeois legality, an estimation that is heavily based on low voter turnout, particularly amongst the proletariat, during bourgeois elections.

While the ever declining percentage of the population that votes is overall a favourable sign for the revolutionary movement, this should not be taken as the masses consciously breaking with bourgeois legality and acceptance of armed struggle. While there is certainly a percentage of non-voters that rejects bourgeois legality as a solution for social contradictions, there is also a likely much larger percentage that does not vote out of disenchantment with existing political parties but not a rejection of parliamentarianism as such. To raise the boycotting of elections to the level of principal is incorrect.

Parliamentary struggle will be of tactical advantage and should be taken up as a component of the mass movement. At this time, it is the job of revolutionaries to expose the true nature of the various bourgeois parties and that voting on its own will not lead to significant social change. The Party must also organize parliamentary fronts, to

use the parliament as a tribune, capture resources from the bourgeois state, raise the just demands of the masses and expose to the masses the ultimate bankruptcy of parliamentary politics.

Despite the many correct critiques made by the RCP of the insurrection strategy as practised by revisionist Parties or Parties that have not fully broken with revisionism, the protracted peoples' war strategy proposed by the RCP is fundamentally flawed. Base areas, as they are conventionally defined in the theory of Protracted Peoples' War, are liberated territories that are almost untouched by state authority, have been organized by the revolutionary movement to be a self sustaining reserve area for the People's Army and have already begun the process of social transformation. These areas gradually expand, encircling the city from the countryside, until such time as the revolutionary forces are able to launch a final offensive and seize political power in the country as a whole. This strategy is inappropriate for countries of the imperialist centre. For one, an urban base area could not be used as a strategic reserve area. There are few areas in Canada that are outside of state control (such as First Nations reserves where the state is currently restrained by the pretence of bourgeois legality) and those areas contain only a minute percentage of the Canadian population. The vast majority of the population lives in the urban areas, where state control is at it's highest and the response time of the armed force of the state can be measured in minutes rather than days. Secondly, a base area in an urban environment is indefensible militarily. Canadian cities were deliberately designed to prevent large concentrations of working class populations and instead places a heavy emphasis on mixed income neighbourhoods and the scattering of smaller pockets of concentrated poverty away from each other.

This would necessitate that any individual base area would only be a few square city block, which could be easily surrounded and annihilated, or turned into concentration camps through the use of armed checkpoints. Thirdly, an urban base area cannot be self-sustaining. Urban areas are entirely dependent on integrated distribution systems to supply all the basic necessities of life, without which even entire cities are unable to survive. As such, an urban base area would be unable to provide for itself in the event of a siege by state forces or to provide reliable supplies to the People's Army.

Finally, and given the above factors, it is also impossible to implement social transformation in the base areas well in advance of the seizure of

political power. While it will be necessary to begin the process of creating dual power through the creation of neighbourhood and factory committees and other forms of proletarian power, these forces will not be able to fully replace the bourgeois state until the period of decisive struggle. Armed struggle can and will be used in the conquest of political power, but a strategy that relies on base areas is doomed to failure.

A key element in the launching of the decisive form of struggle and one that is unaddressed in RCP program, is the winning over of sections of the bourgeois military to the side of the revolution. While the armed units of the revolutionary forces will play a key role in the struggle, they will be overwhelmed by the bourgeois state if they are forced into direct confrontation with a professionally trained army. The majority of these soldiers are of proletarian origin and joined the bourgeois military less out of allegiance to the imperialist system than a desire to escape unemployment or to gain access to systems of higher education that would be otherwise unaffordable. The Party must engage in political work within the armed forces, taking advantage of contradictions within this institution and win over the rank-and-file to the side of the revolution and create forms of dual power within the military. This is likely to happen after a ruinous inter-imperialist war or with significant reversals on the battlefield with forces battling occupation by Canadian imperialism. It will be these devastating losses that will expose the masses to the harsh consequences of the imperialist system.

Recent events in Europe indicate that insurrection is not an outmoded tactic for the destruction of the bourgeois state. The multiple uprisings in France, which spread into some parts of Germany, demonstrated that an armed uprising of the people is capable of overwhelming state forces. Even though the uprising was completely spontaneous, lacked a centralised underground leadership, and consequently did not have any strategy for the seizure of political power, it was able to overwhelm the entire French police force and the French state came within hours of having to call out the Army to put down the rebellion. Had these uprisings been coordinated by a revolutionary Party with the support of its allied mass movement (armed and unarmed) and strengthened by the crossing over of dissident elements within the military, the outcome would have been world-historical.

11. Build the RCP

The RCP strategy of Party building contains

much that is an advancement over other left formations. The RCP recognizes that the Party must be a Party of a new type, one that is a central revolutionary force within the proletarian movement and not a Party of the entire class. The Party must also do more than seize leadership positions through organizational manoeuvres in order to achieve the status of vanguard of the proletariat. In order to do this it will take on the organizational form necessary to the task, one that is based on democratic centralism, line struggle, and the guiding role of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

However, the elements of the strategy by which the RCP seeks to build the Party reveals a fundamental error in their conception of Party building. While there are some individuals who spontaneously develop a revolutionary consciousness due to exposure to revolutionary ideology, overall revolutionaries are not born - they are trained and developed. The Party must do more than rally those elements that have already developed a semi-revolutionary consciousness. It must engage in mass struggle, identify the most capable mass organizers, and through constant and gradual ideological and political work, instil in them a revolutionary consciousness and correct proletarian methods of work.

This method is distinct from economism, which views mass struggle as an end in and of itself and fails to integrate mass struggle into an overall process of building the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary Party. While justifiably seeking to avoid economism, the RCP's "skimming" approach over-relies on spontaneity - both in the generation of revolutionary consciousness and in upsurges of mass struggle. This method lacks a method of testing through revolutionary mass work and a step-by-step development of proletarian revolutionaries.

We are also concerned by the RCP's conception of line struggle, which tends towards an idealist understanding. It is only partially true that "correct ideas don't come out of the blue. They develop in the fight against erroneous ideas." This truth is one-sided because it ignores the basis upon which truth or falsehood is established. Correct ideas will be proven through practice and the concrete results of the lines in question as they are applied through struggle. Practice is the ground upon which truth and falsehood will be established and ultimately it will be the masses that will decide which line is correct or incorrect.

12. A Red Army

We are in overall unity with the RCP on the question of the Red Army. The formation of a Red Army will be necessary to defend the revolutionary movement. It must be distinct from the Party but under the leadership of the Party, following the direction of the Party in its military and political work.

There is a need for further discussion on how the Red Army will relate to the legal struggle, how it will maintain its clandestine nature, and how this will relate to political work inside the bourgeois military.

13. Unleash the Fury of the Masses

Overall, this section of the RCP program is bang on and correctly articulates the purpose of the revolutionary Party: to organize the masses into a material force for the transformation of society. It does this through the mass line of "from the masses to the masses" - gathering the scattered ideas of the masses, systematizing them, and presenting them back to the masses in a manner that encourages the masses ideological development and fighting capacity. The Party gains leadership of the masses not through organizational manoeuvres, but through careful ideological and political work, always with the goal of guiding the masses in assuming control of their own movement and preparing them to take charge of society as a whole.

However, on the question of stages of development of the overall revolutionary movement in Canada, we disagree with the RCP program's conception of Party building as being a separate stage that occurs in advance of the formation of mass organizations, that "communists must work firstly to build the highest form of proletarian organization—the Revolutionary Communist Party ." There is no need to wait for the formation of a Party to begin the process of mass work and the building of mass organizations. Indeed, these are not stages, but interconnected elements of the overall revolutionary project. These elements must occur simultaneously and dialectically, as neither will develop beyond initial stages without the other. Even from the stage of a pre-Party formation, proletarian revolutionaries must steel themselves through mass struggle and the building of mass organizations, linked together through the underground revolutionary organization. These mass organizations are the conveyor belt that connects the Party to the masses, functioning both to elevate the organizational strength of the masses and to act as a training ground for the development of proletarian revolutionaries. It is this practice that will prevent the Party from either becoming a sect, divorced from the masses and

mass struggle, or falling into the trap of economism, where the Party itself becomes bogged down in the immediate struggle of the masses and fails to develop the masses' own capacity for struggle.

Conclusion

This document is only a first step in building our understanding of the RCP and is not intended as the final word on the nature of the RCP. However, we can say that overall the RCP program marks a great advance in the movement for the development of a genuine Communist Party and is leaps and bounds ahead of most other left formations in Canada. Their adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as their guiding ideology, basic understanding of the class forces in Canadian society and Canada's role in the international division of labour, rejection of opportunism, and commitment to building a revolutionary Party are all in line with the Theses on the Party Building Movement in Canada document that guides our organization.

Despite these positives, there are still significant major differences between the lines of RCP and RI, most importantly the military strategic line of PPW for Canada and the Party-building methods proposed by RCP. There are also areas that are under-addressed in the RCP program and require greater investigation to determine if differences exist and the importance of those differences. These would include the role and form of the United Front and how the Party relates to the mass movement.

In order for us to deepen our understanding of the RCP and strengthen the relations between our two organizations, it will be necessary to increase our level of dialogue, greater exposure to the each others work amongst the masses, the initiation of joint cooperation on (initially) small scale projects, and comparing the objective results of the carrying out of our lines amongst the masses. Care must be taken that our discussions with the RCP remain grounded, comradely and objective and not degenerate into back and forth polemics. Our unity will be built as part of a long term and gradual process, one that must end in the creation of a single genuine Communist Party to make revolution in Canada.

Long live Marxism-Leninsim-Maoism!
Long live the Party-building movement in Canada!
Long live the revolution!

Proletarian Internationalism: A Duty for all Revolutionaries

September 2009 - RI Leading Organ

Since the earliest days, proletarian internationalism has been a central pillar of the international communist movement. Communists carry a line among the people that workers have no homeland, that national borders do not determine a community of interest. The common interests of all workers is based on our class and all workers, regardless of their nation, have a common interest in the struggle against capitalism and for a socialist future.

However, various counter-revolutionary ideologies, such as revisionism, petty bourgeois nationalism and cultural nationalism have attempted to obscure this basic truth. They have in various ways hindered the development of internationalism amongst the working class and worked to prop up the imperialist ruling class. As a collective operating in an imperialist country founded on settler colonialism, it is essential that Revolutionary Initiative understand its role in the international movement and work effectively to propagate internationalism amongst the working class and its allies.

This document will attempt to increase our understanding on this central element of revolutionary struggle by analysing how proletarian internationalism has been practised throughout the history of the International Communist Movement, the special duties for revolutionaries operating in imperialist countries, and the principles and priorities for the Canadian movement in particular.

History and Development of Proletarian Internationalism

Proletarian internationalism is best summed up in the concluding slogan of the Communist Manifesto: "Workers of all countries, unite!" Proletarian internationalism is the reciprocal help between all revolutionary peoples to promote the development of world revolution and defeat of imperialism. While respecting the independence of other revolutionary movements, this form of internationalism opposes narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism, which is blind to class contradictions.

The examples of the three Communist Internationals and how proletarian internationalism was interpreted during these periods are crucial to our understanding of this concept and how to practice it. The Internationals were important instruments to promote proletarian ideology, create genuine Communist Parties, and support revolutionary movements, especially the fledgling Soviet republic and other anti-fascist and anti-colonial movements. They were also important forums for the exchange of experience and debates on questions in order to help advance revolutionary theory and practice.

However, the Comintern became an instrument that attempted to direct struggle in one part of the world from another part. This error was fatal for more than a few comrades who lost their lives carrying out erroneous lines, such as in China before the rise of Mao. In some cases, as with Canada, the line of the Comintern was distorted by local revisionist forces to implement a liquidationist line from which the Party never recovered.

The first multilateral forum for proletarian internationalism was established with the founding of the First International. At the time, proletarian ideology was still in the process of formation and much of the proletarian movement was driven by utopian socialism, anarchism, and other petty bourgeois ideologies. Marx and Engels were the first to develop a genuinely proletarian ideology, one that was based on a scientific understanding of socialism and class struggle. They used the First International to promote their ideas to the proletariat of Europe and around the world.

The Second International was formed in 1882, with Engels playing a prominent role. By the 1900s, Marxism was the dominant ideology in the working class movement. However, the rise of Marxism was closely followed by the rise of classical revisionism. Important "Marxists" such as Bernstein sold out the proletarian movement and joined the bourgeois state in the name of "peaceful evolution" as the path to socialism. Kautsky at first defended Marxism but eventually joined the ranks of the revisionists, voting in favour of the war budgets of World War I and defending colonialism. These and other betrayals marked the death of the Second International.

With a backdrop of the Second International supporting the war efforts of their national bourgeoisie and/or feudal monarchs and attempting to convince millions of workers to go to their deaths in the interests of the "fatherland", Lenin and other genuine Marxists such as Rosa Luxembourg launched a relentless ideological struggle against

their national-chauvinist positions. Lenin argued that a new international group was needed to coordinate the movement, that it was necessary to:

“create a really centralised and really leading centre capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a world Soviet republic. It should be clearly realised that such a leading centre can never be built upon stereotyped, mechanically equated, and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world-wide scale—the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety of the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but an application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions” (Lenin - *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*).

The success of the Russian Revolution created a new revolutionary centre by proving the strength of revolutionary Marxism and gave the international proletariat the resources and liberated territory capable of hosting a new International. The Third Communist International (Comintern) provided a platform for the reorientation of the Communist movement and for the development of genuine proletarian internationalism. Two of the initial and primary tasks of the Comintern was to rebuild genuine Communist Parties across the world and to defend the newly founded Soviet republic, which faced aggression from the capitalist nations.

Lenin, in writing the admission requirements for the Comintern, fiercely advocated for a form of central democracy within the International:

“All decisions of the Communist International’s congresses and of its Executive Committee are binding on all affiliated parties. Operating in conditions of acute civil war, the Communist International must be far more centralised than the Second International was. It stands to reason, however, that in every aspect of their work the Communist International and its Executive Committee must take into account the diversity of conditions in which the respective parties have to fight and work, and adopt decisions binding on all parties only on matters in which such decisions are possible.” (Lenin, *Terms of Admission into Communist International*).

Moreover, it is clear that Communists understood that while centralism was an important factor,

there was also the necessity to understand that Communist Parties must pay heed to their specific conditions in determining lines and tactics.

While the Comintern played a positive role in reorienting the ICM, the problems associated with applying democratic centralism to a multilateral body gradually became more and more apparent.

During the early years, the emphasis on international unity and discipline were necessary in order to drag the International Communist Movement out of the cesspool of revisionism and to consolidate genuinely revolutionary Communist Parties. However, during the 1930s and WWII the situation became increasingly complex, such that it became impossible for individual Parties to find the solutions to their problems by taking direction from a multilateral body. The Comintern recognized this situation and dissolved itself in 1943:

“The entire course of events for the past quarter of a century, as well as the accumulated experiences of the Communist International, have convincingly proved that the organizational form of uniting the workers as chosen by the First Congress of the Communist International, which corresponded to the needs of the initial period of rebirth of the labor movement, more and more outlived itself in proportion to the growth of this movement and increasing complexity of problems in each country, and that this form even became a hindrance to the further strengthening of the national workers’ parties” (Executive Committee of the Comintern, *Dissolution of the Communist International*).

The experience of the Communist Party of China illustrates this problem. Prior to the seventh congress of the International in 1935, the International tried to intervene in and direct the CPC with disastrous results. The Comintern had pushed a strategic line that was inappropriate for the semi-colonial semifeudal conditions present in China, with the result that tens of thousands of Communists were killed by reactionary forces. It was not until the rise of Mao Zedong that the correct strategy was applied, often in defiance of the recommendations Comintern.

Speaking about the International upon its liquidation in 1943, Mao stated that the need for such a body had passed:

“What is needed now is the strengthening of the national Communist Party of each country, and we no longer need this international leading centre... The internal situation in each country and the relations between the different countries are more complicated than they have been in the past and are

changing more rapidly. It is no longer possible for a unified international organization to adapt itself to these extremely complicated and rapidly changing circumstances. Correct leadership must grow out of a detailed analysis of these conditions, and this makes it even more necessary for the Communist Party of each country to undertake this itself" (Mao, *The Comintern Has Long Ceased to Meddle in Our Internal Affairs*).

After the rise of modern revisionism led by Khrushchev and especially with the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, China emerged as a new revolutionary centre but of a new type.

While the Maoists engaged in vigorous struggle against modern revisionism on the international level, they did not believe it was possible or desirable to have a single revolutionary centre to give direction to the various Parties of the world. Permanent delegations from Parties from all over the world were hosted in Beijing, but rather than establish a democratic centralist multilateral body, the CPC pushed the principle of equality of all Parties, regardless of their size, regardless of if they held state power or not. Any multilateral resolutions were to be based on voluntary consensus, with Parties being free to not sign if deemed to be unacceptable or sign with reservations noted. The Maoists realized that democratic centralism is not appropriate for a multilateral body, as it will inevitably result either in splitting the movement whenever differences emerged or the imposition of a line that was contrary to the democratic will of the members of a national Party. While international discussion, coordination and cooperation is still important for the development of the world wide revolutionary struggle, the terms under which these take place must take into account these post-Comintern principles.

Proletarian Internationalism in Imperialist Countries

The Comintern grew out of the experience of Marxist parties taking reactionary, opportunist positions regarding the mass slaughter of millions of people during World War I so as to sustain the economies of the ruling class at that time. It is critical then to understand the reasons behind the rise of opportunism and the correctness of Lenin's position on the work of Communists within imperialist countries. Lenin made it clear that comrades working in the heart of imperialism had special duties:

"Parties in countries whose bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations must pursue a most well-defined and clear-cut policy

in respect of colonies and oppressed nations. Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists of its "own" country, must support—in deed, not merely in word—every colonial liberation movement, demand the expulsion of its compatriot imperialists from the colonies, inculcate in the hearts of the workers of its own country an attitude of true brotherhood with the working population of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and conduct systematic agitation among the armed forces against all oppression of the colonial peoples" (Lenin, *Terms of Admission into Communist International*).

To combat opportunism and reaction within our movements, it is necessary to constantly struggle against nationalist tendencies and lines within movements in imperialist countries. As noted by Lenin, "social-chauvinism is consummated opportunism", which is a serious problem in our context due to the dominance of labour aristocratic organizations.

Carrying out a nationalist line for revolutionaries in imperialist countries is unacceptable and dangerous, as history has demonstrated time and time again as it will inevitably result in the betrayal of the revolution. We must constantly improve our methods of carrying out internationalist work in an effective way towards building a genuine mass based anti-imperialist movement.

Priorities and Directions For Our Movement

Given the historical lessons of the International Communist Movement, we can extract certain priorities and specific tasks for our movement.

1 – Mutual support and respect between people's movements.

As with our work amongst the people of Canada, we have a duty to be humble in our practice and respectful in our approach towards comrades from other movements. Certainly, this does not mean that we should not analyse particular struggles and weaknesses and offer criticisms as needed. The size of a given Party cannot be taken as proof that it has the correct line. Smaller Parties with a correct line can expand rapidly, while larger Parties may adopt an incorrect line and wither away. However it should be clear that all relations are conducted in the spirit of learning from and supporting the development of other movements.

We must also defend the anti-imperialist movements in Latin America, Palestine and other regions where there are heroic battles being waged for national liberation. Just as Marx supported the Afghan monarchy against the British and Mao expressed his support for anti-imperialist movements in Africa and Latin America without requiring a unity along Marxist-Leninist lines, neither should we be so myopic as to discard important struggles against imperialism because we do not have ideological unity.

We should promote those struggles and defend the right of national liberation and self-determination to the masses and seek unity on an anti-imperialist basis.

We should also seek to relate to the Maoist forces within those movements, with whom we can achieve a higher level of unity.

2 – Promote advanced and especially exemplary struggles with different kinds of support based on different kinds of unity.

As revolutionaries, we have a duty to support the people's struggle everywhere. It is essential to the healthy development of our movement within an imperialist country. However, as Marxist-Leninist-Maoists we also have a duty to further support and uphold the struggles of the most advanced movements where our comrades have attained successes so that further breakthroughs can be attained. History has shown that every breakthrough has been followed by a wave of advance for the entire global revolutionary movement. As Che Guevara said "A victory against imperialism by anyone is a victory for everyone." Every victory serves to expose and weaken imperialism internationally.

An exemplary movement is defined by the following features: proletarian leadership and ideology, a strategic orientation towards socialism and communism, and being the vanguard of a revolutionary movement. In the current world situation, the revolutionary movements and struggles most in need of our support are in the Philippines, Nepal, and India. We must promote their victories among the masses, defend their gains against imperialist attack, and expose their movements to the people in Canada.

3 – Internationalism must be a part of all work.

Our internationalism has to become ingrained in all aspects of our work. It should not be relegated to something that is done only at the

Party to Party level. It must be part of our propaganda, education and work at every level. All workers must come to know each other as comrades in struggle, regardless of their nationality. Proletarian internationalism must be practised in every level of relationship: Party-to-Party, sector-to-sector, and people-to-people.

Along these lines, it is also important to build solidarity between peoples organizations in different countries as a way of strengthening ties and bonds between people in struggle through common campaigns or any other form of building unity.

4 – Expose Canadian imperialism at every turn.

Canada is an imperialist country and the state represents the interests of the ruling class of Canada: the imperialist bourgeoisie. Canadian imperialism extends its dominance militarily, through active participation in aggressive military operations and coalitions (occupation of Afghanistan and Haiti, 'peacekeeping' in the Balkans and other regions, training of foreign reactionary police and military forces, membership in NATO, NORAD, etc.) and through international financial organizations and inter-imperialist cooperative bodies (WTO, IMF, G8 etc.). Canadian monopolies are active in all corners of the World, exploiting people and land wantonly and actively repressing resistance. Canadian firms work with the Canadian state, local reactionaries, and NGOs to recruit migrant labour and to pacify and repress the people in the semi-colonial countries.

Canada is not participating in these areas due to coercion by other imperialists or the misguided notions of this or that politician. We must actively expose the Canadian state as an imperial power and Canadian monopoly capitalism as imperialism. Canadian imperialists act in their own interest and against the interests of the working class and its allies, both at home and abroad. We must combat, in deed, not only imperialist military interventions but also its other aspects, such as its work through international trade, NGOs, agencies, foreign relations and diplomacy.

5 – Combat bourgeois nationalism and national chauvinism within the working class and its allies.

There is a strong tendency within the leftist groups in Canada to appeal to nationalism and to paint the Canadian state as essentially good, but misled or dominated by American imperialism. These elements push for subsidies to the bourgeoisie and react negatively to discussions about sover-

eignty for the Aboriginal peoples. In Canada there can be no progressive or revolutionary nationalism as our social and economic system is imperialist and the general political line of the revolution is socialism and communism.

These tendencies are destructive to our goal of creating a revolutionary movement that works with and supports other revolutionary movements around the world. This form of nationalism serves to separate the interests of workers here with workers elsewhere in the world and objectively strengthens the imperialist bourgeoisie. We must not only work to support national liberation struggles abroad, but also work to support self-determination for the Aboriginal peoples. We must also look to promote Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology and organization amongst the ranks of the Aboriginal peoples. In all of this, we must remember to beware of ultra-leftism and sectarianism when carrying out our work amongst the people. Building an anti-imperialist revolutionary movement will be a gradual process based on consolidating the most advanced, winning over the majority, and isolating the reactionaries. This will take place in every arena of struggle, including within yellow working class organizations and reactionary institutions.

On the Preconditions for the Founding of a Genuine Communist Party of Canada

September 2009

Revolutionary Initiative Leading Organ

History is littered with pre-Party formations that “jumped the gun” and attempted to launch themselves as a Parties prematurely and turned out to be “Parties” in name only. Some of these premature “Parties” still managed to lead important struggles and are historically significant. Others remained marginal sects and never gained traction in the working class. What both have in common is their eventual destruction – either through splits, liquidationism, being smashed by the state, or some combination thereof.

Therefore, it is vital to ask the question: At what point can a pre-Party formation say that it has reached a higher stage of development and has achieved the ideological, political, and organizational preconditions necessary to transform itself into a genuine Communist Party?

This article will attempt to list what Revolutionary Initiative believes to be the preconditions for the founding of a genuine Communist Party in Canada. The preconditions are not listed in terms of priority or chronological stages and not all the preconditions can be expected to develop uniformly.

However, all of these preconditions are connected dialectically. Should even a single precondition be absent it will retard, distort, or even totally prevent the development of all the other preconditions for the founding of a genuine Communist Party in Canada.

Ideology

“Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” – Lenin, What Is To Be Done?

The revolutionary transformation of society is not a simple undertaking and will not happen spontaneously. It will require the conscious activity of millions of people, united by a broad revolutionary movement and led by a vanguard Party. This conscious activity requires theory as a guide to action.

While the natural and instinctual drive to-

wards social liberation has existed since the dawn of class-based societies, it is only with the arrival of the proletariat and proletarian ideology that this drive has become achievable. It is only proletarian ideology that is capable of providing a scientific understanding of the totality of the capitalist system and the world-historical process by which it shall be replaced with socialism and then communism. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the most advanced form of proletarian ideology as it is the synthesis of the entire experience of the world-wide revolutionary proletarian movement from its earliest beginnings up to today and provides the universal principles that can then be creatively applied to our particular conditions.

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism must be grasped in its essence by the Party as a living science and not studied as a dogma. It must be taken up creatively and as a guide to the entire work of the Party. Every comrade must delve deeper and deeper into the theoretical problems that confront our movement. Otherwise it is inevitable that the Party will degenerate into revisionism and reformism and be re-incorporated back into the capitalist system. Only through constant study and education in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism will the members of the Party be able to recognize the degeneration of the Party, launch a rectification movement whenever necessary, and lead the working class to victory.

Experience

“But a party is not what it says and believes about itself, but what it does.” – Rosa Luxemburg

“New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, without difficulties and setbacks or the exertion of tremendous efforts.” – Mao, ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People’

Before a pre-Party formation can transform itself into a Party, it must have experience in the creative application of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to Canadian conditions, to have verified theory through practice. It must have steeled itself in practice by participating in and leading popular struggles, by learning how to be strategically firm and tactically flexible. It must have learned how to carry out its leading role through the mass line: the step by step method of developing the militancy and organization of the people through careful persuasion and winning over of the broad masses. It must have learned how to move amongst the people like a fish through water.

It is not required that all experiences be positive ones. While working to overcome inexperience it is likely that the pre-Party formation will make many errors. Hopefully, errors will be small rather than disastrous, but we can guarantee that there will be defeats and setbacks. What is critical is that the formation engages in regular assessment, both individually and collectively, and adjusts its tactics accordingly. Only in this way will the formation gradually lose its amateurish character and prepare itself for the responsibility of becoming a Party. As a pre-Party formation gains practical experience its defects and weaknesses will become more obvious. It will be better able to rectify mistakes in its methods of work, fill in the gaps in its theoretical understanding, enjoy richer bilateral relationships with other formations and Parties, and systematize data from a wider range of sources and areas of struggle.

Program

“The practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing...” – Marx and Engels, ‘Preface to the German Edition’ of The Communist Manifesto

In order to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to Canadian conditions it is necessary for the the pre-Party formation to have engaged in concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Revolutionaries must provide the people with a clear understanding of their objective and subjective conditions and the historical context in which these conditions came to be. This includes the development of a basic analysis of Canadian society and class forces, the interrelationship between the various class forces, the role of the working class, as well as a historical overview of the development of the Canadian mode of production. It is only with this analysis and historical overview that the formation can develop the correct strategy and tactics for the Canadian revolution.

This analysis and historical overview will serve as a guide for each sector of the mass movement to orient itself in relation to the basic problems of Canadian society and their particular role within the overall revolutionary process. While each sector of the working class (industries, regions, genders, sexual minorities, nations, ethnic groups, etc.) has its own particular needs and struggles, they are linked together by their common oppression and exploitation by the ruling class and the need for a revolutionary solution. By providing an overall analysis and historical overview the Party

will help break down the parochial divisions that fragment the movement. Otherwise, the movement will be left as cross-class, sector-based fiefdoms that can at best speak of “intersecting oppressions” but are incapable of actually resolving these oppressions and tend to degenerate into petty bourgeois opportunism.

The Party will also need its own program, related to but distinct from the program of the wider revolutionary movement. The Party program covers the specific tasks of the Party in its leading role in the revolutionary movement and remains valid for an entire stage of class struggle. In this case, the stage will last from the current pre-revolutionary situation to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Once that epoch is passed, a new Party program will be required to confront the new situation and its challenges.

The program must be formed in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The Canadian revolution will have its own particular characteristics but will still be in line with the general experience of the the international working class movement. While Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is a living science and must be constantly adjusted to the practical circumstances of every society there must be no compromise of our fundamental principles. Otherwise the descent into opportunism is inevitable.

Mass Movement

“The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will.” – Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 241

The main task of the Party is to educate, organize and mobilize the masses for self-liberation. While the Party is composed of the most conscious, disciplined, and active members of the working class, it is necessary for the broad majority of all workers and their allies to be won over to revolutionary struggle.

Since people’s consciousness develops unevenly, it is vital to educate and organize the people in a step-by-step process. This process begins with uniting the workers around their day to day struggles and basic issues of survival and gradually proving the interconnectedness of their struggles, their relation to the primary contradiction in their

society and the need for revolutionary change. This involves forming genuine peoples organizations that are based in the working class and outside the control of the state as well as winning over spontaneous natural organizations on a voluntary basis to the line of the Party.

Peoples organizations must be formed or won over in every arena of struggle, amongst every sector of the working class and its allies. These genuine peoples organizations will be the conveyor belt that links the Party to the masses. It will spread the line of the Party far beyond its immediate reach, bringing in sections of the people that may not yet accept the entire Party program because they have not yet seen it in practice. It will provide a proving ground where genuine peoples' leaders to emerge, to prove themselves in class struggle, before joining the Party. It will also give the Party a legal front that will allow it to interact with the people while protecting itself against state repression.

This dialectical relationship must begin even before the founding of the Party. Even pre-Party formations should have a wide mass base. To attempt to build the Party otherwise will either create a sect, divorced from the struggles of the people, or bog down the Party in economism.

Cadres

"Cadres are a decisive factor, once the political line is determined. Therefore, it is our fighting task to train large numbers of new cadres in a planned way." – Mao, Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 202.

A Party is not a monolith. It has members with varying degrees of development, the most mature of which are the cadre. A cadre is an individual who has made the revolution in Canada their life's goal, one who has been trained in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and is capable of leading at least a basic unit of the Party. They must also be able to identify, assess and train potential members for the Party and guide their development from candidate membership to full members of the Party.

They must carry out the political line of the Party in a way that is creative and appropriate for local conditions, wholehearted, comradely, and free of arrogance or aloofness. As such they play a critical role in the development of the Party and revolutionary movement. Thus, it is not the total number of members in the formation that is decisive, but how many are capable of taking up a cadre level of responsibilities.

Presence in Several Major Cities

"It is up to us to organize the people. As for the reactionaries in China, it is up to us to organize the people to overthrow them. Everything reactionary is the same; if you don't hit it, it won't fall. This is also like sweeping the floor; as a rule, where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish of itself." – Mao, Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 19.

Viewed internationally, the proletariat has interests that go beyond the bounds of their various nationalities, most importantly the need for world-wide revolution. However, we live in a world of unevenly developed nation-states that express the interests of the ruling classes of each country and oppress the working people of "their" country. Therefore, while each revolution is a contribution to the global revolutionary movement, each revolution takes place within specific geo-political boundaries set by the current ruling classes. This requires the working class to have a distinct vanguard Party for each country.

For the Party to be the genuine vanguard for its country it must have a wide range of experience and this can only be assured by having developed a wide presence. To reach the Party stage of development, the pre-Party formation must be able to lead the struggles of the people across several regions and have an organized presence in several major cities, spanning a wide stretch of the country.

If the Party is confined to a single region it will be unable to develop the correct pan-Canadian strategy and tactics necessary to seize state power as it will not have a well rounded experience and may mistake the particularities of a single region as being common to the whole of the country.

Proletarian Membership from Various Industries

The Party must also be present in several of the major industries of the country. Many earlier attempts at refounding genuine Communist Parties in the various imperialist countries were primarily confined to intellectual circles and the student sector. This lack of a firm base in the proletariat resulted in wild swings to the left followed by swings to the right. This alienated the Parties from the people, caused internal splits and a failure to build genuine vanguards. This is precisely because of the material conditions and corresponding subjectivity of intellectuals under capitalism.

...the intelligentsia, as a special stratum of modern capitalist society, is characterised, by and large,

precisely by individualism and incapacity for discipline and organisation... This, incidentally, is a feature which unfavourably distinguishes this social stratum from the proletariat; it is one of the reasons for the flabbiness and instability of the intellectual, which the proletariat so often feels; and this trait of the intelligentsia is intimately bound up with its customary mode of life, its mode of earning a livelihood, which in a great many respects approximates to the petty-bourgeois mode of existence (working in isolation or in very small groups, etc.)”

Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 7, p. 267

Due to this instability, while the intellectuals and other urban petty bourgeois elements will be the basic ally of the proletariat in the socialist revolution, they cannot be the leading force of the revolution. While it is natural and beneficial that the Party will have as members some “fellow travellers”, these elements must make up a minority of the Party membership at its founding. It is only the proletariat that can be the most consistent, most disciplined, and most determined agent for revolution. A proletarian majority in the Party is a necessary requirement to ensure the adoption and maintenance of a proletarian line and world outlook. This will require the pre-Party formation to consciously focus on the development and recruitment of proletarians.

“Our work is primarily and mainly directed to the factory, urban workers. Russian Social-Democracy must not dissipate its forces; it must concentrate its activities on the industrial proletariat, who are most susceptible to Social-Democratic ideas, most developed intellectually and politically, and most important by virtue of their numbers and concentration in the country’s large political centres. The creation of a durable revolutionary organisation among the factory, urban workers is therefore the first and most urgent task confronting Social-Democracy, one from which it would be highly unwise to let ourselves be diverted at the present time. But, while recognising the necessity of concentrating our forces on the factory workers and opposing the dissipation of our forces, we do not in the least wish to suggest that the Russian Social-Democrats should ignore other strata of the Russian proletariat and working class. Nothing of the kind.”

Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 2, p. 330.

In the early stages of the development of the pre-Party formation it may be that the formation’s most immediate connections and areas of support are outside of the factories. However, should the pre-Party formation concentrate on areas of work that bring in proletarian elements, such as territorial organizing in working class neighbourhoods, it is then possible to spread from the neighbourhoods where workers live to the factories in which they

work and the trade unions to which they belong.

Organization

“The Party is not only the advanced detachment of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the organized detachment of its class. The Party’s tasks under the conditions of capitalism are immense and extremely varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat so as to escape the blow of a powerful enemy when the situation calls for retreat; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in the struggle, with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the organized detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the Party really leading the vast masses of the proletariat.”

Stalin, Foundations of Leninism

In order to build a Party, the pre-Party formation must develop not only its ideological and political strength but also the correct organizational structures and methods capable of leading the working class to victory. The history of the International Communist Movement has shown that the only organizational principal capable creating a united and disciplined proletarian fighting force is found in democratic centralism. Democratic centralism is the combination of both the widest possible freedom with iron discipline. Under democratic centralism members are encouraged to engage and debate all matters of policy and direction. All leading bodies are elected by the membership or their delegates and are renewed systematically as needed. At the same time, the individual is subordinate to the organization; the minority is subordinate to the majority; the lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee. Only in this way can full, conscious unity and discipline be achieved.

As the pre-Party formation expands it must create ever higher bodies of leadership, starting with the local and culminating in the formation of a central body capable of directing the entire Canadian revolutionary movement. The central leadership must be capable of all-round work, co-ordination of struggle, and responding to the problems of the day. Party building is neither an exclusively top-down nor bottom-up process. While uneven conditions may require one aspect of democratic centralism to become predominant, this must be

only on a limited and temporary basis. There may be cases of expansion where new units will be directed by the centre, but once a unit of the formation is formalized it immediately gains all the rights and responsibilities of any other unit.

Only a well organized Party will be able to expand rapidly during periods of crisis, when the majority of the working class and its allies turn to revolution. Properly organized, the Party will be able to absorb thousands or tens of thousands of new members without degenerating into a loose affiliation of sympathizers.

Central Organ

“A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also a collective organizer. In this respect it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labour.”

Lenin, What Is To Be Done?

The central organ is the means by which the Party systematically propagates Communist ideas amongst the people. The pre-Party formation must build a central organ to spread its line, expose imperialism and its agents within the working class movement, and promote revolutionary struggle, both at home and abroad.

The developments in communications technology over the past 20 years has opened up new means for the Party to spread its line amongst the people. Websites, internet radio, video hosting, and social networking sites allow the Party to make use of media forms that were previously beyond the material resources of the revolutionary movement. They allow for the Party to relate with the people outside of regions with direct Party presence, both across Canada and around the world. While a print newspaper is still useful, this should be combined with internet media.

Material Resources

“On what basis should our policy rest? It should rest on our own strength, and that means regeneration through one’s own efforts. We are not alone; all the countries and people in the world opposed to imperialism are our friends. Nevertheless, we stress regeneration through our own efforts. Relying on the forces we ourselves organize, we can defeat all Chinese and foreign reactionaries.”

Mao, Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 20.

Building the Party and the revolutionary mass movement will take not only commitment and struggle, but also material resources. The Party must be able to rely on fairly stable sources of revenue in order to finance functionaries who are able to devote themselves full time to revolutionary work.

Every organization within the movement must be self-sufficient and capable of looking after its own material needs. The Party and the mass movement must not become dependent on funding from the state or any other imperialist institution. While at times it may be possible to capture resources from the state, this should only be an occasional supplement to our main base of support: the working class and its allies.

While the financing of the Party must be clandestine, this does not mean that the Party can engage in fund-raising activities that violate proletarian ethics. Such activity risks lumpenizing the Party and tarnishing the reputation of the Party amongst the people.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this document will assist not only Revolutionary Initiative but also other pre-Party formations in their struggle to build a genuine Communist Party in Canada. We have laid out what we believe to be the most important preconditions for the founding of such a Party. This does not preclude there being other preconditions or tasks that will need to be undertaken. As the Party building movement develops, new challenges and necessities will present themselves, but as long as revolutionaries are able to correctly and creatively apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to our conditions, there is nothing that we cannot overcome!

For a genuine Communist Party in Canada!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Long live the revolution!