ment in Czechoslovakia is procapitalist. In our March 10, 1969, issue, for example, we published a manifesto of the Czechoslovak Revolutionary Youth Movement.

"Living in a social system where the capitalist mode of production and capitalist productive relationships have been abolished," the manifesto said, "but where a democratic, socialist society has not begun to be built; and desiring to resist the abuse of Communist ideals as well as to uphold the principle that it is our right and duty to struggle actively against all who have dishonored and abused the ideals of Communism, we proclaim the formation of the Revolutionary Youth Movement.

"We are convinced that for the Czechoslovak people, as well as for the people of the USSR and the so-called people's democracies, socialism cannot be achieved without destroying the bureaucratic machine as a social stratum and establishing a system of self-management."

It is to silence critics like these of the bureaucracy that Husák and Brezhnev have concocted the current "plot." But the revolutionary youth of Czechoslovakia will not be silenced easily. One organization, the Revolutionary Socialist party, declared in a statement which we published in our October 6, 1969, issue:

"We no longer believe in a system where the leadership, even when it is as humane as Dubcek, decides for the workers without them, for only the workers themselves have the right to decide their own destiny.

"We do not believe in socialism in one country, or that the power of the bureaucracy can be broken in a small isolated country like Czechoslovakia, which would then on have 'gone its own way,' had its own 'socialism with a human face,' for socialism is only one and its face is human, otherwise it is not socialism. . . .

"We do not believe in help from the UNO, we do not believe in 'peaceful coexistence' of imperialism and the Kremlin counterrevolutionaries.

"We believe only in ourselves, in our own reason, our own understanding and power. When we say ourselves, we are not thinking only of the workers, technicians, farmers, students and intellectuals in our country, but of all those who are in a similar social position anywhere in the world, for we have understood that our struggle and our organization must have an international character."

Albatross of Stalinism

Rise and Decline of Maoism in Canada

By Ron Haywood

[The following article is reprinted from the December 15 issue of Workers Vanguard, the biweekly paper of the Canadian Trotskyists published in Toronto.]

Several small Canadian groups are now vying for the nod of Chairman Mao Tsetung. Each claims to be the Canadian expression of the thoughts of Mao. And all seek a bureaucratic franchise from the Chinese workers' state.

A look at the recent decline of the Vancouver-based 'Progressive Workers Movement' [PWM] reveals some important lessons for today's radicalizing left in Canada. The history of the PWM also gives us a glimpse of how other, more recent Maoist groups can expect to fare.

In October, 1964, the PWM proclaimed: "... We will be heard—and will not retreat. We are here to fan the flames of discontent, and disdain to dissimulate or hide our intentions from any man—friend or foe." The PWM, in the same issue of its paper Progressive Worker, issued a statement of principles. It called for a "national conference in the near future for the purpose of organizing a Marxist-Leninist-Workers Party in Canada."

Nearly five years have elapsed since that bold statement... five years of revolutionary upsurge throughout the world. After a brief interlude of rapid growth, mostly through regroupment of older left-wing elements from the decaying B.C. [British Columbia] Communist party and from the CCF-NDP [Cooperative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic party], the Progressive Workers Movement entered a period of attrition and decline that continues to this day.

The failure of the PWM is rooted in the neo-Stalinist heritage of its founders. The formative stages of the PWM program took place under the guidance of Jack Scott, the chairman of the group. He was expelled along with others from the Communist party in 1964 for dissenting pro-Peking "fractional activity." He founded the PWM shortly after.

The PWM attacked the Communist party leadership for its liberal-reformist politics and its crass Canadian nation-
the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in the tremendous prog-
Mao's thought
vriere, attempting to "expose" the LSA/LSO's support of
win over significant youth forces.

However, the PWM attack on the Communist party
stayed rigidly within the ambit of Peking's polemics with
Moscow. It never broke with the Stalinist ideology and
tactics inherited from the CP. PW's first public meeting in
December, 1964, prominently displayed Stalin's portrait.
Soviet revisionism, according to the PWM, started with
Khrushchev.

The PWM failed to come to terms even with the postwar
split in the Canadian Communist party led by Fergus
McKean. That split produced the historic critique of the
Communist parties, *Communism versus Opportunism*. In
his book, McKean—once the top leader of the B. C. CP—
recorded the policy of class collaboration and betrayals
conducted by the Canadian and American CPs during the
prewar and wartime period.

The PWM began its political activity with the albatross
of Stalin and Stalinist policies around its neck. Ever since,
its display—through five years of remarkable oppor-
tunist and sectarian twists—a thoroughly ultraleftist
stance on the major political issues of the day.

PW dismissed the New Democratic party as a capital-
list party. Blinded by Stalin's theory of "social fascism" which
equated the German Social Democrats and Nazis as po-
litical "twins," the PWM classified the NDP as a reactionary
party. PWM withdrew its members from the NDP. It called
upon all "genuine" socialists to leave the NDP and join
PW. A few did, but they soon dropped away.

The central focus of working-class politics in Canada
has become the NDP. Through it, organized labor broke
with capitalist "Liberal-labor" policies and launched a labor
party. The revolutionary-socialist tactic of supporting such
developments and working within them has been defended
many times over by Marxists. Lenin had occasion to ana-
lyze and defend this approach in his polemic against ultra-
leftism entitled *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Dis-
order*.

Seemingly ignorant of this analysis, as of Marxism in
general, PWM directed most of its fire at the Trotskyists of
the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ou-
vrière, attempting to "expose" the LSA/LSO's support of
the NDP with the ready-made arsenal of epithets and
charges provided by Stalin's school of falsification.

With this antilabor party policy, the PWM condemned
itself to speedy isolation from the real world of working-
class politics.

PWM's main political "capital" was the red banner of
Mao's thought—the franchise to speak for Mao which they
claimed to hold in Canada. The widespread interest in
the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in the tremendous pro-
gress of the Chinese workers' state, and in the Chinese criti-
cisms of the Soviet policies has been most pronounced
among the youth and on the campuses. Despite this fertile
interest in China and Maoism, the PWM failed utterly to
win over significant youth forces.

This failure cannot alone be explained by its adulation
of Stalin. The PWM failed to understand the importance
of the youth radicalization and the strategic role open to
the campus youth under neocapitalism. In fact, the PWM
initially pulled its few youth off the campuses and sent
them into the factories—to fight for Canadian unions!

PWM floated a youth group, the Youth Against War and
Fascism. This group, also confined to Vancouver,
didn't survive long, and was quietly buried. It left behind
no program for youth—only a few memories of isolated
demonstrations and militant displays of revolutionary
ervor on workers' picket lines.

The Youth Against War and Fascism's birthmark was
the PWM's chronic habit of combining a "minimum pro-
gram" with ultraleft action.

This separation of minimum and maximum programs—
a sectarian error soundly condemned by all great Marxists
—most notably Luxemburg and Lenin, not to speak of
Marx and Engels—dominated the PWM's one lapse into
electoral activity.

Having denounced the New Democratic party as a capi-
talist party, the PWM decided to enter a candidate against
the NDP in the 1965 federal election. It chose to run in
Vancouver East, a traditional working-class stronghold.
Jerry Le Bourdais, a prominent Vancouver unionist (then
president of the Oil Workers union and a member of the
Vancouver Labor Council executive) was put forward
as PWM's candidate. PWM advanced its own program—
a "minimum" program, no further to the left than that of
the NDP. Some aspects of its "minimum" program were
weaker than the NDP's—on social welfare issues, for
example, where the PWM mustered enough fervor to call
for "adequate medical, dental and hospital care coverage!"

The PWM "minimum" program echoed the NDP's pro-
gram of reforms—with the addition of a strident Canadian
nationalism. They called for the nationalization of Amer-
can-owned monopolies—but carefully avoided aiming the
same demand against Canadian-owned monopolies which,
presumably, did not thwart Canadian independence.

The PWM showed in its 1965 electoral program its
complete ignorance of the transitional program—a pro-
gram which advances a series of class-struggle demands
which can mobilize workers in struggle and advance their
consciousness towards anticapitalist and socialist views.
They zigzagged between their minimum reform demands
on the one hand, and their exhortations to revolution on
the other.

Their minimum program netted them some 300 votes,
contrasted to many thousands for the NDP.

The common observation that ultraleftism and oppor-
tunism are but two sides of the same coin is borne out
by PWM's record in the trade unions.

Just as they dismissed the NDP as a "capitalist" party,
the PWM rejected the organized trade-union movement.
Since this meant rejecting the international unions, which
PWM labels "American," the main struggle before Cana-
dian workers, according to PWM, was therefore for pure,
all-Canadian trade unions. PWM tried to bypass the Cana-
dian Labor Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labor
with a series of trade-union adventures that virtually de-
stroyed its original roots in the unions themselves.

The first escapade—in 1965—was the so-called General
Council of Workers. Just as the PWM would substitute for the NDP, this labor body would challenge the CLC. Needless to report, this Maoist front was short-lived.

After this disaster, the PWM poured even more steam into the campaign to "liberate" Canadian workers from the internationals. They allied themselves with any and all elements in the unions which sought Canadian unions at any cost. Any—or no—program would do. This brought them into collaboration with anti-NDP, pro-Liberal elements in the unions and led to the eventual formation of the Committee for Canadian Unions.

Thus, after attacking the CP for its crass nationalism, the PWM came full cycle back to the same position.

The program for Canadian unionism is a catchall which diverts rank-and-file struggles away from the key problems in the unions, such as bureaucracy and leadership careerism, and state intervention into union affairs. Bureaucracy in the unions is a social, not national feature. It is endemic to the workers' movement in all the advanced capitalist countries. In the fight against bureaucracy and for rank-and-file control, trusteeships and attacks by the brass may necessitate split situations. But PWM’s policy made splitting with the internationals an obligatory principle and strategy without concern for what impact this would have on labor’s overall strength against international capital.

PWM failed to understand that rank-and-file democracy and militant unionism depend upon raising class consciousness in the unions. Cultivated nationalist illusions and all-Canadian unions are no guarantee of rank-and-file democracy. Moreover, Canadian unionists should understand that the Canadian state—and the provincial governments—are just as viciously antilabor as the American and cannot be relied upon for assistance against "American domination."

The opportunism of PWM’s Canadian unionism stance complemented its staggering infantilism in local union situations. Ultraleftism led to the isolation of some of its best trade unionists, most notably Jerry Le Bourdais. During his term as an executive member of the Vancouver Labor Council, Le Bourdais and the PWM had a caucus of almost a dozen VLC delegates. By following the PWM forays into the union movement, Le Bourdais was led into easy victimization and a defenseless situation in his own union, the Oil Workers local in Vancouver. His militant record was no substitute for a policy of winning the rank-and-file to a viable program of struggle.

When Le Bourdais was fired in 1966, he was rendered defenseless, thanks to the record of PWM’s sectarian capers. PW substituted the issue of Maoism in place of the necessary and elementary defense of a trade unionist victimized by the boss.

Nothing now remains of the PWM presence in the unions, on the local level or at the VLC—not even the echo of their revolutionary rhetoric. PW has paid the price of substituting itself and its nationalistic schema in place of a carefully worked out transitional program in the trade unions, a concerted struggle against the parasitic bureaucracy, and support of independent labor political action.

The most wretched aspect of PWM’s neo-Stalinist outlook was its rabid sectarian attacks on other left-wing organizations. The operating principle of the PWM in other organizations and the unions was expose Trotskyists first and CPers second. Once free reign could be secured for the PWM, action could proceed.

This strategy was most pronounced in the Canada-China Friendship Association. From its original function, that of promoting "better understanding between the people of Canada and China" and combating the capitalist press distortions about China, the association was converted by the Maoists into a propagandistic mouthpiece for the thought of Mao Tsetung. One had no business in the CCFA unless the thought of Mao was foremost in his mind and he supported the cultural revolution.

Similarly, the PWM pulled out of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and launched a factional tirade against the FPCC. They red-baited it as "Trotskyist." The counter-committee they formed folded shortly after it announced itself—coinciding with PWM’s "discovery" that Cuba was a "bourgeois" state!

The February 1968 issue of Progressive Worker, PWM’s journal, offered its readers a "systematic presentation of the PWM’s position" on Cuba. Cuba, it said, is "essentially a bourgeois-democratic revolution masquerading as socialism," led by "petty-bourgeois leaders." According to this "systematic presentation," Castro "aims at no more than a patching of the capitalist system."

Castro’s failing, of course, was that he did not prostrate the Cuban revolution and its revolutionary internationalism to the opportunism of Peking’s foreign policy.

PWM failed the acid test—the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Its record of capricious activity in “solidarity” with Vietnam substitutes for mass actions and support for the antiwar movement in North America. PWM characterized the actions of bringing thousands of Canadians into the streets to demand the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, an end to Canada’s complicity, and self-determination for Vietnam, as "petty-bourgeois. The September 1967 issue of PW charged that the leadership of the antiwar movement was dominated by "counterrevolutionaries." Since then, PWM has not participated in building antiwar actions.

PWM’s political method is at least consistent. The NDP is a capitalist party! International unions are CIA fronts! Cuba is a capitalist state! The antiwar movement is petty-bourgeois! Not a trace of class analysis goes into this confused and incorrect assessment; what does go into it is the preconceived, bureaucratic outlook of international Maoism. Worse, the method is crassly idealist; the class character of a state or a political party is determined here by the ideas of its leaders, not by its class foundations, roots, origins and developments it is undergoing.

These sectarian positions coupled with ultraleft confrontations on the picket line and a reformist policy in their election campaign spelled an early end to the PWM as a political force even in the Vancouver area.

Today, after a series of splits, expulsions, and resignations by disillusioned members, the PWM is a handful of sectarianists outside the mainstream of political life. The once-monthly magazine Progressive Worker has been supplanted by a mimeographed bulletin and a promised quarterly magazine. Their forums which once attracted many young radicals have been discontinued. Their policy of regroupment is academic. What have they left to regroup?