

# An Excerpt From The Question And Answer Period

February 8, 1980

**Audience Member:** Could you tell us a bit about other organizations which have reached a point in their development where they have outgrown the structure they have and so make the decision to disband and form a new organization?

**APC Representative:** It's fairly common. With us, people have gotten used to the structure. Eight and a half years is a long time.

There's an organization in Canada called the WCP(ML) which just dissolved its predecessor organization, which was called the CCL(ML), to found a party. The CCL(ML) was a pre-Party formation which was originally founded by three groups, the MREQ, the CMO and the CRO. Both those incarnations of that organization reflect common ways in which changing the organizational structure is done. The move can be from the pre-Party formation, or from a number of pre-Party formations, to the Party. That's not what we're doing. The other move is the creation of a new group in the merger of two, three, or four existing groups. That's not what we're doing either.

It's most common, then, for organizations to change their structure in a process of Party formation or a process of unity between groups.

What we've done is done by others also. It's just not as common.

There is another organization in Canada which did what we did. In fact, that group developed somewhat in the same way as our organization did. It developed a newspaper first. It developed around the newspaper *En Lutte*. This is the group commonly referred to as *En Lutte*. Originally, the formal name of their organization was "EDJ *En Lutte*". The initials were for *E*quipe de *J*ournal, or production team, of *En Lutte*. After a while, they changed the organization's name. Now they are formally called the "Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada *En Lutte*". They made the change about a year ago. They made the change without rallying other groups and without proclaiming a Party. In a way that's an expression of the same thing we've done, then. They considered they had outgrown their form. They analyzed that they had become much more than just a production team. This parallels what we have done fairly closely.

What we have done, changing an organization's formal self-identification from a limited concept like a production team to the broader structure of an advanced revolutionary organization, has been done before. It is common enough also. It's just not the most common way organizations change.

Something that should be understood is that we weren't too concerned about precedents. Whether it had been done before or not was not our concern. Whether it had been done in exactly the same way before or not was not our concern. Whether or not critics would say, "Because it's a new way of doing things, it's not acceptable" was not our concern. Whether or not critics would say, "Because it has been done so many times before, it's not acceptable" was not our concern. We know that anybody who is dedicated to carping at us will always find an excuse to carp.

So, we didn't worry about all that too much. We just did what we felt we had to do. We just created the structure we felt we needed.

**Audience Member:** You said it is very hard to get other groups to acknowledge the existence of *Alive* or the *Alive Production Collective*. Do you expect this new organization to generate response from other groups on the Left now?

**APC Representative:** It's hard to say. This point we made in the speech about our members coming to revolutionary consciousness in a process of real life is really important in all this. Basically, we came to our enthusiasm for revolutionary ideas with a lot of what is often called "street consciousness". That's really good for polemics on the Left in Canada because a lot of it is like back-alley fighting. (Laughter)

They never say something to your face but they're always willing to say something behind your back. A lot of these people won't put anything in print about *Alive* but they'll talk about us until they're blue in the face off the record. None of these characters has ever put this thing in print about us being a police organization but a hell of a lot of them say it unofficially. When we think a group is a police organization, we say it in print. There are groups we consider so and we have said it. We consider the *Bainzites* a KGB agency. We say so in print all the time. We consider this group, *Bolshevik Union*, to be a police organization. We haven't been afraid to say that in print.

If we actually think something to be true, we say it in print. We say these things in our speeches. We tell people to their faces. Others just talk about us behind our backs. They follow a more frightened policy.

We call the situation a conspiracy of silence. We think they don't put things officially because they're incapable of dealing with us. We think the incapability to deal with us in an open and principled way stems from the contradiction between the correctness of our political line and the incorrectness of their political line. That's part of it. For years, we've had the analysis that a large part of it too is a fear of the *Alive* style. They are incapable of dealing with the way we wage polemics.

Many people comment that the way we wage polemics sometimes seems quite flippant. There is a lot of humour and straightforward denigration. That's not all there is to it. There is also political content. However, people comment on the flip content. We consider that a legitimate concern when it comes from our readers. It should be understood that this style is not common amongst Leftists in Canada. It's not common for Left groups in Canada to have a sense of humour. They don't know how to deal with it when they are treated with a sense of humour. A good reason to make the jokes in these polemics is that we know they are incapable of dealing with these jokes. They have such an overblown opinion of themselves that they don't feel anybody would view them with humour. A reason we can view them with humour is because we can view ourselves with humour. We're not that full of ourselves. We're also willing to make jokes at our own expense.

We should be serious about our purpose. We have no dispute with that. This morbid ultra-seriousness is something we're just not interested in.

