advantage of this favorable situation to put forward new projects. Thus, the Communist Party of Canada, which disowned revolution ary Marxist-Leninist principles in 1952, hurries to propose a Feder ated mass workers' party to these radicalized sectors. And so, certain union permanents are actively preparing to set up a workers' party out of the unions.

But these socialist parties which are "new" in appearance, in no way differentiate themselves on the level of their strategic objectives and their fundamental political principles, from the traditional social democratic parties. They defend the utopic project of the peaceful passage to socialism, forgetting that the bourgeoisie will defend its State power to the end and that it will even resort to arms. In practice they deny the leading role of the working class by indifferently addressing all salaried workers, which amounts to the same thing as giving the leadership of their party to the petty-bourgeoisie... the class which according to their arguments is "the most numerous". In this way, they deny the existence of class struggle and of the irreductible contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Their strategy is the same as the Popular Unity's in Chile. And in September 1973, we saw where the disorganization of the proletariat, the absence of its revolutionary Party and the disarrangement of the working class leads to — to a military fascist dictatorship and bloody repression.

At the present time, only Marxist-Leninists defend the revolutionary principles which must be the basis of the proletarian Party. Even though they are divided and numerically weak, Marxist-Leninists are increasingly conscious of the necessity of uniting to build together the proletarian Party. But contrary to the opportunists and the social democrats, who unite without any principled basis, they on the right or on the left, the Marxist-Leninists want to base their unity on a clear agreement of principle. They want to rally the real Marxist-Leninists who are interested in defending to the end, the interests of the working class and of the revolution. And today, do to this, they give themselves three major tasks: to clarify their political line by criticism and self-criticism, to proletarize their organization, and to build a single Party. To the extent that one group today presents itself as being this Party, the "Communist" Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), the "CPC(M-L)" party and all the others, they also have the duty of investigating this party and analyzing its political line. If it's proven that its identification with Marxism-Leninism is without foundation, it must be denounced. If, on the contrary, it represents the real interests of the working class, they should call on all Marxist-Leninists to rally to it.

Without the revolution there can be no liberation, without the proletarian Party, there can be no revolution

Capitalism cannot exist without the exploitation of the working class and the domination of the entire labouring mass. Eliminating capitalist exploitation and domination means eliminating capitalism itself. Eliminating capitalism means expropriating the bourgeoisie and abolishing the political form of its domination, that is, the bourgeois State and bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

But the capitalist class will never cede its power or its holdings. It will fight to its death to preserve them, and it won't hesitate, as it already done so many times, to use all forms of violence imaginable, going from the systematic repression of the workers and the communist movement, to a world war. Hence, the absolute necessity that the workers have recourse to revolutionary violence to eliminate this class which is essentially composed of parasites.

The struggle against the capitalist class, the struggle for socialism, is a long and difficult struggle which demands that the workers have a united organization of combat, guided by a scientific theory, Marxism-Leninism, and solidly implanted among the labouring masses. This Party can't be anything but a proletarian Party, that is, a Party which mainly bases its organization in the working class in order to rally to it all the strata of the people against the capitalist class. The class basis of the proletarian Party, the leading party of the socialist revolution, is thus first of all, the proletariat, and then all the other labouring strata of the people. Because, in capitalist society the proletariat is the sworn enemy of the bourgeoisie. The riches of the capitalist class depend mainly on it. Thus it is up to the proletariat to build the movement which will sweep away the domination of capital, of its monopolies and of its State.
The Marxist-Leninist movement and the Trade Union movement at the present stage

From the very moment that the working class became numerous enough and concentrated enough in factories, and mills, it began to develop organizational forms in order to fight the capitalists' attacks and to demand higher wages and better working conditions. At first, the bourgeoisie fiercely repressed these organizations, outlawed them and hunted down the working class leaders. But when these first workingmen's associations evolved into powerful trade unions and became deeply rooted in all the main branches of industry, the bourgeoisies of all the capitalist countries steered their tactics away from brutal repression and tried instead to take control of these trade unions, to integrate them into the State apparatus and change them into agencies of class collaboration.

In the United States and Canada, these tactics led to the elimination of progressive and communist leadership from the trade unions and to their replacement with elements willing to collaborate with the bourgeoisie in oppressing and exploiting the workers. The result of this is that now, at a time when capitalism is undergoing a crisis on a world-wide scale and when everywhere the masses of workers are mobilizing against the attacks of Capital, the reformist and treacherous trade union leaders are doing their utmost to curb the strike movement and bargain with the capitalists and their State in order to hold the demands of the workers down to a level previously determined by the bosses!

Does this betrayal of the union bosses mean that communists must give up all work in the trade unions on the pretext that their leadership is reactionary and sold out, thereby leaving the working class under the influence of these traitors? Lenin and the leaders of the Communist International were right in exposing this trend as both "leftist" and deeply irresponsible: "To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats or "workers who have become completely bourgeois". (1)

Lenin also teaches us that the essential prerequisite for communist work in the trade unions is the existence of the proletarian Party, which is armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism and is the guide of socialist revolution. This is why, at a time when such a party does not exist as yet in Canada, IN STRUGGLE! puts forward the slogan: "Build the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Struggle for the Proletarian Party!" as the main task of Marxist-Leninists at the present stage in order to win over the vanguard elements of the proletariat to the side of communism. For without a Marxist-Leninist organization, without a genuine communist leading center that will coordinate the work of communists, no consistent work is possible either in the trade unions or in the other mass organizations in this country.

The trends that dominated the Trade Union movement in Europe

The Catholic trade union movement

In Canada and in the United States, as well as in Europe, various trends exercised an influence on the orientation of the trade union movement. It is essential to have some knowledge of these trends in order to understand the present trade union movement and wage the struggle against reformism within it. Trade unionism or "business unionism" (syndicalism d'affaires), its major trend, has certainly dominated the entire world trade union movement for 100 years. However three other trends have left a mark on the trade union movement throughout its history: anarcho-syndicalism, the Catholic trade union movement and the communist movement.

In North America this trend was embodied in the all-powerful American Federation of Labor (AFL) and its Canadian wing, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC). The AFL, a federation of trade unions, was founded by Samuel Gompers in 1886 to struggle against another labor organization called the Knights of Labour. Drawing its inspiration from the pattern of British trade unions, which unionized only the labour aristocracy, the AFL organized the skilled workers in every trade and excluded the unskilled workers, thus dividing the working class. Each trade signed a collective agreement with the employer and didn't care about the other trades. This is the concept of "raiding", that hateful practice of the union bureaucrats who are incessantly trying to expand their "jurisdiction" and their personal power over the workers. They are now called "business agents" for nothing for indeed they earn their living precisely from the trade of manpower with and according to the conditions of the employers, this trade provides them with a profitable monopoly thanks to the union dues and the bribes they get from it.

Trade unionism is characterized by the struggle it wages to "improve" the capitalist system instead of trying to destroy it, as well as by the promotion of forms acceptable to the bourgeoisie. This is why, the Catholic clergy saw that it was better to take control over the unions and use them to control the workers and divide the working class, each trade unionized only the labour aristocracy, the AFL organized the skilled workers in every trade and excluded the unskilled workers, thus dividing the working class. Each trade signed a collective agreement with the employer and didn't care about the other trades. This is the concept of "raiding", that hateful practice of the union bureaucrats who are incessantly trying to expand their "jurisdiction" and their personal power over the workers. They are now called "business agents" for nothing for indeed they earn their living precisely from the trade of manpower with and according to the conditions of the employers, this trade provides them with a profitable monopoly thanks to the union dues and the bribes they get from it.

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The struggle between the two lines within the Canadian Trade Union movement

d) The Canadian Communist Movement and the Unions (1929-1935)

In 1929 a year of generalized crisis for the capitalist system and, in Canada as elsewhere, the bourgeoisie was locking out the workers by the thousands, thus condemning them to unemployment and extreme poverty. It was therefore right for the Communist Party to help these workers by organizing them at a time when less than 15% of the Canadian workers were unionized. Between 1929 and 1935, the League had 40,000 workers in it and led the struggles in the mining, garment, automobile, electrical product, lumber and textile industries.

But the fundamental principle of communist work in the unions is the following: where the masses of the workers are, i.e., in the big trade union organizations, no matter how reactionary they are to conquer the ideological leadership of these organizations in order to win over the workers to the side of communism and to change trade unions into instruments of class struggle to overthrow capitalism.

This experience of a Canadian communist trade union center was very valuable for the Canadian working class. First, it established the basis of industrial unionism in this country by creating unions in the textile, lumber, automobile, and steel industries, all the giant mass industries which were to unite later within the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). Second, the League waged numerous victorious struggles at a time of world-wide crisis of capitalism and did not restrict itself to economic demands but fought also for the political rights of the workers and for essential reforms, such as unemployment insurance. As well, the experience of the League shows the Canadian working class that the leadership of the proletariat is essential in struggling successfully against the bourgeoisie both on the economic and the political levels and that far from leaving the reactionary trade unions, the communists, on the contrary, must join them in order to create communist factions within them that will work at leading the struggles of the workers towards the final objective: overthrowing capitalism and establishing socialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

The struggle between the two lines within the Canadian Trade Union movement

"Imperialism (...), wrote Lenin, creates the economic possibility of corrupting the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives form to, and strengthens opportunism".

The history of the Canadian labor movement is full of examples of opportunism and sold out to the bourgeois. The League had 40,000 workers in it and led the struggles in the mining, garment, automobile, electrical product, lumber and textile industries.

The struggle between the two lines within the Canadian Trade Union movement

The new varieties of opportunism and reformism within the Canadian Trade Union movement

Opportunism and reformism are nowadays assuming new forms within the trade union movement in Canada. It is essential to study these new trends in order to draw a clear line of demarcation between opportunism and reformism and build a genuine class struggle trade union movement.

Let us examine them in brief:

1) Social-Democracy:

Advocates the reform of the State and of the society in order to handle the exploitation of workers. In the final analysis, it increases it with the help of more "rational" and more up-to-date methods. This trend is currently linked to the two main social democratic parties, the NDP and the PQ. Social democrats want to enslave the trade union movement to the bourgeois politics of these two parties and divert the bourgeoisie in the unions is to preach conciliation, moderation in demands and political indifference in order to divert the workers from the need to create a genuine proletarian party.

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) repudiated Marxist-Leninist principles in the 50's and thus sank into revisionism and servility towards the bourgeoisie. It exercises some influence within certain nationalist unions in Canada as well as in the Labour Council of Montreal (QFL). Revisionism in the trade union movement consists precisely in denying the necessity for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat to destroy capitalism and set up socialism, in denying the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie in propagating theses about the "gradual and peaceful transformation of capitalism by reforms". This trend contends with social democracy for the control of the labour aristocracy.

However, for a few years now, a new variety of modern revisionism, neo-revisionism, has been advocating obedience and servility in face of the reformist trade union leaders, while putting forward the primacy of the economic struggle over the class political struggle against capitalism, the abandonment of the struggle against the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie, and, last but not least, the political indifference of trade unions and mass organizations under the pretext that "the line of ideological struggle is the line of dissension" (...). What could be more opportunistic than this group that makes a living in proclaiming itself the "working class party" and refuses to wage the ideological struggle against the corrupted union leaders who every
day betray the workers. We are of course, referring to the so-called Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), the CPC(M-L). Their opportunism on this question is more easily understood when one reads their flattering eulogies of the union leaders. There is no doubt that this petty bourgeois party is trying by fair means or foul to win trade union chieftains and the labor aristocracy over to its side. This group is all the more dangerous as it presents itself as Marxist-Leninist. It must thus be denounced all the more vigorously.

This trend is a variant of anarcho-syndicalism and advocates the following ideas: it is the spontaneous economic struggle of the workers that will permit their radicalization, which will inevitably (i) create the conditions of the creation of a vanguard and remote "autonomous political organization of the Quebec workers". It is based on the recent wave of militant strikes such as the one at Firestone in 73-74, and rests on a narrowly economist conception of class struggle. Its principal representatives are the Regroupement des comités de travailleurs and some labor leaders who take advantage of this positive trend towards combativity among Canadian workers at the present time in order to put forward spontaneity and localism (factory-by-factory struggle) as absolute principles, thus negating Marx and Leninist theory on organizational questions as well as the necessity for the proletarian Party in order to overthrow capitalism.

All things considered, the common characteristics of the reformist line within the trade union movement boil down to: closer alignment among the workers towards the true nature of the State and:

a) by basing the unions within the bounds of economic struggle, which is tantamount to diverting the working class from the solution to the great social and political problems it is faced with. "By restricting itself to economic struggle", wrote Lenin, "the working class surrenders its political independence, follows other parties' lead and betrays its great motive: the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the workers themselves." (4)

For a revolutionary working-class Trade Union movement

According to Marx, "Trade Unions work well as centers of resistance against the encroachment of Capital. They fall partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organizational forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system." (5)

Thus, the daily economic struggle must constantly be linked to the political struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. And it is precisely the task of communists to lead this daily struggle against capital towards a growing elevation of the workers' consciousness towards, the political struggle waged by the proletariat and its allies under the leadership of its party with the object of seizing power.

What are the fundamental principles of Marxist-Leninism on communist work in the Trade Unions?

1) Before the revolution, trade unions are "centers of resistance against the encroachment of Capital". This is why they must be as broad based as possible, aiming at organizing and bringing together the whole of the working class and the working people in general against the bourgeoisie. They remain broader and more numerous organizations than the Party, since the Party includes only the conscious vanguard of the proletariat.

2) Trade unions are a school of class struggle. It is by trade union activity, in a meeting or in a strike, that workers get their first contact with the struggle against the boss, and the political struggle. Therefore, far from limiting the trade union struggle to the corporatist struggle for immediate demands, the conscious workers and the communists must utilize each partial struggle, each isolated conflict and each antagonism (whether on a large or on a small scale) between a group of workers and a boss, to show the workers that there are irreconcilable contradictions between the interests of the bourgeoisie and those of the proletariat, and that only the destruction of capitalism can eliminate the oppression and exploitation of the proletariat. From this (5) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.4

At the present stage, what are the tasks of Marxist-Leninists relative to Trade Unions?

Currently, the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement is young, inexperienced, dismayed and attacked from within by reformism, eco-

(3) People's Canada Daily News, Vol. 5, No. 6
(4) Marx, Collected Works, Vol.4
(5) Karl Marx, quoted in Filip Kesel, Two Opposing Lines in the World Trade Union Movement, Germain Publishing Co., New York, 1976, p.28
(6) Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.13
nomism and revisionism in their various forms. While the capitalist crisis reduces thousands of workers to extreme poverty (there are now more than 800,000 unemployed people in Canada), stirs up the anger of the working class and mobilizes them, the subjective conditions, the conscious leadership of this movement by a proletarian Party, are sorely lacking. Therefore the task of Marxist-Leninists is to achieve their unity on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist principles within an organization that will wage the struggle for the creation of the proletarian Party.

Mao Tse-Tung teaches us that “It is only if the Communist Party is united that the unity of the whole working class and of the whole nation can be achieved”. Now, at a stage when the party does not exist yet, the priority must be to create it. Some opportunists claim that we must build mass organizations, dissipate our efforts in mass work and thus build the Party from the bottom up. It was precisely in connection with communist work in the trade unions that Lenin upheld the following principle against the economists of his time: the progress of mass work depends on the political and organizational progress of the Party itself.

“If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organization of revolutionaries, we can guarantee the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims of both social democracy and of trade unionism. If, however, we begin with a wide workers’ organization, supposed to be most “accessible” to the masses (…) we shall achieve the aims neither of social democracy nor of trade unionism (…)” (8)

The 5th Congress of the Communist International reaffirmed that the first priority must be given to the building of the Party as long as it is not firmly established in the main factories of the country: “The fundamental defect and the origin of all the weaknesses of our work in the trade unions lies in the fact that the party cells in factories are lacking or are still in embryo. The building of cells is a prerequisite for the building of base factions, for the strengthening of the activity of all party members in the trade union movement and for the achievement of a unitarian line at all levels of the trade union organization.”

This is why the priority of Marxist-Leninists right now is to create the organization of struggle for the proletarian Party. This Marxist-Leninist organization will bring together the forces of the young Marxist-Leninist movement, permit its contact with the masses, ensure the development of the strategic and tactical lines and consequently give a scientific guide to the communist work in the trade unions. The Marxist-Leninist organization is an essential prerequisite for Marxist-Leninist work in the trade unions and to negate this fact is tantamount to launching out into activism and spontaneism of course, but also to practically rejecting the leading role of the party in the revolution.

What are the tasks of Marxist-Leninists in the trade unions at the present stage? “The Marxist-Leninist parties struggle neither to set right and educate the reactionary trade union leaders nor to improve and reform the trade union centers but to enlighten the proletariat and give its struggle healthy political and ideological foundations” (9) This is all the more true when the Party does not exist: Marxist-Leninists do not have to struggle for positions in the trade unions at the present stage. On the contrary they must intensify political propaganda and agitation, propagate Marxism-Leninism and bring together the conscious workers who lead and wage the daily struggles in their trade union in order to enable them to assimilate Marxism-Leninism in the meetings, circles and cells of the Marxist-Leninist organization. Why can’t we put forward a broader program right now? Precisely because it is impossible, without a Marxist-Leninist organization of struggle for the Party, to centralize the experience of struggle of the workers’ movement and even the experience of the Marxist-Leninist movement, and translate this experience into slogans and a revolutionary program.

For the struggle against the reformist and sold-out trade union leaders, for a genuine democratization of the trade unions, for trade union unity of action and for a revolutionary working class trade union movement, create the Marxist-Leninist organization of struggle for the Party!