

CHAPTER V
The battle for leadership posts

Horrified at the thought of political struggle and incapable of distinguishing between bourgeois and proletarian politics, there was really no way that the League could avoid “playing politics” itself. After all, you could hardly expect its members to stay buried in their own little “shop” with their fellow petty-bourgeois implantees forever. And what kind of politics is it that they are compelled to play? None other than the reformist politics characteristic of the radical petty bourgeoisie who are trying to impose their hegemony over the working class. As we have seen, the League’s political viewpoint is not Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism but bourgeois nationalism. Further, the tactical line of the League, as demonstrated earlier on, has got nothing to do with mobilizing the proletariat, united on the basis of its class interests, to struggle against the capitalist class, i.e. to engage in the revolutionary political struggle to weaken and overthrow the bourgeoisie, despite the misleading slogans about waging “*class against class*” struggles. Just the opposite. The tactic of the League is economism. It is to build up the “tough” uncompromising economic struggle, “*militant action at the rank and file level*”, as the be all and end all and then to dress it all up in a bow by making vague references to the economic advantages of the socialist system. Not a word about how socialism is first and foremost a society characterized by the transition from capitalism to communism. Not a whisper about how the dictatorship of the proletariat and the continuous mobilization of the people to fight against the vestiges of the old capitalist society are the essence of socialism. In short, the League uses the word “socialism” in just the same way as the revisionists and social democrats do. For them it is an election slogan, a “left-wing” catch word employed in practice to oppose what is the very guts of that concept, the revolutionary political struggle, the independent policy of the proletariat.

Let’s take a look at what the League does to try and impose its bourgeois line on the Canadian masses.

From economism to “radical” reformism

Floating from one type of reformism to another — that is the story of the League in a nutshell since it was founded. To be precise, the

League's mass work comes down to three basic varieties of reformism. While it may seem that League members simply move back and forth between the different varieties, in fact there is a definite trend which is increasingly marked towards plain old-fashioned "rightism", towards an openly reactionary line. The first type of reformism is traditional economism. This was the type of economism pioneered by the first wave of implantees who did their best to get "buddy-buddy" with "the guys in the shop", the better to win posts in the local union. It was followed by radical reformism, a new improved version where our goodly reformists gave their work a revolutionary air by adding a section to their election platforms about "socialism-like-in-China". All of this was then topped off by a denunciation of all those "dirty reformists" who turned out to be anyone offering resistance to the League's campaigns to impose, out of the blue, one or another of its many "class struggle" programs.

And finally, enter the third variety of reformism, the latest and most effective type for fooling people, the "pure and simple reformism" which is on a par with some of the "best" manoeuvres pulled off by the NDP and CP: programs which consist of a shopping list of demands, the same ones as in the earlier programs but minus the references to "socialism"; cozing up hypocritically to yesterday's "dirty reformists" to more easily sneak into leadership posts; carrying out raiding campaigns for the CNTU to try yet again to take over the leadership at a national as well as local level; new campaigns of massive implantation of League members, the vast majority of whom put on the guise of "militant worker" and deny their links with the League; support for the reformist proposals put forward by the labour leaders calling for "full employment" and backing of social democratic policies aimed at getting back control over "our" economy and creating jobs etc.

Thus phase one of the League's tactical line is traditional economism, boosting the "hardfought" and "exemplary" economic struggle. Being a communist in this context comes to mean simply being better than the CLC or the CNTU — better at making friends with the workers; better at fighting grievances; better at setting up action committees of workers on this or that question, whatever looks like it might "catch on". Once the implantees have succeeded in grouping around themselves a bunch of militant workers (which is then baptized a "factory cell") we get to phase two which is to take power — in the factory, union or mass organization. The time is now ripe for the much-heralded "*class struggle programs*" to make their appearance.

These (in)famous class struggle platforms have a dual nature. First of all they are fundamentally reformist, except of course for the inevitable ritualistic reference to "socialism-like-in-China" and the attack against

the "reformists" who, as often as not, are those people fighting for reforms who react rather coolly to the battle for leadership posts drummed up by the League. The so-called "*class struggle programs*" are nothing but poor, watered-down substitutes for a genuine communist program which are all rife with meaningless generalities that try to pass as "principles".

The second characteristic which is particular to this type of reformism is that it tries to come across as "radical" for the precise purpose of covering up the fact that it is reformist. The idea is to flail away to transform a broad struggle mobilizing masses of people for a needed reform, or even one which is simply to ensure that existing economic or political rights are respected, into an "exemplary struggle". Such a struggle thus brings League supporters together around a "socialist" "class struggle" platform to conduct — uncompromisingly of course — the struggle for reforms. And to make doubly sure that they don't fall into the burning pit of "reformism", the League has been known in some instances to go so far as to demand impossible reforms. All this to satisfy the "revolutionary" consciences of our goodly petty-bourgeois radicals. These noble radicals are quick to play the scorned martyr role when they run into an avalanche of criticisms from the masses who are witnessing the sabotage of their struggles. The League supporters shout far and wide to anyone who bothers to listen that they are the genuine "Marxist-Leninists". After all, isn't it obvious? They are by far the most "radical" when it comes to fighting for reforms. And as for those "revisionists" in IN STRUGGLE!, well, all they ever do is talk politics and defend the communist program in the masses. Why they should take a page out of the League's book and learn how to skipper those often stormy "exemplary struggles" that the masses unfortunately equally often try to escape from, before the ship is completely scuttled.

There are a long string of "*class struggle programs*." Especially numerous are the ones aimed at the mass community organizations where the League figures it has a fighting chance, if it moves its people around in calculated fashion, to "take power". Here are the titles of a few of them: **Luttons pour le droits aux garderies, pour l'émancipation des femmes!** (Fight for the Right to Daycare and for Women's Liberation) — SOS Daycare, Montreal; **Contre le réformisme, pour une ADDS de luttes de classe.** (Against Reformism, for a Class Struggle ADDS) — Welfare Rights Association, especially in the Montreal area; **Luttons pour des comptoirs de lutte de classe** (Fight for Class Struggle Food Co-ops); **Pour un garage de luttes de classe!** (For a Class-Struggle Garage) — put forward by the Montreal group Mobilisation as a proposal to a co-operative garage in the Montreal region. And those are only some of them. A more complete list would

have to include the many and varied versions of these platforms which were reissued several times according to how people reacted to them. It would also include the many “*class struggle*” electoral platforms put forward by the League to get its candidates elected in the unions. And then there are the special programs for autoworkers, textile workers, and workers in the other industrial sectors. That is quite a few platforms and “programs” for one organization to dream up, especially for a group that claims to be in such a “hurry” to create the party that it never got around to putting forward a program for making the revolution in Canada. While all of the League’s “*class struggle programs*” are proclaimed as masterpieces of anti-reformism, they serve but one purpose and that is to substitute for the dissemination of the revolutionary program. What they are trying to make people believe is that a given so-called “radical” struggle for reforms can transform itself into a revolutionary struggle because the word “socialism” appears in the platform which guides it. And we say the **word** socialism advisedly because that’s about the only thing socialist about those platforms. In its pamphlet, “*For a class-struggle ADDS*”, the League promises to save welfare recipients from fiery flames of reformist hell by the unflinching affirmation of the following commandment:

“ADDS must put forward that only socialism can solve the problems faced by welfare recipients (1).”

And how does the League go about demonstrating what this means, why it is a correct approach and what the practical implications of it are? Well, it’s really quite simple. Socialism is like what they have in China. One point and there you have it folks.

“But will the day ever come when there won’t be any more unemployed or welfare recipients? Yes it will! Look for example at China where unemployment has been eliminated. (2)”

There is no doubt that the living example of a socialist country can have an inspirational effect on people. But to reduce the program of the socialist revolution in Canada to a rundown of the economic advantages of socialism in China is to copy Khrushchev’s line, changing only the name of the country to protect the innocent. Khrushchev and Co. claim that the socialist revolution is nothing more than the peaceful demonstration of the economic superiority of Russian “socialism” and its wonderfully “modern” Sputniks. That has a whole lot in common with the “socialism-in-the-platform” approach.

But the “intermediate” non-communist nature of the League’s many platforms is not simply a function of the fact that they effectively avoid defining what socialism is, what the objectives of communists are and

the path to be taken to achieve those objectives. It also lies in the character of some of the demands they put forward which create dangerous reformist illusions about the possibility of wresting away control of certain public institutions from the control of the capitalist State. Such demands imply that the power of the working class can be won by nibbling away bit by bit at the Big Cheese without making a revolution, without the violent overthrow of the State power of the capitalist class. Thus the League pulled out a demand that had already been introduced earlier as part of its Statement of Political Agreement (3), and placed it in its platform for SOS Daycare. According to the League, it is not enough to make the general demand for free, universal daycare paid for by the State. The demand must also be raised for these daycare centres to be “self-governing”, i.e. user-controlled.

Apparently the League has already become so entranced with the capitalist “self-management” of the Yugoslav revisionists that it doesn’t even realize that the capitalist State will never tolerate the existence of a State-run daycare system where it was to hand over control to the users, let alone one composed of “*class struggle*” daycare centres. Unless of course a secret entente could be arranged between the League and its ally in the “*world united front*”, the Canadian bourgeoisie. And keeping with the spirit of diplomacy, might we remind the “absent-minded professors” of the League ever so discreetly that what communists advance in their revolutionary program — and, unlike the League, communists have but one program — is control **by the working class**, not only of daycare centres but of all social institutions? The control that is called for is not self-management by the users but the **dictatorship of the proletariat**, control by the organs of proletarian power. In contrast, under capitalism, raising self-management to the level of a general demand as the League does, merely perpetrates a peculiarly petty-bourgeois reformist illusion. It serves to cover up the class character of the capitalist State and engenders the idea that somehow the State apparatus, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, can be nibbled away at bit by bit.

It is quite legitimate for cooperatives, daycare centres or community clinics to want to defend whatever autonomy they have. But when you start to beg the State to grant self-management, that’s something else again. To put it even more bluntly, it is crass reformism, using radical rhetoric to push class collaboration between the proletariat and the capitalist class — more specifically between the so-called “*class struggle*” organizations and the capitalist State which finances them. In the real world, a reformist point of view like that which bills itself as “radical” and “militant” is doubly reactionary. First of all, because it undermines the struggle for a free, universal daycare system, which is

very much a just demand that is realizable under capitalism and helps strengthen the camp of revolution because it enables women to get involved in the social struggle. Second, it is also reactionary because it tries to distract the people from the struggle for power, the struggle for socialism which is the only guarantee that our daycare centres, our schools, our hospitals and so on will truly serve the interests of the people. Yet again the League shows us how reformism (whether “radical” or not) and disdain for the revolutionary political struggle are but two sides of the same rusty coin.

A look at another series of platforms provides a clue to how the League intends to move from the battle for leadership posts in community organizations to doing the same thing in the unions. Having already shifted from “class struggle” daycare centres to “class struggle” food co-ops with a little detour in the direction of a “class struggle” ADDS (welfare rights associations) and then back again to a “class struggle” ACEF (family budgeting associations) and a “class struggle” garage, the League has now reached the stage of proclaiming “class struggle” unions. This means “class struggle” platforms which boost, or rather are supposed to boost, the candidatures of “communist” candidates for union posts. In practice, these platforms are just glorified calls for more militant unionism. Now it is without a doubt a good thing to have unions that are more militant. But when a platform of militant unionism pure and simple tries to pass itself off as a communist program, when the slates that are put forward are riddled with League implantees who are trying to pass off their revisionist line the only way they know how, then the name of the game the League is playing shines through bright and clear: sabotage of the very “class struggle” they claim so loudly to promote.

“I am running as part of this slate because to me it's obvious it is the only group of people who have really done anything to defend the workers' interests up to now (...) we want to change that situation around by electing a slate dedicated to the struggle of class against class, the struggle of the workers against the bosses (...) Class-struggle unionism demonstrates that it is possible to win brilliant victories even when we are in the middle of a crisis. That is because class-struggle unionism always promotes direct action (...) It is because class-struggle unionism calls for workers' unity and tries to co-ordinate the different struggles (...) It is because class struggle unionism is more democratic (...) Let's elect a slate made up of communists from the League and militant workers who stand for the right to health and to a decent job for everyone.” (4)

One thing is for sure. No one is going to be opposed to the idea of a union which practices “direct action”, effective “coordination” and “democracy”. However, it is a mite strange that in a hospital which has been a centre of great militancy in the past that the League members are the only ones capable of defending the trade-union demands of the workers. The League's flashy slogan for all times and places, “class struggle unionism”, which has been adopted by the CNTU Labour Council in Montreal, is exposed for what it really is: militant trade-unionism calling for the struggle of the workers against the bosses.

One other thing. In the pamphlet cited above, the League has a brief “political part” which talks about another one of its hobbyhorses, “the Parti Quebecois' crisis measures”. Concentrated in that one phrase is the kernel of the whole fraud being perpetrated by the League with its “class struggle” programs. First, it shows real contempt for the ability of the masses to fight for themselves; in this situation the workers are demonstratively militant and would like very much to get involved in democratizing their union. Second, it falsifies what communism is all about, limiting its scope down to the simple struggle against a capitalist party rather than against the capitalist system. In short, the League tries to substitute itself for the people, advertising itself as “their representative”: all the people have to do if they want everything to change is vote for the League. At the same time, the League is undermining genuine communist work which consists of making working people conscious of the fact that the defensive economic struggle in itself is insufficient. It is completely liquidating the responsibility of educating people to grasp that they must take up the highest form of class struggle, the political struggle. And that struggle is not against the Parti Quebecois which has failed to provide “good government” but against the system and the capitalist State.

And that rap is not something that should only be given to the handful of people who are already “initiated”. It is not a heartfelt wish that the “advanced” express to one another privately with a sign and then add “Ah yes, we are all agreed on that now. We must get together again and talk about it soon, say in twenty years, after we have finished the economic struggle ‘stage’ and the ‘stage’ of the “struggle against the superpowers”. That approach is completely wrong. The time to defend the communist program is now, right now. The workers in our country are more and more hungry for political debates. Go ahead and talk about strikes and the struggle for decent wages and conditions. But remember that workers already know these things. What they want to find out about is whether capitalism is going to last forever, whether Lévesque is a “lesser evil” than Trudeau, why the NDP is no solution, and what socialism is. What the workers would like answers to is why

they shouldn't opt for independence and how can you prevent a communist party from degenerating into a capitalist party. What workers want to understand is what revolutionary political struggle means in today's context, what the relative importance of the Wage Control Act is, and why it is necessary to organize the working class and the people to force the capitalists to put a halt to their attacks on democratic rights. The list of concerns could go on for pages. The League doesn't ever get around to talking about these questions in its platforms. It is too busy fighting the union bosses for their jobs, to do communist educational work.

From "radical" reformism to plain old reformism

But the workers have not been sucked in by the League's clever little tricks. Neither are the rightists, might it be said in passing. Thus the great campaign by the League to bring us all the "goodies" that come with their version of the "*class struggle*" has ended in a predictable dismal failure. This failure has in many cases also represented a victory for the bourgeoisie and for anti-communism. When a group misrepresents itself as communist and provides a perfect caricature of Marxism-Leninism that reinforces all the prejudices against communism as the League does, the capitalists are quick to cash in on the opportunity to push things even further "to the right". That is exactly what happened in a number of food co-ops, daycare centres, community groups and unions where elements, who as often as not were openly identified with the Parti Quebecois or the "notables" in the co-operative movement, took advantage of the chance to push corporatism, isolationism within these organizations and the expulsion of political groups. So a number of openly pro-capitalist types were able to exploit the situation with the helping hand of scurrilous propaganda in the major capitalist papers like La Presse of Montreal. However, a large number of workers were able to discern the difference between the petty-bourgeois radical line and the communist viewpoint.

Having weathered "radical" reformism and the "tough battles" line, now we find the League preparing its third onslaught of reformism. This time it is offering "pure and simple" reformism and downright bourgeois political struggle. It promotes the CNTU's program of fighting unemployment by demanding the right to a job and a policy for reviving the economy. It calls for defending the national independence of imperialist Canada against Russian aggression. It appeals to people to celebrate June 24 (Quebec's "national holiday") and July 1 (Canada's "national" day), in the spirit of "*class struggle*" of course. It joins in with the Parti Quebecois in condemning the "dirty im-

migrants" who threaten all of "us Quebecois" with the dreaded Assimilation. It hails the staggering successes of the "non-aligned" countries led by the very "honourable" fellow we all know and love, the very "revolutionary" Marshal Tito. It supports the chauvinist and reactionary policies of the present Chinese leadership regarding socialist Albania. Thus our goodly "revolutionaries" in the League have come to terms with the policy, the **capitalist** policy, of "our" bourgeoisie which, while not being as consistent as that of the League, nevertheless has its "positive aspects" which should be united with blah, blah, blah.

When you get right down to it, this is a tired old refrain indeed since, as we saw earlier, the League's bourgeois nationalist line was annointed at the time of its creation. The difference is that today's version of social chauvinism is presented as an "innovation" in Marxism whose theoretical expression is the "three worlds theory". That doesn't mean of course that the League is ready to dispense with all of its "revolutionary" pomp and ceremony, especially when it is preparing to create its revisionist party. To declare such a party requires achieving at least the appearance of leadership over the mass movement. The "socialism-in-the-platform" approach, the "radical" veneer that was supposed to give the old-fashioned economism a new shine, simply led to rejection. Undaunted, the League today is undertaking to go back to the old methods of economism, this time spruced up with openly reformist political positions. Operation "change-our-work-style" has arrived. The League has a new image, a new paint job on the same old rusty jalopy.

The League's "swing to the right" in its interventions among the masses cannot be detached from the very rapid evolution of political positions and concrete actions by the international social chauvinist trend. This same world-wide trend has been used and continues to be used to give a semblance of "revolutionary" ardour to the League's revisionist line. That is what inspires the League when it applauds every single act of collaboration by the revisionist Chinese leaders with imperialism, including with Canadian and American imperialism. And with every burst of applause, the League finds less and less about the policies of the capitalist class that is worth booing at. It shows greater and greater interest in presenting itself to others as the alternative to the NDP and the CP. These older revisionist parties sell themselves, as does the League, as "real workers parties", each with its own bourgeois program, each distinguished by its ties with a specific rival imperialist power.

The publication recently of a "corrected and simplified" version of the economist manifesto, **Fight class against class for our demands and for socialism**, criticized in a previous chapter, provides a good deal of

insight into the new openly reformist tactic of the League. We have already shown how this “new” version, **Build a united fightback of the working class**, takes another step closer to the grave of trade-unionist politics. But the text is also quite instructive about the League’s latest methods for trying to impose its revisionist leadership on the movement of resistance to the capitalist offensive. Having called in its manifesto for a trade-union policy to “*get united and concentrate all the different struggles against the various aspects of the crisis measures into a single working-class fight*” (5), the League then issued a plea to the unions to organize common actions. The spirit in which it did this is evidenced by the fact that it considered the November 1, 1978, demonstration against the shutdown of the Cadbury factory in Montreal and the support movement for the postal workers to be “*the first step in developing the united political struggle we have been calling for*”. Shortly thereafter, the League condemned the “*betrayal of the top union leaders “who had “completely capitulated”*” (6). For the League, the more things change the more they remain the same: from the “capitulation” of the Canadian bourgeoisie over Canada’s independence, to the “capitulation” of the Parti Quebecois in relation to the “interests of the Quebec nation”, and now the “capitulation” of the trade-union leaderships in the economic struggle. When it denounces the antics of the NDP which these same labour leaders support, the League thinks that it is demonstrating the all round capitalist nature of that party by talking about only one criteria, the opposition of the NDP to the strike movement. The mini-manifesto ends with a call to rally to the League which is on its way to forming a “real” workers party.

The problem, however, is that the League is just as mum about the political program, that its would-be “party of the working class” will be founded upon, as it is about the political program of the NDP and the trade-union bosses. Even the word “socialism” barely finds its way into the text. What has happened in fact is that we have passed from the era of “socialism-in-the-platform” to the epoch of “socialism-in-the-appendix”. It is only in a brief paragraph at the end of an appendix on economic data about the crisis that we find a few words of explanation of what socialism is, “*this system will not be based on the search for maximum profit, but will ensure that the material and moral well-being of the masses of workers and people be met above all*”. (7)

Gone are the days of “class struggle” platforms, long live the platforms of demands! One place where the shuffle of opportunist tactics is most evident is among students. Just yesterday, the League shouted at the top of its lungs that students didn’t have any collective interests because they didn’t constitute a social class. It affirmed loudly that all student struggles — except for the denunciation of the bourgeois con-

tent of the courses and rendering support to the economic struggles of the working class — were merely corporatist struggles for privileges. Having said that, it opposed uniting students on a trade-union basis. Instead they preached a line of organizing students around a correct political line, namely some kind of “*class struggle platform*”. The result of such a position was to place the League on the outside, looking in at the spontaneous mobilizations by students who also suffer definite effects from the crisis. Today the League has done a complete about turn without a word of public explanation. Now it seems that all student demands are automatically correct because they are all part of the right to education. The “*class struggle*” platforms are no longer where it’s at. Candidates are busy running for positions in the student associations here, there and everywhere, but it appears that it is now scarcely worthwhile for these candidates to mention that they belong to the League. Their program? “*Unity in action at the grass roots level*”:

“*Our demands and our struggles come up against the same enemy: the Parti Quebecois. It’s by getting together at the grass roots level in a common struggle against the crisis and the PQ that we will be able to wring these benefits out of the bourgeoisie (...)* It’s by developing unity in action at the grass roots level that the student movement will be able to consolidate itself(...) ANEQ (Association nationale des étudiants du Québec, the Quebec National Students Association — Editors’ note) must be transformed to make it a powerful instrument of struggle which will resolutely take up the class against class struggle against the capitalist class!” (8)

The League trots out the same old recipe: the common enemy is the Parti Quebecois, everyone must get involved in the struggle of class against class. What that means in this context, if we understand what is said in black on white correctly, is the struggle of the student class against the PQ! All that is missing is the bit about “socialism-like-in-China” where the right to education is respected, where there is no unemployment and where everything is going perfectly in the best of all possible worlds, as the next League’s leaflet indicates.

“*Under socialism, the working class leads the society in the interests of the people: the right to education is guaranteed for everyone, there is no more unemployment and young people play their part in building a new society*”. (9)

The League has also abandoned the use of its former supposedly socialist platforms in plants, hospitals, factories, etc. Is that because it is finally going to defend the communist program? Hardly. The object

is to provide even more camouflage for its implantees, old and new, behind a screen of purely trade-union work, with a few private meetings with contacts recruited on the basis of the trade-union work thrown in for good measure. Meanwhile, implantation is moving ahead full steam. In some cases, the implantation even extends to placing someone in each department of the same company. Worse still, the implantees, some of whom have been identified with the League for a long time, have started to deny their links with the League and to disguise their political positions. As a last straw, they run away from debates like the plague. Mind you, that doesn't prevent them from trying to straighten out those errant workers who have the affrontery to buy the newspaper *IN STRUGGLE!*. They talk away at such workers trying their level best to convince them that our group is "no good". Any anti-communist argument is good enough if it serves the purpose, for our implantees disguised as "ordinary workers" take great care never to let the argument get to the level of debating the communist program.

The trade-union work of the current generation of economists is often just crass opportunism. Take for example the under-handed union raiding campaign undertaken by the League in certain Quebec hospitals, trying to get the workers to go over to the CNTU from the QFL. That was done at the very moment that the Common Front of Quebec public service unions was being prepared. That Common Front had already gone to the point of adopting a motion of unity and an agreement not to raid, something which would act as another weapon in the hands of the bosses' State. The League also has resorted to the grossest opportunism in trying to get its people elected as delegates to the CNTU convention. Indeed, a number of these delegates get along just marvellously with those bureaucrats who want above all to avoid stimulating any political debate at the rank-and-file level. Once the candidates get themselves elected on the basis of being "good trade unionists", the League has picked up for itself a bunch of "voters" whose sole role becomes to vote for the motions of the official spokesmen for the League. At the last CNTU convention, these official spokespersons even went so far as to suggest putting an end to debate on the question of a workers' party (which was on the official agenda) in order to move on to the "more important question of unemployment". The same delegates also identified themselves with an executive motion calling for the nationalization of companies by the capitalist State as a solution to unemployment.

The kowtowing to reformism and social democracy, the hypocritical work done in workplaces, the shameful promotion of raiding, the undemocratic manoeuvres to "take power" underhandedly — all of these

things are done with one goal in mind: to accomplish through hypocrisy and double-dealing what the League could not succeed in doing by displaying its line openly. More precisely, what the League is after is to take over the leadership of the CNTU, which is already on record as being against capitalism and for socialism. The League takes advantage of a certain disinterest on the part of most people in the debates that go on more or less without the knowledge of the great mass of people. The League uses the same techniques that the trade-union bureaucrats use to control the union apparatus and attempts to put across the image of being a "real" party. The League's reformism corresponds perfectly with the old tactics of the Canadian revisionist party, whose implantees now occupy a number of important posts in some unions in English Canada, especially in Ontario. It also serves to join up together the radical petty bourgeoisie and the labour aristocracy which constitute the two class bases for revisionism in our country.

While stepping up its reformist work in the unions, the League is also working away at consolidating its network of intermediate organizations, its fake "mass" front groups. These organizations serve several purposes. In the short run, they help put the finishing touches on the preparations for the grand upcoming self-proclamation of the League as the new (revisionist) party. By organizing the unemployed, immigrants, anti-imperialist groups, women and so on, this once and future "party" tries to give the impression that it is leading these struggles and organizing the masses on a "revolutionary" basis. Hence the often pitiful caricatures of mass organizations sprout up like mushrooms. The Committee of the Unemployed was, for example, composed almost exclusively of League members and has been simply integrated into the mother organization.

The League is very partial to the practice pioneered by the old CP of organizing people on an ethnic or national basis. Inevitably, it has recently decided to create a new mass organization for immigrants, the Organization to Fight for the Democratic Rights of Immigrants (OFDRI). This group, although it lacks any "socialism-in-the-platform", still manages to apply the three worlds theory very well to the point of making the superpowers the main enemy of immigrant workers in Canada, an enemy to be denounced ahead of Canadian imperialism!

The same conception which leads the League to want to create special organizations for immigrants rather than doing things like demanding that the unions pay particular attention to protecting the rights of their immigrant members crops up in the opportunist line it has developed around the question of providing internationalist support to people's struggles around the world. As far as the League is con-

cerned, it is up to the anti-imperialist groups in Canada to mobilize the support of the Canadian people for the revolutionary struggle in their country. And the task of Canadian Marxist-Leninists is simply to support them in doing this. This approach is clearly wrong. It conceives of internationalist support as something passive and independent of the revolutionary struggle of the Canadian proletariat and people. The opposite is true. It is up to the Canadian proletariat and its organizations to organize active support for the struggle of the international proletariat. What is hidden behind the League's narrow-minded approach is more reformism and opportunism. The approach is reformist because the League plain refuses to include international solidarity with the struggle of the proletariat and peoples of the world as part of the revolutionary struggle of the Canadian proletariat. It is opportunist because the League is here again spending most of its time setting up phoney anti-imperialist organizations that it controls in an underhanded fashion. The purpose of the exercise is to make such organizations faithful disseminators of its nationalist line that claims "*the Third World is the motor force of history*".

The description of the latest phase of League reformism would not be complete if we failed to mention the widespread practice of entrism into community organizations. Each League member signs up in as many as possible at the same time: the medical clinic, the food co-op etc. In some universities and colleges where rules permit they register in several different departments so that they will be able to run back and forth between as many student departmental meetings as possible. This of course multiplies the percentage chances that League members will get elected to some post somewhere. After having waged an "*exemplary struggle*" in the daycare centres all alone, the League has become very very cautious in their work style more recently. SOS daycare even attended the Regroupement provincial des garderies, the Provincial Coalition of Daycare Centres, convention. This is a group which the League always used to put down. It was formed in reaction to the liquidation of SOS Daycare when the League grabbed control of the old organization and started to expel the "reformists". The SOS/LEAGUE thus has gone from declaring that any and all "reformists" without distinction are part of the enemy camp to congratulating the leadership of the Regroupement. It has even gone so far as to propose that they hold common demonstrations, etc. To be sure, these sudden about turns are never accompanied by the slightest self-criticism. This only shows more clearly that the latest magical weapon to come out of the League's bag of tricks is simply another tactic to win back through opportunism what was lost through opportunism. The League has come full circle, from one brand of reformism to another,

from economism to economism. The League is no closer today than it was the day it was created to fulfilling the conditions necessary for rebuilding a genuine party of the Canadian working class. It has sabotaged to the best of its ability the struggle for the unity of Marxist-Leninists. It has abandoned the struggle for the communist program. It has rallied workers in an opportunist fashion, strictly on the basis of immediate struggles and a stereotyped image of socialism. Add the carefully crafted adman's image of a lofty and powerful organization with world-wide connections and "recognition", and the job is done. The League has realized the conditions to re-create a party alright, but it will be a revisionist party, not a communist party.

Undemocratic tricks and contempt for the masses

The League may have changed its tactics to have a better chance of imposing its bourgeois line but the essence of its tactics remains the same: opportunism and undemocratic tricks. The "workerism" of the economists is merely a cover for various stratagems for manipulating the situation in such a way as to leave workers cut off from political debate and open polemic so that they can be more easily fooled. These undemocratic tricks and this contempt for the masses express quite sharply the class position of the petty bourgeoisie who want only to be able to establish their bourgeois leadership in the name of the working class. This class position can take two apparently contradictory forms. One is to act in an underhanded manner, to get people elected under false pretenses, to hide one's political ideas, to come across as more democratic than the "others" in order to grab onto leadership posts without the masses knowing what is really going on.

But there is also a second way to take over leadership and that is to carry off a "coup de force". To get its "*class struggle platforms*" adopted, the League has to push things through as fast as possible without political debate, a practice which usually provokes splits. In the final analysis, the technique is fairly simple. A few members are implanted in an organization which is to be taken over in order to make a superficial analysis of the situation. Rejecting out of hand the lessons drawn by the existing members of the organization from their own experience, the League comes on the scene waving the miracle solution, the "clear line", the latest version of "socialism-in-the-platform". Once the miracle solution has been distributed around to everybody (the preferred timing for this being just before the organization's convention) the tactic is to push right away for a showdown. The organization is thus divided into two groups: the reformists who must be gotten rid of and the reformists who accept the League's leadership. This is the

beginning of a process whereby the less politicized members of the organization who participate in a daycare centre or co-op or whatever to defend their immediate interests become dispirited. Confused by the arguments that are raging around them and tired of being harassed into accepting the League's leadership, workers start to quit en masse. All that remains to do then is for the League to get itself elected and thereby receive the stamp of approval to enact its reformist platform.

What it comes down to is that all of these different tricks aim at one thing: transforming mass organizations which are instruments for mass struggle into intermediate organizations which exist somewhere in the No Man's Land in between the masses and the Marxist-Leninist party. Such hybrid creations provide an opportunist facade for equally opportunist political groups who have to impose their leadership on organizations because they are completely incapable of convincing people of the correctness of their program. The game is a very old and well-known one: infiltration. The League resorts to the age-old methods of bourgeois electoral cliques to get its platforms adopted.

Then it moves into the stage of so-called "democratization" and "broadening the base". What this means in practice is changing what had been a mass organization in a given sector into an organization composed of all those who want to fight to apply its platform. Thus SOS, an organization set up to enable the daycare centres to struggle together, was turned into an organization of individuals fighting for daycare. What happened was that almost all of the daycare centres withdrew from SOS to rebuild a new daycare federation. Meanwhile the League threw all its energies into building up its newly acquired "mass organization" and the few "red" daycare centres that remained from that day on spent virtually all of their time conducting an "exemplary struggle" — for **their own** survival. And that is how the SOS/LEAGUE was transformed into a disguised front for the League which serves as a recruiting ground for its various activities. From one opportunist method of rallying people to another. Activists who are convinced of the importance of fighting for daycare centres will find themselves one day — surprise, surprise — behind the League's banner or at one of its meetings which they thought was part of the activities of SOS, just to read *The Forge* the next morning boasting that "we" were out in even greater numbers the previous evening...

Objectively what we are dealing with here is a tactic for destroying mass organizations which unite all those people who have specific interests in common to defend, independent of their various political positions. Mass organizations like that are absolutely essential to enable workers to come together and defend themselves. The continued existence and vitality of democratic life of these organizations are equally

important from a political point of view. It is precisely there within the framework of these organizations that the masses are going to become hardened in the struggle and learn through their own experience. It is there also that the communists will come into contact with them and try to persuade them of the correctness of the communist program and on that basis work to isolate the agents of the capitalist class in their ranks. The League on the other hand has demonstrated in practice that it holds these organizations and the people in them in contempt. It would be hard to put it better than the League itself does in the following excerpt from one of its "*class struggle platforms*":

"It is better to mobilize 12 people on a clear basis, 12 people who will not just come out to a demonstration but who will fight in an ongoing and conscious way for their long and short term interests, than it is to mobilize hundreds of people on a strictly reformist basis who do not possess any of these qualities." (10)

Whatever tactic is used at any given time, the political line of the League reveals itself for what it is: a line fundamentally opposed to the interests of the masses in both the long and short term.

Another thing to note is what the League representatives do once they have managed to get elected on the basis of their abjectly reformist platform. Well, to put it quite simply, they do exactly the same thing that their predecessors, the labour bosses, did. They make light of the decisions of the majority in order to be able to impose their bourgeois line which they work at all costs to hide from the people. The tune they sing of sabotaging mass organizations and engaging in undemocratic manipulation picks up tempo very quickly to become an anti-communist jig the moment they are denounced by genuine Marxist-Leninists, whose duty it is to expose these new-style revisionists to the masses.

From sectarianism to provocation

Genuine Marxist-Leninists, and especially those from IN STRUGGLE!, constitute a considerable obstacle to the neo-revisionists who claim to base themselves on Marxism-Leninism in order to more effectively undermine the proletarian revolution. History — and in particular the history of the Regroupement des comités de Travailleurs (RCT) (*) and its descendants who formed or rallied to the League — has proven over and over again that revisionists, old-style or new, cannot deal with polemics from Marxist-Leninists. That is why opportunists inevitably rely in the final analysis on counter-revolutionary provocations to try to block the dissemination of the communist program among the people.

That has been the history of the so-called Communist League. It is clear that IN STRUGGLE! is the League's main enemy, the immediate obstacle to its plans for creating a new revisionist party in Canada. Lacking in any arguments that stand up under scrutiny, the League has embarked on the one-way street of escalating the use of counter-revolutionary tactics to stifle the expression of the communist viewpoint. After exhausting its arsenal of lies, historical falsifications and impressive quotations which turn out to be out of context or just plain doctored, the League started to employ disparagement of persons or events, promoting gossip, engaging in systematic character assassination. Finally, it began to engage in intimidation tactics and the police-style denunciations that try desperately to stop the distribution of communist literature. A number of incidents demonstrate just how far these revisionists are prepared to go. Practice also shows that we must combat them by relying on the masses. The main objective of the League — and here it takes a back seat to no one, including the police — is to try to prevent the distribution of the newspaper IN STRUGGLE!. The first little trick — which has been employed systematically since the Montreal flourmill workers strike over a year ago — is to surround each IN STRUGGLE! distributor with three or four provocateurs from the League. Their job is to pester the distributor and try to isolate him or her from the people. If someone wants to buy the newspaper IN STRUGGLE!, the provocateurs interpose themselves physically and block the sale by offering their own paper. If the person manages nevertheless to buy a copy, the League goons try to buy it back or in some cases they just grab it. Our distributors have been attacked by League goons on more than one occasion and had their papers grabbed and ripped up.

To do justice to the provocation tactics of the League would require another whole pamphlet. There are lots and lots of eyewitness accounts which detail the physical attacks against distributors, the ripping down or alteration of the contents of posters to try and mislead people, the circulation of the most unlikely wild rumours and gossip about IN STRUGGLE! supporters, etc. The most important point here is to recognize the counter-revolutionary thrust of these acts. The revisionists love to dress up in the shiniest red uniform they can find (with lots of decorations for "personal valour" etc.) to cover up the fact that they are really playing footsy with the bourgeoisie. Precisely because of this, their desire to impose their collaborationist line on the workers and revolutionary movements takes on a particularly extreme and reactionary character. The revisionists have no other methods to fall back on than those of the capitalist class itself when it comes to installing their bourgeois leadership (complete with "radical" image).

They must engage in systematic planned sabotage of the mass struggles and in police actions against the Marxist-Leninists whose intervention guarantees that the League will get exposed sooner or later.

Should we find these unprincipled actions so surprising? Not at all. Revisionists have no principles beyond achieving short term personal glory through opportunism and deceit and milking that image to take over and control the mass movement. But workers are beginning to catch on to their many false friends — the NDP, Communist Party of Canada, the CPC (M-L), and the CCL(ML) — who hawk the "big reform" miracle remedies and try to outdo one another in undemocratic manoeuvres aimed at shutting up those who stand firm with the flag of communism in their hands.

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- (1) *Contre le réformisme! Pour une ADDS de lutte de classes!* p. 30 (our translation).
 - (2) *Ibid.*, p. 28
 - (3) *Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist)*, op. cit., p. 89.
 - (4) Election pamphlet issued by the slate at the Notre Dame hospital in Montreal, a majority of whom were members of the League.
 - (5) *Build a United Fightback of the Working Class*, October 1978, p. 13-14.
 - (6) *Ibid.*, p. 14
 - (7) *Ibid.*, p. 20
 - (8) Leaflet entitled "Batissons une large riposte, manifestons contre le PQ" (Build a broad fightback, demonstrate against the Parti Quebecois).
 - (9) Leaflet entitled "Soutenons la lutte à Montmorency" (Support the struggle at Montmorency).
 - (10) *Contre le réformisme...*, op. cit., p. 11 (our translation).