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A new split in the Maoist party in Belgium

Published: *World Outlook* November 17th 1967

<https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/world-outlook/v05n37-nov-17-1967-wo.pdf>

Transcription, Editing and Markup: Paul Saba and Sam Richards.

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By Pascal Lubra

On June 20, La Voix du Peuple, the Belgian Communist party (Maoist) weekly, announced that the central committee had "unmasked" and expelled a group of party members, the "Trifaux-Hauwaert group."

The central committee "communiqué" described them in the following words: "a small group of people, members of the Communist Party of Belgium, who had for some months been repeatedly and precisely criticized for opportunist and sectarian political deviations of the utmost seriousness, as well as for faults in their personal conduct. Faced with the legitimate and binding demand to account for their machinations, to undertake self-criticism before the regular meeting of the Party Central Committee on June 21, 1965, Desiré Trifaux, Pierre Schrayen, and Arnold Hauwaert, though members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Belgium, chose flight in a shameful attempt to avoid their responsibility,

launching an attack on the Party, the Central Committee, and the Party's political line.

The same day La Voix du Peuple appeared, the expelled members published a mimeographed newspaper, l'Exploité [The Exploited], taking the name of the post-World War I left opposition paper in the Belgian Workers party which was founded by Jacquemotte.

There are thus three papers in Belgium which bear the legend "founded by J. Jacquemotte": Drapeau Rouge [Red Flag], the organ of the pro-Moscow Communist party, with the same name as the organ of the Belgian section of the Communist International following 1921; the Maoist La Voix du Peuple, taking the name of the Communist party daily published from 1936 to 1939; and finally l'Exploité.

But here is how the group expelled

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described the situation in the July-August issue of the monthly Action pour la Paix et l'Indépendance des Peuples (Action for Peace and Independence of the Peoples, the organ of an anti-imperialist front organization of the Grippa group, but where a majority went over to the group expelled):

"For some time now, some members of the group which Jacques Grippa pretentiously calls the 'Communist Party of Belgium' have been trying to introduce their methods and practices into our association. Though it has existed for several years and has considerable financial resources, this small sect is today limited to a handful of paid officials. At present this group has about sixty members."

L'Action pour la Paix et l'Indépendance des Peuples adds "the sectarianism of this little group has benefited only the adversaries of the anti-imperialist struggle." Thus Grippa finds himself accused of "objectively serving imperialism."

In the first issue of l'Exploité (June 30, 1967), Grippa is accused of a still more serious crime: waiting "to choose between the thought of Mao Tse-tung and the stand of those who support the highest official who, although in the party, has taken the capitalist road." The reference is clear: Grippa is a partisan of Liu Shao-chi!

One can only conclude, however, that these accusations have not been heeded in the right places, since the July-August issue of l'Action pour la Paix et l'Indépendance des Peuples says: "The means at his disposal (Grippa) will doubtless enable him to subsist artificially yet some time and to deceive many foreign friends."

This is the fifth split in the Maoist "Communist party" since its founding.

To put it in the words used by La Voix du Peuple, there was first "the attacks of the group of the adventurist-police agent Frisque," a section of the party in the town of Drogenbos in the Brussels suburbs, which split in 1964 and published a newsletter called Dég-mystifications [Let Us Expose], for some time before its disappearance from the political scene. Second, the group of the "CIA agent Maurice Massoz" was expelled (Massoz had been the principal leader after Grippa).

Then came the expulsion of the leadership of Jeunesse Communiste [Communist Youth] in Brussels, which was called the "petty-bourgeois provocateur careerist group of Albert Faust."

Fourth came the "Delogne-Moerenhout group, marked by the influence of modern and Trotskyist revisionism," which was expelled in 1964 for "consistent opportunism."

In the present instance, Grippa accuses the expelled group primarily of opportunism while it in turn accuses his party of sectarianism.

There is an unconscious irony in the anti-imperialist journal which I have just quoted: less space is devoted to the very successful attack of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam on the Da-Nang base than to the "aggressive intrusion of members of the Grippa group into the office of Action pour la Paix et l'Indépendance des Peuples, an incursion which of course was defeated and served as the occasion for victory bulletins.