

Canadian Maoists, Stalinists, Vs. Antiwar Movement

By Carl Fleming

[The following article is from the May 18 issue of *Labor Challenge*, a revolutionary-socialist biweekly published in Toronto.]

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Judging from much of the literature being sold and distributed at antiwar demonstrations across the country, you might get the impression that the enemy was not U. S. imperialism and its accomplices in aggression like the Canadian government, but . . . the Trotskyists of the League for Socialist Action [LSA].

In particular, the various Maoist sheets circulated around the April 18 antiwar mobilizations assailed the "Trotskyites" as "opportunists," "bankrupt," pacifists, liberals, believers in God, and even "counterrevolutionaries," "arch criminals and police agents." These "literary" attacks were coupled with, in the case of one tendency, a threat (which didn't materialize) to smash the mass Ottawa demonstration.

The Canadian Party of Labor, for example, accuse the Trotskyists, who participate in the leadership of the Vietnam Mobilization Committee, of capitulating to "liberalism." This charge arises from the fact that the VMC is open to all groups and individuals, ranging from revolutionaries to liberals, united in action against the war.

In an article in their paper *Canadian Worker* headlined "Trotskyite Prayers Fail to Stop War," CPL accused the Trotskyists of "opportunism" for even helping to organize a demonstration against the war: "The Trotskyite-front Vietnam Mobilization Committee was apparently hoping for a modern miracle when they attempted to resurrect the antiwar movement in Toronto on Sunday, March 29." Why? Because, it seems, the march ended in a rally which just happened to be held in a church. (One of the very few references to religion at the rally was when the CPLers rose and walked out swearing!)

To see the antiwar movement as a "front" for Trotskyists or any other political tendency illustrates a hopeless sectarianism and lack of understanding of what a mass movement really is.

The antiwar movement was not built by prayers. It was built, and will continue to grow, by bringing together the broadest possible forces around a single-issue program that can unite the movement, and clearly pose the correct solution.

Such a program is summed up in the demands "Withdraw U. S. Troops Now" and "End Canada's Complicity," which revolutionary socialists and other antiwar activists have fought for consistently. Although these demands have essentially anti-imperialist and anticapitalist implications, they have been embraced by wide layers of people newly radicalizing on the issue of the war, because they obviously correspond to the logic and needs of the movement.

CPL is not really attacking "liberalism" or "opportunism" at all, but the whole concept of building a mass movement. Anyone who is seriously interested in bringing masses of people into the struggle against the war must be willing to work with any and all forces who oppose the war. The struggle itself will help to overcome liberal illusions as people confront U. S. imperialism and the Canadian government.

Not content with attacking antiwar activists here in Canada, CPL also slanders the Vietnamese: "The revisionist leaders in Hanoi have gone along with the Soviets hand-in-glove while pretending to be neutral. . . ." The Vietnamese revolutionaries, who have continued their struggle for generations despite the pressures and maneuvers of Moscow and Peking, deserve active support from serious revolutionaries, not the ultraleft verbiage of CPL.

Carry CPL's lack of seriousness in building a mass movement—and its defeatism—to its logical conclusion, and you have the incredible ravings

of another Maoist sect, the Canadian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).

This group, doubtless fortified by readings of Mao Tsetung and Stalin thought, went beyond the literary attack to outright attacks on demonstrations. They declared in unmistakable terms that they were out to smash the protests, which they considered "fascist." "The holy alliance of the 'left' is the main force of the imperialists against the developing revolutionary initiative of the masses. They are the fifth column in the Canadian anti-imperialist revolution and are the present-day Judas," proclaimed their paper, *Mass Line*.

They accused march organizers (the Trotskyists, according to them) of "hiring security guards and off-duty policemen to attack the progressive people." Another article is headlined "Trotskyists Hire Goons from International Unions to Attack the Progressive People."

To translate this mock Peking language, one must understand that the "security guards" and "off-duty cops" refer to the Ottawa VMC's undertaking to pay the wages of guards at the Civic Center (as required by the officials) where an antiwar rock festival had been scheduled after the march. "International union goons" presumably refers to members of international trade unions—which the Maoists consider anathema—who served as marshals of the demonstration. These marshals were representative of the various tendencies which built the march and ensured that it was conducted without disruption by Maoists or right wingers.

The "Holy Alliance of the left" is the antiwar movement. The "progressive people" is the CCP (ML).

In the simple world of the CCP (ML), anyone who opposes their line—the "mass line" of course—is antipeople. Thus the antiwar demonstrations of April 18 were fascist, and should be smashed.

Balked by the effective well-organized marshaling of the VMC at Ot-

tawa, the CCP (ML) held their own action, an isolated confrontation with the cops massed in front of the U. S. embassy. This ludicrous adventure was easily smashed by the cops, who greatly outnumbered them. Yet according to subsequent issues of *Mass Line* which devoted pages of lurid prose to it, this action "struck terror into the hearts of the holy alliance and their defenders, the lackey police."

Other non-Maoists sects, too, attacked the Trotskyists at the April 18 march—some on other grounds. For example, some found fault with the LSA's sympathetic approach to the mass movement developing against U. S. economic domination of Canada, and the forces within the NDP [New Democratic party—the Canadian labor party] who reflect that view; while others criticized the LSA for its support of Québécois nationalism. But most tendencies centered their attacks on the Trotskyist concept of a mass all-inclusive antiwar movement.

Even the Communist party, which fully identified with the Ottawa march, created a deliberate split on the West Coast. CP forces in Vancouver refused to participate in the Vietnam Action Committee, a broad coalition of forces which include the British Columbia Federation of Labor and the NDP. The CP set up a phoney committee of its own which excluded Trotskyists and other antiwar fighters, and organized a counteraction the night before the April 18 mobilization—a candlelight procession with the single slogan "End the War Now."

This action represents a retreat from the clear demands put forward by the antiwar movement over the past few years. It said nothing about how to end the war, much less anything about the complicity of the government in Ottawa.

The Communist party is torn between adhering in some way to the antiwar movement which it can hardly avoid, and serving the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy, to which it owes its political reason for being.

By its repeated advocacy of negotiations with the Washington war-makers rather than U. S. troop withdrawal as the basis for a "solution" in Vietnam, Moscow shows that in the interests of peaceful coexistence with U. S. imperialism, it is prepared to make a deal with Washington even at the expense of the Vietnamese revolution. Support of such policies has led

the Canadian CP to seek every possible opportunity to extract itself from allying with the militant wing of the movement that calls uncompromisingly for withdrawal. It also explains the virulent attacks and slanders of Trotskyists in the antiwar movement.

All these tendencies find themselves united in opposition to the Trotskyists, who have consistently built the broad

Guatemala

Mexican Report on Killing of Yon Sosa

The Mexican high command on May 19 released the official military report on the death of Guatemalan guerrilla leader Yon Sosa and two of his followers.

Excerpts from this account, written by Colonel Luis Barquera Trucios, commander of the army unit that allegedly killed Yon Sosa, were published in the May 20 issue of the Mexico City daily *Excelsior*.

Addressing his commanding officer Luis R. Casillas, chief of the Thirty-First Military Zone, Barquera Trucios wrote: "Permit me to inform you that on the 16th of this month in accordance with your verbal orders and with the personnel under my command I went in search of armed men in the area which includes the mouth of the River Lacantun, on the supposition that Guatemalan guerrillas had crossed over to the Mexican side.

"About a kilometer from the mouth of the Lacantun, on the left bank of the river, we were greeted by gunfire, which wounded Private Francisco Rodriguez Perez and killed the guide who was leading us, Fidel Lorenzo Lopez. Lopez's body was swept away by the current of the river and could not be recovered until early morning of Sunday May 17.

"Three of them (the guerrillas) were killed. The rest of the gang fled. Because of the denseness of the jungle, we could not ascertain the number. From the documents they were carrying, the dead men were identified as Marco Antonio Yon Sosa, Fidel Rexcaco Xitumul, and Enrique Cahueque Juarez."

Barquera Trucios noted that his troops had fired eighty rounds from M-1 and 7.62 automatic weapons in the course of the engagement.

The bodies of the three guerrillas, the report said, were deposited in the civilian hospital in Tuxtla Gutierrez, where the headquarters of the Thirty-First Corps is located.

Secretary of National Defense General Marcelino Garcia Barragan, who released the report to the press, admitted that the army had been "reinforcing" its garrison in this area for some time. But he energetically denied that the Mexican government was cooperating with the Guatemalan forces in antiguerrilla operations: "At no

antiwar movement for years. The use of violence against political opponents, the outpouring of lies and slanders against revolutionaries, the inability to work in any movement that is not a front for itself, are long-standing characteristics of Stalinist movements. The pro-China and pro-Soviet versions remain remarkably similar in their methods.

time," he said, "has the Guatemalan government made any special request of us with respect to the guerrillas."

Garcia Barragan claimed that Mexican troops would not have fired on the guerrillas if they had not shot first: "If guerrillas pursued by the Guatemalan forces had disarmed themselves and asked for help, it would have been possible to give them asylum. But nothing of this sort happened. To the contrary, the guerrillas attacked the Mexican military detachment. In these circumstances, our soldiers were not going to respond with flowers and kisses."

The Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (Foreign Affairs Department) reportedly informed the Guatemalan embassy of the clash and advised them that the bodies of the dead guerrillas were at their disposal. Guatemalan diplomatic officials told the Mexican press that they would not comment on the matter until they received instructions.

The Mexican army report, however, left some questions unanswered. For example, the area where the clash is supposed to have taken place is described as an almost impenetrable jungle. General Garcia Barragan declared that civilians could travel back and forth across the border in this region "without difficulty." How, then, were the troops able to locate the guerrillas?

The circumstances of the reported clash suggest a counterinsurgency dragnet on both sides of the border.

It seems reasonable to assume that the Mexican government, which, despite everything, still seeks to maintain a certain image of independence in foreign affairs, would be reluctant to admit joining forces in counterrevolutionary warfare with the bloodstained Guatemalan regime whose first concern is safeguarding the holdings of the United Fruit Company.

Choby Yara, chief executive of the Ryukyu Islands, has demanded the immediate removal of American nerve gases from Okinawa. Plans to remove the gases by midspring were canceled when two U. S. governors sued to prevent transfer of the gases to the U. S.