

ring; the Marxist-Leninists serious western politics

Western Maoism wasn't bureaucratic and
neous and human with lots of dialogue,
popular action.

left groups, the party embarked on a more conventional strategy of infiltration. CPC-ML members would be parachuted into organisations, work to take them over, and then parrot the party line or destroy them. If infiltration failed, parallel front groups would be set up.

Student organizations were prominently targeted by the party. Its first major success was to rebuild the Association Nationale des Etudiant(e)s du Quebec (ANEQ), a federation of students' associations which had self-destructed in 1969. CPC-ML members were able to refloat the federation and convinced a great number of CEGEP and university students' associations to join. For a while ANEQ was extremely useful for the party; through it, students' unions were being encouraged to pick up and repeat CPC-ML campaigns on campus, across the province. ANEQ position papers and publications reflected CPC-ML politics.

ANEQ in turn refloat La Presse Etudiante Nationale (PEN), a francophone student press news service with a history going back to 1944, which had gone down with ANEQ in 1969. Through the new PEN ("Bedard-PEN" as it came to be known, in honour of its CPC-ML appointed president), the party was able to get material into Quebec student newspapers, not a few of which were also controlled by the party.

It all came to an end in 1976, when a well-organised group of left-wing Pequistes students arranged to have the entire ANEQ executive purged.

Infiltrating "les hosers"

Things went poorly for the party in English Canada. There, the targets were the National Union of Students (NUS, with about 300,000 members in 1975) and Canadian University Press (CUP, with about 60 affiliated student newspapers at that time). NUS and CUP shared offices at that time and enjoyed a close relationship. Taking control of one of the organizations could plausibly have led to control over the other: the CPC-ML targeted CUP as the easier nut to crack.

In the summer of 1976, some of the CPC-ML's brightest remaining English-Canadian members infiltrated the *Chevron*, student newspaper at the University of Waterloo in Ontario. They succeeded in getting themselves elected to the paper's key editorial positions (which featured full-time salaries) after intimidating the student editors into leaving the paper.

The CPC-ML *Chevron* then provoked a bitter fight with the Students' Association at Waterloo, and successfully demanded solidarity and financial support from the CUP executive and from member newspapers. The next act was supposed to be that, riding on a wave of support, the CPC-ML editors of the *Chevron* would get themselves elected to the executive of CUP. At CUP's annual meeting in December 1976, however, doubts about what was happening at Waterloo were already high enough to allow a slate of student newspaper staffers to defeat the CPC-MLers during the elections for CUP's executive. Beaten back from CUP, the *Chevron* was eventually thrown off campus by an overwhelming vote in a student referendum.

CPC-ML activity was relatively low-key for a while after that, especially on university campuses. Party front groups remained, members still passed out leaflets and newspapers, the party kept holding congresses to listen to Hardial Bains and CPC-MLers kept showing up at demonstrations to wave banners at television cameras. There were no more great coups, however, until an opportunity presented itself in British Columbia, in 1980.

Many farmworkers working in B.C. are East Indians. Their hours, housing, pay and working conditions are extremely poor, and in 1980 they started to do something about it by organizing a union, the Canadian Farmworkers' Union. The situation — an increasingly militant group of workers, but a still fledgling and weak union — looked promising to the CPC-ML, and the party moved members into the area to set up a rival union, the "General and Allied Workers Union." This new CPC-ML counter-union quickly secured certification from the Labour Relations Board, and competed

directly with the Canadian Farmworkers' Union for members. CFU organizers, fortunately, were able to forestall any serious loss of members to the CPC-ML's front.

Stymied, the CPC-ML tried to generate some enthusiasm for itself among the East Indian workers by intervening in a campaign against a branch of the Klu Klux Klan, which had recently set up shop in the province. The party repeated its tactics against the Farmworkers' Union: it set up a front group (the "Peoples' Front Against Racist and Fascist Violence") to compete directly against the legitimate popular organization (the British Columbia Organization to Fight Racism) and, in a flashback to its early days, physically assaulted members of the other group.

This attracted plenty of media coverage which depicted the attacks as clashes between "two rival anti-racism groups" without identifying the CPC-ML. The coverage partially discredited the legitimate anti-Klan committee and disrupted the campaign.

The CPC-ML front union apparently continues to compete with the Canadian Farmworkers' Union for members, but ineffectively.

And lately . . .

Judging from the material being distributed at McGill, the party is now very interested in hitching itself to the disarmament movement. This confirms a pattern that Manjit Singh, connected to the Canadian Farmworkers' Union, described as the party's "modus operandi".

"Wherever there are popular movements based on the real needs of a community and wherever these movements show signs of being effective, members of the CPC-ML force themselves to the forefront," he writes.

"Using their placard sticks as clubs, clearing or bullying their way to the head, waving their huge banners at the T.V. cameras, they grab the microphone away from designated speakers and scream their extremist epithets instead. Two of their recent victims are still in hospital in Vancouver — one with serious brain damage. Two others were released with broken arms."

"If through these tactics the cult is able to wrest the leadership of a given movement, the movement quickly collapses under the weight of extremist rhetoric and provocative actions. The CPC-ML then withdraws, seeking newer territory to infiltrate."

This pattern has led a number of activists at the receiving end of various CPC-ML campaign to speculate that the party is being funded and perhaps directed by the R.C.M.P. Certainly, if the CPC-ML didn't exist, it would be in the government's interests to invent it. The party's functional role is to divert, divide and destroy the left at its grassroots, meeting by meeting, group by group. The party doesn't do a very good job of it, but doesn't lack for enthusiasm.

And the party doesn't lack for money. It maintains adequate offices on Amherst street in Montreal. When the *Chevron* was kicked out of Waterloo, it was equipped with a full typesetting shop and published weekly for two years without any visible financial support or advertising. The B.C. union scam cost a lot of money. The party prints a lot of material. Where does the money come from, given the CPC-ML's tiny membership?

They are, in any event, still present on Canadian campuses, with names such as the McGill or Dalhousie Student Movement, or Friends of Albania. (Why Albania? Well, China has gone capitalist, see. Albania is now the only country in the world which is really Socialist.)

There aren't very many of them and they don't have a sense of humour, so they will probably never be very dangerous again here. Maoism doesn't pulse very strongly in the veins of the Chinese anymore, and it doesn't pulse in the veins of young Canadian intellectuals anymore, either.

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