

Nationhood or Genocide:

*The Struggle of the
Native People Against
Canadian and
American Imperialism*

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The authors acknowledge with thanks the contributions which Native Marxist-Leninists and other Native people have made to our understanding of the Native struggle in Canada.

I. INTRODUCTION

*O, it's written in books and in songs
That we've been mistreated and wronged.
Well, over and over I hear these same words
From you, good lady, from you, good man,
Well, listen to me if you care where we stand
And you feel you're a part of these ones.*

—Buffy St. Marie¹

Canada has popularly been known as a nation without racism. In the present era of social discontent and upheaval, this mythology about Canadian brotherhood and respectability is finally being exposed to the world for the lie that it is.

More than any other single group, the people who have suffered from racism in Canada have been the Native people. They are invisible to the masses of Canadian people. When they scream at the top of their lungs on Parliament Hill, they get a bit of attention in the press; then they are forgotten again.

The reason for this, of course, is that the problem goes so much deeper than racism. Racism, always, is a symptom, and a tool to divide and confuse. The question of Native people in Canada is a

national and a colonial question. British and French colonialism in Canada, which later developed into Canadian imperialism, have descended upon an alien people; stolen their land, forbidden them their way of life, herded them into concentration camps, nurtured a mammoth bureaucracy to keep them in chains, surrounded them with colonists, driven them into the harshest and most barren climates, and sucked everything possible from them in the way of land, labour and resources. In the process, it has created the opposite side of the dialectic as well: welding them into a nation, which is steeling itself for a struggle of national liberation, knowing full well that the bourgeoisie will do anything to keep them in chains, knowing full well that the example of a free Native nation within Canadian borders would undermine the credibility of Canadian bourgeois rule to the Canadian working class, and having suffered so much misery and oppression that their determination to struggle for their sovereignty will know no limits.

The bourgeoisie knows this all well, having recently called the Native struggle the “principal threat to national stability” in the present period². The Native people, too, know it. But the masses of the Canadian working class, and their most advanced revolutionary elements, do not yet know it so well. And so, it is to the Canadian working class and to its advanced detachments that this article is primarily addressed. This article will advance a line on the Native question: the line that Native people are being welded into a nation in their struggle against imperialism and genocide, in their struggle for survival.³ It is also, however, a plea to the Marxist-Leninist movement to stop ignoring the Native question; to stop just crying limply, “We support your call for justice,” and instead to try to understand the question in its totality and as an integral part of the struggle for socialism in Canada. Our movement must understand what “justice” really means for Native people, and what “genocide” really means as well. It must understand the necessity of educating our own working class in full measure about the Native struggle for national liberation.

II. THE HISTORY

A. Before Contact

We always had plenty; our children never cried from hunger, neither were our people in want.... If a prophet had come to our village in those days and told us that the things were to take place which have since come to pass, none of our people would have believed him.

—Black Hawk⁴

Before European contact, there were hundreds of Native groupings across Canada with widely varying forms of language, customs, and social organization. With the exception of inhabitants of coastal British Columbia, however, they all shared in common the fact that they were based on egalitarian modes of production, without a ruling class.⁵ The simplest of Native groups were hunters-gatherers; this included the Maritime Natives, all Inuit groups and most Natives in the Prairies and the harsher Northern climates. Where agriculture was used, as in Southern Ontario and Quebec, the social organization became correspondingly more complex, and leadership was hereditary but still accountable to the people.⁶ Descent was traced through the mother.⁷ In coastal British Columbia, the lush and abundant food resources, particularly the river salmon runs, enabled people to develop highly complex sedentary societies with elaborate ranking systems and the beginning of slavery. Until European contact, however, slaves were used for service functions only, rather than production.⁸ B.C. differed too from the rest of Canada in that the ragged mountainous terrain isolated people from each other to a tremendous extent. Out of the ten language families which existed across Canada before European contact, six were found in B.C. alone (remember, a language family is such as Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, etc.)⁹

Native people in Canada shared in common many things despite their mutual isolation. The position of women was everywhere productive.¹⁰ While religious observances differed widely, the belief in the one overriding Great Spirit and in the Unity of All Things was common to Native people throughout Canada.¹¹ Attitudes toward nature and to the oneness of man with nature were likewise held in common. Above all, Native groups all had a fundamental attachment to their land. They believed that land belonged to everybody, and could not be bought or sold. The land was the source of all nourishment,

the provider of all necessities, the core of the religious experience, the lifeblood of the tribal identity. To rip a Native person from his land, one might as well have ripped a limb from his body, for the land was integral to his very Nateness.¹² So affirmed Chief Frank Tfelehye in his promise to the bourgeoisie last August, to blow up any pipeline built in Native territory. "You are plotting to take over from me the very centre of my existence," he said. "You are stealing my soul. By scheming to torture my land, you are torturing me."¹³ Without the land base he was a lost and wandering soul in an incomprehensible world.

Thus the stage was set for a fundamental contradiction between Native people and the European settlers who coveted Native land to an ever-increasing and insatiable degree. The two social systems – an egalitarian form of property ownership and a rising capitalist system which needed to divide and deplete that property – collided irreconcilably. Colonialism in Canada could thrive only by breaking the back of the Native way of life.¹⁴

Thus it has been over the issue of land that the greatest contradictions between the Native people and the Canadian state have appeared. The Native could survive without the hunt, he could survive without the ceremonies and the traditional modes of dress; he could adapt to jobs, to schools, even to Christianity if he had to. But when the European coveted Native land, he faced a showdown. Above all, it seems, if the Native had his land base, he knew that he could endure the other hardships which colonialism was visiting upon him.¹⁵ Consistently, and to the present day, Native cries for justice have taken various forms, but one above all: LEAVE US OUR LAND!

B. The Fur Trade

*And yet where in your history books is the tale
Of the genocide basic to this country's birth?*

–Buffy St. Marie ¹⁶

The four-hundred-year pattern of genocide in the name of capitalist profit was begun with the search for furs.¹⁷ After dipping their big toes into the waters of the fish trade of the Atlantic Coast, French colonists began to explore the land and offer objects in exchange for beaver pelts. Says one writer,

"In 1534 the Indians along Canada's eastern coast already knew what the whites sought in North America. Cartier, in that

year, described how Indians held up a beaver skin attached to a stick, indicating their willingness to trade. They also kept their women-folk out of sight.”¹⁸

Along with the colonizers came their ideologues, the Jesuit missionaries. Soon the British too were exploring, and the Hudson’s Bay Company was founded in 1670 and established trading posts up into the eastern Arctic as well as more and more into the plains areas.¹⁹ In 1784 the North-West Company was founded and competed with the Hudson’s Bay Company, but the amalgamation of the two in 1821 ensured the virtual monopoly of the Hudson’s Bay Company over the fur trade right across Canada.²⁰ On the Prairies it had a legal and official monopoly over all forms of trade, serving in effect as the law itself in that hinterland; in the East, its monopoly was legally limited but those limits were not enforced.²¹

Native people were at this time not pushed onto reserves because it was in the objective interest of the Hudson’s Bay Company to keep them fluid, nomadic, and engaged in hunting.²² This pattern continued in Canada’s northern reaches right up until World War II, as the objective conditions were quite comparable.²³ Yet, during this fur trade epoch, the Hudson’s Bay Company was providing Natives with supplies which they had no way of producing themselves: most significantly, guns and ammunition.²⁴ Within a generation, the complicated and lifelong skill of shooting the bow and arrow was unfamiliar enough to Native people that they were totally dependent on the Company for their survival as hunters.²⁵ The Company used this dependence to the utmost, threatening them with withdrawal of supplies for the long winter if they did not comply with any one of hundreds of regulations. The worst violation by a Native person was any barter, however insignificant, with a trader who was not a servant of the Hudson’s Bay Company. If a Native person was caught gathering cranberries for an independent “white” trader, or hanging around a Jesuit mission which was providing some food, the Hudson’s Bay Company threatened to cut off all supplies for the winter for his tribe. Thus the Company was able to pay Native people the most insignificant pittance for the precious furs. This pittance kept Native people at starvation levels within walking distance of Company trading posts.²⁶

A key tool of the Hudson’s Bay Company thievery of furs was the liquor trade. Bourgeois history has it that the Company policed

the prairies to suppress the liquor trade because this stopped the Native people from hunting effectively.²⁷ This is a bourgeois lie: the Company did pass a few weak resolutions against the liquor trade in the nineteenth century, but for the two centuries before this they were the kings and monopolists over the Canadian liquor trade.²⁸ They imported huge quantities of rum and brandy from Europe and sold it to Native people, often diluted with water, for a fortune. To add to the profit of the liquor itself, Company traders chose to intoxicate Native people at prime hunting times so as to take their furs and hides – often representing months of hard work – for nothing.²⁹ The use of alcohol to oppress the colonized and profit colonialism was identical to the use of opium in nineteenth century China.³⁰

Having gained legal sovereignty over the vast West and North, the Hudson's Bay Company then sold these territories to the newly Confederated government for 300,000 pounds plus permission to retain 50,000 acres around the various trading posts.³¹ Needless to say, the Native people never saw a dime of this fortune, and so the Company had simply sold the Crown stolen land. To this day the Hudson's Bay Company retains a cruel monopoly over Native lives in vast sections of northern Canada.³² The Company had made 20,000,000 pounds in the fur trade.³³ Much of this was sent back to England, but much was reinvested in Canada as well. Add this to the enormous profits on alcohol, most of which stayed in the colony, and we can understand why the Hudson's Bay Company was the stepping stone of a number of magnates into the land, railroad, steamship, and banking businesses in Canada, businesses which were to become the backbone of the Canadian bourgeoisie (particularly the banks, which are among the most concentrated in the world).³⁴ Thus we can see that the exploitation of the Native people formed the basis, the primitive capital accumulation, of modern Canadian capitalist concerns.³⁵

The history of the Hudson's Bay Company can be compared with striking similarity to the British East India Company. Marx says:

“The English East India Company, as is well known, obtained, besides the political rule in India, the exclusive monopoly of the tea-trade, as well as of the Chinese trade in general, and of the transport of goods to and from Europe....The monopolies of salt, opium, betel and other commodities, were inexhaustible mines of wealth. The employees themselves fixed the price and plundered at will the unhappy Hindus.... Great fortunes sprang

up like mushrooms in a day primitive accumulation went on without the advance of a shilling.” (*Capital* 7:704, Moscow 1971).

In general, Marx comments:

“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.” (*Capital* I: 703)

During this period, Native was pitted against Native in many ways. Bourgeois history likes to foster the idea that intertribal wars and hostilities were always present among Native people and in fact among all tribal peoples (“warlike savages”), and that class society therefore did mankind a benevolent service by coming along and imposing a little bit of law and order on the world through the advent of the State. This is wrong. Native people did compete for territory on a small scale, in isolated skirmishes, but for the most part they lived in ecological balance with the rest of their natural world, and few people were actually hurt or killed in intertribal fighting.³⁶ With the advent of the European, however, the balance of people to resources was so upset that Native people – who had historically found their mode of survival through the small tribal unit – had no choice but to turn against each other in a violent scramble for territory and resources.³⁷ The English and the French used Native people to help them in their fights against each other, often with the assistance of Jesuit missionaries who persuaded them that the other Europeans were out to destroy Native people.³⁸ Natives were pushed farther and farther West, and the pressure of population on resources was aggravated by the steady disappearance of fur-bearing animals because of the insatiable appetite of the Hudson’s Bay Company and the mother country.³⁹ This suffering in the Native community was compounded by problems of alcoholism, malnutrition, starvation, and lack of clothing. In a lower level of physical stamina, they were now highly susceptible to a whole slew of European diseases, particularly of course the dreaded smallpox but also other infectious diseases such as measles and tuberculosis.⁴⁰ The American prank of offering smallpox-



infested blankets as a treaty offering was repeated in Canada as well. Tuberculosis was a leading infectious disease in the Northern reaches which was introduced by the European.⁴¹ Bourgeois mythology likes to paint Native aboriginal societies (along with all pre-class societies) as constantly tottering on the brink of plague and starvation, again awaiting the rise of class society to bring well-being and salvation to the world.

A wide array of recent evidence, however, indicates that this is false, and that well-nourished mobile populations are not particularly susceptible to infectious disease.⁴² By the time the era of the fur trade was ending, the Native population was reduced to one-tenth its original number.⁴³

Yet while Native people were being pitted against each other and wiped out throughout Canada, the opposite side of the dialectic was taking form as well. Colonialism also welded diverse tribes together in a search for an increasingly precarious survival, particularly on the Plains where geographical barriers were insignificant. And so, the classic, globally-known "Indian"⁴⁴ was born: feather bonnet, mounted on a horse, wearing mocassins and buckskin jackets, living in a circle camp of teepees, and hunting the buffalo. Ceremonies, systems of prestige, and technologies merged.⁴⁵ The beginnings of Native nationhood (in the Communist sense of the term) appeared when the rising capitalist system of Canada came into contact with Native people.

C. The Treaties

*Hear how a bargain was made in the West
With her shivering children at zero degrees
Blankets for your land, so the treaties attest.
Well, blankets for land is a bargain indeed.*

– Buffy St. Marie ⁴⁶

As in the United States, the buffalo in Canada was actively massacred in order to hasten the genocide of the Native people. The Red River buffalo brigade was an outstanding commercial enterprise.⁴⁷ That, combined with the disappearance of other fur-bearing animals on account of the fur trade, brought Native people to a low point of demoralization around 1875.⁴⁸ They broke up into small groups once again, and they turned even more to alcohol, selling their guns, their horses, and the clothes on their backs to get it.⁴⁹ Now Christian missionaries at last had their day in the sun, moving into these broken and shivering communities and declaring themselves to be the replacements of the medicine men, the holy men, and the chiefs in positions of authority and prestige. Direct white caste government over the Native social structure was born.⁵⁰

The fur trade was over. (Except in the North.) Now capitalists were going seriously about the business of building their own empires right here in Canada. Instead of furs and hides, the system now needed minerals, timber and farmland, and the labour to realize the value of these things.⁵¹ And so their designs on the Native people changed. All of a sudden they became concerned that in 300 years of “settlement” they had “neglected” to bring Native people the “blessings of civilization”. Why had they been so thoughtless? It was high time to change things.⁵² The era of treaties was therefore begun.

Said Alexander Morris, Lt. Gov. of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, in connection with the opening of the treaty era:

“In consequence of the discovery of minerals, on the shores of Lake Huron and Superior, the Government of the late Province of Canada, deemed it desirable, to extinguish the Indian title....”⁵³

But to the Native the bourgeoisie did not talk of minerals, but of the blessings of civilization.

“Your great Mother wishes the good of all races under her sway. She wishes her red children to be happy and contented.

She wishes them to live in comfort. She would like them to adopt the habits of the whites, to till land and raise food, and store it up against a time of want.... But the Queen, though she may think it good for you to adopt civilized habits, has no idea of compelling you to do so. This she leaves to your choice.”⁵⁴

The legal basis for treaties was two-fold: the British north America Act, which gave the Crown authority to deal with the Native people, and the Proclamation of 1763, which stated that all legal title to land rests with the Native people unless it is formally extinguished. This proclamation is the crucial basis for the claims to aboriginal land rights which Native people are using in their struggle to the present day.⁵⁵

Peaceful chicanery and arm-twisting techniques were used during the treaty negotiations, as well as some forms of outright lies, frauds and misrepresentations.⁵⁶ The government negotiators gave Native people the distinct impression that they were sent not from Ottawa but from London – such a terribly awesome power across the seas – and that they were not empowered to negotiate the conditions of the treaties.⁵⁷ Treaty provisions were presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, and the “take-it” was the most humiliating form of pittance imaginable.⁵⁸ “Blankets for your land” is a pretty accurate description of what the Native people of Canada were offered. They got a few dollars per year for a family of five, with a bit more for chiefs and headmen; they got promises of agricultural equipment and medicine, which later proved to be outdated, minimal and faulty; they got some flags and medallions with a picture of the Queen.⁵⁹ The Canadian state had learned from the American experience, where Native people had been promised a great deal and given nothing. And so, the Canadian state simply promised nothing.

The treaties were negotiated orally, and then Native people signed a parchment (there is evidence now that some of these “X’s” were falsified by the State); then the treaties went back to Ottawa, where they were re-drafted by government lawyers.⁶⁰ Phrases like “as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow” were deleted from the original version which Native people considered to contain the holy binding promise of the spoken word.⁶¹ “Our brains are like paper,” said an Ojibway chief. “We never forget.”⁶² And they have not, and today when they find these phrases missing from their treaties, Native people consider themselves to have been swindled.⁶³

Standing by for treaty negotiations was the North-West Mounted Police, forerunner of today's RCMP. The NWMP was to replace the Hudson's Bay Company as law enforcement agency for the bourgeoisie in the West and North; it was created for the purpose of taking lands away from Native people.⁶⁴ Said Prime Minister Diefenbaker:

"Riel's life proved a strange contrast of good and evil. In his role as rebel leader and inciter of the Metis and Indians he caused many innocent people to lose their lives. But in that role also, he was mainly responsible for the unsettled conditions which led to the founding of the Force now famous the world over for efficiency in enforcing the law."⁶⁵

Thus we can see that it was in response to the Louis Riel Rebellion of 1869 in what was to become Manitoba that the NWMP was formed. By 1885, the Force had flexed its fingers and was becoming excellent at the task of massacre which was to be used against the 1885 rebellion in Saskatchewan. The Riel rebellions are generally seen as a struggle for democratic rights, but the more perceptive students of the question have seen these uprisings as the beginnings of a national struggle against colonial encroachment.⁶⁶ Big Bear, a chief of a large super-tribal structure of Native people on the Plains, never signed a treaty, and was imprisoned along with other comrades for participating in the uprising; eight Native people were executed.⁶⁷ Resistance continued, for example the resistance led by Chief Piapot of the Crees, against the encroachment of the newly developing Canadian Pacific Railway.⁶⁸ "The plunder engaged in by the CPR made the Hudson's Bay Company look like small-time swindlers by comparison."⁶⁹ Suppressing Native resistance to the blood-stained CPR along with resistance of the growing Canadian working class to the same growing bourgeoisie, the RCMP thus made clear to the world just who was the common enemy of all the oppressed people of Canada.⁷⁰

Native people were given scattered reserves throughout Canada rather than the larger and more concentrated reserves that the United States has granted at first.⁷¹ Canada learned from the bad experiences south of the border. In the United States the large reservations created a strong and united force of Native people and attempts to break the treaties brought war and bloodshed. Those large reservations often inadvertently included precious minerals and timber resources discovered later; the most notable example of this, of course, is the

discovery of gold in the holy Black Hills of the Sioux, over which territory the worst Native-“White” war was fought.⁷² Canadians wanted to avoid these experiences, and so they deliberately gave Native people small and scattered reserves, thus keeping the growing unity of Native people against colonialism from becoming a threat to the bourgeoisie. The reserves which were set aside for Native people were carefully assessed beforehand with regard to mineral potential, agricultural potential, water, and climate, and chosen to maximize surface contact with non-Native society; therefore, Natives would be more easily Christianized, “civilized” and assimilated.⁷³

In the North, the same patterns took place but at a later point in time. The policy of the Canadian state toward Native people in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon was, until World War II, best characterized as a policy of benign neglect. Said the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources in 1957,

“So completely did we forget the north that as recently as ten years ago – with the sole exception of the mining town of Yellowknife – there was not in the Northwest Territories one single school... that had been built by any government – national territorial, or local. The north was left to the missionaries, the fur traders, the Eskimos and the Indians.”⁷⁴

In particular, one bourgeois scholar notes:

“Indeed, much of the Canadian government’s inactivity in the north prior to World War II may have been the result of a more or less conscious policy of not disturbing the pattern of native life which had been created by the fur traders and missionaries. The post-World War II period, however, brought increasing awareness of the inadequacy of the fur trade as a source of income for the native population and of the mission system as a source of education, medical care, and welfare services. Above all, it became obvious that the long-run prospects for improving conditions of life for the native people of the north could not be separated from the question of general economic development of the northern territories.”⁷⁵

Why had they been so thoughtless? It was high time to change things. Thus the bourgeoisie set out in the 1950’s to “saving the native population. from the debilitating effects of living on unearned income.”⁷⁶ Said the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories of the

northern population, “With proper training and adjustment they can contribute greatly to the development of northern Canada in the years to come.”⁷⁷

Again, as the fur trade declined and “development” moved in, the bourgeoisie set out to turn Native people into good beasts of burden. Hence instruction in employable skills was introduced into the North by the bourgeoisie after World War II. Their skills at hunting and gathering were outliving their usefulness.

Back to the South. In Canada, more emphasis was placed on the process of breaking people into the new role of labour force for the rising capitalist system than was placed in the United States. In Canada land was vast but cheap labour was difficult to recruit, whereas the Americans had the opposite problem: tight land, and a more easily accessible labour force. The problem in both countries, however, was that the Native was not easily broken in as a beast of burden. This is a problem encountered by colonial bourgeoisies throughout the world in their contacts with peoples from classless societies. Only where the bourgeoisie has found peoples who were experienced at tilling the soil – and not just tilling it themselves, but tilling it from dawn till dusk in order to produce a surplus for an authority – has it successfully harnessed aboriginal populations for the purposes of slavery. Thus, the Aztecs, the Maya, the Incas, and the Africans of the West Coast were successfully enslaved; the Australian, the Maori of New Zealand, and the North American Native sickened, died, and otherwise refused to adapt to being used as slaves. In the United States, the African was therefore imported over a long period to supply the labour needs of the growing system. But Canada never developed a slave trade, and the forces of the Quebecois were insufficient to serve the needs of the growing system. Hence the bourgeoisie reasoned that the Native was “tractable, docile and willing to learn”;⁷⁸ and that, with proper instruction and Christian training, a slave mentality could be instilled. The bourgeoisie was wrong.

To many Native people, agriculture itself was a profound threat to the freedom of their Nateness. Tilling the soil was women’s work (a profound comment on the productive role of women!), and male hunters resisted engaging in it.⁷⁹ Big Bear, the proud chief of the Plains who was to engage in the Louis Riel uprising, led the move of the Plains Natives to resist this imposition on the old way of life.⁸⁰ But the situation was anything but uniform. Many Natives, including a number of wise and prominent leaders, took the position that their

people would not be able to survive without the buffalo unless they learned agriculture. They therefore wanted the new State to help them learn these skills so that they could cope with living under European civilization rather than be destroyed by it. Poundmaker, Red Pheasant, Starblanket, and Mistawasis were among the leaders who wanted their people to learn agriculture.⁸¹

Yet these chiefs wanted to learn the new way for the survival of their people, not for their exploitation. They wanted agriculture to be practiced on the reserve, on a self-sufficient basis. Clearly the bourgeoisie could not be satisfied with this: the bourgeoisie could only be interested in what surplus-labour the Native could provide for the ends of the growing system. And so, the Canadian state adopted a simpler policy toward the Native assimilation. Through assimilation it was thought that the Native would simply be absorbed into the mainstream of Canadian life: which meant, of course, into the bottom of the workforce, where he belonged. Native people were therefore denied the rations which had been promised them to survive the harsh winters,⁸² as well as the agricultural equipment and instruction which had been guaranteed them by treaty.⁸³ They had been blackmailed. They had been lured onto the reserve in order to clear the way for the growing move to expansion and settlement, and now they were being lured into the labour force as disarmed, frightened and starving people. The first lure worked, but the second lure did not. The Native people were determined to cling to the bit of land which was still theirs, even if it meant hunger, nakedness and police rule.

In British Columbia, at the time of Confederation, Native people constituted 80% of the population.⁸⁴ The resources were vast and seemingly limitless; it appeared at first that the settlers and the Native way of life could exist side by side. Yet reserves were assigned for Native people just to make sure that the most valuable land was available for the bourgeoisie and not “wasted” on the “Indians”. Even the original assignments of reserves were not good enough for the bourgeoisie: the province began to complain that the Natives had gotten land which was too good for these unproductive aboriginals. Missionaries had some success in turning small groups of Native people into industrious, obedient Protestants for a while, but the old way of life still had to be outlawed by police action. The most significant example of this was the Potlatch, an all-important ceremony in which surplus goods were systematically destroyed. The Canadian Protestant mind could not cope with such extravagance.

The fact was, however, that in the pursuit of activities such as mining, forestry, agriculture and the fur trade, it appeared at first that the Native people and the settlers of B.C. could co-exist. Native people were successfully employed in some of these industries, or else the activity of the settlers did not interfere with the Native society in this vast expanse of province. But the growing bourgeoisie could not suffer such peace on earth and goodwill to men in silence. It had to hit the Native where it would hurt him the most: in his precious and seemingly bottomless fishing sources. Fish! The truly profitable industry of the Pacific frontier. Commercial fisheries grew, and rules began to regulate how much and where Native people could fish. They would not comply; this was their ancestral birthright.

To some extent Native people began to participate in the fishing industry as employees. It was easier to teach Native people in B.C. to participate in capitalist industry, because there was less pressure on resources and hence more time to make the transition. But this success was only partial and temporary. The contradiction between being an employee for the bourgeoisie and being Native was too antagonistic. And so the bourgeoisie began to actively recruit and import Chinese, Japanese, Newfoundlander, Norwegian, Scottish and other European labour to replace the Native people in the fisheries. Soon reserves in B.C. were to look like reserves everywhere else in Canada.

This attempt by the bourgeoisie to assimilate Native people into the Canadian labour force at large is found consistently in Canada wherever the fur trade has drawn to a close. After Native people outlived their usefulness as hunters-gatherers, they have been expected to fulfill roles corresponding to the succeeding historical epochs: slavery, serfdom, and proletarianization. Wealthier settlers tried to use Native people as domestic slaves, but this was never very successful.⁸⁵ We shall see soon that the colonial administration tried to extract a surplus from Native people by putting them into the position of serfs, but not much surplus could be extracted in this fashion. And, of course, there has been the consistent attempt to make them into a cheap reserve labour army. The bourgeoisie has been explicit in its designs on Native people: to lead "the Indian people by degrees to mingle with the white race in the ordinary avocations of life."⁸⁶ We will see from a discussion of the Trudeau-Chretien White Paper that the bourgeoisie has not changed one iota in its designs on Native

people, nor have Native people backed down in their determination to keep their land and stay Native.

It will be remembered that the American bourgeoisie, in its search to kill every Native around so that the land could be freed, engaged in active and consistent massacre against the Native people. Yet, when the dust was settled, the American bourgeoisie was finding that the cost of killing one Native was higher than the cost of letting him die off through simple neglect. And so, said General Pratt of the American Cavalry: "Feed the Indians to America. Americans will do the assimilating and annihilate the Indian problem."⁸⁷ In Canada, the policy of assimilation had slightly different motives (i.e., cheap labour), but the results on state policy were the same. Said Sir John A. Macdonald, "These impulsive half-breeds have got spoiled by this emeute (disturbance), and must be kept down by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers."⁸⁸ This was to become the practical policy of both countries for the 100 years to follow. For those Natives stubborn enough to want to cling to their own land, the Indian Act was devised in Canada.

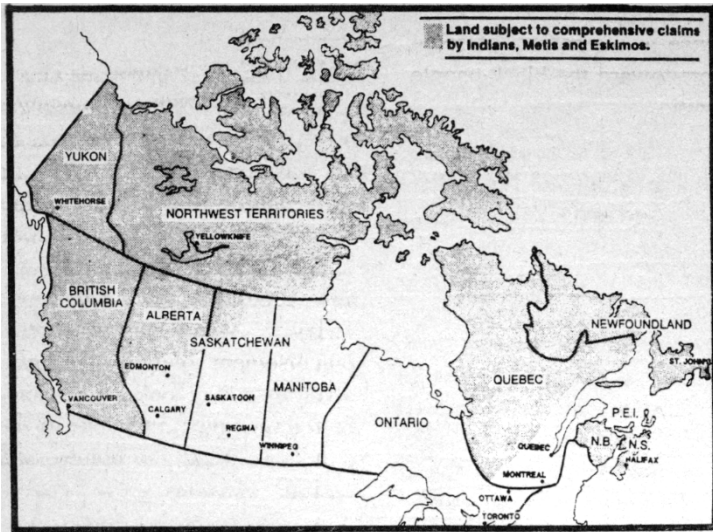
D. The Indian Act

*Now that the pride of the sires receives charity,
Now that we're harmless, and safe behind laws.*

—Buffy St. Marie⁸⁹

Following upon the heels of the treaties was the Indian Act, an official piece of colonial legislation which reads like colonial legislation the world over.⁹⁰ As Native people were making poor slaves and they kept on practicing agriculture on the reserves as if it were meant for their own survival instead of for the purpose of producing a surplus for their conquerors, the new Canadian bourgeoisie simply could not let this situation go on.⁹¹ And so, the Indian Act of 1880 was written, in the spirit of "The term person means an individual other than an Indian."⁹²

The Indian Act established a feudal relationship between the colonial administration, in the person of the Indian Agent, and the Native people living on the reserve. The Indian Agent was the living representative of the bourgeoisie to the Native people, and it was to him that the fruits of their labour were owed. In exchange, they got the right to live on their own land, which is exactly the privilege which serfs have. Says Robertson:



“The legal system of land tenure under which Indians function is not unlike the feudal system, and the levels of administration can be compared to feudal ranks. The Indian Affairs Branch is the lord of the manor. The Indian agent is the local manager. The lord has total control over the lives of his serfs, who neither own their land nor rent it. They are ‘crofters’ permitted to live on the land and farm it, but not for their individual benefit. The lord or manager tells them what to plant and when to sow and harvest; he provides the equipment; he tells them when to sell the crop and at what price. He can, if he wishes, tell them to plant nothing at all. Thus, the Indians, on their own reservations, actually work for Indian Affairs. The revenue from their work goes to the Minister, as the lord is called. Often amounting to millions of dollars, these funds are kept by Indian Affairs to be spent at the Minister’s pleasure. The Minister draws up “projects” on which to spend this money, plans for model villages, schemes for economic efficiency and even proposals to move people from one part of the country to another.

“But he treats his Indians with charity. They are given the opportunity to be Christianized and educated, and are provided with houses, food, clothing, money for liquor, and medical care. The system is predicated on the Minister’s treating the Indians as a responsible patron would treat inferiors.

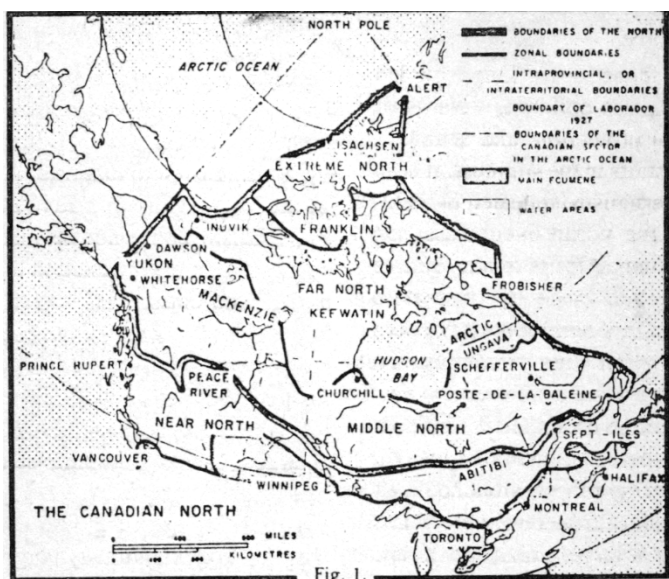


Fig. 1.

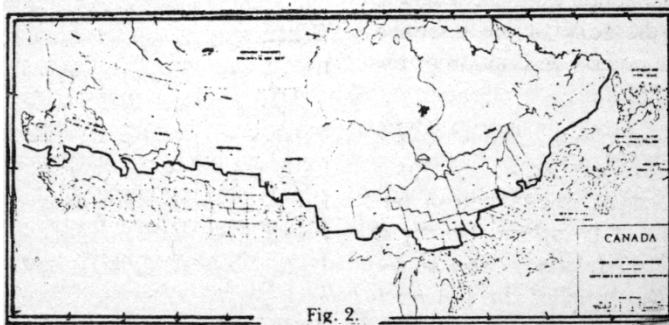


Fig. 2.

“Within the last ten years, this feudal system has been influenced by the surrounding capitalist economy sufficiently to make the relation of Indian to Indian Affairs move closer to that of employee to employer. He is a “professional Indian”, and the Queen’s bounty and benevolence laid down in the treaty has become a salary. The Indian is paid to be an Indian and, since in most cases he is living in poverty, he is paid to be a peasant.⁹³

Says Carstens, a bourgeois anthropologist, speaking of South African as well as Canadian reserves (and noting that they were both founded by the same British colonial bourgeoisie):

“Nearly all reserves belong to that intermediate societal species... – peasantry. Most reserve communities have all the

characteristics of peasant communities according to Kroeber's definition of peasants as rural people living in relation to market towns, provided we see them (as Kroeber did) as consisting of class segments of a population that contains urban centres.... Peasants, the working class, and people who live in reserves belong to the same social genus in terms of the relationship in which they stand to the dominant segment of their social milieu. They are all 'class segments' of society."⁹⁴

And Dunning says:

"For the southern areas those who were principally hunters and collectors clung to subsistence cultivation on a European immigrant model in the nineteenth century until the economics of expansion by the 1930's prohibited its continuation as a basic economy. And since the late 1940's for those people who were unsuccessful in obtaining wage labour in surrounding regions, per capita welfare payments became more basic to their sustenance."⁹⁵

And so we can see that the feudal model, of subsistence cultivation plus fealty to the lord, is a good one in application to Native society after the Indian Act took force.

The Indian policy of the bourgeoisie regarded Native people as helpless children, "wards of the state," in need of protection, and unable to deal with their own affairs in the slightest. It is an official policy of paternalism, repeated by colonial administrations the world over. Based on this philosophy, Indian Affairs made Native people beg for every allowance, for access to their own band funds for a development project, for every permission to sell a pig, accommodate guests, or do anything else. Based on the line that Native people were so incapable of functioning, Indian Affairs "helped" them by handling all their money, and in the process siphoned it off into the bureaucracy and via the bureaucracy into the Canadian system at large. Land, labour and resources were all funnelled from the reservoir of Native life into the belly of the insatiable bourgeoisie.⁹⁶ For a general description of this phenomenon, Stalin says:

"The struggle spreads from the economic sphere to the political sphere. Restriction of freedom of movement, repression of language, restriction of franchise, closing of schools, religious restrictions, and so on, are piled upon the head of the

“competitor”. Of course, such measures are designed not only in the interest of the bourgeois classes of the dominant nation, but also in the furtherance of the specifically caste aims, so to speak, of the ruling bureaucracy. But from the point of view of the results achieved this is quite immaterial; the bourgeois classes and the bureaucracy in this matter go hand in hand.” (*Marxism and the National Question*)

Stalin’s description of a ruling bureaucracy can be applied almost verbatim to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. (Listen to that title! A clearer statement of the relationship of Native people to Canadian imperialism could not be made.) This Department (which has weaseled in and out of different names and classifications for nearly a century) has made specific rulings against freedom of movement, freedom to speak one’s native language, freedom of franchise, freedom of religion, and freedom of education. Children are dragged off to boarding schools where their heads are shampooed with lye soap, they are whipped for speaking their own languages, and they are conscientiously taught to compete with each other and hate themselves for being Native. When they return home, they cannot communicate with their families in the Native tongue.⁹⁷

DIAND is a monster that gets bigger and stodgier with every passing year.⁹⁸ It is a rigid caste system whose participation by Native people is severely limited; it is a stagnant pond whose scum rises to the top. Should a bureaucrat show any knowledge of or sympathy with Native people, he loses any chance of promotion.⁹⁹ Bureaucrats sent from the metropolis to govern Native people up North are called “Southerners”, a clear reference to the racism of some American Southerners toward the black people of their own communities.

This cesspool pays fancy salaries to the most incompetent and useless strata of the petite-bourgeoisie. Teachers who can’t teach are hired by Indian Affairs to teach Native people; engineers who barely graduated are hired by Indian Affairs to design houses and roads for Northern conditions of which they know nothing. When illiteracy is rampant (only one-quarter of Native people are educated beyond grade six) and houses and roads crack under the cold, and when heat is nonexistent and Native people are forced to tear down walls for firewood, then Indian Affairs blames Native people. “Indians just won’t live right,” Indian Affairs tells the world. “Poverty breeds its own.”¹⁰⁰ In the meanwhile, both the capitalists themselves and the

politicians find their needs satisfied. Prefabricated houses built in the south which last two or three winters are a choice example of planned obsolescence, and the bureaucrats of the colonial administration can point to Native people for their failures.¹⁰¹

The Indian Act also made ample provision for the assimilation of Native people into the overall society, as it was becoming clear that assimilation was going to be the only “final solution to the Indian problem”. Enfranchisement, as the voluntary relinquishment of Native status was called, was made easy and tantalizing but irrevocable. It brought liquor rights and a small sum of money.¹⁰² Many native people opted for enfranchisement solely for the right to drink, or to travel; then they took their enfranchisement fee, spent it on liquor, and woke up the next morning to the sober reality of homelessness and dispossession. Tensions grew between reserve Natives, who could not forgive their brothers for selling their birthright; and fringe Natives, who settled around the reserves but were not allowed to “trespass” back onto it.¹⁰³ Native men could marry whomever they wanted and keep their treaty rights, but Native women could not marry “out” lest they be stripped of their legally guaranteed heritage. Marrying “out” did not just mean marrying a white person, it more often meant marrying a Native person who for some bureaucratic reason had lost HIS treaty rights. Thus not only was the sexism of patriarchal European society written into the colonial legislation, but a built-in mechanism for reducing the number of Treaty Indians was created.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the pushing of Native women off the reserve and the welcoming of “white” women onto it has created a situation today where even the little power that Native people have within their own reserve structure is being undermined by outsiders. We can see that, by dividing Treaty Indians from non-Treaty Indians, the colonial legislation created one more way to divide Native people from each other and weaken them in the face of colonialism. Who is and who is not an “Indian” in Canada bears scant relation to ancestry or personal identity. It is a question of legal definition.¹⁰⁵

E. Nationhood in the Making

*Yet a few of the conquered have somehow survived.
Their blood runs the redder, though genes have been paled...
The wounded, the losers, the robbed sing their tales.*

– Buffy St. Marie ¹⁰⁶

The period following the Indian Act has been the period of the making of the Native Canadian nation. It has been called by bourgeois scholars the “period of gestation” (of what they are not quite sure), the period of adaption, or the period of irrelevance.¹⁰⁷ After the great nineteenth century resistance to colonialism led by heroic Native chiefs, active resistance dwindled. Stripped of all power to take destiny into their own hands, Native people resorted to a wide variety of techniques of passive resistance, all geared to maintaining their own independent identity, resisting attempts at assimilation, and drawing firm lines of demarcation between themselves and the nation which was oppressing them. They were the horses who were led to water but wouldn’t drink. They worked at jobs, but resisted leaving the reserves to become a migrant labour force. They tilled the soil, but resisted tilling more than they needed for their own survival.¹⁰⁸ After World War II, when the era of subsistence agriculture was largely passed, they were left with welfare as the only means to survive; this was found preferable to integrating into the dominant society.

They were also engaged in the process of adaptation, sorting through the traits forced upon them or expected of them by their conquerors and adopting those which were not a functional threat to their Indianness. They cut their hair and wore Western clothes and to some extent learned English. They attended Church schools and some Native people actually adopted Christianity, working it into their existing religious framework, although in general Christianity was looked upon as the hypocritical and hegemonic ideology of imperialism. They learned how to continue foraging activities from the base point of their strategic hamlets. Flexibility and adaptability were always traits of the aboriginal cultures, and these traits stood them in good stead to cope with this horrible shock which was Canadian civilization.¹⁰⁹

During this period Native people were also learning to come to terms with the ruin which colonization was visiting upon them in material terms. They were learning to cope with the lies and trickery by which they had been herded into concentration camps. “You can call them reserves if you want,” said one Native person to us, “but we call them concentration camps.” They were learning to deal with the fact that the bourgeoisie spoke with forked tongue, and that his promises of assistance in the new way of life were just so many flutters in the wind. When there was a drought, there were no crops; when there was a depression, there was no government assistance; when there was prosperity, then phony government experts – the bottom of the barrel – strutted

onto the reserves with barren cattle, seed that wouldn't grow, ploughs that did not plough.¹¹⁰ It was not difficult to figure out that the government was not interested in seeing the Native person through to develop his own self-sufficiency, but rather to exploit his labour and encourage a helpless dependency on the colonial administration; and to urge him away from the reserve and into a life of migrant, reserve labour. It was not difficult for them to figure out that the Hudson's Bay Company was still out for blood: dominating the lives of many Native communities in the North, holding such a total monopoly in some areas that the people could not even open their own bakery shop because the Company cornered the market on flour.¹¹¹

What Native people did not yet realize was that the conditions which they were enduring were to be found in almost identical form in countries the world over. They were a colonized Third World people. They were forbidden to develop their own resources; they were denied the tiniest pretense of self-determination; they were kept in the most squalid of human conditions.

The Chinese define the Third World as "the developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America *and other regions*."¹¹² (Emphasis added.) Marxists categorize the world not by geography or race but by economic conditions. Native territory in Canada is a colony of Canada, it is a Third World colony, and this is true because of its underdeveloped economic conditions, kept that way consciously and deliberately by the bourgeoisie of the First and Second Worlds for the purpose of imperialist profit. In one sense, the entire northland of Canada can be considered Canada's major colony, or primary resource area. In another sense, the reserves themselves can be considered to be little colonies, or fragments of a colony, of Canada: because of the relationship which Natives on the reserve have to the bourgeoisie via the colonial administration, and because of the specific economic conditions which operate on the reserves. As the colonial nature of Native territory will prove to be key to our analysis of the national status of Native people, it deserves to be gone into at some length.



LOUIS RIEL



III. The Present

A. Native Territory: Canada's Colony

*When a war between nations is lost,
The loser, we know, pays the cost.
But even when Germany fell into your hands,
Consider, dear lady, consider, dear man,
You left them their pride
AND YOU LEFT THEM THEIR LAND.*

—Buffy St. Marie¹¹³

A colony, as Lenin explains in *IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM*, is plundered by the mother country primarily for its raw materials and cheap labour. It is a primary resource area. Development of secondary industries (agriculture, manufacturing) is severely curtailed. Economic activity is directed by monopoly capitalist concerns with little if any competition tolerated. Few goods produced are kept in the colony; they are sent back to the mother country and then the colony imports its finished goods at extremely high prices. ("It's all in the freight," crooned a Bay manager.) Transportation networks are developed when they are seen profitable by the imperialist bourgeoisie, but only to foster the interests of the monopolies and not planned with the convenience or needs of the residents in mind. Finally, a colony is distinguished from a semi-colony (or a neo-colony) by the absence of self-determination for the population, particularly the aboriginal population.

All of these features are precise and indisputable descriptions of Canada's northland. The bourgeoisie is fully aware that the Canadian northland is a colony. Said Professor K. J. Rea, a specialist in the economic history of the Canadian north:

"It may seem strange that economists use the 'underdevelopment' models, the ones that are usually used to describe underdeveloped countries far across the seas, to study a geographical area within a developed country; but we have to use these

models to study the North, because no other models work properly. Economically, there is nothing unique about Canada's northland."¹¹⁴

The bourgeoisie defines Canada's north not only as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, which are considered the Extreme North and the Far North; but also as those areas of the provinces in which the same economic patterns obtain. Figures 1 and 2 are two interpretations of what constitutes Canada's northland. Above these general boundaries, the territory is proportionally heavily populated with Native people. It is important to emphasize, however, that we are not even remotely attempting to delineate the boundaries of Native Canada by ourselves. These boundaries may be as far north as the 60th parallel or considerably further south; they may include huge tracts of land in some cases, and in other cases may only be scattered portions which are reserves and Metis colonies. The boundaries of Native Canada will be determined in the process of struggle and struggle alone.

Concretely, how can Canada's northland be described as to raw materials and economic patterns? The industries in the North which have grown since World War II are mining (particularly gold and silver), petroleum, natural gas, and electric power. These products all are primary raw materials which leave the area and are extracted by the mother country. The industries which have declined since World War II are, primarily, agriculture, manufacturing, and forestry.¹¹⁵ Since World War II railroads and other modes of transportation have also been developed, because the bourgeoisie has decided that the super-profits from the growing industries justified the enormous costs. Yet, while the growing transportation has fostered the growth of the large mother-country interests, it has stifled the development of indigenous industry rather than encouraged it: for example, foresting has declined because industries can import their fuels more cheaply from the mother country. Consumption goods have been increasingly imported from the mother country, and home-made goods have declined in importance.¹¹⁶

Within this vast colony live Canada's Native people. They are not distributed evenly throughout the colony but have been herded into strategic hamlets so that they are out of the way of the colonizers

in their search for plunder. Yet from the economic conditions of the North we can see that most of the settlers are there for specific imperialist interests: they are employed by a mining concern, or as a technician for the petroleum industry, or as an administrator in the colonial bureaucracy, or as medical assistants. Many of them have one foot in home base down south.¹¹⁷ Many of them are there for only seasonal employment. When a particular industry folds up, many of them return to the warmer climes, as in the collapse of the gold rush of the Yukon.¹¹⁸

The Northwest Territories and the Yukon are governed by a territorial administration headed by a Commissioner. The source of the power of this administration is in Ottawa, except in the case of certain minor local decisions.¹¹⁹ The provinces have self-government, but that government is controlled primarily by southern contingents. The self-interest of the residents of the north is generally as subordinated to the decisions made in the south as it is in the Northern territories. These sections have separate economic conditions but they do not have a separate self-government.



CHEF BIG BEAR

Huddled onto strategic hamlets scattered throughout this vast colony, the Native people find their colonial situation even further exaggerated. We have seen that they totally lack self-determination in the colonial bureaucracy. One bourgeois-liberal scholar describes reserves thus:

“The Indians are economically dependent on the dominant group because the reserves are treated as hinterlands — geographical and social areas to be exploited. Primary depleting

resources (oil, mining, water, forest products) are exported from the reserves by whites and shipped to the large industrial centres for processing. This has two important results. It prevents the industries being developed on the reserves and it keeps native activities on an agricultural level. It has always been the basic aim of the dominant group to keep the natives oriented toward agriculture. The treaties and the Indian Act itself reveal this. A “two-level” system develops – the colonizers (whites) who own, direct and profit from the exploitation and the colonized (Indians) who are the workers. Native participation in the economic structure is nil or at the level of unskilled, part-time wage earners. The long-term result is that Indians live at “subsistence” level, practising agriculture to survive. They also make up a major portion of the secondary labour pool and profits from raw material production (obtained through cheap native labour) go to the whites.”¹²⁰

The same writer goes on to cite Tabb’s criteria for an underdeveloped country and notes that it is exactly comparable to Native Canada.

“...low per capita income, high birth rate; a small, weak middle class; low rates of increase in labour productivity, capital formation, domestic savings; and a small monetized market. The economy of such a country is heavily dependent on external markets where its few basic exports face an inelastic demand (that is, demand is relatively constant regardless of price, and so expanding total output may not mean higher earnings). The international demonstration effect (the desire to consume the products enjoyed in wealthier nations) works to increase the quantity of foreign goods imported, putting pressure on balance of payments as the value of imports exceeds the value of exports. Much of the small modern sector of the economy is owned by outsiders. Local entrepreneurship is limited, and in the absence of intergovernmental transfers, things might still be worse for the residents of these areas.”¹²¹

Frideres outlines seven aspects of colonialism and finds them all applicable to Native Canada: the forced entry of the colonizers, the destruction of the aboriginal system of life (political, economic, kinship structure, value systems), external political domination, native

economic dependence, low standard social services, racism, and a colour line.¹²² Carstens says:

“The Indians of Canada who are under the Indian Act and live within the economic, social, and territorial confines of reserves are not wards of the Government as some have argued; they are members of little colonies within the borders of the dominating nation.”¹²³

Finally, Native territories in Canada are a colony not only in terms of the economic structure but also in terms of the mode of life. Conditions of existence are exactly similar to conditions found throughout the unliberated Third World. For example, a number of diseases are found among Native people which are rarely found elsewhere in North America but which are found commonly throughout the Third World. These include kwash-kior, marasmus (both diseases of severe malnutrition), trachoma, otitis media, and vitamin deficiency diseases such as beriberi.¹²⁴ As in the rest of the Third World, death by tuberculosis is found ten times as frequently as it is in non-Native North America.¹²⁵ Of infant mortality, Rea says:

“...While the infant mortality rate in Canada as a whole fell fairly steadily from over 90 (per thousand live births) in the late 1920's to a low of 27.2 in 1961, the rate in the Northwest Territories not only remained over 100 throughout this period but it was as high in the 1950's as in the 1930's.... Appalling as it was by the standards of the western industrialized countries, the Yukon infant death rate *appeared almost 'civilized'* compared with the rate in the Northwest Territories. The latter rate was exceeded *only by the rate displayed by such primitive countries as Chile, which had a rate of 127 in 1960, and it compared unfavourably with the rate in the reporting districts of India, which was 100 in 1961.*”¹²⁶ (Emphasis added.)

Death before the second birthday is eight times as high as in the rest of Canada.¹²⁷ Severe malnutrition is rampant.¹²⁸ The Hudson's Bay Company keeps Natives on a diet of lard, white flour, and occasional canned goods, in exchange for the precious hunted and trapped game which they bring to the oppressor nation.¹²⁹ As a result, heart disease is extremely common, along with all the other problems that go with a devitalized diet.¹³⁰

Mercury poisoning, or Minamata disease, is now developing among Native communities in Ontario and Quebec which rely on fish for their diet. The primary culprit in Ontario is Dryden Chemical Company, which until recently was dumping its mercury into the water and now continues to refuse to compensate the Natives so that they can afford to eat something other than fish. It also refuses to clean out the sludge. Minamata disease is an incurable attack on the nervous system which causes the most grotesque forms of paralysis, convulsions, congenital deformities, and madness imaginable. The government has known about this scourge for years but has been an accomplice through its silence.¹³¹ Now that there is some evidence that Dryden Minamata disease may be infecting the waters of Winnipeg, where members of the dominant nation are living, publicity is becoming more widespread.

The average life span of Canadian Native people is 34 years; that of the Inuit in particular, 26 years.¹³² It is alleged that women are sometimes sterilized without their consent, a common tactic of genocide against Third World peoples. The shacks, the dirt floors, the lack of sanitation, heat or running water, and the all-pervasive dispiritedness and internecine hostilities: all are thoroughly characteristic of the colonized Third World. These problems are compounded by alcoholism, which is generally analogous to the gravitation of all oppressed peoples to drugging agents (heroin in Harlem, hashish in the Middle East, cocaine in South America, alcohol in the Soviet Union). The bourgeoisie has concocted the wildest theories as to why "the Indians drink so much", but one theory we have not seen mention of is, simply, malnutrition. It is known that rats on a vitamin-deficient diet rapidly become alcoholics, but lose interest in alcohol when the diet is made adequate again.¹³³

In general, the Native community is the victim of daily acts of violence. Next to respiratory ailments, violent accidents are the single highest cause of death among Native people, these acts being born of alcoholism, neglect, frustration, and unsafe living conditions.¹³⁴ These only add to the obvious fact that every child who dies of kwashiorkor, or every adult who dies at 34 of old age, has died a violent death far more painful than death by a bullet. The violence-turned-inward of colonized peoples has been well documented by Franz Fanon.¹³⁵

Modes of subsistence in Native territories of Canada are strikingly similar to those throughout the dependent countries of the Third

World. A portion of the population – particularly as one goes farther North – lives in the aboriginal style of life, depending on hunting, fishing, trapping, and craft production. Yet whereas in pre-contact times the parameters of such activity were narrow, and they were performed for subsistence only, today they are performed largely for trade with the imperialist bourgeoisie.¹³⁶ Fish, furs, crafts, and even gathered produce are brought in from wider and wider areas to central trading posts: be these of the Hudson's Bay Company or the Indian Affairs bureaucracy itself.¹³⁷ This is a key form of a growing economic cohesion, or common economic life, which is welding Native people together into a nation. Tribal boundaries lose material significance as Native people, irrespective of tribe, have a common relationship with the imperialist bourgeoisie. Aside from these traditional pursuits, many Native people participate in the labour force as a reserve army. The average duration of employment per year for Native people is 4.8 months.¹³⁸ One survey in Saskatchewan of 2,200 Native people showed only 200 having stable, year-round jobs.¹³⁹ The Hawthorn Report (a government report, 1966) showed Native per capita income to be \$300 (contrast \$ 1,400 for non-Native Canadians);¹⁴⁰ nearly half of Natives who are working earn less than \$1,000 in a year.¹⁴¹ Illiteracy is rampant. Forty-one percent of Native people in Canada receive welfare, in contrast to the national welfare rate of 3.7%.¹⁴² Attempts to harness Native people into full-time labour in commercial fisheries and like exploits have failed with the usual consistency.¹⁴³

The bourgeoisie represses Native people with a viciousness and irreproachability not found in advanced capitalist countries except in times of crisis. It is alleged that RCMP officers have helped themselves to rapes and murders, and go away unpunished.¹⁴⁴ In 1971 Fred Quilt was allegedly stomped and beaten by an RCMP officer and the death was ruled as accidental. Fifteen-year-old Michael Muskego was shot and no reprisals were taken.¹⁴⁵ These are only two of the more famous and publicized cases.

We have found the assumption that Native territory is a colony of Canada to be accepted widely throughout all the literature on the North and the Native question: be they bourgeois-conservative, bourgeois-radical, or bourgeois-liberal sources.¹⁴⁶ Said a contemporary in the era of the Metis rebellions: "The Metis... objected to being transformed from a Crown colony to a 'colony of a colony,' and handed

over to the Dominion, bon gre mal gre, like so many head of cattle.”¹⁴⁷ Say Brown and Brown:

“Certainly as long as there is a trace of racist policy which exploits and keeps Indian people in a state of subjugation, the police will continue to act as a colonial force. For police are in a sense just the instruments of racist oppression in the North in much the same way as they are the instruments of class oppression in labour disputes.”¹⁴⁸

and

“Apparently the events of the so-called Red River Rebellion and the unrest following it had convinced the authorities that the native peoples were not likely to become loyal servants of their colonial masters.”¹⁴⁹

and, more significantly:

“Canadian historians generally agree that an extremely important if not the most important reason for Confederation in 1867 was to serve the needs of the commercial and industrial interests centred in Toronto and Montreal with connections in London. In order to prosper and expand, these companies needed enlarged markets for both primary and manufactured products and, especially in the case of railway and other transportation interests, assurance that trade goods would reach their destination by way of the St. Lawrence route.... *The plan was to administer the entire North West as a colony of Canada with a governor and council appointed by the federal government.* There was not even to be a pretense of self-government; any rights accorded to the inhabitants of the colony would be by the grace and the discretion of the federal government. Not surprisingly the inhabitants, particularly the Metis in the Red River vicinity, objected to this high-handed arrogance. When their objections were ignored, they took up arms and declared a provisional government under the leadership of Louis Riel.”¹⁵⁰ (Emphasis added.)

And so emerges a picture of Canadian history which envisioned the vast expanse northward as a colony of commercial interests of the metropolis. The colonized, of course, were the Native people, together with the vast and lush resources amidst which they lived. Canadian history since Confederation has been a history of gradual

expansion, gradual encroachment into that territory, eating away at aboriginal rights, building the empire and intensifying the exploitation within the narrowing hinterland.

If we understand the Native question in its fullest implications, then the present confusion which clouds our understanding of Canadian history will begin to dissipate. The expansion to the northland has been used by the Canadian bourgeoisie as a means to establish itself as a power in its own right rather than being overwhelmed by the United States capitalist system to the south of it. Says Zaslow:

“In fact, this empty, undeveloped quality of the country northwest of Canada constituted its main attraction to Canadians. Their drive to secure the territories had been dictated to a considerable degree by the increasing inability of the Province of Canada to present opportunities for growth comparable to those offered by the neighbouring United States. The American westward movement, particularly after 1850 when railways began laying open the trans-Mississippian west and California and Oregon beckoned along the Pacific coast, made it imperative for British North Americans to match this advance by expanding west into the territories of the British Crown. Not to do so would expose those lands to the danger of being overwhelmed by the United States and would condemn the people of Canada to their present narrow limits *and to a lower standard of living than their neighbours*. Expansion became a national duty for Canada, a commitment with destiny.”¹⁵¹ (Emphasis added.)

Said another scholar:

“To preserve a ‘frontier’, Canadians had been forced to build a nation.”¹⁵²

The founding and building of Canadian capitalist society, and the genocide of Native people and the theft of their lands, are one and the same question. All of our theoretical work will be off the track until we start to understand this fact. A correct concrete analysis of Canada depends on it.

But what of the population of Native Canada? Is it not sparse and insignificant, too small to be a key issue in the understanding of Canadian imperialism? No, this is wrong.

Government statistics of “Indians”, although they vary from decade to decade depending on whom the bourgeoisie chooses to

include¹⁵³, are easy to come by: for 1970 the figures are 1.3% of the overall population of Canada, including 14.8% of the Yukon and 23.4% of the Northwest Territories.¹⁵⁴ To use these statistics, however, is to fall into the trap set by the bourgeoisie of considering every non-registered Native person a “white” person. By these criteria, some Native leaders of the 1974 Caravan were white, as well. Inevitably, statistics on the actual Native population in Canada are going to be estimates, particularly in an attempt to assess the Metis population, whose estimates run from 60,000 to 600,000.¹⁵⁵ The problem is compounded by the fact that many Native people are migrant, or non-registered not only as “Indians” but also as human beings: they are born without birth certificates being issued. The figure which Native leaders use operationally in their estimates of Native population in Canada is about one million people; this estimate conforms to that of Frideres, who gives the percentage of the Canadian population as about 6.5%.¹⁵⁶ This figure includes only those who identify themselves as Native, and not those who are Metis but integrated into the dominant society and identify with white society at large. Another important factor in considering Native population is that they are the fastest growing population in North America, with an annual population increase of 5% and a projected doubling of population within fifteen years.¹⁵⁷

Information Canada (1971) reports that the Native population of the Yukon is 42.2% of the total, and that of the Northwest Territories is 81.4%; the total aboriginal population of the two territories in the North constitutes 67.9% of its total.¹⁵⁸ The 60° line, however, is not a sharp demographic barrier, and Native people continue to form a majority of areas south of that border as well.

It is true, nonetheless, that the northern reaches of Canada are sparsely populated: 90% of the population of Canada lives within 200 miles of the U.S. border. It is true that the colonial territory is not like the banana republics of Latin America or the rice paddies of Asia, where vast armies of human labour have slaved for a pittance. The two types of territories are different because the aboriginal conditions which the bourgeoisie found to exploit were concretely different. Where the bourgeoisie found agricultural, class societies, with dense populations accustomed to exploitation, it took advantage of these conditions and harnessed the labour-intensive, land-intensive system to its own advantage. However, where the bourgeoisie found hunters-gatherers, living in primitive communism, the concrete conditions

were different. Hunters-gatherers live in sparsely populated territory with vast expanses of virgin land, but the possibilities of labour-intensive exploitation are limited. And so, the bourgeoisie, being eminently willing to adapt itself to conditions in order to maximize profits, exploits certain types of colonies differently from others. The North is used primarily for its raw materials, which, as Lenin pointed out, was the initial use of a colony to the bourgeoisie. Cheap labour is utilized sporadically, but the bourgeoisie at this point does not depend on it; it is more inclined to import expensive, “reliable” labour from the South¹⁵⁹ and use industries which have a high proportion of constant capital (machines, etc.). This, of course, cuts into the rate of profit. But the raw materials are the property of Canada, whereas they would not be if the bourgeoisie had to pay royalties on property rights to the local population as it does for resources taken from other parts of the world. That fact alone increases its profits immensely. Where foreign capital invests in the North, those companies must pay the Crown gigantic sums for the rights to the minerals, oil, water, natural gas, wood, and other natural resources. This is the significance of the colony to the bourgeoisie. This is why a national struggle in that territory would pull out such an important prop to bourgeois rule in Canada.

B. Native People in Cities

*I'm going back, back to the land I love
I'm going back, where skies are big above me
Back to the land I left behind
Back to the pride that I must find
Leave me alone, can't you see I'm goin' home.*
—Floyd Westerman¹⁶⁰

Today the number of Native people migrating into urban centres is increasing.¹⁶¹ Yet let us look at the objective composition of Native people living in cities. Most Native people who move into the cities return to the reserve or near it before long; only 20% of Native people stay in cities beyond five years.¹⁶² There are many reasons for this, the subjective factors intermingling with the objective ones. Employment in the cities is hard to maintain for Native people: their level of education is often too low, their level of conditioning to the 9-5 way of life insufficient. Discrimination is rampant. The unemployment rate of Native people in cities is 68%!!! – as compared with 65% on

reserves, not counting the fact that the reserve has some fringe benefits such as free rent and access to hunting.¹⁶⁶ Native people will advance explanations such as: “Indians can’t live in the cities. It’s too cut-throat,”¹⁶⁷ or talk of



the cultural disorientation brought about by wandering through mazes of concrete.¹⁶⁸ Many Native people who are statistically city folks are really there only for a season, or a year, to hunt and gather the fruits of a job and bring the spoils back home.¹⁶⁹ Many try to cope with city life and fail. The same phenomenon is generously documented with respect to American Natives. Eisenhower thought up a brainstorm of “relocation”, but after the initial training programs most of the reserve Natives returned home.¹⁷⁰

What is significant in this analysis is to show that to vast numbers of Native people in Canada, city life is a passing experience. Contrast this with national minorities such as Italians, Chinese, and West Indians who immigrate to Canada and generally accept that their future and the future of their children will be made in the cities of Canada. For most Native people, home can be returned to. In other words, for most Native people, the loyalty to the colonized homeland remains primary.

Several studies of Native people in urban areas confirm that Native people as a whole have not been successfully integrated into the Canadian working class.¹⁷¹ The largest percentage of Native people in cities are welfare recipients, who hold jobs for a few weeks at a time at the most.¹⁷² Their situation is worsening at a faster rate than the worsening of the situation of the Canadian working class as a whole.¹⁷³ “Essentially, the Indian lumpenproletariat has been too miserable to be able to develop a solid slum,” says Dosman of Saskatoon.¹⁷⁴ That author sees no hope for Native people in the cities even to integrate into the Canadian working class and sees the reserves as the only possibility of Native survival.¹⁷⁵ “They remain

'home' for urban migrants, and ensure the possibility of at least going back."¹⁷⁶ The literature is consistent on this subject.

Yet the bourgeoisie does not give up. Following in the footsteps of Eisenhower's disastrous "termination and relocation" policy, and in fact modeled after it despite its failure, was the Trudeau-Chretien White Paper of 1969. The paper was entitled "Indian Policy" despite denials that it was official policy.¹⁷⁷ It was written after months of consultation with the top Native reformist leaders and flew in the face of everything they had testified to.¹⁷⁸ Its policy was flatly assimilationist, consistent with the Canadian policy toward Native people since the close of the fur trade. Its goal was "to help bring Indians into a closer working relationship with the business community." Yes, and what could that possibly mean? It spoke of mapping "a road that would lead gradually away from different status to full social, economic, and political participation in Canadian life," arguing, "It is inconceivable that one section of a society should have a treaty with another section of a society.... They should become Canadians as all other Canadians."¹⁷⁹ Native opposition to the White Paper was virtually unanimous¹⁸⁰, and in fact was a step in the political unity of Native people which has been building in this decade.

What is the significance of this? It is that Native people have consistently resisted every attempt by the Canadian bourgeoisie to drag them away from the reserve and into the Canadian work force at large. Their primitive communal consciousness, and their sense of peoplehood, have been tremendously tenacious and a threat to the bourgeoisie. Said Dosman:

"Should the main recommendations of Ottawa's White Paper of July, 1969, be implemented, in effect "terminating" the special status of Indians, the reserves will be lost, and the native will be permanently pauperized, a skid row subculture."¹⁸¹

It is not as if Native people are not eager to lead full, productive lives as are all oppressed peoples of the world. Say Native leaders:

"An aspiration... remains common to every Indian I have ever talked to who is on welfare. This aspiration is simply to get off relief."¹⁸²

"Contrary to the slurs of white bigots, most Indians are more than willing to work."¹⁸³

But Native people have consistently insisted on working on their own terms: which means, first and foremost, the right to remain on the reserve.

“But opportunities on the reservation, other than employment by the tribe, are usually almost nil, and the prejudice of surrounding whites prevents a great many Indians from finding jobs within commuting distance to the reservation. Another factor that contributes to Indian unemployment is the generally low quality of education and the frequent language barrier.”¹⁸⁴

“Indians gladly accept the challenge – to become participating Canadians, to take a meaningful place in the mainstream of Canadian society. But we remain acutely aware of the threat – the loss of our Indian identity, our place as distinct, identifiable Canadians.”¹⁸⁵

It is this that the bourgeoisie has been unable to allow. It has been unable to offer the Native person productive work on his own terms – on the reserve, living in the ways promised him by treaty, and for his own benefit rather than for the super-profits of a capitalist. The bourgeoisie has deliberately counterposed the goal of productive labour for Native people to the goal of his maintenance of his Native-ness. Experiments of factories and cooperative projects run on reserves by and for Native people have been tremendously successful. Yet the bourgeoisie curtails opportunities for tribal self-development with an unparalleled vengeance. That is because such self-development is not in the interest of the bourgeoisie; what the bourgeoisie wants is a reserve labour army, a bottom to its labour force, in a migrant and urban context. This is what the bourgeoisie has been unable to wring out of Native people except in the most marginal of ways.

C. Concrete Analysis: Conclusion

*For the tribes you've terminated,
For the myths you keep alive,
For the land you've confiscated,
For the freedom you've deprived,
Custer died for your sins,
Now a new day must begin.*

– Floyd Westerman¹⁸⁶

In our concrete analysis of Native people of Canada we have found that the relationship of Native people and their lands to the Canadian bourgeoisie is a colonial relationship in all its major aspects. The Canadian bourgeoisie deliberately limits all but the tiniest possibilities of development and self-determination in Native territory so that it can use such territories as primary resource areas and siphon off super-profits via the colonial bureaucracy and the monopoly capitalist concerns. Yet Native people have consistently preferred to remain within the colonial framework than to pick the fruits of the Second World, and have been unwilling and unable to integrate into the mainstream of the Canadian working class. The literature is consistent as to all these points, even to the point that Willliam Wuttunnee, leading Uncle Tomahawk of the Native community, chastises his own people for their childish attitudes about their land and their separateness.¹⁸⁷ Canada does have a major colony: Native territory. It is a part of one colonial system, one colonial administration, with the same rules obtaining throughout.

IV. Stalin's Definition

A. The Fetish of Stalin's Definition

*Here come the anthros,
Better hide your past away,
Here come the anthros
On another holiday.*

– Floyd Westerman ¹⁸⁸

Anthropologists have long been a favorite hate-object of Native North Americans¹⁸⁹ (although there is some evidence that this is changing somewhat¹⁹⁰). Dissecting, detecting, inspecting and rejecting their way of life, these bourgeois scholars have been the paid ideologues of North American imperialism. For the anthropologists, tools of analysis did not exist for the people but people served the end of their analytical tools.

It should be axiomatic to Marxist-Leninists that when we analyze a situation we first make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions. It should be axiomatic as well that our tools of analysis, such as definitions, are but tools, and are made to serve the cause of the human race in its struggle for liberation. It should be axiomatic that human beings were not born to fit into definitions which exist in an ideal and unchanging form. Such an approach would be what is meant by metaphysics, a methodology proudly carried on by anthropologists and other scoundrels.

Mao says:

“In discussing a problem, we should start from reality and not from definitions... We are Marxists, and Marxism teaches that in our approach to a problem we should start from objective facts, not from abstract definitions, and that we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts. (*Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, MSW III:74).

Yet when it comes to Stalin's definition of a nation, Marxist-Leninists forget all this. As soon as you bring up the subject of the nationhood of Native people, it comes out so predictably you could time it with a stopwatch: “Do they fit into Stalin's definition of a nation?”

This is not meant to downplay Stalin's major historical contributions to the understanding of the national question and hence to the

liberation of oppressed nations. On the contrary, we will be drawing heavily on Stalin's theoretical work on the national question, work which was evolved in struggle against Trotsky, Luxemburg, Kautsky, Bauer and others who did not understand the right of nations to self-determination. The least of Stalin's great contributions to the national question is his "definition."

Marxism and the National Question was written in 1913, at a time when national oppression among European nations was the primary focus of attention for Communists. When we read this essay, we notice that the concrete analysis and examples contained in it are drawn from the history and struggles of European peoples. Its categories and its class analysis deal with nations which emerged from the ruins of feudal empires. To apply those categories without analysis or flexibility to the question of colonial liberation is to make the serious error of European chauvinism which dismisses the entire question of the liberation of tribal peoples of the Third World oppressed by colonialism. We shall see shortly that Stalin agreed fully with what we have just said.

Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao all stress in their philosophical writings that to understand any phenomenon we start with concrete analysis of concrete conditions, with the METHOD of dialectical materialism, and not with formulae or definitions. Lenin insists on this principle with particular emphasis when he is discussing the national question.

"(We must) grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or "inventing" abstract definitions, but by examining the historical-economic conditions of the national movements." ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in *Lenin and Stalin on National Colonial Question*, Calcutta, p. 14)

"The categorical requirement in investigating any social question is that it be examined within definite historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch." (*ibid.*, p. 16)

"In this age of imperialism, it is particularly important for the proletariat and the Communist International to

establish *the concrete economic facts* and to proceed from concrete realities, not from abstract postulates, in all colonial and national problems.” (*Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions*, July 26, 1920, LCW 31:240)

“The Communist Party, as the avowed champion of the proletarian struggle to overthrow the bourgeois yoke, must base its policy, in the national question too, not on abstract and formal principles but, first, on a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation *and, primarily, of economic conditions.*” (*Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions*, June 5, 1920, LCW 31:145. Emphasis added)

How many comrades have told us their “line” on the Native question by reciting every phrase, every comma, of Stalin’s definition of a nation, without having done one bit of investigation of the concrete conditions of the Native people? How many comrades have held up to us ideal-type nations – say, the nation of France or Ireland, or the black nation in the South – and told us that the Native people could not constitute a nation because they did not sufficiently resemble these ideal types? We can only say to these comrades: Your methods have nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism, and you would do much better to investigate the difference between dialectical materialism and dogmatism than the Native national question or any other question, because all of your work will suffer from this dogmatism. Mao says:

“Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know the truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition – from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.” (*On Contradiction*, MSW 1:321)

Native people will undoubtedly realize that certain people in our movement, in their dogmatic and idealist applications of Stalin’s discussion of nationhood, are tragicomic parodies of the ubiquitous anthropologists whose main interest in Native people was categorizing

them into acceptable and predetermined slots. They will correctly understand that these applications of theory to their struggle are just more forms of Western chauvinism and isolated scholastic debate. Unfortunately, what they may not fully understand is that this is not what Marxism-Leninism is, in its revolutionary essence, and they may reject Marxism-Leninism because they will be unconvinced that it has anything to offer them.

When talking of colonial struggles, Stalin talks of the national question in a different light from that of his 1913 article. He notes in *Foundations of Leninism* (1924) that the national question in the epoch of colonialism is different *in its very essence*. In this later essay, his main point is that the colonial question is *in its essence* a national question. We quote at length, and we recommend that before people take a line on the Native question they read and study thoroughly the entire section which we cite, until its implications in terms of the Native question become clear. All bracketed sections and emphases are ours.

“During the last two decades the national question has undergone a number of very important changes. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their intrinsic character.

“Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, “civilized” nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities – that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, “civilized” and “uncivilized” on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies – that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national question

has been brought to an end. (*Except in Canada*—authors.) Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asiatics, between the “civilized” and “uncivilized” slaves of imperialism and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

“Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually misinterpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the idea of the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to turn the right to self-determination into the right to cultural autonomy, i.e., the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions, leaving all political power in the hands of the ruling nation. As a consequence, the idea of self-determination stood in danger of being transformed from an instrument for combating annexations into an instrument for justifying them. Now we can say that this confusion has been cleared up. (*Except in Canada*.) Leninism broadened the conception of self-determination, interpreting it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states.

“...Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations was usually regarded as purely a juridical question.... Leninism brought the national question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the “equality of nations” not backed by the direct support of the proletarian parties for the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of supporting, of rendering real and continuous assistance to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

“...The tendency towards political emancipation from the shackles of imperialism and towards the formation of an

independent national state (is) a tendency which arose as a consequence of imperialist oppression and colonial exploitation.” (*Foundations of Leninism*, Peking ed., 70-73, 78)

Notice that Stalin does not say, “Self-determination is the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, provided that they fit into my definition of ‘nation’ which I invented in 1913.”

In the epoch of colonialism, in the epoch of imperialism, a colonial question is by that fact alone a national question. Lenin says:

“Liberation of the colonies, we stated in our theses, means self-determination of nations.” (*A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, LCW 23:63)

and refers to “the freedom to secede for colonies and nations oppressed by ‘their own’ nations.” (*The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, LCW 22:156) The peoples colonized by imperialism, by that fact alone, have the right to self-determination, up to and including secession. They are not obligated to join hand in hand with members of the nation which oppresses them, in any struggle, for any reason. Nationhood is the path by which this right to self-determination is realized. This is the essential theoretical basis by which we must understand the Native question. Lenin says:

“In the United States, the Negroes (and also the Mulattoes and Indians) account for only 11.1 percent. They should be classed as an oppressed nation.” (*Statistics and Sociology*, LCW 23:275. Emphasis added.)

Lenin here groups Native Americans with Black Americans, but as applied to Canada we must see this sentence in terms of Native people alone. What made Lenin make this statement? Did he draw it from abstract definitions, or from a formal list of criteria? No; he drew it from the mode of oppression of Native and Black Americans. This is because Lenin was not a metaphysician or a dogmatist; he was a dialectician and a scientist. Clearly Native people in America in 1917 did not “fit into” some kind of perfect form, a snakeskin which would give them permission to liberate themselves. Yet Lenin understood the fundamental nature of their oppression. This was his methodology. Lenin says:

“For what we are discussing is the logical contradiction between two social categories: ‘imperialism’ and ‘self-determination of nations’, the same logical contradiction as that between two other categories: labour money and commodity production. Imperialism is the negation of self-determination, and no magician can reconcile the two.” (*A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, LCW 23.40-41)

and says *Peking Review*:

“Where there is oppression and aggression, there is resistance. The process of *invasion* and enslavement of the colonies and semi-colonies by colonialism and imperialism is also the process of resistance by the oppressed nations.” (*On Studying Some History of the National-Liberation Movement*, PR 45: Nov. 10, 1972. Emphasis added.)

The dialectical opposite of imperialism is the self-determination of nations. Where there is imperialism, there is created, out of diverse and scattered tribes, nationhood. The one requires the other. The classics of Marxism-Leninism are clear and consistent. Stalin’s “definition” is the wrong tool to use in understanding the right of tribal, colonized peoples to self-determination.

B. The Formation of a Nation: An Historical Necessity

*Seminole, Apache, Ute, Paiute and Shoshone,
Navajo, Comanche, Hopi, Eskimo, Cree,
Tuscarora, Yaqui, Pima, Porno, Oneida,
Native North American me....
Cherokee, Muskogee, Fox and Passamaquoddy,
Winnebago, Haida, Mohawk, Saukteaux and Sioux,
Chickasaw, Ojibway, Cheyenne, Micmac and Mandan,
Native North American You.*

—Buffy St. Marie¹⁹¹

Native people in Canada are being welded into a nation in the process of their struggle against imperialism. Their nation-ness is not a metaphysical perfect form, ready to be examined and analyzed by Communists for all its component parts; it is being created in the process of struggle.

For example, we have heard it said that Native people could not possibly “be” a nation because they are too tribally divided. This is a

metaphysical and undialectical approach to the Native question. It looks at the Native situation in Canada statically and not in terms of the direction in which it is moving. The strong – in fact, the powerful and irreversible – trend among Native people in Canada is towards higher and higher levels of unity, towards conscious and active struggle against the historic differences which have divided them. Some of these differences come from aboriginal times and some have been sown by the bourgeoisie, but they are all anachronistic at this stage of history. The jealousy and competition which is fostered by the bourgeoisie to keep Native people divided and weak is no more of a reason for them to stop struggling for their nationhood than are the differences which divide our own working class a reason to stop struggling for the unity of the proletariat and for socialism. Our own proletariat, too, is deeply divided: race vs. race, men vs. women, craft vs. trade unions, skilled vs. manual labour. Yet the proletariat has an historic mission, and in struggle to carry out this historic mission it must and will overcome all these divisions within it. The same optimism must guide our analysis of the Native struggle. It is not in the objective historical interest of Native people to live on their knees, begging for every pittance from Indian Affairs and watching, helpless, while their land claims are red-penciled by the bourgeois courts. It is not in the objective historical interest of Native people to insist that those tribal differences are more significant than the differences which divide all Native people from the dominant Canadian society. Nor is it in the objective historical interest of Native people to wait, divided and weak, until the working class of the oppressor nation exercises leadership over their liberation struggle against imperialism. Their objective historical interest lies in, and only in, uniting into a strong, self-reliant national struggle against Canadian imperialist encroachment upon their life and homeland.

While some people in our movement are fussing and fretting over Native tribal differences, Native people are crossing tribal lines and getting it together. One of the most advanced struggles in Canada now is in B.C., which for reasons mentioned above is historically one of the most divided of all Native groupings. In April of 1975 the Native people of B.C. got together, status and non-status alike, tribal distinctions disregarded, and determined to refuse all government assistance, choosing instead to struggle for every inch of land claim and to carve out their own means of self-sufficiency.¹⁹² This struggle included not only the poorest of Native people but also many of the

well-to-do “good” government “Indians.” (Note: there is no true comprador bourgeoisie to speak of among Native people. All that can be said is that there is a stratum of comprador petit-bourgeoisie, largely consisting of Native people well paid by the Government through the Department of Indian Affairs to quiet the temper of their own people. This stratum also includes a few Native lawyers and M.P.s who are joining the bourgeoisie in urging their people onto the path of full integration.) In July of 1975, 70 Native people were arrested on the Mount Currie reserve for roadblocking, on the grounds that the imperialist interests could not truck their coal and oil through Native territory in B.C. until land claims were settled.

These militants were not all of one tribe; their struggle crossed tribal and status lines. In Northern Ontario the smaller Band Council units have merged into the Grand Council of Treaty Nine, declaring their intentions to struggle for their common interests. Vern Harper, a leader of the Caravan to Parliament Hill, says that 1974 saw a qualitative leap in that old tribal differences – Ojibway vs. Cree, status Indian vs. Metis – melted away. The slogan was adopted on Parliament Hill: “The tribes have died. A nation is born.” This historic Caravan was led not by the spiritualists or the reformists in the Native movement, but by Native Marxist-Leninists. In July of 1975 a conference was held in Yellowknife, NWT, which declared a Native nation of Dene (meaning “the people”) composed of descendants of five tribes. They demanded recognition by Ottawa and are contemplating secession ¹⁹³ Lenin says:

“Freedom of secession... is an absolute demand, even if the chance of secession being possible and ‘feasible’ before the introduction of socialism by only one in a thousand”
(quoted in *Foundations of Leninism*, Stalin, 80-81.)

One of the first acts of the Dene nation was to threaten to blow up any pipeline built by the imperialists in their territory. If Native people constituted only a “national minority” in the North, then a demand of secession would be splitting and wrecking, and a threat of sabotage would be terrorist and adventurist; but, as they constitute a section of an oppressed nation, these acts are an important threat to the bourgeoisie. Mao says:

“It is an era in which the world capitalist front has collapsed in one part of the globe (one-sixth of the world) and has finally

revealed its decadence everywhere else, in which the remaining capitalist parts cannot survive without relying more than ever on the colonies and semi-colonies, in which a socialist state has been established and has proclaimed its readiness to give active support to the liberation movement of all colonies and semi-colonies, and in which the proletariat of the capitalist countries is steadily freeing itself from the social-imperialist influence of the social-democratic parties and has proclaimed its support for the liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies. In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category . . . Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be regarded as allies of the counter-revolutionary front of world capitalism; they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism” (*On New Democracy*, MSW II: 343-4.)

Communists must remember that national struggles of oppressed peoples, even when led by the forces of bourgeois democracy, are progressive. They must not downgrade or underestimate the importance of nationalism in the Native struggle. Such trends are fundamentally anti-imperialist, and in fact are only a continuation of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle which Native people have been waging for 400 years against the bourgeoisie. Says *Peking Review*:

“The liberation movement of the oppressed nations and the wars of national liberation constitute a great cause sweeping away stumbling blocks on the path of history and propelling society forward. Historically unavoidable and reasonable, they are “inevitable, progressive and revolutionary.” (Lenin: *The Junius Pamphlet*) For hundreds of years the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, dauntlessly advancing wave upon wave, have never ceased fighting against colonialism and imperialism. From the very day the colonialist set foot on the sacred territories of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples, the oppressed nations and peoples who love freedom and independence dealt head-on blows at the invaders with rocks, arrows, spears and cannons.” (*On Studying Some History of the National Liberation Movement*, PR 45: Nov. 10, 1972.)

The road to overcome tribal and status differences ahead is a long one, but the significant fact is that Native people are struggling for that as an inseparable part of their struggle for emancipation. Dialectics teaches us that it is the direction of a struggle which we must examine when we seek to understand it in its essence.

Native people have one and only one weapon with which to struggle for their sovereignty and self-determination: nationhood. If they do not struggle for nationhood, then they will be accepting the hegemony of the dominant society over them, which is exactly what they have been fighting against for 400 years. Every signboard, from every corner of the Native world, from every segment of their political thought and every stratum of their social order, points to their option for nationhood: for sovereignty, for self-determination, for freedom from hegemony and domination by the overall society of Canada, and above all for their land.

If Native people struggle for nationhood – struggle for the unity among them which will enable them to forge a self-sufficient future and struggle to overcome all obstacles in the way of that unity – then they will be struggling for their right to self-determination and freedom from the hegemony of the dominant society. If they fail to struggle for their nationhood, but bow to the differences which now divide them, then they will be opting for the other alternative – becoming one of the many ethnic groups stirred up into the dominant Canadian society, be it capitalist or socialist. This is their choice.

Yes, the nationhood of Native people is an objective question. It depends not just on national consciousness but on territory, history, economy, and so forth. And these objective factors are there. But it is undialectical to eliminate the role of consciousness in a struggle for national liberation, just as it is undialectical to eliminate the role of consciousness and political leadership in the struggle of the working class for power. If the Vietnamese had not had the determination to weld themselves into a nation in the process of their struggle against imperialism, then a nation would not have been formed. Nationhood was the necessary tool for their liberation; and so, diverse groups from plains and mountains, from varying language families and varying modes of survival, from varying epochs of historical consciousness, overcame these obstacles in their struggle for liberation.¹⁹⁴

The formal structure of the nation was not primary; it was secondary. Primary was the liberation of their people from colonialism and imperialism. Secondary was the tool necessary to struggle for

that liberation. This is not an idealist analysis, it is simply dialectical. Only mechanical materialism, such as revisionism, Trotskyism and Menshevism, sees national struggle and class struggle to be a mechanical and automatic force, operating outside of the consciousness of those who are struggling. National struggle, like class struggle, is a conscious struggle. This analysis of the welding of a nation in the process of struggle applies throughout the Third World and its struggles for liberation, and so a Communist who takes issue with it must apply his politics consistently to Third World struggles everywhere. Certainly this will clarify things and help us to draw firm lines of demarcation in our movement.

C. Stalin's Definition: An Instructive Guideline

*"Well, it's all in the past, you can say,
But it's still going on here today.
The Government now wants the Iroquois land,
That of the Eskimo, and the Cheyenne.
It's here and it's now, you must help us, dear man,
Now that the buffalo's gone."*

—Buffy St. Marie¹⁹⁵

We are now engaging in a discussion of Stalin's definition of a nation as it was written to apply to the bourgeois nations emerging from the ruins of feudal empires. We do not consider it essential to use this definition at all in our discussion of the Native national question, as it was not written to apply to tribal colonized peoples; but to a limited extent we find it an instructive guideline, and hence will go through its categories to show in what ways the Native struggle against imperialism is welding Native people into nationhood. We will show a continuity between the nation of the first type (bourgeois nation) and the nation of the second type (colonized nation), rather than an identicalness; the categories will not be considered determinant or binding.

"A nation is an historically evolved, stable group of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

Is the Native nation historically evolved? It certainly is. It has been evolved in the era of rising Canadian capitalism, which for

Native people has been the era of colonialism. It has been evolved further in the epoch of imperialism, when the export of capital into Native territory has acquired exceptional importance.

Is the Native nation stable? It certainly is. Native people have been living in "Canada" for 10,000 years, and have held firmly to their way of life in the face of every attempt at genocide. Their tenacity is a miracle to all who have observed it. Its stability and historical roots long antedate either the English or the French Canadian nation.

Do the Native people have a common language? Yes and no. The hundreds of languages which existed at the time of European contact are in the process of giving way to higher levels of linguistic unity just as the breakdown of tribal barriers itself is giving way to a higher level of unity on all fronts, just as the Native nation is being formed. In the southern sections of the Native nation, people are crossing tribal barriers by communicating with each other in English (in Quebec, French), whether as a first or a second language. Band council meetings and local newspapers use English (and French). English is the major common language of Native Canada. In the northern sections, most intertribal Native communication is held in Cree or Ojibway; new forms of dialects are evolving to enable people to break down language barriers.

We offer that Stalin was wrong when he said that one nation can have only one language, even as applied to European nations. The Irish nation itself spoke not only English, but Gaelic as well. The Welsh speak Welsh as well as English. National minorities in English Canada speak a wide variety of mother tongues. In the question of tribal peoples evolving into nationhood, this is going to prove to be even a more consistent pattern. If tribal linguistic differences mean that colonized Third World peoples



are not nations and do not have the right to self-determination, then this principle must be extended consistently to apply to Third World struggles everywhere: Vietnam, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Peru, and so on. If people hold to this position, we could like a clear and consistent statement of it: once again, it will clarify people's politics and help us to draw firm lines of demarcation in our movement.

Do Native people have a common territory? They certainly do. We have shown that the extend of the Native colony is vast, probably covering more than half of the surface area of Canada. Here is an excellent example of Mao's principle that "When we look at a thing, we must examine its essence and treat its appearance merely as an usher at the threshold, and once we cross the threshold, we must grasp the essence of the thing; this is the only reliable and scientific method of analysis." (*A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire*, MS W 1:119) The essence of the Native mode of life before European contact was in its relationship to the land. The essence of the Native struggle with colonialism and imperialism has consistently been the struggle over land, and as contradictions intensify, it more and more focuses on a conscious and unifying struggle for land claims. The essence of Uncle Tomahawkey is the loud proclamation of "cultural festivities", "ethnicity", etc., while denying the central role of land claims. Native people do have claim to a common territory; it is the essence of their struggle.

Sometimes Native people must feel like the dog trainer who was trying to teach a dog to pick up a stick. The dog trainer kept on pointing to the stick, but the dog kept on looking at the finger. Native people have been struggling for their land. The "left" cheers on. "Hooray for the Indians! Hooray for those who are struggling! Look at how well we champion their cause!" But they do not look past the finger to the stick. Native people are trying to call attention not to their own heroism but to their land claims, to their rights to sovereignty over their own territory. Native people are pointing to the stick, and the "left" keeps staring at the finger.

Communists must not allow themselves to be distracted by the fact that the Native colony is officially a part of Canada. They must see these areas as *annexed territories*. This is a very important principle of Lenin's theory of imperialism. Lenin says:

"The proletariat of the oppressing nations cannot confine itself to the general hackneyed phrases against annexations

and for the equal rights of nations in general, that may be repeated by any pacifist bourgeois. The proletariat cannot evade the question that is particularly “unpleasant” for the imperialist bourgeoisie, namely, the question of the *frontiers* of a state that is based on national oppression. The proletariat cannot but fight *against the forcible retention of the oppressed nations within the boundaries of a given state*, and this is exactly what the struggle for the right of self-determination means. *The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that “its own” nation oppresses.* Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; mutual confidence and class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will become impossible; the hypocrisy of the reformist and Kautskyan advocates of self-determination *who maintain silence about the nations which are oppressed by “their” state will remain unexposed.*” (From *Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions*, Peking, pp. 7-8. Emphasis added, except for first emphasis.)

“The Kautskyists... evade precisely the question of the frontiers of a state which forcibly retains subject nations, etc. (They) are opportunists who prostitute Marxism and who have lost all capacity to understand the theoretical significance and the practical urgency of Marx’s tactics.” (ibid., p. 14)

And Stalin says:

“...Imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the “integral whole”; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of conquest, without which imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.” (*Foundations of Leninism*, 78).

Not only can imperialism annex colonies; Stalin says it must do so.

Do Native people have a common economic life! They certainly do. As explained above, their economic life has been shaped by contact with colonialism and imperialism. The parameters of traditional activities, such as fishing, hunting, trapping, gathering and crafts

production, have widened in response to colonial oppression. These activities are no longer conducted primarily for small scale subsistence but for trade with colonial centres hungry for ever-depleted primary resources. Therefore wider and wider sections of Native people are welded together into common economic activity.

The traditionalist forms of subsistence agriculture in which Native people engaged between the Indian Act era and World War II are another example of common economic life. They had the Indian Administration as their common reference point and they served to weld diverse tribes together into a common relationship vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie. Today, the chronic 65% unemployment rate, the extremely high levels of welfare and government assistance, the suctioning off of all resources and the fruits of labour into the dominant society – all form a part of the common economic life of the oppressed nation. To be an oppressed, colonized people means many of these things; there is nothing unique about the common economic life of Native people of Canada.

Recently, a common economic life is being welded as well on a new level in the process of political struggle. The fight for land claims has brought issues such as fishing and hunting rights, guaranteed by treaty but consistently eroded by the bourgeoisie, into the area of collective struggle which crosses tribal lines. Similarly, a number of Native groups have begun, through their band organizations, to operate cooperative industries such as pulp and paper mills, shoe factories, and other modern industrial concerns. This is an aspect of their struggle for self-sufficiency and has attempted to supercede the latest attempts of the bourgeoisie to actually encourage a bit of nascent Native capitalism in the colonies. Although traditionally every bit of local entrepreneurship was hamstrung, now the bourgeoisie is eyeing such exploits as eleventh-hour attempts to divide Native people from each other and keep the masses down in a new and creative way. Native people, however, are getting wise, and several band councils have actually outlawed such incipient capital ventures on the grounds that it is in the Native tradition to own things in common. Here we can see the powerful impact that the classless, egalitarian mode of production of the pre-contact period continues to have on Native consciousness.

(One interesting tool which is being used in the North to weld diverse tribal groupings together is the snowmobile. People are

grasping it as a means to break down mutual isolation and to seek each other out in the struggle to survive as a people.)

The “**common economic life**,” while geared toward survival, is at the same time being used as a political tool to forge a higher level of unity in an effort to survive the threat of extinction. It is an excellent example of “politics in command.” *Do Native people have a common psychological makeup manifested in a common culture?* They certainly do. It is this common psychological makeup above all which welds scattered groups of Native people all over North America together into a group which has far more in common with each other than any one cluster has with the white working class. Despite aboriginal differences, attitudes towards certain fundamental things were very similar and have become more similar since contact with colonialism. Attitudes towards the land, towards the Great Spirit, and the unity of all things, towards the religious experience, towards childbearing, and music, and the role of silence and the spoken word, and a penchant towards extreme generosity - all are quite different from the attitudes of the “white” society which were evolved in a civilization torn by class antagonisms. Native awareness of their own oppression within the dominant society has strengthened the psychological bonds of commonality which come from the aboriginal cultures.

This common psychological makeup is a category consistently underplayed by revisionists, Trotskyists and liberals, who in their mechanical materialism cannot grasp the role of the superstructure, the role of ideology and world view and its fundamental importance to human life. Insensitivity to the strong national contradictions which operate between Native and “white” people has driven a wedge between the two groups time and again, and we think that a recognition by Marxist-Leninists that there are more national differences than meet the eye is a *precondition* for full and equal relationships between the Native and the “white” Marxist-Leninist movements.

We have been accused of mystification and adulation for saying such things as these, and so we would point out that Lenin and Stalin also recognized the depth of national contradictions between peoples of different nations. This is why Stalin included the category, “psychological makeup”, in his “definition” of a nation of the first type (bourgeois nations). Notice that Stalin does not explain or define scientifically what these psychological differences are; he just states that

they are there and that they function as objective forces in the world. Here is his brief discussion in *Marxism and the National Question*:

“Apart from the foregoing, one must take into consideration the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a nation. Nations differ not only in their conditions of life, but also in spiritual complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland, which speak one language, nevertheless constitute three distinct nations, it is in no small measure due to the peculiar psychological make-up which they developed from generation to generation as a result of dissimilar conditions of existence.

“Of course, by itself, psychological make-up or, as it is otherwise called, ‘national character,’ is something intangible for the observer, but in so far as it manifests itself in a distinctive culture common to the nation it is something tangible and cannot be ignored.

“Needless to say, ‘national character’ is not a thing that is fixed once and for all, but is modified by changes in the conditions of life; but since it exists at every given moment, it leaves its impress on the physiognomy of the nation.

“Thus, a common psychological make-up, which manifests itself in a common culture, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.” (In *The Essential Stalin*, ed. B. Franklin, p. 60)

Adulation! Mystification! Unscientific! Idealist!

We think that Lenin’s and Stalin’s basic GRASP of the depth of these differences between peoples was the important key to the strength and firmness of their political line on the national question. Lenin saw that such differences were thoroughly stubborn and tenacious.

“The elimination of classes will come first, followed by the elimination of the state and finally that of nations... National and state differences among peoples and countries... will continue to exist for a very, very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale” (quoted in *Peking Review*, July 19, 1974)

Today's Soviet revisionists have snipped away the "psychological makeup" section of Stalin's "definition" in their campaign to assimilate their national groupings into the great Russian empire.¹⁹⁶ If nations will be the last man-to-man differences to be eliminated, then the psychological differences between nations will be equally stubborn. Up until such times as national inequalities will be eliminated, moreover, national differences will manifest themselves ideologically as racism.

Summary. Now we have concluded our discussion of Stalin's criteria for a bourgeois nation. We have seen that the categories can be applied in certain ways to the colonized nation of Native Canada as well. Yet we have seen that many of the criteria are being filled not only automatically but also guided by consciousness, in the process of struggle against imperialism. The unity of Native people is being worked for on all levels: linguistic, economic, territorial, psychological. Native people are not leaning back and waiting for cosmic forces to unify them or to liberate them; they are taking their future into their own hands. "The people, and the people alone are the motive force in the making of world history." (Mao, *On Coalition Government*, MSW, III: 257). Says a member of the Native Study Group in Vancouver:

"We (meaning the urban Natives of the south) are expatriates, not from a contemporary nation but from a nation of the future; a nation prematurely conceived by the relentless expansion of world capitalism in the eighteenth century; a nation growing in the consciousness of Native people, fed by their increasingly contradictory historical condition; a nation destined to be born in the midst of corporate invasion and popular resistance in one of the world's last frontiers, the Canadian north."¹⁹⁷

V. National Minority?

*“And now here you come, bill of sale in your hand,
With surprise in your eyes that we’re lacking in thanks
For the blessings of civilization you’ve brought us,
The lessons you’ve taught us,
the ruin you’ve wrought us.”*

—Buffy St. Marie¹⁹⁸

Those who would argue that Native people in Canada do not have the right to self-determination, up to and including secession, can take only one line: that Native people constitute a national minority in Canada. This is a social-chauvinist and opportunist line. Let us see why.

What is a national minority? First of all, a national minority is a minority. Go far enough North, and Native people are not a minority, but a majority. To call them a minority is implicit annexationism and Great Nation chauvinism. To fail to distinguish between northern Canada and southern Canada is implicitly to *endorse* the annexation of the North to Canadian imperialist interests. Lenin says:

“By refusing to support rebellions of annexed territories we objectively become annexationists.” (*The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22:333)

How does Lenin define “annexation?”

“However you may twist and turn, annexation is violation of the self-determination of a nation, it is the establishment of state frontiers contrary to the will of the population.

“To be against annexations means to be in favour of the right to self-determination.” (Ibid., p. 328)

Those who have in the past been loyal slaves to Stalin’s “definition” of a nation would do well to take a moment to enslave themselves to Lenin’s “definition” of annexation, and to accept the conclusion which he draws from that definition.

That issue aside, there is one fundamental fact about a “national minority”. That is, that despite sharp national contradictions which a group might have with the rest of the society, those national contradictions are subordinated to a principal contradiction which they share with the rest of the society. For example, the black immigrants from the Caribbean into Canada have a national contradiction with

the Canadian bourgeoisie but they have immigrated into the urban Canadian work force and their primary oppression is as proletarians. Italians, Chinese, Ukrainians, the French in Manitoba, and so forth, are oppressed nationally but they too are in a situation where their primary contradiction with the Canadian bourgeoisie is a class contradiction, which is the primary contradiction in English and French Canada. Their primary struggle therefore merges. Within that struggle these groups are entitled to democratic rights.

In China, there are various groups which are regarded as national minorities and indeed have been the victims of Great Han chauvinism. China, however, is a Third World country. Before Liberation the primary struggle of the Chinese people was that of all people of China against foreign imperialist domination. In their common struggle, they were welded into one nation with groupings of national minorities. Said a Chinese spokesman:

“China is a big, multi-national country whose various nationalities, the Han people as well as all national minorities, have through their tireless labour developed production, created their own history and culture, and made important contributions towards building up their great homeland. Economic cooperation and cultural exchange are the result of contacts of long standing between them. At different times, they jointly resisted foreign aggression. Imperialist encroachments on China during these last hundred years made the various nationalities feel that they were in the same boat. The national democratic revolutionary movement led by the Chinese Communist Party during the past thirty years, in particular, has systematically brought about greater unity among them.” (Emphasis added.)

“...Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung and the Chinese Communist Party, this common enemy was overthrown two years ago by the great people’s revolution and War of Liberation, initiated and expanded among the Hans but joined in by the people of many national minorities.”¹⁹⁹

That is why Mao said, “first, the liberation of the Chinese nation, and second, the equality of all the nationalities in China.” (MSW III: 306)

And so we can see that the situation of China is not comparable to the situation of Canada. Canada is a Second World country whose

state is the imperialist aggressor against the colonized people and whose primary contradiction is a class contradiction. Lenin says,

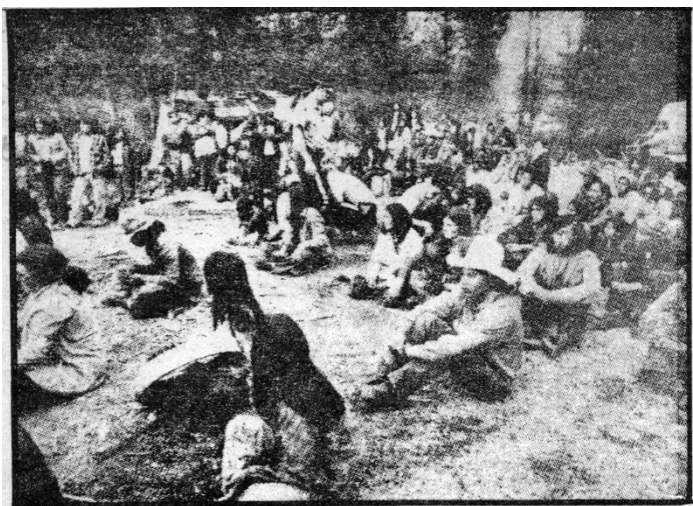
“The distinction between oppressing and oppressed nations... (is) the essence of imperialism, which deceitfully evaded by the social-chauvinists, and by Kautsky.” (*The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, LCW 21:409)

China was an oppressed nation, and Canada is an oppressor nation; this distinction must not be “deceitfully evaded” when understanding the difference between the proletarian line as applied to China and that as applied to Canada.

What is a national minority? Not only is it a minority, but it in some sense must be “national”. It must in some way be related to or descend from a nation. Redheads and homosexuals are minorities, but they are not national minorities because they do not descend from nations. Italians, Chinese, etc. in Canada are national minorities because they descend from nations (Italy, China). Yet if Native people are not now and have never been a nation, then in what sense are they a national minority? They are not a part of the greater Canadian nation (as, for example, the Inner Mongolians are a part of the greater Chinese nation): they do not share with English or French Canada a common history, a stable relationship, a common territory, a common economic life, a common psychological makeup, or a common experience of struggle against a foreign imperialist aggressor. To call them a national minority is to argue by default alone: “Well, they can’t be a nation, and they’ve got to be something, so they are a national minority.” The term, when applied to Native people, has no positive or scientific meaning. It is a way, in the good old Canadian tradition, to put Native people out of sight and out of mind. It is a way to implicitly assume their membership in greater Canada. It is tantamount to the policy of the French revisionists who have “openly regarded the people of the French colonies as ‘naturalized Frenchmen’.” (*Apologists of Neo-Colonialism*, by the Editorial Department of *Renmin Ribao* and *Hongqi*, Peking 1963, p. 41) It is a way to implicitly assume the rights of the Canadian proletariat to have hegemony over the Native struggle, to pat Native people on the head and say, “Now, now, that’s all right, don’t worry if we don’t call you a nation, you’ll get your own little autonomous regions. After the revolution, we’ll give you better reserves.” Lenin says:

“All reactionaries and bourgeois grant to nations forcibly retained within the frontiers of a given state the right to “determine jointly” their fate in a common parliament... Our opponents try to evade precisely the point at issue, the only one that is up for discussion – the right to secede. This would be funny if it were not so tragic!” (*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22:322.)

The only issue that is up for discussion re Native people at this stage is their *right to secede*. This is the discussion that cannot be evaded. Our movement can no longer coast along, limply applauding pleas by Native people for better education, indoor plumbing or even land claims. It must confront the issue of the Native *right to secede*. All other discussions at this stage of the debate are evasive.



Road block at Mount Currie

VI. The Native Question and Our Movement

A. Annexationist Indifference in Practice

*"The government now wants the Iroquois lands,
That of the Eskimo, and the Cheyenne. It's here and
it's now, you must help us, dear man,
Now that the buffalo's gone."*

—Buffy St. Marie²⁰⁰

Has anyone in our movement concretely put forward a developed position that Native people constitute a national minority? No, nobody has done so. Then why are we engaging in a polemic against that line, and against a general trend of social-chauvinism in our movement? We consider it essential to do so.

Everywhere we have gone in our movement, people have shown an open and consistent lack of interest in the Native question. This trend is strongest among those with bourgeois-nationalist leanings, but exists in other sections of our movement as well. It is a difficult subject to bring up for struggle, it is always out of place, and conversation ends quickly. Yet, everywhere we have gone, we have heard the hasty opinion expressed that Native people constitute a national minority. When this line is objected to, Stalin's definition is quickly dragged out in defense.

It is true that nobody has written a developed position on the Native question. Why should they, if it so bores them? Why should they, if the Native question is a "national minority" question like the Italian or the Greek question is a "national minority" question? It is then not a priority, not fundamental to an understanding of Canada or the application of Lenin's theory of imperialism to Canada. It is then not worth rushing even to take a line on it. But, if we have not one but two oppressed nations within Canadian borders, the question becomes far more urgent; people would be debating it, calling meetings about it, writing positions about it.

We have found people in our movement to consider the Native question a passing and minor question, to "forget" about it. Yet Lenin says:

"Europeans often forget that colonial peoples too are nations, but to tolerate this 'forgetfulness' is to tolerate chauvinism." (*A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, LCW 23:63)

In particular, they “forget” to include Native Marxist-Leninists in their investigations (when they do investigate), and they “forget” to consider the opinion of Native Marxist-Leninists as very important. This is an error which has NOT been made with respect to Quebecois Marxist-Leninists. They also “forget” to consider the feelings of Native people in Canada as very important, thus “forgetting” Mao’s basic principle of “from the masses, to the masses... Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.” Finally, they “forget” to consider the depth of the national contradictions which are operating between Native people, who were stunned by colonialism when they were in an era of primitive communism, and “white” people, whose consciousness has been shaped over a long period of time in a society torn by class antagonisms. This leads to insensitivity to the magnitude of suffering and oppression which Native people have experienced in Canada, and can manifest itself in attitudes which are unwittingly patronizing. We have found people’s stubborn refusal to appreciate the importance of these national contradictions downright Trotskyist. Lenin says”

“A member of an oppressor nation must be ‘indifferent’ to whether small nations belong to his state or to a neighboring state, or to themselves, according to where their sympathies lie; without such ‘indifference’ he is not a Social-Democrat. To be an internationalist Social-Democrat one must not think only of one’s own nation, but place above it the interests of all nations, their common liberty and equality. Everyone accepts this in ‘theory’ but displays an annexationist indifference in practice. There is the root of the evil.” (*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22:347)

The entire history of Canada is a history of continuing annexation of Native land and the entire history of our movement in Canada has been a history of “annexationist indifference in practice.” Even in the heyday of the extreme Third Worldism of Weatherman, Toronto’s *Red Morning* was too busy adulating the Black Panthers of America to give but weak mention to the struggle of Native people right here in Canada against imperialism. If Marxist-Leninists had a genuinely Marxist-Leninist world view, they would not have missed noticing the continuing annexation of Native land and the continuing genocide of Native people in a country in which they have lived all their lives. We can only understand this if we realize that these comrades have

been infected to a degree with a bourgeois world view. It is a world view they share with Canadian society at large. Said Carstens:

“The observation needs to be repeated again that there has been an almost complete disregard in recent works on contemporary Canadian society, of Indian and Eskimo peoples. It is as though the authors of these works regard only Europeans as members of Canadian society; in many ways I suppose they are correct.”²⁰¹

Said Cardinal, a Native reformist leader:

“Indifference? Indians have witnessed the growing concern of Canadians over racial strife in the United States. We have watched the justifiably indignant reaction of fellow Canadians to the horrors of starvation in Biafra. Television has brought into our homes the sad plight of the Vietnamese, has intensified the concern of Canadians about the role of our neighbour country in the brutal inhumanity of war. The Unitarian Service Committee reminds us of the starving conditions of hundreds of thousands of Asians. Canadian urbanites have walked blisters on their feet and fat off their rumps to raise money for *underdeveloped countries outside Canada*.” (Emphasis added.)

We do not question the concern of Canadians about such problems. We do question how sincere or how deep such concern may be when Canadians ignore the plight of the Indian or Metis or Eskimo in their own country. There is little knowledge of native circumstances in Canada and even less interest. To the native one fact is apparent – the average Canadian does not give a damn.²⁰²

The annexation of the northwest territories has been going on since before Confederation. We say: a line of demarcation on this subject is long overdue. We must expose this “annexationist indifference in practice” with which our movement has been infected.

And so we charge the Marxist-Leninist movement in Canada with having made a grave error of implicit social-chauvinism, and we hope that we have made a contribution toward knocking our movement out of its “annexationist indifference” stupor. We are confident that the genuine Marxist-Leninists in Canada will correct this error by investigating the question and taking the correct line. Those who wish to continue to slumber will “have to be exposed; those who will

take a social-chauvinist line will have to be purged from our movement.

In previous drafts of this article which have circulated, we neglected to account for the fact that *En Lutte!* (a Quebec Marxist-Leninist group) has written a short position on the Native question. We criticize ourselves for this oversight.

En Lutte! takes the position in *To Chart the Path of the Revolution is a Task of Prime Importance* (CR 1: 21:22) that Canada's Native peoples are national minorities but that they have the right to secede. We criticize *En Lutte!* for its "national minority" characterization of Canada's Native people as we think it is based on incorrect methodology and understanding.

But *En Lutte!* has upheld the Native *right to secede*, and this is the principled issue at stake at this stage. While we think their formulation is wrong, therefore, the contradiction is not antagonistic.

B. Bourgeois Left-Nationalism

*"And the eagles of war whose wings lent you glory,
They were never no more than carrion crows,
Push the wrens from their nest, steal their eggs, change their story,
The mockingbird sings it, it's all that she knows."*

—Buffy St. Marie ²⁰³

Lenin says,

"...The very substance of chauvinism (is) to defend one's 'own' fatherland even when its acts are aimed at enslaving other people's fatherlands." (*Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International*, LCW 22:109-110)

This has been bourgeois left-nationalism in Canada in a nutshell: its failure to realize that Canada has been built from the beginning on the enslavement of the Native fatherland for the ends of the growing bourgeoisie. The trend in our movement is away from bourgeois left-nationalism and towards the recognition that Canada is a weak imperialist power of the Second World. Yet the implications of this analysis have not yet been fully grasped. When studying the export of capital in the epoch of imperialism, it is erroneous to exclude the export of capital from the Canadian south to the Canadian north. It is erroneous to neglect the activities of corporations in mineral mining, petroleum, natural gas, hydroelectric power, transportation, and pulp

and paper extraction in their imperialist exploits of the North.²⁰⁴ The Canadian government is an active accomplice of these imperialist exploits. Whereas the American companies pursuing petroleum extraction in Alaska have been delaying pipeline construction until Native land claims have been heard in court, the Canadian state has consciously and deliberately rushed through pipeline activity despite Native land claims.²⁰⁵ It is not a coincidence that the White Paper, designed to liquidate Native land claims, was presented when the pipeline issue was coming to the fore for the Canadian and American bourgeoisies. Now the position of the Canadian bourgeoisie has changed, however, to the emphasis on granting Native land claims as a tokenistic co-optive measure, despite which development will proceed as usual.

Pipeline construction does not mean employment for the aboriginal population. Many of the employees are not Native, and those that are Native are employed seasonally, in spurts, and only at the height of construction activity. When the dust is settled, the old way of life will be torn in two, the caribou will have fled, and the Native people will be left with welfare checks, alcohol, and boarding schools. Said James Wah-shee, president of the NWT Indian Brotherhood: "No settlement, no Mackenzie Valley pipeline".²⁰⁶ And, as we have seen earlier in this article, Native people will resort to anything that is needed to enforce their demands, up to and including sabotage.

The Canadian state receives gigantic royalties for its ownership of mineral and other property rights in the North. Having herded Native people onto reserves and deprived them of resource rights in large sections of the North, it now takes these royalties as its own, and foreign companies which want to invest in the north must pay the Canadian state huge sums in order to invest there. The Canadian state takes an active lead in an all-out attempt to "develop" the North. Those who would say that the export of Canadian capital is insignificant have not counted the export of capital from the Canadian south to the Canadian north in their calculations. If they were to do so, they would indeed understand what it means that Canada is an imperialist power of the Second World, and that the Canadian state is an active accomplice in imperialist plunder. A common fall-back of bourgeois left-nationalism is the line, "But Canada doesn't have any colonies." When people hear the word "colony" they still think "Canada", rather than "the North". When they hear the words "the national question" they think, "Canada against U.S. imperialism, rather than "Native

people against Canadian imperialism". This conditioning must be erased. Marxist-Leninists must deepen their understanding of Canadian imperialism until it hits upon the genocide of the Native people.

Bourgeois nationalism has even affected Native people in Canada to a cruel extent. During the Korean War, Native people believed that by fighting for the bourgeoisie against another Third World people, they were fighting for their fatherland. Now they know better, and they know that in the Korean War they were fighting on the wrong side; the next time they pick up guns for the fatherland, it will be for their own fatherland, and pointed against the Canadian (and American) bourgeoisie.

Communists must not separate the issue of Canadian imperialism from the issue of Native people. The issue of the Native struggle in Canada is key, it is key to a correct strategy for revolution, because it hits at the foundation of what Canada is. Canada is not like France, or Italy, whose nations emerged from the stable populations in transition from crumbling feudal empires. The epoch of rising capitalism in Canada was the building of a colony within a colony: settling, usurping, and exploiting resources which belonged to other peoples. Canada began as a colonial settler's state, based on genocide. The process of settling is not over, nor is the genocide. Any analysis of the nature of Canada which does not start from that point is incorrect.

We have heard it said that it is impossible that a Second World country can have contained within its borders a Third World country. Such a statement can only rely for its content on categories of bourgeois geography and on legal-juridical conceptions of a nation. The Third World is not simply "Africa, Asia and Latin America"; it is "the developing countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions". As pointed out previously, it is useless and non-Marxist to categorize the world by other than economic structurings. If the North of Canada has more in common economically and politically with certain oppressed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America than it does with southern Canada, then it should be classified as a part of the Third World. What constitutes the Third World is material conditions, not atlases.

The idea that a Third World country cannot exist within a Second World country is also an idea which assumes that Third World territory must have its own state boundaries. If we are to stick to that idea, then we fly right in the face of Stalin, who fought the same battle with social-chauvinist conceptions of the national question many years

ago. We have seen that Stalin said that annexation is an integral part of imperialism. To annex a colony, there are no formal state boundaries, and in fact it takes a scientific analysis to realize that the boundary is a reality despite the lack of formal political status. Stalin says:

“According to your scheme, only such nations could be recognized as nations as have their own state, separate from others, and all oppressed nations which have no independent statehood would have to be deleted from the category of nations; furthermore, the struggle of oppressed nations against national oppression, and the struggle of colonial peoples against imperialism would have to be excluded from the concept ‘national movement’ and ‘national liberation movement’.” (*The National Question and Leninism*, Moscow, p. 9)

To say that a Third World country cannot exist within a Second World country is simply naked social-imperialism. It is indistinguishable from the ravings of the Communist Party of France, which cried, “Algeria is an inalienable part of France” (*Apologists of Neo-Colonialism*, p. 42), and with the CPSU’s declaration that the Chinese “create racial and geographical barriers”, (ibid, p. 44) It is not Marxist-Leninists who create geographical barriers within state boundaries; it is the imperialists who do so. Marxist-Leninists simply uphold that these barriers objectively exist and that those on the one side have the right to secede from those on the other side.

C. Imperialist Economism: The Essence of Opportunism

i. Opportunism: A History

*“Where were you when we needed you, our friend?
Where were you when we needed you to bend?
And now you claim to be
Part Sioux or Cherokee.
But where were you when we came close to the end?”*
—Floyd Westerman²⁰⁷

In our opinion, a position on the Native question is not adequate without a major and thorough discussion of the opportunist tendency in our movement known as “Imperialist Economism”.

Six years ago a terrorist tendency overtook the radical student movement of North America. Led by Weathermen in the United States, this “passionate indignation of intellectuals”²⁰⁸ found

organizational echo in Canada as well. It championed the lumpenproletariat, the alienated youth culture, and the national liberation struggles of the Third World (except for the Native struggles in North America, to which it gave but weak mention). It saw the working class of the advanced capitalist countries as a write-off, bought off hopelessly by imperialism and possessing no revolutionary potential. It therefore saw terrorist tactics as the only answer, as supportive action for the truly revolutionary movements of the world.

The terrorist movement was but a flash in the pan. Within a year, it had seen its day. Its own members were horrified at what they had been saying and doing. Many underwent self-criticism and made a complete turn-about in their politics. Many called themselves Marxist-Leninists, but they were not. They were economists: “gazing with awe upon the posteriors of the proletariat”.²⁰⁹ They say their next move “to go among the workers,”²¹⁰ to have “close organic contact with the proletarian struggle”.²¹¹ They made the economic struggle the main starting point, and saw demands for higher wages and other trade union demands as the truly revolutionary activity to be engaged in.²¹² Now, economism has no more in common with Marxism-Leninism than terrorism does. Not only that, but its disastrous effects on the cause of revolution in Canada were apparent. Lenin explains the reasons: because the workers within the sphere of their own economic struggle can develop only trade union consciousness but not class consciousness. The working class needs leadership, organized outside of the sphere of economic relationships in the workplace, with the science of Marxism brought to it from the outside.

Yet economism did not go away like the flash in the pan of the terrorist tendency. On the contrary, it stayed and it stayed and it stayed. Neo-revisionist organizations like the CPC (M-L) were avoided because they were an “ultra-left tendency”. The question of the party was dismissed as vanguardism. These people were not just economists; in some senses they were, in practice, closer to anarcho-syndicalism.

Leninism gradually began to become more widespread. Yet when Leninist principles began to be voiced, these people in our movement did not jump suddenly away from economism the way they had jumped away suddenly from terrorism. On the contrary, they stalled, they equivocated, they made up excuses not to change their politics. They put off study, but instead continued to entrench themselves in trade union politics. They read *What Is To Be Done* but they

did not learn from it. They put off the process of self-criticism. They evaded struggle; they did not write down their politics, and so could not be openly criticized or held accountable for them.

Economism has exhibited a phenomenal tenacity . Its adherents creep along, never willing to make the final leap and become Leninists. They change their political line just enough so as not to be discredited by the trends of the movement but not enough to really ally themselves firmly with Leninism. They talk about a Party, but will not understand what the functions of a Leninist party are: they think that a Party simply co-ordinates and disciplines the reformist work they have been doing all along. They say they have changed from economism to Leninism, but in practice it appears more accurate to say that they have changed from anarcho-syndicalism to economism. They talk about raising political demands, but in fact do so “only on festive occasions”.²¹³ They confuse trade union struggle with class struggle. Lenin says:

“Every class struggle is a political struggle. We know that the opportunists, slaves to the ideas of liberalism, understood these profound words of Marx incorrectly and tried to put a distorted interpretation on them... The Economists believed that any clash between classes was a political struggle. The Economists therefore recognized as ‘class struggle’ the struggle for a wage increase of five kopecks onto the ruble, and refused to recognize a higher, more developed, nation-wide class struggle, the struggle for political aims.” (*Liberal and Marxist Concepts of Class Struggle*, LCW 19:121)

“The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the entire class of capitalists and against the government that supports that class. Only when the individual worker realizes that he is a member of the entire working class, only when he recognizes the fact that his petty day-to-day struggle against individual employers and individual government officials is a struggle against the entire bourgeoisie and the entire government, does his struggle become a class struggle.” (*Our Immediate Task*, LCW 4:216)

Although many have made a fetish of Stalin's definition of a nation, we have not heard anybody make a fetish of Lenin's definition of class struggle. Rather people will set their own definition above it, without substantiation. Rather than confronting what Lenin had to say on the subject, people will simply tell you that you have "dragged out a string of quotes." They cannot, or will not, grasp the role which human consciousness has always played and continues to play in the shaping of human history. Their world outlook is that of mechanical materialism, a bastard bourgeois ideology.

Economists continue to run away from ideological struggle, on one excuse or another. They say that right-opportunism is the main danger, but in practice some of their best friends are right-opportunists, and their most severe polemics are conducted against "left deviations." They cringe in fear of the classics, and pooh-pooh others' painstaking research into Lenin and Stalin. Their self-criticisms are token, or pre-emptive of criticism, or are simply never written down, so that the revolutionary movement at large has no way of evaluating them. They continue to refer to the immediate post-terrorist movement as a Marxist-Leninist movement, and in general accept that anyone outside of CPC (M-L) who calls himself a Marxist-Leninist is a Marxist-Leninist. The same people will, however, when reference to the Native Communist movement is raised, say "The Native leaders? How do you know they are Marxist-Leninists? What do you mean by that?" We have heard this racist double-standard applied not once by people in our movement, but four or five times.

Economists criticize CPC (M-L), but they lack the theoretical basis to understand what is wrong with CPC (M-L). As a consequence, they simply paint it as the green man from Mars in our movement, while at the same time falling into the same kinds of errors which CPC (M-L) makes. They will refer to a struggle against bourgeois ideology within our movement as divisive and sectarian; they will tell you that their lines have not really changed, just developed (said Hardial Bains: "There have been no errors, we are just inexperienced"); they feel slandered by strong polemics, and seek to protect their petit-bourgeois egos through pleas for "comradely debate"; they seek to make antagonistic contradictions non-antagonistic, and seek unity without struggle and before lines of demarcation have been drawn. In doing these things, they give credence to CPC (M-L)'s line that the only basis of the independent Marxist-Leninist movement in Canada is to "smash the Party."

Economists criticize in themselves what they want to criticize; they refuse to take an overall look at economism and flush themselves clean of it. They are infested with small-group mentality. They tail after the winds of the movement, all the while promoting themselves into positions of organizational leadership. Their ranks neither swell or shrink. It has been five years now, and the opportunists are still playing the same games. The working class is getting impatient; spontaneous outbursts are increasing, and little principled political leadership is available to give it socialist direction. (This applies only to English Canada.)

Why? Why is this? Why is economism so tenacious, while terrorism was so easily wiped out?

ii. Opportunism: A Materialist Explanation

*“The white nation fattens while others grow lean,
Oh, the tricked and evicted, they know what I mean...
Oh, what can I do, say a powerless few,
With a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye,
Can’t you see that their poverty’s profiting you?”*

Buffy St. Marie²¹⁴

To answer this question, we must analyze the situation just as Marxists should analyze any phenomenon: we start with objective material conditions. Lenin asked the same question, and answered it this:

“Here we must ask: how is the persistence of such trends in Europe to be explained? Why is this opportunism stronger in Western Europe than in our country? It is because the culture of the advanced countries has been, and still is, the result of their being able to live at the expense of a thousand million oppressed people. It is because the capitalists of these countries obtain a great deal more in this way than they could obtain as profits by plundering the workers in their own countries.” (*The Second Congress of the Communist International*, LCW 31:230)

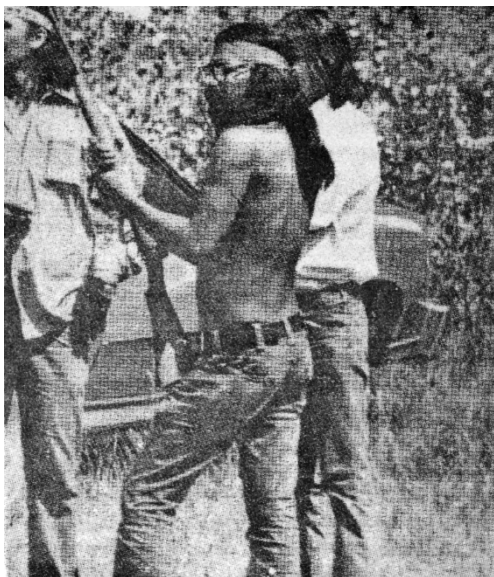
“...Objectively the opportunists are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been bribed out of imperialist super-profits and

converted into watchdogs of capitalism and corrupters of the labour movement.” (*Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, LCW 23:110)

It would be easy and comforting to think that the opportunism to which Lenin refers obediently confines itself into neat little packages such as the NDP, the Communist Party of Canada, or the CPC (M-L). Unfortunately, it is in the very nature of opportunism to home in as close to “where it is happening” in the workers’ movement as it can manage to come. Concretely, that means that it can and does seek membership and hegemony in the Marxist-Leninist movement.

The issue of “benefit from imperialism” must be raised openly, if the working class is to understand the material basis of opportunism in our movement. Contemptuous of the classics, economists dismiss this fundamental observation of Lenin, this cornerstone of Lenin’s theory of imperialism, by referring to it as “the white skin privilege line” and “a string of quotes.” Yet the classics are stubborn; they do not go away. Certainly throughout the classics we find references to the tiny stratum of labour bureaucrats, foremen and union hacks who are paid to quiet the labour movement. Yet this is not all the classics say about imperialism and the workers’ movement. Throughout the classics we also find references to the fact that sections of the proletariat itself eats crumbs from the table of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Engels says:

“...The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the



bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable. The only thing that would help here would be a few thoroughly bad years, but since the gold discoveries these no longer seem so easy to come by..." (Letter to Marx, 7 Oct., 1858, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, p. 110)... "You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think. There is no workers' party here, you see, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies." (Letter to Kautsky, 12 Sept., 1882, *ibid.*, p. 351)

Lenin quotes Hobson positively as saying:

"There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence." (*Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, LCW 23:108)

Lenin himself says:

"Why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields super-profits, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists can devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these super-profits to bribe their own workers, to create something like an alliance... between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists against the other countries." (*ibid.*, p. 114)

"As a result of the extensive colonial policy, the European proletarian partly finds himself in a position when it is not his labour, but the labour of the practically enslaved natives in the colonies, that maintains the whole of society... In certain countries this provides the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat with colonial chauvinism. Of course, this may be only a temporary phenomenon, but the evil must nonetheless be clearly realized and its causes

understood in order to be able to rally the proletariat of all countries for the struggle against such opportunism. This struggle is bound to be victorious, since the ‘privileged’ nations are a diminishing faction of the capitalist nations.” (*The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart*, LCW 13:77)

“However, even in regard to Britain it must not be forgotten that,... the percentage of workers and office employees who enjoy a petty-bourgeois standard of living is exceptionally high, due to the actual enslavement of hundreds of millions of people in Britain’s colonial possessions.” (*Third Congress of the Communist International*, LCW 32:456)

And our Albanian comrades say:

“...As a result of economic conjunctures, of large profits, the bourgeoisie have striven to buy off, to ‘raise to the aristocracy’, to ‘turn bourgeois’, a part of the working class. The classics of Marxism-Leninism have long pointed out the danger of the spread of opportunism and revisionism in the advanced capitalist countries, where the bourgeoisie take advantage of their super-profits to corrupt and win over a part of the working class.” (*The Party of Labour of Albania in Battle with Modern Revisionism*, p. 351)

And Lenin says:

“...imperialism... to a certain extent... facilitates the rise of powerful revolutionary movements in countries that are subjected to imperialist plunder, and are in danger of being crushed and partitioned by the giant imperialists (such as Russia), and on the other hand, tends to a certain extent to prevent the rise of profound revolutionary movements in the countries that plunder, by imperialist methods, many colonies and foreign lands, and thus make a very large (comparatively) portion of their population participants in the division of the imperialist loot.” (*Revision of the Party Programme*, LCW 26:168-9)

And he says also:

“Is the actual condition of the workers in the oppressor and in the oppressed nations the same, from the standpoint of the national question?

“No, it is not the same.

“(1) Economically, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressor nations receive crumbs from the super-profits the bourgeoisie of these nations obtains by extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Besides, economic statistics show that here a larger percentage of the workers become “straw bosses” than is the case in the oppressed nations, a larger percentage rise to the labour aristocracy. That is a fact. To a certain degree the workers of the oppressor nations are partners of their own bourgeoisie in plundering the workers (and the mass of the population) of the oppressed nations.

“(2) Politically, the difference is that, compared with the workers of the oppressed nations, they occupy a privileged position in many spheres of political life.

“(3) Ideologically, or spiritually, the differences is that they are taught, in school and in life, disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nations. This has been experienced, for example, by every Great Russian who has been brought up or has lived among Great Russians.

“...In real life the International is composed of workers divided into oppressor and oppressed nations. If its action is to be monistic, its propaganda must not be the same for both.” (*A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, LCW 23:55-56)

Notice that Lenin concludes here, in the final citation, that because, of these basic distinctions between the oppressor and the oppressed nation, the propaganda within the oppressor nation cannot be the same as that within the oppressed nation. Therefore it is not correct to dismiss Lenin’s “benefit” theory by saying that only a tiny stratum of union bureaucrats, who are pretty far away from our own movement, are the only ones who corrupt the workers. The danger is closer to home than that.

How does Lenin distinguish those who are privileged from those who are not?

“Opportunism was engendered in the course of decades by the special features in the period of the development of capitalism, when the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged workingmen ‘bourgeoisified’ them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses.”
(The Collapse of the Second International, LCW 21: 242-3)

On the one hand are workers who lead a **“comparatively peaceful and cultured life”**, **“gaily feast”**, and **“enjoy a petty-bourgeois standard of living”**. On the other hand are workers who are **“impoverished and ruined masses”**, of **“suffering, misery and revolutionary temper”**. In some historical circumstances, those so privileged are but tiny in number; but elsewhere, depending on the success of imperialism, they are **“a very large (comparatively) portion of their population,”** an **“exceptionally high”** percentage. These factors depend on the degree of the hegemony of the imperialist system. As Canada has, in recent history, ridden high on the tide of Western imperialism, we can see that Lenin’s benefit theory applies concretely to Canada if it applies anywhere at all.

Some people have said that, because the post-terrorist economist movement rejected the theory of “benefit”, therefore it must not be allowed to be voiced in our movement. The fact that these people would refer back to an analysis reached during that epoch as legitimate Marxist-Leninist theory shows two things: (1) the tokenistic and hypocritical nature of their self-criticism of economism, and (2) that their own careerist histories in the “movement” are more important to them than an objective assessment of what does and what does not constitute Marxism-Leninism.

Both the Weatherman (terrorist) line and the economist line reject the dialectic fundamental to Lenin’s theory of imperialism: that is, that the crisis in capitalism is directly, concretely and objectively related to the collapse of imperialism. Stalin says:

“...the colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a vast reserve and a very important source of strength for imperialism.... the most important colonies and dependent countries have already taken the path of the national liberation movement,

which cannot but lead to the crisis of capitalism." (*Foundations of Leninism*, 76-77. Emphasis added.)

And Marx observed:

"After occupying myself with the Irish Question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) cannot be delivered in England but only in Ireland." (*Letter to Meyer and Vogt*, April 9, 1870, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 235)

And we have seen Mao say, "... the remaining capitalist parts cannot survive without relying more than ever on the colonies and semi-colonies." (*On New Democracy*, MSW 11:343). And the Albanian Party of Labour says:

"The revolutionary national liberation movement of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America is a movement of major historic importance not only to the future of the peoples of these continents but also to the future of the European people, to the entire progress of mankind. By dealing heavy blows to imperialism in its rear area, by undermining its strength and narrowing down its sphere of domination, *this movement aggravates the contradictions in the advanced capitalist countries themselves*, speeds up the progress of the revolutionary movement in them and makes it easier for the working class to overthrow capitalism. The triumph of the revolution depends to a large extent on the successful conduct of the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the bulk of the population of the world." (*The Party of Labour of Albania in Battle with Modern Revisionism*, Tirana, pp. 369-370 Emphasis added.)

In not grasping dialectics, both Weatherman and economism see the situation in the advanced capitalist countries as static. Both are incapable, therefore, of understanding why the working class in Canada is becoming so rapidly immiserated.

Economism makes working in the working class everything because it makes the working class everything. It bows to the trade union movement because it fails to assess objectively all the forces

which are at work in all strata of the world imperialist system. It confuses trade union struggle with class struggle because it considers the proletariat to be the automatic liberator of all humanity by definition, regardless of the objective conditions of the imperialist system and regardless of the state of political consciousness of the masses. Just as it considers mentioning the backwardness of the trade union movement as a slur on the working class, so it considers raising Lenin's "benefit" theory to be a slur on the working class. Economism, as Lenin points out, underestimates the intelligence of the workers and their capacity to understand the system as a whole, to grasp science, and to raise political demands. Honest workers know very well when material benefits are accruing to them and when they are losing those benefits; they do not need to be patronized by a denial that such advantages have been theirs, because in so denying we are denying them an honest explanation of why those advantages are now slipping away.

It is not often that this theory of "benefit" is raised within our movement, which continues to be riddled with economism. Yet to those who have risen to condemn us for raising it, we say: don't waste your time attacking us, for we have added nothing new to the literature on the subject. Take it up with Lenin, Engels, and the Albanian Party of Labour, from whom we have learned our politics.

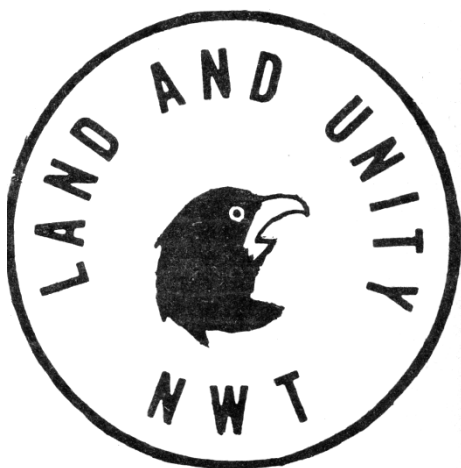
iii. Opportunism: A Social-Chauvinist Tendency

*Now that your big eyes have finally opened
Now that you're wondering how must they feel
Meaning them that you've chased across America's movie screens
Now that you're wondering how can it be real.*

—Buffy St. Marie²¹⁵

Economism, apart from its myriad other mistakes, is inherently a social-chauvinist ideology. This is an important point, and deserves to be gone into at some length.

By taking advantage of the immediate gains which can accrue to workers in the advanced capitalist countries, and hitching them to its own movement, opportunism implicitly abandons not only the most oppressed strata of the proletariat in Canada, but also the oppressed peoples of the Third World. It implicitly holds that the workers in the workplace of the advanced capitalist countries, particularly in the



trade union movement, are the leading force in the world revolutionary situation. Not only does it abandon the unemployed, the welfare recipient, the impoverished farmer, and the struggling student; it also abandons the Third World, simply by making the economic struggle the main starting point.

In its grossest form, this economist perspective is represented in pure, unadulterated, test-tube Soviet social-imperialism. It expresses itself in a line which has, tragic to say, been represented by "comrades" in our movement, a line which says that to uphold a national bourgeois-democratic liberation struggle of the Third World in its own right, rather than as subordinated to the class struggle of the advanced capitalist countries, is to implicitly attack the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat. In saying such things, these "comrades" in our movement walk right into a high point of the struggle between the revisionist parties of the Soviet Union and Europe, on the one hand, and the revolutionary communist parties of China and Albania, on the other. Says the Chinese Communist Party:

"The Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU misinterprets the proper relationship of mutual support which should exist between the socialist camp and the working-class movement in the capitalist countries on the one hand and the national liberation movement on the other, asserting that the national liberation movement should be 'led' by the socialist countries and the working-class movement in the metropolitan countries. It has the audacity to claim that this is 'based' on Lenin's views on proletarian leadership." (*Apologists of Neo-Colonialism*, Peking 1963, p. 32)

On the subject of the mutual support between the national liberation struggle and the class struggle, the Chinese say:

“But the leaders of the CPSU and their followers refuse to acknowledge this significance. They talk only about the support which the socialist camp gives the national liberation movement and ignore the support which the latter gives the former. They talk only about the role of the working-class movement in the Western capitalist countries in dealing blows at imperialism and belittle or ignore the role of the national liberation movement in the same connection. Their stand contradicts Marxism-Leninism and disregards the facts, and is therefore wrong.

“The question of what attitude to take towards the relationship between the socialist countries and the revolution of the oppressed nations, and towards the relationship between the working-class movement in the capitalist countries and the revolution of the oppressed nations, involves the important principle of whether Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism are to be upheld or abandoned” (ibid., p. 34-5).

And, says the Albanian Party of Labour:

“European revisionists reproach the parties which courageously uphold Marxist-Leninist principles with allegedly belittling and even denying the role and importance of the revolutionary movement in Europe, with allegedly counterpoising to it the national liberation movement as the only revolutionary force in our time, with allegedly trying to isolate and wean the revolutionary national liberation movement of Asia, Africa and Latin America away from the socialist camp and the workers’ movement of the advanced capitalist countries, and so on. The revisionists stand in need of all this in order to prove that the center of world revolution is allegedly in Europe and that all the revolutionary and liberation movements of other countries should be subjected to and led by revisionist Europe.” (*The Party of Labour of Albania in Battle with Modern Revisionism*, p. 365. Emphasis added.)

People in our movement have questioned whether the Native leaders are truly Marxist-Leninist (like they themselves, of course, are), or whether the Native movement can be considered a genuine form of a revolutionary movement. The best answer which we can give to that question is to cite the Albanian Party, once again.

It is not the Marxist-Leninists who counterpoise the national-liberation movement to the movement of the working class of the advanced capitalist countries, but the Khrushchevite revisionists that counterpose the workers' movement to the revolutionary national liberation movement of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, considering the latter a "lower, not entirely genuine form" of the revolutionary movement; it is they who, in fact, counterpoise the "European" Marxism-Leninism (read: European revisionism) to the "Asiatic" Marxism-Leninism; it is they who claim that the revolutionary movement in other "non-proletarian" regions where "petty bourgeois population predominates" should be under "the patronage" and "leadership" of the "true proletarian" European workers' movement, and so on. This is a new, refined, camouflaged form, and allegedly "proletarian" and "Marxist" phraseology of the old European imperialist chauvinism, an emphatic manifestation of the imperialist ideology of "the upper nations" who have dominated over the bulk of the population of the world for tens of years in succession, lowered by them to "the inferior category" of "savage" and "undeveloped people", "incapable of independent creative historical deeds". Thus, it is the revisionists who classify people into "upper" and "lower", into "capable" and "incapable", into "leaders" and "followers", who judge them by the colour of their skin and their race, plunging in this way into the pit of imperialist chauvinism and racialism (ibid. pp. 373-4).

It is nothing but revisionism and social-imperialism to say that a national liberation struggle, even (and especially) if it is within one's own state boundaries, must be led by the more "developed" forces of the proletariat of the advanced capitalist sectors. Says *Peking Review*:

"Chairman Mao has pointed out: 'In the fight for complete liberation the oppressed people rely first of all on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance.' The historical experiences – both positive and negative, successes and setbacks of the national-liberation movement have repeatedly proved this principle to be correct... Today, under the signboard of 'international aid', Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is imposing its counterrevolutionary revisionist line on others, and betraying and strangling the national-liberation movements.... The oppressed nations and peoples must adhere to the principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in their own

hands and relying on their own efforts in order to break through all kinds of complicated and difficult situations, crush all the schemes to undermine the national-liberation movement and win victory.” (*On Studying Some History of the National-Liberation Movement*, *Peking Review*, No. 45, 10 Nov. 1972)

The relationship between national liberation struggles of the Third World and class struggles in the oppressor nations is dialectical and mutually supportive. It is not a question of one of them leading the other one.

“...Those who fail to support and aid the national-liberation and revolutionary movement of oppressed people, with all their strength and means fail at the same time to support and aid the revolutionary movement in their own country.” (*The Party of Labour of Albania in Battle with Modern Revisionism*, p. 372)

“Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia have confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat... Hence the necessity for the proletariat of the ‘dominant’ nations to support – resolutely and actively to support – the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.” (*Foundations of Leninism*, Stalin, pp. 73-4)

“The just struggles of the people of all countries support each other.” (Mao, as quoted in *Peking Review* No. 45, 10 Nov. 1972)

When Vern Harper, a Native Marxist-Leninist, put the question to our movement: “Can you support us without leading us?”, he was voicing the fundamental line of this dialectical theory as set forth by Stalin, by the Chinese Communist Party, and by the Albanian Party of Labour.

Economists have called our analysis racialistic, because it is an analysis which sees the Native struggle as a national rather than as a

class struggle. For the same reason the revisionist CPSU has called the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the world situation racialistic:

They describe the correct stand of the CPC in resolutely supporting the national liberation movement as “creating racial and geographical barriers”, “replacing the class approach with the racial approach”, and “playing upon the national and even racial prejudices of the Asian and African peoples.... By slandering the unity of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the anti-imperialist struggle as being “based on the geographical and racial principles”, the leaders of the CPSU have obviously placed themselves in the position of the social-chauvinists and of Kautsky.” (*Apologists of Neo-Colonialism*, pp. 43-45)

But the Chinese and the Albanians uphold that it is the revisionist analysis of the world situation which is truly racialistic, because it is a racist analysis. As well, these courageous vanguards of the people have upheld that it is not Marxism-Leninism which liquidates the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat, but that it is revisionism which does so in fact, by undercutting the support which the national liberation struggles can give to the proletariat in its battle for socialism.

Economists have told us that to bring Native people into the proletariat of the oppressor nation would be progressive. But dialectical materialism, unlike the mechanical materialism of economism and revisionism, does not see human progress on a straight-lined, unilinear scale, but rather in terms of the concrete conditions of a given situation. In the case of a colony, it can be very progressive for the oppressed people to resist being absorbed into the proletariat of the oppressor nation. That is why the Albanian Party of Labour disassociates itself from the revisionists who say that the “petty bourgeois population”, the “non-proletarian” population of the colonies are not a truly revolutionary group but must be led by the proletariat of the capitalist countries.

Revisionism and economism are inherently social-chauvinist in one further way as well: by liquidating the role of raising conscious political demands in reference to the liberation of the colonies. In their mechanical materialism and the worship of the posteriors of the proletariat, they see the liberation of oppressed nations as automatically following upon the seizure of power by the proletariat. Economists have voiced this opinion to us, but Lenin says:

“ ‘We know’, runs our opponents’ reasoning, ‘that socialism will abolish every kind of national oppression since it abolishes the class interests that lead to it....’ What has this argument about the economic prerequisites for the abolition of national oppression, which are very well known and undisputed, to do with a discussion of one of the forms of political repression, namely, the forcible retention of one nation within the state frontiers on another? This is nothing but an attempt to evade political questions!” (*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed up*, LCW 22: 322)

Further, Lenin makes it clear that a socialist revolution, a dictatorship of the proletariat, in *not* a sufficient condition for the abolition of national oppression.

“It is impossible to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism, since this requires the abolition of classes, i.e., the introduction of socialism. But while being based on economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone.... By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the possibility of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes reality ‘only’ – ‘only’! with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres, including the delineation of state frontiers in accordance with the ‘sympathies’ of the population, including complete freedom to secede.... This is the Marxist theory, the theory from which our Polish colleagues have mistakenly departed.” (*Ibid.*, p. 325)

“It is... impossible to fight for the socialist international revolution against imperialism unless the right of nations to self-determination is *recognized*. ‘No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations’ (Marx and Engels). A proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its “own” nation cannot be a socialist proletariat.” (*Socialism and War*, LCW 21: 325. Emphasis added.)

Economists have told us that a proletarian dictatorship cannot possibly maintain oppressed colonies. Yet we see here that Lenin clearly saw that a proletariat is not automatically a socialist proletariat; it can become a socialist proletariat, only through conscious political struggle and ideological leadership. A proletariat can be a

chauvinist proletariat, unless the proper political demands are raised by it. Similarly, a proletarian dictatorship can slide into social-imperialism as easily as night into day, unless the correct conscious demands for liberation of the colonies – up to and including their freedom to secede – are raised. This is the difference between the Leninist world outlook and the revisionist world outlook.

And so we can see how integrally related is social-chauvinism to the economist deviations within our movement. They are one tendency. Lenin says:

“It is perfectly obvious that social-chauvinism’s basic ideological and political content fully coincides with the foundations of opportunism. It is one and the same tendency.”
(*The Collapse of the Second International*, LCW 21: 242)

Lenin called this tendency “imperialist economism”. (*The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economism*, LCW 32:13ff; “A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism”, LCW 23:28ff). Whereas in 1904 the tendency was simply called “economism”, by 1916 the link between imperialist ideology and economist ideology was made historically clear. And so, in the epoch of imperialism, we should not draw the line of demarcation against economism; we must draw it against “imperialist economism”, as the line of demarcation is not a separate line but the same line.

As applied to Canada, this means that we must draw a line of demarcation upholding the right to secede with respect to Canada’s two oppressed nations: French Canada, and Native Canada. The nationhood of Quebec is already an undisputed question of principle in our movement; but the struggle to uphold the right to secede in the Native question is ahead of us.

iv. Opportunism: Conclusion

*“When we had no voice, you never said a word,
When we cried out to you, you never even heard,
When our freedom was being denied, you never questioned why,
When we needed help, somehow, the well was always dry.”*

– Floyd Westerman²¹⁶

This entire discussion of imperialist economism in our movement relates directly to the Native question in two important ways.

1. A correct understanding of the dialectic of Lenin's theory of imperialism will help us understand why right-opportunism is the main danger in our movement, based on the benefits derived from imperialism generally and the exploitation of Native people in particular.

2. It can help us to understand the significance of the Native question to the workers' movement in Canada. A correct understanding of the Native question is incompatible with all forms of bourgeois-nationalism, economism, revisionism, and opportunist hegemony-seeking. For that reason, an incorrect line on the Native question may prove to be a good acid test of right-opportunism in our movement.

On the other hand, a truly internationalist workers' party will embrace the cause of the Native people as its own, enthusiastically and without reservation, because a national liberation struggle of Native people in Canada will make it easier for the workers to overthrow capitalism.

D. Third Worldism

*"Canada, you invite the red man
To sit at the table and be your guest,
To justify the guilt that you are feeling.
Now you tell us that You like us the best."*

—Floyd Westerman²¹⁷

Third Worldism, or the politics of the Weatherman tendency of the 1969-70 era, is an insignificant force in the workers' movement today. Its politics are voiced in scattered rumblings in parts of Canada, but it is miles away from having won the ear of the working class. The fact that some people have elevated Third Worldism (or Leninism, which some people confuse with Third Worldism) to be a



serious threat and a principal menace in Canada, simply shows how badly they need a cover for their right-opportunist and revisionist politics. However, because Third Worldism is objectively the “left” deviation in the issue of the Native question, it deserves to be mentioned.

Third Worldism, like economism, denies the dialectic fundamental to Lenin’s theory of imperialism. It does not understand that the crisis in capitalism which is happening in Canada right now is directly related to the collapse of the world imperialist system. It views the situation in the advanced capitalist countries as static, and the proletariat as a write-off. It does not understand how rapidly Western imperialism is collapsing and how immediately that is creating a staunch and steadfast alliance between the proletariat and Third World peoples. The politics of Third Worldism would implicitly deprive Native people in Canada of their dearest ally: the Canadian proletariat.

Third Worldism does not understand this fundamental distinction which Lenin made:

“...in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split into two international camps, one of which has been corrupted by the crumbs that fall from the table of the dominant nation bourgeoisie – obtained, among other things, from the double or triple exploitation of small nations – while the other cannot liberate itself without liberating the small nations, without educating the masses in an anti-chauvinist, i.e., anti-annexationist, i.e., ‘self-determinationist’, spirit.” (*The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22: 343)

Ultimately, in order to liberate itself, the Canadian proletariat must consciously and actively embrace the cause of the Native people as its own. Third Worldism turns its back on this truth, and makes an enemy out of an ally.

Lenin, Stalin, the CPC and the Albanian Party of Labour make very clear, as we have seen, that the relationship between national liberation struggles of the Third World and class struggles in the imperialist countries is mutually supportive. That works both ways. Not only do national struggles make it easier for the working class to overthrow capitalism, but the class struggle enhances the chances of

success for national struggles by weakening the power of the bourgeoisie directly.

Philosophically, Third Worldism is nothing but bourgeois idealism. It fails to analyze scientifically the fundamental contradiction in capitalist society: that between the socialized nature of production and its private ownership. Therefore it does not grasp that the class in fundamental antagonism to the bourgeoisie is the proletariat, and it argues that the proletariat is one and the same as the oppressed nations of the world, rather than their ally. All that Third Worldism can do is disarm the advanced elements of the proletariat in Canada and render them helpless to do anything at all, including to support the Native struggle. Whereas Marxism-Leninism, the science of the proletariat, sees the task of non-Native communists as that of educating the working class about the nature of the Native struggle, Third Worldism can offer nothing to conscious advanced elements within the workers' movement except perhaps some terrorist adventurism and some guilty liberalism.

Even if the task of educating the Canadian working class about the nature of the Native struggle prove to be a slow and arduous one, it must be done, and it is the only thing that can be done, for the liberation movement of the Native people to have the maximum chances of success any socialism in Canada. The most advanced elements in the Native Marxist-Leninist movement could not be more aware of this, and of the need for the Native movement and the working-class movement to have a common political line and perspective. Yet it must be emphasized that, in this epoch, the chief danger in "left" errors is that they lead to "right" errors. The chief danger of Third Worldism in our movement is that, when people realize how far away they are from proletarian ideology, they will flip into economism in a desperate effort to become "truly proletarian." The historical predictability of this pattern does not need to be documented any further.

VII. Implications

A. The Political Party

*“Go and tell the savage native
That he must be Christianized
Tell him, end his heathen worship
And you’ll make him civilized
Shove your gospel, force your values
Down his throat until it’s raw
And after he is crippled
Turn your back and lock the door.
Missionaries, missionaries,
Go and leave us all alone,
Take your white God to your white man,
We’ve a God of our own.”*

— Floyd Westerman²¹⁸

Those organizations on the “left” in Canada which have taken a line on the Native question have generally taken the incorrect line. For example, the Communist Party of Canada says,

“The struggle of the native people for their rights is part of the struggle of the Canadian people for social justice.... There is a solid base for unity of white and Indian workers in defense of their needs as a class. They have the same basic needs and desires and they face the same employers.”²¹⁹

Like the bourgeoisie, the CP tries to force Native people right into the working class; and, like the bourgeoisie, the CP fails. Trotskyism (a right tendency in left clothing) generally holds that Native people are a national minority, although occasionally in their literature you will see references to a Native nation when the bandwagon looks good for the hopping.²²⁰ Of course, it does not matter what line Trotskyist groups take on the Native question, because they would still consider themselves entitled to seek leadership over that struggle and to pontificate about its progress, as Trotskyism sees nationalist movements to be inherently reactionary, and subordinated to the class struggle (i.e., strikes) of the oppressor nation.

Finally, there is CPC(M-L), which was the first contact of leading Native Marxist-Leninists with the historical tendency which calls itself Marxism-Leninism in Canada. CPC(M-L) took the position

that, having provided thousands of dollars worth of support to Native people during the Caravan, they were now entitled to ownership rights over the Native movement. The Native people got CPC(M-L)'s usual fare.²²¹ CPC(M-L) offered support for specific activities, with strings attached; they used the carrot and the stick, alternately praising and denouncing them; they did not discuss with Native leaders the Party's political line on the Native question (that is, that Native people are a national minority), and would not tell them even when asked, for quite a long period of time; they told them that if they were not with the "Party" they were not Marxist-Leninists; they discouraged them from doing their own independent investigations on certain subjects and told them that "we will tell you what you need to know"; they split and wrecked the Native movement for their own hegemonic ends. One Native Marxist-Leninist who has disassociated himself from CPC(M-L) said to us, "They preach Marxism-Leninism but they do not practice it. They say they follow Chairman Mao but you cannot feel it from them. They do not have the feelings of Chairman Mao's teachings. Mao listened to people." Now, admittedly, CPC(M-L) has made itself famous for such autocratic and opportunist methods of work. But, just as Marxist-Leninists are now beginning to deepen their criticism of CPC(M-L) beyond their methods of work to see that "Party" in terms of its neo-revisionist political line, so the criticism of CPC(M-L)'s relationship with the Native people must deepen to see that the basis of their errors comes from an incorrect line on the Native question: that is, that Native people constitute a national minority. For, if Native people constituted a national minority, then a party has the right to see the Native movement as a part of the "struggle of the working class as a whole," to seek leadership over that movement, and to expect Native Marxist-Leninists to subordinate the interests of the Native struggle to the overall struggle in Canada (i.e., the Party in all its activities). And it is this very position which Caravan leaders have come to object to in CPC(M-L), and which is at the basis of their disassociation from it.

Lenin refers to:

"...The right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political separation." (*The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, LCW 22:143)



JAMES WAH-SHEE, president of the Northwest Territories Indian Brotherhood, is one of the men demanding the return of Native territory. "We are a colony now but we'll be a nation," Wah-shee says.

Native people have the right to "free political separation," and this principle must be applied before as well as after a revolution. This principle must be grasped, because Native people have had a long history of meddling and interference by the dominant society since the days of the earliest Christian missionaries, and they have long experience in knowing how to resist it.

Social-imperialism will meet with

about the same degree of success in eliciting cooperation from Native people as imperialism has had.

Native Communists at the present time, it appears, are seeking to exercise their right to their own independent national debate and their own national political party. They do not see this as a permanent long-term programme but rather as a necessity of the given historical period. They want to use this right to consolidate their own national forces as their nation is coming together; to develop a political line which they know will be in their own interests; to strengthen their own political development and their links with the masses of their people. This they feel they can do best independent of the non-Native movement. This, however, is only half of the story of why Native people are now struggling for their own party, and probably the lesser half.

Native people gave those who call themselves "Marxist-Leninist" in Canada a good chance. They were more than willing to participate fully within the movement which existed already in Canada.

Now that they have learned their lesson about those who call themselves “Marxist-Leninists,” they will be less easily fooled; and they have a much better idea of what to look out for. That is, of course, bourgeois left-nationalism and imperialist economism.

Until our movement actively shows the world that it is distinguished from tendencies such as CPC(M-L) on the Native question, it should not expect Native people to search for crumbs of sympathy in our ranks. Right-opportunists have told us that it is anti-communist to speak of Marxist-Leninists in the same breath as the CPC(M-L), revisionists, Trotskyists, Christian missionaries, fur traders, and so forth. We say that, if Marxist-Leninists want to be distinguished from these agents of the bourgeoisie, then they must so distinguish themselves. This is not an automatic process, a kind of magical CPC(M-L) “We are Marxist-Leninists, therefore.” It is a question of ideological struggle, a struggle against bourgeois ideology within the Marxist-Leninist movement. As we have shown that a correct line on the Native question may prove to be a key acid test of people’s politics in our movement, we can see that this two-line struggle may well prove to be a key struggle.

In our movement, economism, right-opportunism, and implicit social-chauvinism remain rampant. Until such time as our movement rids itself of economism, which makes the working class of the oppressor nation by definition everything, and national struggles of the Third World by definition secondary; until our movement rids itself of bourgeois left-nationalism, which puts the “defense of the fatherland” above the defense of the fatherland of Native people; until our movement rids itself of implicit social-chauvinism, which takes for granted the same rights of hegemony over the Native peoples of Canada that the rest of Canadian society has always taken for granted; until our movement rids itself of opportunism, which cries: “Unity, unity! Don’t be divisive!” and remembers Lenin’s words:

“Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation.”
(*What Is To Be Done*, Peking p. 26)

“Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers’ cause needs is the unity of Marxists, not unity between Marxists, and opponents and distorters of Marxism.”
(*Unity*, LCW 20:232);

until our movement rids itself of revisionism, which sees the liberation of oppressed peoples to be pretty well taken for granted under a proletarian dictatorship; until our movement rids itself of dogmatism, which sees the liberation of Native people as a function of Stalin's definition rather than as a function of the struggle against imperialism; until our movement rids itself of mechanical materialism, which sees national struggle (like class struggle) to be automatic, rather than a conscious process of overcoming differences in order to unite for self-liberation; until our movement rids itself of explicit racism, which sees the right to secede in the case of Quebec as a question of principle but the right to secede in the case of Native people as not a question of principle; until our movement confronts implicit racism, which is the ideological manifestation of national inequalities, and starts becoming conscious of it so that it can wage a struggle against it, much as class struggle and struggle against sexism must be constantly waged; then any talk of unity between the Native movement and the non-Native movement in Canada is an arrogant joke, a sick joke and a racist joke.

B. The Duties of Communists

"He was a wise old geezer, that Lenin. I mean for a red man who was a white man. But they say he was a 'savage' too, you know."

– August King, a Chippewa chief.²²²

Native nationhood places three primary obligations on the shoulders of Communists:

1) to actively struggle for every land claim, and every struggle for aboriginal and treaty rights, which Native people are putting forward; to see each of these as an important threat to the bourgeoisie in undermining their rule over the masses of people in Canada. To actively oppose continuing annexation of Native territory. To actively oppose "Northern Development" unless it is in the explicit interest of Native people. To see bourgeois-democratic nationalism in the Native community as progressive and anti-imperialist at this stage. But, at the same time, not to "paint the bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries in communist colours." (Lenin, *Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions*, LCW 31:149) In the Native movement, this concretely means two groups: the reformists and the spiritualists. The reformists are led by the Native people funded generously by the Government, either through the

Brotherhoods or through the colonial administration, and generally take the line that what Native people need is lots of new capitalism right on the reserves. The spiritualists are those who worship and mystify the primitive communal consciousness of ancient Native society, thus covering up the fact that Native people are now living in an epoch of imperialism and that their full liberation cannot be achieved except by the leadership of proletarian ideology.

But it is not enough just to speak of proletarian ideology as the guiding force of Native liberation. The Native proletariat itself, concretely, must lead the national struggle of Native people, if this struggle is to be a struggle for socialism. The Native proletariat is small relative to the entire Native population, but this situation has also existed in China, Albania, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Korea, and other Third World areas. In these countries the proletariat, although not the main force of revolution, was the leading force.

Why is this? Because in the epoch of imperialism, it is only socialist revolution which is capable of achieving the national and democratic rights of oppressed people in their fullest form. That is why the fundamental interest which the proletariat has in achieving socialism is entirely compatible with the national and democratic interests of the oppressed people in the Third World country. The proletariat in the Third World has been not only in the forefront of the struggle for socialism, therefore, but also in the forefront of the struggle for national and democratic freedom.

The history of all Third World countries has shown that, for socialism to be achieved, the proletariat must be organized into a Communist Party which in turn has led the united fronts and movements against imperialism. Wherever the proletariat has not done this, it has not led the national revolution to socialism. Grave mistakes have been made historically in this regard, mistakes that have led to the death of millions of revolutionaries (e.g. China in 1927 and Indonesia in 1966).

The Native proletariat has already proved itself in the Louis Riel rebellion (the first national struggle of Canadian Native peoples) by being the most disciplined and consistent fighters for the interests of their people. We look forward to the day that the Native proletariat once again rises to its historical role and, in the form of a Marxist-Leninist party, leads its people's united struggle against Canadian and American imperialism (whether that party is separate from or merged with the party of the proletariat in English and French Canada.)

This is what we mean when we say that Communists should give their fullest support to the most advanced elements of the Native struggle, to the Native Marxist-Leninists whose forces are growing in number. Communists must take the line that only a socialist revolution will truly liberate Native people, because if a Native bourgeoisie were to take power in Native territory, it would continue to sign away Native lands, resources and labour for a price.

2) to make the nationhood of Native people an integral part of the strategy for revolution in Canada, and to make the Native right to secede a question of principle. To link the question of Canadian imperialism with the question of Native people, at our highest theoretical levels, and both historically and for the future; to understand that the struggle of Canada's most oppressed people, whose land is more than half of the surface territory of Canada, is key to the overthrow of bourgeois rule in Canada. To apply Lenin's theory of imperialism to Canada. To educate the Canadian working class in full measure about the oppression of Native people and about their struggle for national liberation, and about the fundamental interest which the working class has in supporting this struggle unconditionally. To base our mass line, our strategy and tactics on the Leninist line re the position of the proletariat in the epoch of imperialism. Lenin says:

"The imperialism of our days has led to a situation in which the Great-Power oppression of nations has become general. The view that a struggle must be conducted against the social-chauvinism of the dominant nations, who are now engaged in an imperialist war to enhance the oppression of nations, and are oppressing most of the world's nations and most of the earth's population – this view must be the *decisive, cardinal and basic in the national programme* of Social-Democracy." (*The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right to Self-Determination*, LCW 21:410-11. Emphasis added.)

"In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be no internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who fails to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist" (*ibid.*, p. 346).

3) to draw firm lines of demarcation in our movement against imperialist economism. To refuse to allow social-chauvinists to be a part of the workers' movement. Lenin's denunciations of these tendencies are some of the strongest which we find in the classics.

"We must... demand the liberation of the oppressed nations, not only in general, nebulous phrases, not in empty declamations, not by 'postponing' the question until socialism is established, but in a clearly and precisely formulated programme which shall particularly take into account the hypocrisy and cowardice of the Socialists in the oppressing nations." (*Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions*, Peking ed., p. 6.)

"...The task will be to educate the masses in a revolutionary spirit so as to make it impossible for Socialist-chauvinists and opportunists to belong to the workers' party" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

"Socialists who fail to demand freedom of secession... are behaving like chauvinists, like lackeys of the blood-and-mud-stained imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

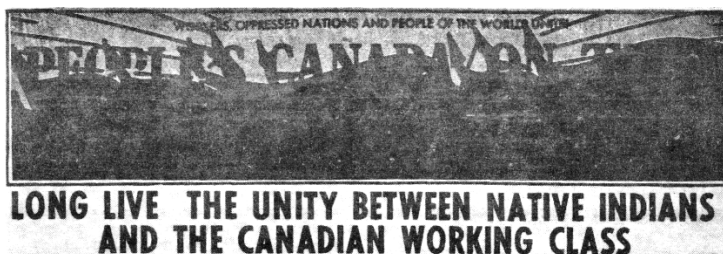
Lenin's strongest denunciations by far are directed toward those who champion self-determination for colonies around the world **but who fail to insist on the same rights for colonies within their own state borders.**

"References (must be made) to... the actual identity of the chauvinists and those Social-Democrats, particularly the Social-Democrats of the Great Powers... who fail to champion the freedom of secession for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nations" (*ibid.*, p. 18).

"Hence the necessity for a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the dominant-nation chauvinism of the 'socialists' of the ruling nations... who do not want to fight their imperialist governments, who do not want to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples in 'their' colonies for emancipation from oppression, for secession." (*Foundations of Leninism*, Stalin, p. 79)

“The prevailing hypocrisy remains unexposed, agitation is dull and does not touch upon what is most important, basic, significant and closely connected with practice – one’s attitude to the nation that is oppressed by “one’s own” nation.... No matter what the subjective ‘good’ intentions of Trotsky and Martov may be, their evasiveness objectively supports... social-imperialism.” (*The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22:359-60)

“What is the social-chauvinists’ programme on the national question? They either entirely deny the right to self-determination... or they recognize that right in a patently hypocritical fashion, namely, without applying it to those very nations that are oppressed by their own nation or by her military allies.... ‘National autonomy,’ if you please, is enough!” (*The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, LCW 21:411)



VIII. Conclusion

“When the red man will begin to unite, all other races will join with him.”

– old Native prophecy, revived at Wounded Knee.²²³

The Native movement is growing rapidly in Canada, and Native Marxist-Leninists are emerging as leaders in it. The pressure of the forces of Native liberation in Canada have already gained so much momentum as to be unstoppable and irresistible.

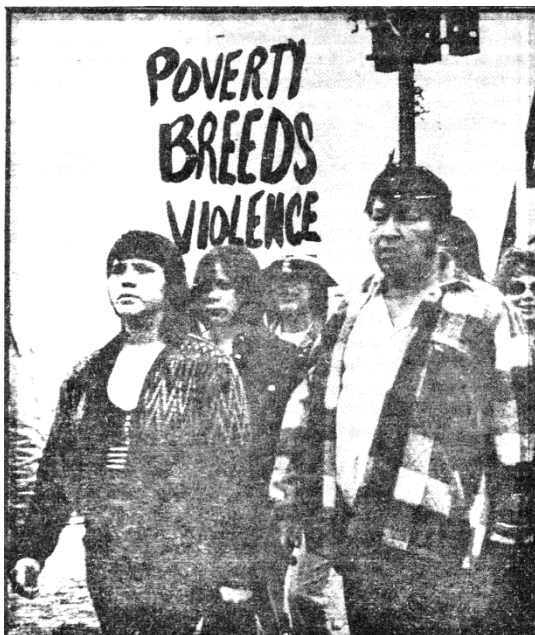
Native people in Canada are being wiped out, every day. The Minamata horror in Ontario and Quebec is only the most grotesque and disgusting example of this fact. Native people cannot, and will not, wait until the working class of the oppressor nation exercises leadership over their struggle against Canadian imperialism. They are mobilizing their forces now, and the proletariat of the oppressor nation will be embraced as a dear and welcome ally.

We support as a question of principle the right of Canada’s colonized Native people to self-determination, up to and including secession. We support as a question of principle the right of Canada’s Native people to their own independent national debate, their own independent political party, and to free political separation, both before and after a revolution.

We do not advocate secession; but, as Lenin says,

“People who have not gone into the question thoroughly think that it is ‘contradictory’ for the Social-Democrats of oppressor nations to insist on the ‘freedom to secede’, while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on the ‘freedom to integrate.’ However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any other road to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road from the given situation to this goal.” (*The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW 22:347)

The actual advocacy of secession is a question for Native people decide; it is after all their right to self-determination. They will have to make that decision based on the needs of their people as their struggle develops. But we should be absolutely clear that the “practicalness” of secession has nothing to do with our support for their right to it. (See Lenin, *The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up*, LCW22:337) Their right to secede is absolute, no matter what its



chance of success or whether we think it is the best decision for them to make.

We have seen that Native people have been dragged by the ear through every historical epoch by the Canadian bourgeoisie. If people in our movement carry on the Canadian torch, and try to drag Native people into an epoch of social-

imperialism, then they will have about the same measure of success with Native people that the bourgeoisie has had. Stalin says:

“To attempt to bring about the amalgamation of nations by decree from above, by compulsion, would be playing into the hands of the imperialists, it would spell disaster to the cause of the liberation of nations, and be fatal to the cause of organizing cooperation and fraternity among nations. *Such a policy would be tantamount to a policy of assimilation.* You know, of course, that the policy of assimilation is unreservedly excluded from the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism, as being an anti-popular and counterrevolutionary policy, a fatal policy. Furthermore, we know that nations... possess an extraordinary stability and tremendous power of resistance to the policy of assimilation.” (*The National Question and Leninism*, pp. 25-6. Emphasis added.)

To a Marxist, the test of theory is practice and practice alone. If people in our movement deny Native people in Canada the right to secede, they will find out in practice how wrong their line has been. The protestation of those comrades (and how many there have been) that the national question for Native people must be analyzed

objectively (read: measured up to Stalin's definition), and that therefore what Native people have to say about it doesn't matter, will be lost in the winds of history. Native people will defy these metaphysicians as they have defied every other imperialist since European contact. And, as this is the epoch of the national liberation struggle, history will be on their side.

And so we can say that "national minority-ism with autonomous regions" is not good enough. According to Stalin, it is tantamount to an assimilationist line. The struggle of Native people in Canada has consistently been a struggle for land, for resistance to the hegemony of the Canadian bourgeoisie and all its petty agents, and for resistance to imperialism. A line that Native people do not have the right to secede is a line whose basis is to evade the question that Native people are a Third World colonial people, and that Canada is an imperialist Second World power. It is a line which reasserts the fundamental right which Canada has claimed for itself from the beginning: hegemony over its aboriginal population. Those who held such a line could logically consider a separatist movement among Native people a counterrevolutionary move which could justifiably be smashed by force. If this seems too fantastic to believe, consider that this very suggestion was made to us by a "comrade" in our movement. Of him let it be said that, not only does he objectively ally himself with the RCMP, who would eagerly join him in this common task; but he also walks in the noblest of Canadian traditions. Said Sir John A. Macdonald, "Should these miserable half-breeds not disband, they must be put down."²²⁴

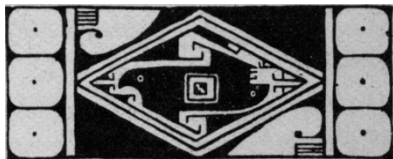
We consider that the struggle to recognize the nationhood of Native people is inseparable from the struggle to recognize what Canada is. We consider that the struggle to uphold the Native right to secede is inseparable from the struggle against right-opportunism within our movement. Says *Peking Review*:

"Lenin... repeatedly taught us that it is necessary to integrate closely the struggle against imperialism with the struggle against opportunism and revisionism. 'The fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.'" (*Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. "On Studying Some History About Imperialism", PR 26-June 30, 1972)

And, we consider that the line of demarcation against social-chauvinism in the Native question is the same line as the one which true Communists are now drawing against economism, revisionism, and right-opportunism in all its varied, disguised, and multicoloured forms. Lenin says:

“But that is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, you are fawning on the opportunists, who are alien to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and unless the labour movement rids itself of them, it will remain a bourgeois labour movement. By advocating “unity” with the opportunists... you are, objectively, defending the enslavement of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, only it is moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, against you, it will be a victory over you.” (*Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, LCW 23:111)

The Bolshevik Tendency is a grouping of Marxist-Leninists in Toronto. We are struggling for political unity as Marxist-Leninists and expect to consolidate ourselves as a collective in the near future.



Endnotes

1. "Now That the Buffalo's Gone," *Native North American Child: An Odyssey*, Vanguard Records. This and all quotes which introduce sections of the article are used because they are voices of Native People in North America.
2. "RCMP tell Ottawa Indians pose threat to stability," *Toronto Star*, August 6, 1975, p. 1.
3. This is not intended as an exhaustive history of Native people in Canada, but summary for the purposes of elucidating a political analysis. Details can be found in references which are cited.
4. McLuhan, T.C., *Touch the Earth: A Self-Portrait of Indian Existence*, N.Y.; Pocket Books, 1971, p. 3.
5. Widely accepted. See Driver, Harold E., *Indians of North America* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969.
6. Sahlin, Marshall D., *Tribesmen*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. ch. 5.
7. Driver.
8. Driver.
9. Patterson, E.P. II, *The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500*, Collier-Macmillan Canada Ltd., 1972, pp. 42-3.
10. Manuel and Posluns, ch. 3; Novack; Patterson.
11. "Indians warn they'd blow up N.W.T. pipeline," *Toronto Star*, August 6, 1975, p. 4.
12. Patterson; Novack.
13. Manuel and Posluns, ch. 3.
14. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying," *Native North American Child: An Odyssey*.
15. Manuel and Posluns, ch. 3
16. "My Country Tis of Thy People You're Dying," *Native North American Child: An Odyssey*.
17. Patterson; Cumming & Mickenberg, *Native Rights in Canada*, Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, 1970; Innis,

Harold A., *The Fur Trade in Canada*, U. of Toronto Press, 1973.

18. Patterson, p. 57.

19. Rea, K.J., *The Political Economy of the Canadian North*, Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1968, ch. 3.

20. Innis, ch. 10.

21. Meyer, Gustavus, *A History of Canadian Wealth*, Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1972, ch. 8.

22. Meyer; Patterson, Sec. 2, ch. 3.

23. Rea, ch. 3.

24. Meyer, ch. 3; Patterson, ch. 1.

25. Jameson, Anna Burwell, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, ed. J. J. Talman and E. M. Murray, Toronto, 1943, p. 251.

26. Meyer, ch. 8.

27. Patterson; Stanley, G.F.G., *The Birth of Western Canada*, Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1975.

28. Meyer, chs. 1,3,4.

29. Ibid.

30. McCoy, Alfred W. et al., *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*. N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1972.

31. Meyer, pp. 145-6.

32. "The Other Side of the Ledger: An Indian View of the Hudson's Bay Company," narrated by Geo. Manuel, National Film Board, 1972.

33. Meyer, p. 46.

34. Ibid., p. 147.

35. It is not the place or purpose of this article to justify that Canada is a weak imperialist power of the Second World, or to specifically outline the monopoly capitalist concerns of Canada which are engaging in the exploitation of Native lives and resources. Such documentation will have to await a later position paper on this subject. However, we hope that an

understanding of Native history in Canada will help people understand the imperialist role which the Canadian bourgeoisie plays in the world.

36. Driver, ch. 18.

37. Patterson, Sec. 2, ch. 1.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid; Cumming & Mickenberg; Stanley; Innis.

40. Patterson.

41. Crowe, Keith J., *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada*, Montreal: McGill-Queens U. Press, 1974, p. 128.

42. Ibid., p. 127; Brothwell, D.R., 1969, "Dietary Variation and the Biology of Earlier Human Populations." In *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals*, ed. P.J. Ucko and G.W. Dimbleby, London: Duckworth, 1969, pp. 532-45; Dunn, F.I., "Epidemiological Factors: Health and Disease in Hunter-Gatherers," in Lee and Devore, 221-8; Dubos, Rene *Man Adapting*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

43. Meyer, p. 135.

44. "If Columbus had been looking for China, we'd all have been named Chinese." The European-chauvinist and imperialist term "Indian" is to be avoided.

45. Similarly to the American experience. See Thomas, Robt. K., "Pan- Indianism," in *The American Indian Today*, ed. Levine & Lurie, Baltimore – Penguin Books, pp. 128-140.

46. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."

47. Stanley, ch. 11.

48. Patterson, ch. 2.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Morris, Alexander. *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories*. Toronto, 1880; Meyer.

52. Meyer, pp. 135-6.
53. Morris, p. 16.
54. Morris, p. 28-9.
55. Cumming & Mickenberg.
56. Robertson, Heather, *Reservations Are for Indians*, Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1970, ch. 5; Cumming & Mickenberg, ch. 14.
57. Robertson, ch. 5; Morris.
58. Morris.
59. Ibid.
60. Cumming & Mickenberg.
61. Robertson, ch. 5.
62. Morris, p. 69.
63. Robertson, ch. 5.
64. Brown, Lorne and Caroline, *An Unauthorized History of the RCMP*, Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, ch. 1.
65. Ibid., p. 8.
66. Howard, Joseph, *Strange Empire: Louis Riel and the Metis People*, James, Lewis & Samuel, 1974.
67. MacEvin, J.W.G. *Portraits from the Plains*, Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1971, pp. 102ff.
68. Ibid., pp. 92ff; Brown & Brown, ch. 2.
69. Brown & Brown, p. 13.
70. Ibid.
71. Morris.
72. Brown, Dee, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, ch. 12.
73. Morris.
74. Robertson, R.G., "The New North," lectures Dec. 1957, Ottawa: Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources press release, mimeographed, p. 6.

75. Rea, p. 55.
76. Ibid.
77. Robertson, R.G., *The Northwest Territories – Its Economic Prospects, A Brief Presented to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955, p. 17.
78. Morris, p. 288.
79. Patterson, sec. 2, ch. 3.
80. Patterson, p. 130.
81. Ibid.
82. Andrews, Isabel, "Indian Protest Against Starvation: The Yellow Calf Incident of 1884," *Saskatchewan History XXVIII* (Spring 1975), p. 41.
83. Patterson, ch. 3.
84. Zaslow, Morris, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914*, Toronto: Maclellan & Stewart 1971, p. 30. The following discussion is drawn primarily from this source, ch. 2. See also Robin, Martin, *The Rush for Spoils*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972, ch. 1.
85. Ibid., p. 22; Ryerson, Stanley, *The Founding of Canada, Beginnings to 1815*, Toronto: Progress, 1975, ch. 27.
86. Canada, Secretary of State for the Provinces, *Report*, 1870. Indian Branch, p. 4.
87. Burnette, Robert, and Koster, John, *The Road to Wounded Knee*, N.Y.: Bantam Book, 1974, p. 43.
88. Ryerson, Stanley B., *Unequal Union*, Toronto: Progress, 1973, pp. 388-9
89. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."
90. *An Act Respecting Indians*, R.S., c. 149, s. 1; Patterson, Sec. I.
91. Patterson, Sec. II ch. 3.
92. Robertson, p. 109.
93. Ibid., pp. 111-112

94. Carstens, Peter, "Coercion and Change", in Ossenberg, R., ed., *Canadian Society*, Scarborough, Ont: Prentice-Hall of Canada Ltd., 1971, p. 137.

95. Dunning, R.W., "Some Speculations on the Canadian Indian Social-Political Reality," unpublished paper, August 1974.

96. This must be deduced from the fact that they are siphoned off into the colonial bureaucracy and disappear, never to be seen again. Bourgeois-academic scholars do not understand that funds siphoned off into a colonial bureaucracy are intended for the bourgeoisie. See the following quote from Stalin.

97. Manuel 8c Posluns; Frideres, J.S., *Canada's Indians: Contemporary Conflicts*, Scarborough, Ont: Prentice-Hall of Canada Ltd., 1974.

98. Dunning; Carstens, pp. 136-7.

99. Dunning.

100. Fry, Alan, *How a People Die*, Don Mills, Ont: Paperjacks, 1970.

101. Ibid.

102. Robertson, ch. 6.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Cumming & Mickenberg; Robertson, ch. 6.

106. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."

107. Patterson, Sec. II, ch. 4.

108. Patterson, pp. 28-9; Zaslow, ch. 1.

109. Patterson.

110. Patterson, Sec. II. ch. 3.

111. This instance was communicated to us by a person who lived in the North.

112. "Third World: Great Motive Force in Advancing World History," *Peking Review* 44 (Nov. 1, 1974), p. 6. See also

Speech by Chairman of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China, Teng Hsiao-ping, at the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1974, p. 3.

113. "Now That The Buffalo's Gone."

114. Prof. Rea is Prof. of Economic History at the Univ. of Toronto. Personal communication.

115. Rea, ch. 5.

116. Rea, p. 178.

117. Robertson; Rea, *passim*; Zaslow.

118. Rea, ch. 4; Zaslow.

119. Rea, ch. 2.

120. Frideres, p. 160.

121. Tabb, Wm., *The Political Economy Of The Black Ghetto*, N.Y., 1970, cited in Frideres, p. 158.

122. Frideres, pp. 159-161.

123. Carstens, p. 129.

124. Robertson, ch. 7.

125. *Ibid.*

126. Rea, p. 328.

127. Robertson, ch. 7.

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*

130. *Ibid.*

131. "The Fifth Estate," CBC television channel 5, Sept. 23, 1975, 9 p.m.; Group to Arrest Dryden Minamata Disease, *Newsletter*.

132. Frideres, p. 19.

133. Davis, Addelle, *Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit*, N.Y.: Harcourt and Brace, 1954.

134. Robertson, ch. 7.

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137. Ibid.
138. Frideres, p. 27.
139. Buckley, Helen, J. Kewand F. Hawley, "The Indians and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan." Saskatoon: Saskatoon Center for Community Studies, University of Saskatchewan, 1963.
140. Hawthorn, H.B. et al. *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada*. 2 vols. Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966-7.
141. Frideres, p. 26.
142. Ibid., p. 52.
143. Rea, ch. 3.
144. Brown and Brown, chs. 10-12.
145. Ibid., chs. 11-12.
146. Patterson; Rea; Davis, Robert and Mark Zannis, *The Genocide Machine in Canada: The Pacification of the North*, Montreal: Black Rose Books, Montreal, 1973; Manuel & Posluns; Carstens; Frideres; Brown & Brown.
147. Ryerson, *Unequal Union*, pp. 382-3.
148. Brown & Brown, 153.
149. Ibid., p. 13.
150. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
151. Zaslow, p. 2.
152. Wright, Anna M "The Canadian Frontier, 1840-1867," Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1943, p. 234.
153. Frideres, p. 13.
154. Ibid., p. 15.
155. Ibid., p. 12.

156. Ibid., p. 13.
157. Ibid., p. 17.
158. The exact figures reported are: Yukon, total Native: 7,590, total pop., 18,388; NWT, total Native, 28,580, total pop., 34,804.
159. Rea, p. 259.
160. "I'm Goin Back," *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Perception Records.
161. Frideres, p. 19.
162. Steiner, Stan, *The New Indians*; Frideres, p. 98.
166. Frideres, p. 97.
167. *Voices from Wounded Knee*, Akwesasne Notes, 1974, p. 61.
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169. Steiner, ch. 14.
170. Deloria, Vine, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*, N.Y.: Avon, ch. 3.
171. Dosman, Edgar J., *Indians: The Urban Dilemma*, McLellan & Stewart Ltd., Toronto; Brody, H., *Indians on Skid Row*; Robertson; Hawthorne; Frideres; Steiner.
172. Dosman, ch. 3.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid., p. 72.
175. Ibid., p. 179.
176. Ibid.
177. Cardinal, Howard, *The Unjust Society*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1969.,
178. Cardinal, Howard, "Citizens Plus," in Waubageshig, *The Only Good Indian*, Toronto: New Press, 1970.
179. The White Paper.

180. Dunning.
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182. Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, p. 15.
183. Burnette & Roster, p. 100.
184. Ibid.
185. Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, p. 14.
186. "Custer Died For Your Sins," *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Perception Records.
187. Wuttunee, William I.C., *Ruffled Feathers: Indians in Canadian Society*. Calgary: Bell Books.
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192. Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, *Bulletin*, April 26, 1975.
193. "Indians, Metis call their nation 'Dene', ask Ottawa to recognize it." *Toronto Star*, July 23, 1975, p. A3.
194. "Mountain Regions and National Minorities," *Vietnamese Studies* no. 15, 1968, p. 5; Burling, Robbins, *Hill Farms and Padi Fields*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965.
195. "Now That The Buffalo's Gone."
196. Revolutionary Union, *How Capitalism Was Restored in the Soviet Union and What It Means for the World Struggle*, Chicago 1974, ch. V:3.
197. "A Marxist Approach to the Liberation of Our People: May 1st Discussion Paper," p. 1. (1975)
198. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."

199. *Policy Towards Nationalities of the People's Republic of China*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1953, p. 27-28.
200. "Now That the Buffalo's Gone," *Native North American Child*.
201. Carstens, p. 139. References which he cites to substantiate his point include: B.R. Blishen, *Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives*; W.E. Mann, *Canada: A Sociological Profile*; B.Y. Card, *Trends and Change in Canadian Society: Their Challenge to Canadian Youth*.
202. Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, p. 3.
203. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."
204. Rea; "Heed Indians or Risk Uprising: Pipeline Boss," *Toronto Star*, August 7, 1975, p. 1.
205. "Ottawa Tried to Slip Pipeline Past Natives," *Toronto Star*, October 16, 1975, p. B3.
206. Ibid.
207. "WHERE Were You When," *Custer Died for Your Sins*.
208. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*, Peking ed., p. 93.
209. Ibid., p. 132.
210. Ibid., p. 98.
211. Ibid., throughout.
212. Ibid., p. 97.
213. "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," LCW 4:369.
214. "My Country Tis Of Thy People You're Dying."
215. Ibid.
216. "Where Were You When."
217. "Red, White and Black," *Custer Died for Your Sins*.
218. "Missionaries, Missionaries," *Custer Died for Your Sins*.
219. Swankey, Ben, *National Identity or Cultural Genocide?* Progress, p. 36.

220. Fidler, Dick, *Red Power In Canada*, Toronto: Vanguard, p. 10.

221. This and the following information was communicated personally to us by Native Marxist-Leninists who do not want to be named, as they are not yet prepared to come out publicly against CPC(M-L). Our position is that it is not their obligation to denounce CPC(M-L) publicly, as it is a “Party” of a separate nation just as the Communist Party of China does not publicly denounce foreign groups which claim to be Marxist-Leninist but are not.

222. Steiner, p. 88.

223. *Voices from Wounded Knee*, p. 261.

224. Ryerson, p. 388.