

On The Misrepresentation of Line Struggle

One of the worst aspects of the New Communist Movement was its tendency to get bogged down in unprincipled polemics that spent more time attempting to win on the level of rhetoric than achieve substantial organizational gains. For years the Maoist movement in Canada has avoided this distraction, using polemics to draw clear lines rather than disguise arrogance and doubling-down as principled line struggle. Unfortunately, the faction that split from the PCR-RCP in early 2017 with their document “We Are The Continuators” (henceforth this faction will be called “the Continuators”) has thrown itself back into the swamp of unprincipled polemics, using bombastic accusations to misrepresent the line struggle that led to their split, and are now repeating the worst excesses of the New Communist Movement.

Although we did not want to fall down the rabbit hole of these types of polemical exchanges, which multiply with no end in sight, we think it is necessary to further clarify the history of the Continuators’ split, since they have rarely been honest in what happened. This clarification is especially important in the light of the Continuators’ recent statement to relaunch the Arsenal and declare the last issue of that journal to be illegitimate and opportunistic. This declaration is puzzling and demonstrates their dishonesty, considering that the previous issue, by the end, was edited by a group consisting of two members in the Continuators’ camp and one in the pan-Canadian PCR-RCP who voted on and collectively edited the material without any argument or controversy. Even more puzzling is the fact that the majority of the contents were written by cadre who are now in the Continuator camp. What seems to be going on, and what was a pattern symptomatic of the New Communist Movement (NCM), is the desire to rewrite the past so as to produce a narrative of a political problem that never existed to sanctify the Continuator’s interpretation of events the Continuator’s interpretation of events. We continue to argue that this supposed problem – the alleged existence of a powerful opportunistic line in the Party – is baseless. Considering that some of the Continuators used to belong to groups in the NCM that were trained in this kind of polemicizing, it is disappointing but not surprising.

To be fair, we made the mistake of assuming that they would not misrepresent the events and reasons for their split, and figured that it made more sense to work on broadening the pan-Canadian organization rather than produce endless documents about the unprincipled nature of their split. We figured the charge of “opportunism”, since it rests on proof they invented and could be found nowhere in our documents, would evaporate. We did not assume that they would begin to search through documents we all once upheld for esoteric signs of opportunism, distorting them to fuel their narrative. This practice on their part is saddening, especially since they were our comrades and we expected so much more of them.

The following document is a summary of their accusations against us, our accusations against them, and our perspective on what led up to the schism. Our story is different from theirs and though we realize comrades outside of our organizational ranks will not have enough information to accept one story over another, we at least hope that it will add the necessary details to the whole picture so that rushed judgements are avoided.

1: The Accusations Against Us

Let's begin by looking at the Continuators' accusations. We stand accused of: 1) rejecting the Programme of the PCR-RCP and the strategy of Protracted People's War (PPW); 2) rejecting Maoist militancy in favour of economism; 3) pursuing unprincipled and opportunist growth across Canada instead of building proper Maoist formations; 4) falling victim to a host of "post-modernist" conceptions and ideas that are alien to MLM. If even one of these accusations are correct, then the Continuators are also correct: the PCR-RCP as a whole is compromised by opportunism. But we maintain that these accusations are unprincipled misrepresentations, and that in some cases the Continuators are very aware that these are misrepresentations.

Before looking at each of these accusations in detail, however, we need to highlight the fact that the Continuators base a large part of their argument regarding the PCR-RCP on a weird document about "Maoism" that was submitted to the last congress: 80 pages of an individual's personal assessment of the meaning of Maoism, worse than the Avakianites' New Synthesis, that devolves into silly passages about "Maoism and poutine". Obviously such a document should be treated as a joke, or at least a wild subjectivist assessment of reality that nobody should take seriously. But the Continuators claim that we accept this document as correct, when in fact it was roundly denounced by the outgoing Central Committee (CC) of which some of the Continuators were a part of, so that it wasn't even considered debatable in the Congress. That is, nobody on either side of this line struggle took that document seriously, because it is a load of nonsense written by a relatively new supporter who is no longer involved with us. It is entirely dishonest that the Continuators used it as proof that the PCR-RCP was opportunist.

Unfortunately, the existence of this document is coloured by the fact that the supporter who wrote it was one of the people categorized as suspicious by the Montreal branch, the same person who had made allegations about the behaviour of another supporter, and was thus part of the trio who was assaulted at the Continuity & Rupture book launch in March of 2017 at Maison Norman Bethune bookstore. Since the Central Committee did not think this individual should have been publicly assaulted, and that

its decision to discipline those involved in the assault is what led to this confused split, then perhaps the Continuators were weirdly motivated to imagine a conspiracy where we were united with this supporter's nonsense perspectives regarding MLM. The truth, however, is that we were being principled. The fact that this individual wrote a garbage analysis of Maoism was treated as a separate issue from their charge that one supporter sexually assaulted another (the latter, formerly a central organizer, had since quit organizing).

As communists we take these charges seriously, no matter their origin. To simply dismiss this charge as a "psyop", or because it came from someone who wrote a garbage document about Maoism, would be unprincipled. Unlike organizations such as the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, we must take charges of sexual violence seriously. This does not mean throwing supporters under the bus, or assuming that charges cannot be falsely made by infiltrators, but that we must thoroughly investigate them if we claim to uphold proletarian feminism. Numerous macho Marxist organizations have shielded rapists by treating accusations as instances of state infiltration. We must do better, otherwise we will become opportunists who put our supporters and the masses at risk of facing sexual violence while claiming to do the opposite. Unfortunately, the CC's investigation of the charge, which some of us did indeed think was questionable due to the victim not being involved in bringing the information forward, was stymied by the public assault and then complicated by the assumption we were uniting with the perspective of someone we had already classified as suspicious.

The reality of building and maintaining a revolutionary organization across an entire country is messy. Regrettably, this is something that some non-party formations abroad do not appreciate for various reasons. Many Maoists who are involved in "pre-party" projects, for example, have no understanding of the difficulties of party life because of the regionalism of where they are located. Some of these Maoists like to make damning proclamations about our practice without a holistic understanding of our practice because they are only reacting to interactions on social media, and have no conception of the challenging nature of day-to-day reality of party work. Imagine, for a moment, that you are part of a political formation which exists beyond your immediate region. Imagine that there is a Central Committee elected from elements across your entire country. Local problems are investigated by bodies that are not part of that locality; local leadership is no longer the highest leadership of the mass movements. Problems are no longer so simple; solutions are no longer so easy to declare. This is precisely what we are facing now, as a party that has transcended regionalism, and localized "pre-party" cadre in the USA should pay attention to this shift. If they succeed in building a party, these challenges will affect them as well.

But let's get on with these charges...

Firstly, the accusation of rejecting the Programme and the strategy of PPW is complete garbage. We do not reject the Programme, and there is nothing that we have produced since the split that demonstrates such a rejection. We do maintain that the Programme needs to be updated, because it is ten years old and there is a lot that needs to be added and developed, but the Continuators maintained the same perspective. In fact, the last Party Congress was supposed to be an event where everyone could participate in the updating of the Programme, and those in the Continuators camp were quite happy with this possibility and encouraged the spirit of updating it. This is what resulted in the biggest controversy of the Congress: two possible updates of Chapter Eight, which was about proletarian feminism, were put forward: one that was trans-inclusive and another that was beholden to a Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist Line (TERF) The latter document was influenced by the kind of radical feminism that excluded trans woman from the category of “woman”, dressed up in Marxist language, thus not only excluding trans women from the proletarian front but claiming that they were not real women. This document came from the Montreal branch that would become the Continuators. Nothing was decided on this issue at the Congress, because of a general desire to work things out through continuous line struggle after it, and the trans comrades in attendance showed admirable restraint in accepting the line struggle process.

The point here is very simple: nobody wanted to scrap the Programme, everyone involved wanted to see it further developed. The controversy was only in how it was to be developed. Moreover, other developments regarding the national question (pushing that chapter beyond the issue of Quebecois nationalism versus Indigenous self-determination was becoming a necessity), or additions about the environment, were put on hold because of the debate over the direction of Chapter Eight. In any case, when both sides of the split were united in their agreement of an update of the Programme, which was not a scrapping and fundamental rewriting, it is unprincipled to pretend that the PCR-RCP wants to reject the Programme because it thinks, along with what the Continuators also claimed at the time, it needs to be updated after a decade of its existence.

Furthermore, we have not rejected the strategy of PPW. There was some debate at the last Congress about the means in which we achieve PPW but it was not resolved. Many of the comrades who remained with the PCR-RCP and did not leave with the Continuators possess the same understanding of how to move forward as the Continuators. The strategy of PPW was never in question, only the means to achieve it.

Secondly, the accusation of rejecting Maoist militancy in favour of economism is a complete joke. The militancy of every branch across the country has been recognized by the Canadian state, regardless of what the Continuators claim. Activities in Ottawa, for example, have drawn the attention of Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We have not ceased being militant everywhere and at

every time. We would ask the Continuators to provide a real example of non-militant activity that proves them correct. In fact, the rest of the PCR-RCP has been more militant than the Continuators in relation to the state. We have witnessed supporters arrested, have innumerable stories about our violent confrontations with the pigs and fascists, and what do the Montreal splitters have to show? Not very much these days, honestly. And yet they see fit to make proclamations about the lack of militancy across Canada even though they haven't investigated this militancy, even though they make completely erroneous analyses. For the Continuators, May Day was only militant in Montreal just because of the traditionally higher level of militancy of the masses. Everything they said about the rest of the PCR-RCP is nonsense, because they did not know what was going on. Did they know about the confrontation with the pigs in Toronto because of a march that refused to license itself according to the bounds of legality? Did they know about the Winnipeg comrades who worked with Indigenous activists to oppose the Canadian state and carried out a blockage of the Trans Canada Highway? Apparently they did not. The Continuators have produced propaganda designed to make them look militant in the eyes of the international communist movement. However, their performance is questionable; their numbers are smaller, and their actions more timid than in years past.

Thirdly, the accusation that the PCR-RCP pursued an unprincipled growth across Canada is patently absurd. This speaks to a regionalist fear amongst the older leadership of the Montreal branch that became the Continuators. They were in fact afraid to grow because they did not want to lose leadership and control. The moment an organization grows beyond one region in a large country is the moment when cadre who are distant from the original leadership will vote for a Central Committee that is shorn from tradition. At the last Congress comrades from across the country were present and many of them did not possess the same relationship with the "historic leadership" that Quebec and Ontario had possessed for years. They based their decisions on the arguments that were being expressed and whether or not these arguments represented the interests of the Party in their region. Against this reality, which should be understood as the fact of any organization that grows beyond regionalistic concerns, the Continuators have tried to assert a conspiracy theory that the PCR-RCP mass base is flawed, because Party growth wasn't properly pursued. What they really meant is that it wasn't pursued in such a way as to keep the historic leadership in charge. Such a charge is obviously nonsense: people across the country were not brought into the organization simply because of social media connections: years were spent cultivating these relationships, investigating their mass work and figuring out proper connections.

Comrades were sent on tours across the country to investigate the social circumstances for the past four years and the Continuators are again being dishonest about this fact, pretending recruitment happened on the level of social media. In fact, in one of the Central Committee meetings where two members of the Continuators were still present,

a discussion of a successive tour to consolidate Maoist groups in major cities across Canada became a point of debate: the eventual Continuator wondered why the organization should bother sending people across the country to investigate and recruit, arguing that we shouldn't waste our time recruiting, and the rest of the CC was confused by their refusal to expand. Now they're misrepresenting their position, refusing to accept that they are actually afraid of growth. They think we should not recruit country-wide, that it is better to stay small and regional, and are misrepresenting their fear of growth by claiming that it is unprincipled, for reasons they cannot really defend without being dishonest. The fact that they can literally pretend that years of work had not been conducted across the country, and that this work was not discussed in meetings of past Central Committees, is startling and disingenuous.

Fourthly and finally, the charge that the party has fallen victim to "post-modernism" is entirely ludicrous. At the last Congress some former comrades who are now part of the Continuator camp made the same charge, but it was clear that they did not know what they meant: one of them demonstrated this ignorance by speaking against a motion to write a history of the PCR-RCP on the basis that such a history could never be known because it was a conflicted history. This was clearly a post-modernist understanding of history from the mouth of someone who used the charge of "post-modernism" to attack any position he did not understand. But otherwise, this vague charge of "post-modernism" is all over the place. The Party is accused of putting forward "weird" and "new" ideas such as "partisan war machine" and "gender oppression", amongst other things, but most of these accusations are alarmist nonsense that is intended to be alarmist.

The new idea of "partisan war machine" is a term used by one of our supporters, J. Moufawad-Paul, which was never included in our Party documents. It was expressed in an essay in the last Arsenal, that was explained to not represent the Party ideology, but was merely a synonym used to think through the concept of the vanguard party. The fact that it became the title of that Arsenal was a decision that was accepted by individuals who are part of the Continuator. They had no problem with it then, they were quite happy to print it on the cover of the journal, but now they are pretending it is a revisionist conspiracy regardless of their involvement.

Otherwise charges of "post-modernism" have to do with the rest of the Party's refusal to adopt a trans-exclusionary line in our Programme. These claims about post-modernism, far from being a real understanding of what post-modernism is, are actually intended to oppose politics that offer support to our trans comrades. According to the Continuator, it is "post-modern" to support trans comrades: it is "misogynist" and "opportunist" (charges literally levelled at the last Congress by one of the Continuator expelled for assault) for trans women to claim they are women. In fact, in their document they admit their chauvinism by referring to a trans woman as a "man", making it seem as if she was

acting violently towards a woman, and celebrating that this trans woman was in fact yelled at for being a “misogynist” by simply demanding that she not be misgendered. Demands to not be misgendered are thus apparently “post-modern” - an assertion made by the same people who also, at the same Congress, refused to recognize the possibility of historical truth.

It should be fairly clear by now that all of the charges expressed by the Continuators, if not treated as bunk, are at least challenged by a counter-narrative. That these splitters, since they know that they are unprincipled, are forced to spread falsehoods about the rest of the Party to justify their splitting, should demonstrate that their narrative is an exercise in subjectivism and opportunism.

2: Our Accusations Against Them

Our accusations against the Continuators are not singular; we are not simply claiming that they are transphobic and using this charge to deflect principled line struggle. We in fact agree that opportunist organizations can and have resorted to identity politics in order to avoid discussions of political substance. We will also admit that some of the online responses of people who uphold the rest of the PCR-RCP against the Continuators have been put forward in unhelpful ways that appear to justify this claim. Aside from maintaining that individual responses are often emotional and can be driven by a sense of just anger, or that individual responses aren't the best way to gauge an organization's position since there is no way to know a mass member's precise involvement in spaces like Facebook, we can only put forward what we see as our actual differences with the Continuators. As we shall see, our accusation of transphobia is not the central point of difference, though it in fact became quite determinant as a battleground upon which the deeper issues came to light.

Our problems with the Continuators are the following and are interrelated: 1) a refusal of the Montreal branch to engage in collective life of the Party as a whole and to stop viewing itself as an unelected authority over and above the Central Committee; 2) a refusal of the Montreal branch to engage in principled line struggle or recognize democratic centralism; 3) a rejection of the mass-line and a fear of expansion across the country. The manifestations of transphobia and violence against comrades are the symptoms of these internal deficiencies.

Firstly, the Montreal branch had a problem of sending reports of its activities to the Centre long preceding the recent Congress. Despite the fact that the CC preceding this Congress was largely filled with comrades from this branch, there was an unwillingness to provide any assessment of its plans, development, and day-to-day issues to the Party centre. Such assessment is necessary for a party such as ours to develop, since we

believe that different branches should be able to learn from each other and that the dialectic between centre and branch aids the organizational development. When the branch was finally investigated, it was discovered that they had lost a significant amount of supporters among the masses, that they were alienating themselves from the masses, and that they refused to make criticism and self-criticism part of their collective life.

Years earlier, for example, they refused to participate in the 2015 Quebec student strike and in fact drove out one of their long time organizers who was doing most of the student strike work simply because the banners and flags of the marches she helped organize did not look Maoist enough. That is, they refused to help her organize in the student strike because they didn't think it was important, but then attacked her for decisions she was forced to make on her own. This was an instance where they could have pulled in many more mass organizers and, let it be noted, the few students they happened to pull in turned out to be those negative elements that were behind the assault at the book store. They recognized their error in retrospect, even offering to apologize to the organizer they had driven away, who had given years of her life to the Party, but it was too late. She is no longer willing to engage with us in any capacity, despite having helped build the Montreal branch and the Party for years.

These problems of practice (concealing information from the centre, neglecting criticism and self-criticism, losing organizers) were in fact indicated in a document that was meant to be discussed at the CC meeting that precipitated the split. The intention was to rectify the Montreal branch according to the assumption that they should be part of Party life. Those CC members who were part of this branch did not even want to talk about these problems, treating discussion as an assault on their "autonomy". Our understanding of democratic centralism does not include revisionist concepts such as regional autonomy. On the whole, they consistently expressed an attitude that they were beyond criticism, that Montreal should be treated as over and above the Central Committee because it had initiated the Party. One of these outgoing members said she would refuse to participate in any criticism and self-criticism with the Central Committee because she did not recognize them as comrades. The other said he would quit the CC if the individuals who led the assault at the bookstore were disciplined in any manner and that Montreal would make the CC pay for daring to criticize it on any level. This refusal to engage in collective life unless it remained outside of the structures of collective life - beyond criticism, beyond rectification, beyond any measures they damn well thought should be extended to every Party branch except theirs - was an exercise in pure liberalism. When they split, they tried to recruit Quebec City branch to their cause and one comrade there called them anarcho-Maoists for this: he was correct in his assessment.

Secondly, and connected to the above point, the Continuators rejected line struggle within the bounds of democratic centralism. Let's be clear about this, especially in a

context where charges of “post-modern identity politics” are being thrown around. When it came to the issue of making our politics explicitly inclusive to struggles for trans liberation, our trans comrades bent over backwards to permit line struggle over the political conception of their existence so as to accommodate those who would become part of the Continuators. Despite the fact that the majority of this Congress was opposed to the transphobic document put forward by former comrades from the Montreal branch, trans comrades were still willing to not make a final decision on this issue and instead struggle with people they saw as comrades. There was a general recognition that there was no proper Marxist-Leninist-Maoist (MLM) line on this issue and, because we were all opposed to simple identity politics (regardless of what the Continuators now claim), trans comrades were willing to work this out within the movement. This line struggle was betrayed the moment the Continuators separated and decided it was “post-modernist” to begin with. This context needs to be taken into account to grasp why supporters of the Party online centre the issue of transphobia and react to documents put out by the Continuators and to some organizers in the US defending these documents, with this kind of anger. When trans comrades were willing to submit to a line struggle of collective life, despite the fact that some of their comrades were expressing transphobic positions, only to be told that line struggle doesn’t matter and that they’re just wrong because they shouldn’t exist, anger is justified.

Moreover, the Continuators could not even respect democratic centralism in their rejection of line struggle. That is, the line struggle was meant to be worked out within the bounds of democratic centralism, the CC elected at the Congress was given the task of working through these problems, but the Montreal branch still acted as if it was outside of these decisions. The assault at the book launch proved this rejection. There were comrades in attendance who raised charges of sexual assault and an organizer who was under investigation by the Central Committee. Even though some members of the CC saw these charges as dubious, they understood that they were serious enough to warrant investigation rather than be pushed under the rug. And, in this context, why did the Montreal branch decide to take matters into their own hands despite the fact that this investigation was ongoing? Because they didn’t respect the democratic will of the organization and have disrespected the centralization of the decision making process.

And let’s be even more clear: our understanding of democratic centralism is not the same as the commandism that is passed off as democratic centralism by revisionist Marxist-Leninist (ML) organizations. We see the Congress as the highest making decision body, and the collection of branch initiatives as what keeps centralized leadership in check. The fact is that the Continuators did not respect the Congress: not only did they see themselves as existing outside of CC intervention, they refused to recognize the CC as legitimate because they refused to recognize the decisions made by the Congress that elected the CC. Their rejection of democratic centralism emerged from

a sentiment that they were a branch above everyone else, an informal and eternal leadership not beholden to collective decisions.

Thirdly, the Continuators have a warped understanding of the mass-line and are afraid to build the PCR-RCP across the country. Their “small movements” approach emerges from a fear of the existence of mass organizations that are not Party fronts. That is, they do not think mass organizations that are not under complete structural control of the Party should exist. Despite the fact that the mass organizations we have initiated remain under political control of the Party, because our supporters are able to put forward a coherent and unified line and win over other members of the masses; despite the fact that this kind of line struggle amongst the masses is necessary so as to learn from the masses, grow, and avoid revisionism by fighting off commandism - the Continuators maintain that it is better to withdraw, construct only Party fronts, and not risk struggle amongst the masses. This is a deviation from previous Party positions, and the way in which some of the older members of this group previously discussed the relationship of the Party to the mass organization, just as it is a deviation from Maoism.

The “Methods of Mass Work” document in the recent Arsenal, along with the older “Maoist Manual For Serving the Struggle of the Masses” possessed our understanding, which was in line with the conceptualizations of the mass-line inherited from revolutionary China and developed in successive revolutionary struggles. The “Methods of Mass Work” document was edited by at least one Continuator, and says very little new about the mass line. It is telling that the Continuators reject “Methods of Mass Work” but not “Maoist Manual For Serving the Struggle of the Masses” despite similar content. This is only because some of the Continuators wrote the latter document and are unwilling to recognize how their current line might be in contradiction with the line expressed there. To be clear, the position on “small movements” is not wrong in itself; it is only wrong insofar as it is seen as absolute and antithetical to a position that recognizes mass and intermediate organizations.

The wrongness of this position manifests in the current unwillingness, in practice if not in theory, of the Continuators to grow outside of Montreal and its sphere. The one member of the historic leadership who was on the recent CC even thought it was strange to send an organizer across Canada to make contact with various Maoist groups who wanted to unite with the PCR-RCP. In order to justify this unwillingness to organize the advanced sections of the masses, they have since made up a story that these groups were nothing more than Facebook contacts. They are acting as if they are ignorant to the years of efforts dedicated to sending organizers across the country to establish and reestablish contacts with potential supporters.

Weirdly, the Continuators refuse to even accept that this country-wide growth was driven by aspects of their “small movement” doctrine that was correct: originally we did

make contact with only the most advanced potential supporters, those who could form detachments of the Party (hence the classification of these groups as “PCR-RCP Organizing Committees”), just as the Party initially grew into Ontario by proposing “Proletarian Revolutionary Action Committees” (PRAC) in 2010. But just as the PRAC reached its limits upon realizing that there was no reason that anyone who would join the PRAC should not also be in the Party, because the points of unity were essentially the basis of MLM, the Organizing Committees also needed to expand the sphere of their influence by establishing mass organizations. We cannot grow if we focus only on already convinced Maoists, but instead we need to establish spheres of mass work and struggle where we can expand outwards and pull more people towards our line. Especially if we want to establish the basis for an accumulation of forces necessary for PPW.

In such a context, this current fear of growth is telling: it represents a fear of the masses, a refusal to grow outside of people who immediately possess identical ideological conceptions, and thus a cynical reinterpretation of the “small movement” approach that resulted in formations such as the PRAC. Once an organization grows - line struggle manifests, new conceptions are encountered and new conceptions amongst party factions such as the Continuator necessarily manifest. Not all of these conceptions are correct, to be sure, but it is incorrect to imagine that all of them are wrong or that a party monolithism will permit any real expansion.

The above errors allowed for the precipitating assault at Maison Norman Bethune to happen, just as it led to the proliferation of anti-trans chauvinism which is a defining characteristic of the Continuator’s anti-mass perspective. Once you classify other Party supporters as “suspicious” because they disagree with your line and have made accusations against one of your close comrades, and once you believe that your subjectivist assessment should not be investigated by a CC that represents the will of the Congress because you see yourself as more authoritative than the collective - you have rejected both line struggle and democratic centralism. Once you disdain the struggles of the revolutionary masses on all fronts then you can decide, without any social investigation or mass work, that the perspectives of particular groups of oppressed people can be completely dismissed as “post-modern.” In the past Marxists made similar charges about feminists and queer radicals; we now know their judgements were wrong regardless of whatever Marxist phraseology was used to justify bigotry.

3: More on the Supposed “Rejection” of Party Documents

As we maintained in the first section, despite what the Continuator have baselessly claimed, we have not rejected the Party documents. However, we feel that more needs to be said on this topic, since they use the rhetoric that our desire to further develop these

documents is evidence for revisionism of the MLM Party line. We have pointed out that some of these documents, particularly, the Programme were already slated for edits at the previous Congress and that those in the Continutors camp were also submitting their own revised chapters. The CC that was elected was mandated to synthesize the various position papers that were put forward and send them out to all Party branches to vote on. That CC included members from the Continutors; there was overwhelming agreement, from all sides of the debate, to move forward with these edits. Now they pretend that this was some plot of an imaginary Ottawa cabal that had taken over the Party when, in point of fact, this was the position held by all. Only the details in how certain elements should be edited and developed are what is at stake.

Updating a Programme is not the same as scrapping and revising it. There is no desire on our part to begin from square one, to reject all of what was already established with the first Programme, and to reinvent the wheel. Rather our position, which was shared by most of the Continutors, was that the Programme was a decade out of date, that it needed to incorporate conclusions gleaned from ten years of struggle, and that it required expansion in certain areas where our mass work had opened up insights the Party had not encountered when it first formed.

Take, for example, the chapter on women and proletarian feminism. Everyone agreed that it was a compromised chapter, a messy agreement between factions that thought feminism was important and factions that still thought the very word “feminism” was tantamount to bourgeois ideology. That line struggle seemed to be overcome by the time of the Fourth Congress, with everyone aware of the need to better theorize a proletarian feminism, and yet a new line struggle emerged around the social category of trans and the concept of gender oppressed people. The Continutors submitted a revision that borrowed heavily from a trans exclusionary line, thus moving two steps back from the compromised proletarian feminism of the already existing chapter. Other comrades submitted a chapter that was intended to develop the chapter to account for trans liberation, but that also was incomplete. The very fact that we had a significant number of trans and queer comrades in our ranks meant that we were making some useful communist interventions in trans and queer struggles; it was thus, in our mind, necessary to reflect this in the Programme and try to develop a line to represent the material experiences of our trans and queer comrades rather than:

a) just leave it out because “the Maoist movement doesn’t yet have a line on the trans liberation” (which would be equivalent to a communist “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy); or, even worse

b) adopt a line that was against trans liberation. The line struggle around this chapter ended up, as noted, being a significant aspect of the split and something that the Continutors still do not take seriously.

Another example is the chapter on the national question. While the original version is a correct starting point, and that starting point should not be rejected, it is still wholly inadequate in the context of waging People's War in a settler-colonial country such as Canada. To assert that Indigenous nations deserve full and unqualified self-determination and that Quebecois nationalism is not a progressive avenue to pursue is correct, and definitely an advanced position when compared to the revisionist parties, but we cannot rest on our laurels - especially when Indigenous revolutionaries find this political line inadequate. How does the PCR-RCP relate to Indigenous nations and their struggles, precisely? How do we function as a revolutionary party pursuing People's War and respect the leadership of Indigenous revolutionaries, the autonomy of their struggles and the boundaries they might choose to draw? How does Indigenous leadership within the party function, how should it be supported and developed? What will a socialist struggle that supports full and unqualified Indigenous national self-determination look like when it resists settler-chauvinism? We believe this chapter should be developed by Indigenous comrades within the PCR-RCP in consultation with the most advanced forces of the Indigenous nations. "Advanced" in this specific context meaning, to be precise, not necessarily forces that accept our particular Maoist line or even a clear communist line, but forces that reject Canada and are organizing in the interest of liberating their nation from colonial sovereignty. Such a consultation process, along with the alliances it may achieve, is necessary for accomplishing People's War. Moreover, it is necessary for pursuing a socialism that does not simply reproduce settler-colonialism and thus undermines the possibility of such a society being properly socialist.

Hence our position is not to create new plans from scratch - and there are in fact a variety of positions regarding these plans - but simply that we should examine our activities since it was first written and assess it according to our successes and failures. Apparently, demanding the minimum of historical materialism is "opportunist", plans made a decade ago have the status of a religious dictate, and it is against People's War to ask whether we have taken the correct steps to achieve People's War. Again, our position is not about scrapping these plans, but simply assessing their strengths and weaknesses and, upon figuring these out, basing an updated timeline on this assessment rather than just setting the clock forward.

Unfortunately, something resembling focoism seems to have affected the younger comrades recruited by the Continuators: they think we should be in the stage of strategic defensive now, despite not having accumulated the necessary forces and despite opposing this accumulation by refusing to accept what Party growth looks like. They have manifested this attitude with their assault in the bookstore, and later, their assault

of cafe workers at UQAM for refusing to put up their posters. You cannot just imagine your way to strategic defensive.

The only other evidence of our rejection of Party documents is the bizarre pseudo-Maoist document they attribute to us and some random posts on social media. We have no need to defend ourselves from such slander any further.

In conclusion, we hope that this adds some clarity about the nature of our political line, or at least how we see ourselves with regards to the Continuator's statements. Since there are no documents or practices that prove their assertions correct, we feel that all assessments based on their statements are questionable. We do not mind if judgement is withheld altogether because comrades elsewhere are stuck wondering whether we or the Continuator's are lying; we would expect nothing less. But at the very least, we maintain, outside observers should not accept the Continuator's at their word since there is no document we have published, and no practice in which we have engaged, that has demonstrated our supposed "opportunism" in a meaningful sense.

In our opinion, however, it is utterly wild to assert that a Montreal branch that refused collective life, that saw itself above criticism and self-criticism, and that never cared about line struggle within democratic centralism is pursuing the correct Maoist line. It is even wilder to observe unfounded declarations about our Party's class composition based on the "evidence" of angry counter-statements made by student supporters over Facebook. Wilder still to observe claims about our security culture, levelled at our mass members or public supporters who may or may not share the Party's security concerns, that resemble attempts to trick us into talking about our security procedures.

And these charges of falling prey to "postmodern identity politics" look sillier and sillier in the light of the struggle against movementist identity politics that the Ottawa branch has been engaged in, and the state's attempt to play up these differences so as to smash collaboration between the Party and revolutionary Indigenous forces.

It is our hope that this split with the Continuator's is resolved, that this is a line struggle that will result in a higher stage of unity, but such a resolution cannot be accomplished in the face of bombastic and unfounded declarations made by some supporters of Maoist formations in the US that have not bothered to do even the minimal social investigation and believe they stand over and above Maoist movements in other countries.

We remain the Revolutionary Communist Party of Canada. Our Programme is opposed to the politics of Canadian capitalism, settler-colonialism, and imperialism, and our ideology is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. We maintain that the Proletariat is the only class that can lead the revolution and the construction of socialism. Our strategy is Protracted People's War and we have not stopped pursuing this strategy regardless of

the misrepresentations invented by the Continuators. We persist, we grow, and we will reach higher levels of unity through struggle.

In Struggle,

Central Committee of the PCR-RCP