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Marxist-Leninist Entryism and Co-option of Workers' Movements in Singapore

A Black Flag Among the Red

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In Singapore the most dedicated and relentless group of activists, the ones who show up to every meeting, every rally, every protest, every direct action, and every even remotely anti-establishment activity, are as in many other places where they perform relentless entryism and co-option, the Marxist-Leninists;

Particularly confusing is the fact that the Marxist-Leninists of Singapore appear, based on what they say and do, to idolise Lenin, Mao, and Guevara behind closed doors on one hand, and simultaneously call for the abolition of policing, of prisons, of death penalties, and of state violence, which their idols had no problem utilising with reckless abandon, on the other.

These internally incoherent Marxist-Leninists also profess to use methods of democratic organisation, but nonetheless, their authoritarian and collectivist-supremacist tendencies are well-preserved and well-represented, as they proclaim in their ostensibly pan-leftist and left unity organisations a dedication to ending all debate with a resolution that benefits their vision of unified struggle, as well as the allegedly democratic nature of their organisations.

Of course, in practice this means obeying the instructions of those senior to you and having individual initiatives and actions taken down or worked against ostensibly in the name of group image and a collective democratic process. What they want out of new recruits is not active, individually motivated activists, which ironically they recruit, but passive receivers of instruction that will bow to the idol of collectivism, in practice the Marxism agreed upon by these Marxist-Leninists.

It is presumed by these Marxist-Leninists that the more one involves oneself with the left-of-liberal activist movement they dominate in Singapore, the more familiar with Marxism and Marxist terms one will become, and the more likely it is one will become a Marxist-Leninist himself.

These conversation becomes noticeably more tense the more one questions the supremacy of dialectical materialism and the status of Marxism as the presumed default ideology of the movement's committed members, which might be the true reason behind the iron-fisted striking down of individual initiatives in the name of group identity and collectivism, as some such initiatives may threaten to shatter a possible illusion of Marxist default-ism in their spaces if allowed to come to fruition.

Attempts to confront this prioritisation of Marxism over all other socialist and leftist currents are met with attempts to steer the conversation away from criticism of Marxism by declaring that conversation about theory is secondary to true organisation and activism, of course being organisation on *their* terms.

It seems that in pursuit of rebuilding worker power outside the grasp of state-captured unions, these incoherent Marxist-Leninists tend to use front organisa-

tions that would be associated with anarchists in other countries, such as harm reduction and mutual aid organisations, transformative justice organisations, and decentralised networks of horizontally organised workers' collectives, one of which, Migrant Workers Singapore, predates the organisation and re-emergence of the Marxist-Leninist movement around the nucleus organisations of Workers Make Possible(WMP) and the Transformative Justice Collective(TJC), both in 2020, although it is unclear if the Marxist-Leninists slowly co-opted TJC over-time rather than having it as a practical nucleus from the start like WMP.

In pursuit of building a power base among the workers' movement of Singapore, the Marxist-Leninists had no choice but to abandon the traditional partially electoral party model in favour of a completely non-electoral activist group front, as the electoral system is completely captured by the party-state of the People's Action Party of Singapore.

As such, they are forced to engage with horizontally organised non-union workers' collectives instead of the formalised and hierarchical trade unionism which Marxism-Leninism is more at home with in order to survive and grow as a group.

One might hope that these circumstances may drag the effectively Marxist-Leninist organisations further towards the libertarian and anti-authoritarian left, but the historical record shows the reverse is much more likely.

It has been noticed that the increasing Marxist-Leninist involvement in these workers' collectives is starting to re-introduce informal hierarchical relations among the activists who work with and are part of the collectives in practice.

Although it is not known at this time whether this extends to the workers, talk of hopes of the emergence of "leaders" in the workers' movement appear to foreshadow an anticipation of stratification of the workers' movement among Singaporean Marxist-Leninists, true to the tradition's authoritarianism and inability to think outside of top-down relations, and possibly of a Marxist-Leninist hope to be able to influence such top-down organisational structures more effectively.

What, then, is to be done, for the anarchist movement in Singapore?

As of time of writing, no organised anarchist movement exists in Singapore that can oppose this Marxist-Leninist complex.

Rather, underground groups and individual actors may occasionally act directly in concert with migrant workers, forming illegal unions, or they are forced to work in the margins of effectively Marxist-Leninist organisations in light of their near-total effective and practical domination of the senior leadership of the left-of-liberal activist landscape in Singapore.

No organised anarchist movement exists which can provide alternatives to the Marxist-Leninist domination of anti-establishment politics in the city-state, and the task of building one therefore falls upon anarchists and those of other libertarian socialist traditions as well, isolated as they are, to find each other and establish affinity groups of free association to counter the Marxism-Leninism in activist spaces and fight their authoritarian tendencies at their root.

Signed,
A Black Flag Among the Red