

Answering Cathy Lauzon

Cathy Lauzon's *Response to Section 4, Alive 125* and *Letter* are excellent negative models of how to completely miss the point. Both require a response because they challenge points raised in *Alive 125* and call into question *Alive's* politics in general.

Cathy Lauzon's opening remarks in her *Response* indicate that the "evidence put forward in Section 4" of *Alive 125* makes no attempt to prove "that anti-imperialist revolution in Canada can and must be waged prior to and separated from proletarian revolution." We completely agree. Of course, this was never our intention. Cathy Lauzon, on the other hand, seems to think that supplying "evidence" to prove the correctness of our line on the Canadian revolution should have been our intention in Section 4. In so doing, she misses the point of the Section entirely.

Evidence indicative of U.S. imperialism being the primary contradiction in Canada at the present time exists independent of *Alive* in the real world around us. Our work as a whole involves analysing this evidence and synthesizing it into a correct line for the Canadian revolution (summed up concisely in the *Alive View* and *Alive Production Collective View*). Proof of our contention that two-stage revolution, anti-imperialist revolution followed by proletarian revolution, is correct for Canada does not hinge on Section 4 of *Alive 125*. Evidence to prove our contention can be found throughout *Alive's* propaganda work — we are not famous for keeping our politics secret, as every Left group in Canada knows!

Our intention in writing Section 4 was to expose Edward Pickersgill as a totally unprincipled charlatan with no grasp of revolutionary theory, opposed to the very revolutionary analysis upon which *Alive's* work is based. This is the point Cathy Lauzon misses. Others, judging by the response we've received, have grasped it.

In Section 4 we stated: "Thus, whether one agrees with *Alive's* analysis or not, so long as one understands what *Alive's* position is, one can see how absurd Edward Pickersgill was being in breaking with the organization's line in an article proposed for publication rather than using the internal organizational structures to try to change the line. This is because he did not formally disagree. He did not understand the line of the organization so he could not disagree. He just made up his own line as he went along." We didn't ask every Leftist to agree with *Alive's* politics, only to acknowledge that the politics which Edward Pickersgill opposed are *Alive's* politics. The point was one that even Leftists who disagree with our politics could easily relate to — an exposure of the ludicrousness of Edward Pickersgill unprincipledly opposing the politics of the organization which he was supposed to be leading, from a position of utter ignorance. Edward Pickersgill should have either upheld the line of the Collective or striven to have it changed, after investigation, through principled struggle and debate.

We don't believe that Cathy Lauzon missed the point of Section 4 due to oversight, but rather that she dragged up her disagreements with Section 4 as a cover for disagreement with *Alive's* politics in general irrespective of anything said in Section 4.

A smaller point is that we do believe the quotations from Chairman Mao have "relevance for us today in Canada". That's why we included them. We're the first to admit that our grasp of revolutionary theory is relatively unsophisticated, but we don't just quote from the Marxist-Leninist teachers for the hell of it!

We agree with Stalin's and the Comintern's analysis of China presented by Cathy Lauzon in her *Response*. Stalin and the Communist International also had a few more things to say about China, but more on that later. Much of the evidence Cathy Lauzon attributes to the Communist International "proving" that Canada was an imperialist country in the late 1920s, however, we disagree with substantially. We will make our in-depth views on this question and others of significance in Canadian history known over the protracted period.

Cathy Lauzon states: "Of course it does not follow that the

analysis made by the C.I. necessarily remains true today. This is not the Canada of 1929." We not only agree with this statement, but venture to add — of course, it does not follow that the analysis made by the C.I. was necessarily true then either!

We believe that the Comintern made mistakes in analyzing the situation in Canada in the late 1920s. Are we being presumptuous? No, not at all. The Communist International and Stalin made a number of mistakes in analyzing conditions in China during the same period and later. Mao Zedong opposed these errors and formulated a program, strategy and tactics which resulted in the triumph of China's liberation in 1949. He did not slavishly follow the dictates of Stalin and the Comintern, and a good job, too, because some of them were wrong. At the same time, Chairman Mao upheld Stalin as a great Marxist-Leninist and upheld the Communist International as the headquarters of the proletariat.

The Comintern committed errors in its attempts to direct the revolutionary struggle in China, thus it is not unreasonable to admit the possibility that the Comintern could also have made errors in analyzing the Canadian situation. We believe that the Comintern's analysis that Canada in the late 1920s was an imperialist country was incorrect. We agree that the Canada of 1979 is not the Canada of 1929. We state quite unequivocally that the view of Canada today as an imperialist country is also incorrect. Facts prove otherwise. On this question, too, we will continue to make our views known in depth over the protracted period.

A point of clarification — it was *not* Trotsky who promoted the idea that Canada is a colony.

Cathy Lauzon goes on to mention that three leaders of the CPC, MacDonald, Spector and Buck, led the Party towards revisionism. She notes that "MacDonald and Spector were both expelled from the CPC when their opportunism was exposed. Buck's opportunism was not exposed in such a way...." Wrong! From the late 1920s onward, Tim Buck's opportunism was exposed every time he opened his mouth or picked up a pen. Cathy Lauzon says as much herself, "...an examination of Buck's writings reveals that he was an opportunist to the core." Buck's opportunism was exposed every time he opened his mouth and opposed, in some circles at least, every time it reared its ugly head. Among others, Fergus McKeen and Cape Breton revolutionary J.B. McLachlan firmly opposed Tim Buck and the opportunism of the CPC.

We agree that "opportunism among Canadian revolutionaries has historically taken the form of calling for Canadian independence from imperialism through alliances with the national bourgeoisie". Further, opportunism in Canada has historically taken many other forms also, such as calling for North American continent-wide revolution, promoting worker chauvinism, calling all nationalism reactionary, pushing national chauvinism, and liquidating workers' defence organizations.

Cathy Lauzon states: "To characterize the call for proletarian revolution as evidence of a 'rotten' and Trotskyite line adds no clarity." We go further. Not only does this characterization add no clarity, it's downright reactionary and the person making it should be roundly denounced. Lauzon implies that it is us who make this characterization in Section 4 of *Alive 125*. She is wrong. We support proletarian revolution. Edward Pickersgill opposed proletarian revolution. (Read *Alive 125*.) Our line is that in order to wage successful proletarian revolution in Canada it is first necessary to defeat U.S. imperialism by waging all-out anti-imperialist revolution. This line is one of concrete support for proletarian revolution. Edward Pickersgill's phony call for proletarian revolution described in Section 4 was only made to "appear more revolutionary than the rest". His waving the red flag in order to oppose it was concrete opposition to both anti-imperialist revolution and proletarian revolution. It is this which we describe as "rotten" and "ultra-Left". It is this point which Cathy Lauzon misses completely.

Cathy Lauzon makes another big mistake when she charges the APC's line reflects one of Trotsky's views. No! The Collective rejects Trotskyism absolutely!

In the next sentence of her *Response*, Cathy Lauzon accuses the

APC of showing "no respect for the thing that Stalin referred to as 'the holy of holies of the working class' — the Communist International." Because the APC opposed Edward Pickersgill's "rotten" line of ultra-Left dogmatism and his facile posturing, somehow this is equated with us showing no respect for the Communist International. Cathy Lauzon's contorted line of "logic" is totally backwards! The Alive Production Collective has every respect for the International that Lenin founded 60 years ago.

At the root of Cathy Lauzon's charge is her disagreement with Alive's line on the Canadian revolution and her own contention that Canada's bourgeoisie is imperialist. Cathy bases her thinking, apparently, on the fact that the Comintern gave this analysis some 50 years ago. In this she makes the mistake of many Canadian Leftists who attempt to "analyze" Canada today by invoking the words of the Comintern as a gospel which should be accepted purely on faith.

As we said earlier, we believe the Comintern was wrong about Canadian imperialism in 1929 as some Canadian Leftists are wrong about Canadian imperialism today. We strive to base our analysis on facts not on subjective prognostications, no matter who makes them. Stalin may well have referred to the Communist International as "the holy of holies", but he never said that revolutionaries should kneel in uncritical, adulatory worship of every word uttered by the Comintern! Such a posture is disrespectful. Such a posture denies the fine revolutionary spirit of criticism, self-criticism and transformation upheld in practice by Stalin and the Communist International.

An interesting point is that Cathy Lauzon waxes eloquent about Stalin in her *Response* yet tries to play Marx off against Stalin in criticizing the *Alive View* (see her second footnote). We presume this was unconscious. The term "cultural superstructure" used in the *Alive View* was in fact an expression much used by Stalin! It doesn't say so but neither does it say it is a quote from Marx.

We agree with Cathy Lauzon's contention that: "Since 1929 U.S. imperialism has increased its domination of Canada considerably." It is now the main enemy of the Canadian people! Then she asks, "Is there any evidence to support the APC's contention that the Canadian bourgeoisie has become a progressive force during the past 50 years?" Here, again, she completely misses the point.

The APC has never said that the Canadian bourgeoisie has become a progressive force during the past 50 years. All we say is that a certain section of the bourgeoisie can be united with in the struggle against the main enemy of the Canadian people — U.S. imperialism. This is an objective phenomenon. Cathy Lauzon equating our identification of this objective phenomenon with us prettifying the reactionary nature of the Canadian bourgeoisie as a whole shows superficial subjectivist thinking on her part.

Monopoly comprador elements of the Canadian bourgeoisie will always sell-out to U.S. imperialism to serve their own interests and will never be a part of the anti-imperialist united front in Canada. Patriotic national elements of the Canadian bourgeoisie will oppose U.S. imperialism in order to protect their own interests which are threatened by the U.S. domination of Canada. They can be allied with to build a broad anti-imperialist united front providing certain conditions are met. More on this subject can be found in the Alive speech on building the united front printed in this issue.

Cathy Lauzon states that "it is fairly evident that the Canadian bourgeoisie — in its entirety — is still the enemy of the Canadian working class." It is absolutely evident that the Canadian bourgeoisie is an enemy of the Canadian proletariat. Is it the primary enemy, though? This is the important question.

We agree that revolutionaries should not go over to the enemy camp. We also agree with Cathy Lauzon's comments about the Three Worlds Theory. A point of clarification, though, is that the *People's Daily* article does not spell out the one and only precise condition but spells out only one of "the precise conditions under which the working class in a second world country can unite with the national bourgeoisie."

Canada has not been directly annexed to the U.S., but it has been invaded by the U.S. militarily with the full cooperation of the sell-out bourgeoisie. There are a number of military bases on Canadian soil occupied solely by U.S. troops. The U.S. has also expressed its intent to massively invade Canada if its interests here are threatened. Just to drive the point home, it mobilized a huge concentration of troops on the U.S.-Canada border at Quebec during the FLQ crisis of 1970.

Cathy Lauzon continues to miss the point in her plethora of generalizations about U.S. economic domination of Canada. To set the record straight: 1) U.S. imperialism operates freely inside Canada with the full consent of a section (the monopoly sell-out section) of the Canadian bourgeoisie. 2) U.S. imperialism controls the major portion of the most significant sector of Canada's economy and large chunks of the rest.

Another point is that the Canadian state cannot effectively defend the "present arrangement" militarily even if it wanted to. It has to call on the U.S. armed forces. Weakness of the Canadian armed forces is a well-known joke around the world.

A further point is that an alliance exists between U.S. imperialism and a certain section of the Canadian bourgeoisie. Another section will support liberation from the yoke of U.S. imperialism. It does not accord with facts to say that "the interests of U.S. imperialism and the Canadian bourgeoisie are so interconnected that at the present time it is impossible to wage an anti-imperialist revolution in Canada without at the same time waging a proletarian revolution." Certain elements of the Canadian bourgeoisie are not even connected with U.S. imperialist interests. Certain elements even oppose these interests. Uniting the maximum forces possible to defeat U.S. imperialism in Canada is the prerequisite for successful proletarian revolution in this country. It is the essential first step.

It was good to get Cathy Lauzon's view on the question of opportunism in Canada. Trouble is, of course, that her view doesn't govern the real world. Calling for a broad united front including alliance with patriotic elements of the Canadian bourgeoisie against U.S. imperialism is an objectively correct slogan. Even if at one time it has been opportunist, it certainly is not an opportunist slogan today!

Cathy Lauzon is taking the overthrow of Edward Pickersgill and the publication of *Alive 125* as an opportunity to split with Alive, but she is departing on points which have been a part of our politics for years. Her cute little remark about "present interpretations" of the *Alive View* proves the point. She does not even object to something changed in the current version of the *Alive View* but to a tenet of the original *Alive View* published first at the end of 1971. Surely Cathy Lauzon had studied the *Alive View* prior to the release of *Alive 125*?

Regarding Cathy Lauzon's working "closely with a leading member of the APC in writing the official statement of the Guelph Committee for Working Class Rule in Canada", suffice it to say that this "rationalization" for her present disagreement with Alive's politics doesn't go far. Without wanting to sound petty, Cathy Lauzon's participation in this writing process might be better described as: a leading member of the APC wrote the GCWCRC statement in consultation with people other than her; the statement was presented to her and one other person in a sub-committee struck by her GCWCRC unit to write the first draft; her contribution in this sub-committee was to write nothing, say very little, and only pick apart fine details not general line (for example, her intransigence on one occasion led to a three-hour debate on the phrasing of one sentence); when the draft was presented to her unit as a whole it was extensively criticized and reworked but her participation at that stage was also negligible. Further, Cathy Lauzon's role arose out of the inactivity she chose on her part. In that sub-committee and that GCWCRC unit, her voice was not stifled by others in any way.

Speaking of "interpretations", given that Cathy Lauzon was in on discussion of the official GCWCRC statement draft, she knows

that clear distinction was drawn between that section of the Canadian bourgeoisie which has reached the sell-out monopoly capitalist stage and the national bourgeoisie, comprising the small capitalist owners who will fight to maintain their own interests as small capitalists. Cathy Lauzon was there for all the long discussions on this point. She was a member of her GCWCRC unit for a long time. She's known for a long time that Alive distinguishes between the monopoly comprador bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.

The staff of *New Foundations* never joined the GCWCRC, only one staff member did — Cathy Lauzon. Other staff members refused to participate in the work of the Committee. Cathy Lauzon joined her GCWCRC unit before *New Foundations* ceased publication and there was debate in her unit about whether it should continue but only after some three months' time.

Cathy Lauzon's list of GCWCRC members is a bit short. She lists one member of *New Foundations*, members of the APC and former members of the GCWCRC. In fact, there were a number of other people who didn't fit into any of these categories who also participated in the Committee and who continue to do so. Cathy Lauzon, of course, did not know the whole organization.

Resist! was part of the practical activities of one unit of the GCWCRC. It was certainly not the full activity of the organization as a whole. Even Cathy Lauzon's own unit was not founded with the sole goal of producing *Resist!* After the unit had been meeting for a long time, one issue was produced as a supplement in *Alive*.

The Guelph Committee has never been dormant as Cathy Lauzon asserts. Rather, her personal participation in the work of the Committee has ebbed and flowed. She was moved around various units to try to answer her erratic behaviour in a mutually acceptable way but eventually she became dormant. The GCWCRC tried all it knew to keep Cathy Lauzon in contact with the Committee's work in various forms. If anything, the organization was "guilty" of catering to her erratic stance by trying to tailor programs to her fit. She was given every leeway to participate and this is to the organization's credit. Even now, when her membership in the GCWCRC has stopped in practice, it is her choice, not that of the Committee.

In her *Letter*, Cathy Lauzon makes it sound as if the GCWCRC gave her the right to continue publishing *New Foundations* if she wished. Actually this was simply acknowledging a reality of the basic right of a comrade to do as she saw fit. It was not a big point. On the question of publishing *New Foundations*, the technical work on the first four issues was done on APC equipment. We have made a similar offer of assistance to Cathy Lauzon after receiving her letter of March 15.

Cathy Lauzon's account of her battles with Edward Pickersgill are largely flights of fantasy. The real record bears out that she wrote a great many documents against the APC itself, and that she withdrew every one of these documents after APC members had discussion with her. *Alive* showed great tolerance towards Cathy Lauzon despite continued abuse of us by her. Most of her attacks were directed against people other than Edward Pickersgill. For example, in the summer of 1977 she wrote a long document accusing two comrades of being Confucianists! She withdrew this document and later wrote another in support of Taoism, which she considered anti-Confucianist. If this is the level of her opposition to Confucianism — well, need we say more?!

The sections of *Alive* 125 Cathy Lauzon cites as dealing with attempts by Edward Pickersgill to force her out of town are not about her at all. There is one section on page 40 about a comrade being forced out of town, but it has nothing to do with Cathy Lauzon. Her own recent behaviour is interesting in this regard.

Cathy Lauzon's *Response* and *Letter* are dated differently, however, they were submitted to the APC by hand on the same date. At that time she requested discussion with a responsible comrade from the Collective.

When he arrived at Cathy Lauzon's apartment in Guelph at the appointed time, the comrade found all the lights off and he could not get an answer to his knocking at the door. Cathy Lauzon later admitted that she was in and deliberately didn't answer the door. After a few days the comrade returned to the apartment only to

find it empty with Cathy Lauzon moved out. Edward Pickersgill may not have driven her out of Guelph but she left anyway after calling for discussion. She left no forwarding address.

The only contact we've had with Cathy Lauzon subsequently was one phone call in which we again stated our willingness to have unity with her. She reiterated the firm NO contained in her letter!

We stand by the two quotes on page 57 of *Alive* 125 cited by Cathy Lauzon in her *Letter*. She wrongly interpreted the second quote. Our position is that Edward Pickersgill was "Left" posturing when he called for proletarian revolution. He was not indicating support for proletarian revolution, but hysterically mouthing his "support" for one-stage revolution in Canada to appear "super-revolutionary". Edward Pickersgill is a counter-revolutionary. He is opposed to anti-imperialist and proletarian revolution. We promote the building of anti-imperialist revolution recognizing that it creates the objective conditions for proletarian revolution. What more support for proletarian revolution in Canada can there be?

Alive calls for the dictatorship of the proletariat! We say that this dictatorship is not just around the corner because it is not. We also do not constantly call for the proletarian dictatorship at this time. We do constantly call for the building of a united front against U.S. imperialism in Canada because conditions in this country demand its creation!

A point of clarification is that *Alive* is not put out by *New Foundations*. Likewise, *New Foundations* has always been a separate publication from *Alive*. We also say that "the policies promoted in the *Globe and Mail* are not the view of *Alive*". What could be more normal than two different publications with different names having different views?

We unreservedly support the quotation by Engels about the Paris Commune under the picture on the front cover of *New Foundations*, number 1. After all, it was *Alive* who designed that cover!

In her final paragraph, Cathy Lauzon reiterates that the GCWCRC was liquidated. We repeat that it was not. There have been high and low tides in the Committee's work, but its units have never stopped meeting and people have not given up their membership as Cathy Lauzon has done.

Cathy Lauzon also says, "The position of *New Foundations* could hardly be more clear." We disagree. Cathy Lauzon is trying to hide too much. She is trying to hide certain references to her in *Alive* 125. She claims that certain references made in the issue concerned her which in actual fact did not, yet other references which were obviously about her she chooses to ignore.

We don't believe that Cathy Lauzon chose this moment to split with *Alive* because the politics in the *Alive View* suddenly became clear after 7½ years, or indeed for any other concocted reason. Our analysis is that she split because our unwavering opposition to Edward Pickersgill became clear with *Alive* 125. She split ostensibly on the issue of *Alive* 125, shortly after its release. The reasons, we feel go somewhat deeper, though, than the specific content of *Alive* 125.

When Cathy Lauzon first heard about Edward Pickersgill being overthrown, months before *Alive* 125 was published, she reported to us on the nature of her political relationship and her personal friendship with him. She later withdrew this report saying that the description she'd given us was wrong and gave a substantially opposite second version of her report. True or false? First or second version? These questions do not matter. The very nature of Cathy Lauzon's erratic story is consistent with her erratic history around *Alive*! A concrete fact was that she had unity with Edward Pickersgill on a personal basis. Another fact is that when we demarcated from him she demarcated from us and rejected our friendship. Cathy Lauzon attempts to give her split from contact with *Alive* a political colouring but this artificialness fades in the wash. Her split came from something other than what she says.

Whatever the reason lying behind her splitting from *Alive*, we still bear Cathy Lauzon no ill will. She's always been quick to write us off; we're not so hasty with her. We're still willing to unite with her if she decides once again to unite with us and if she proves willing to rectify errors in practice.