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PROLETARIAN UNITY

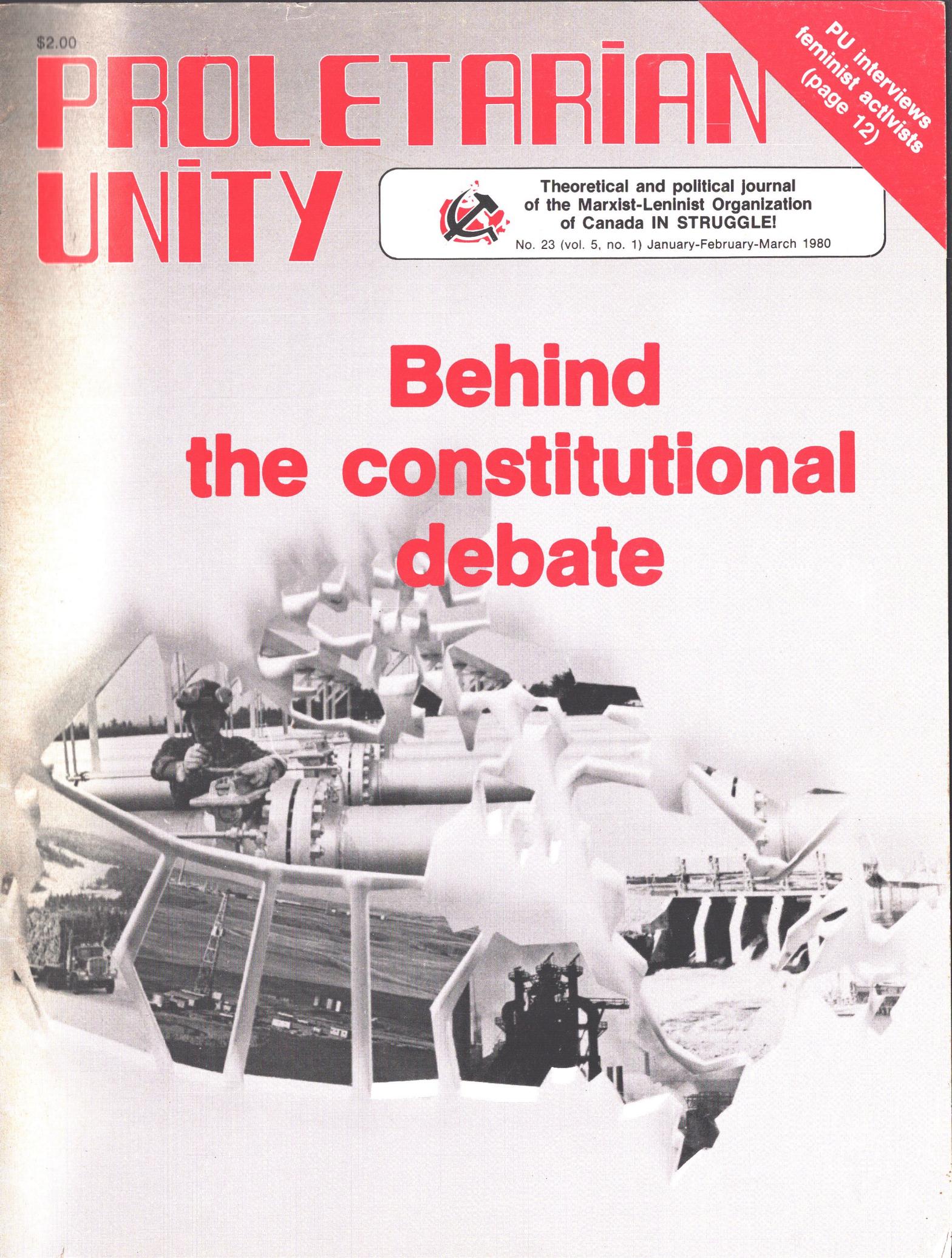
*PU interviews
feminist activists
(page 12)*



Theoretical and political journal
of the Marxist-Leninist Organization
of Canada **IN STRUGGLE!**

No. 23 (vol. 5, no. 1) January-February-March 1980

Behind the constitutional debate



Note from the editor

Money, money, money...

Our readers will remember that in the last issue we announced that the price of the journal was going up. We would like to take this question up again; for, as you may have noticed, this issue is about ten pages shorter than previous ones. This is no accident. It is part of the measures that the Organization IN STRUGGLE! is forced to take to meet rising publication costs.

We wish to emphasize that the present situation is not alarming, and the journal will definitely continue to be published. But the facts are that we have to take into account the means presently at our disposal. In the last year, IN STRUGGLE! has considerably developed its activities on many fronts. As far as publishing goes, the Organization now has INTERNATIONAL FORUM as well as its weekly newspaper and the journal. The layout of PROLETARIAN UNITY has also undergone some important changes (coated paper for the cover, more photos, etc.). As well, the weekly IN STRUGGLE! is longer. All these changes have entailed considerable expenses, and the time has come to readjust our financial situation a bit.

Our readers will be little affected by these readjustments. The most important change is that the journal will no longer have a column on the international communist movement. Since the publication of INTERNATIONAL FORUM, this column has overlapped with the contents of that magazine. However, the journal will continue to actively participate in the polemic concerning the international communist movement. It will also occasionally publish certain texts by foreign parties or organizations, but this will not take the form of a regular column as in the past. Modifications to the journal's layout will be minor and are for the most part designed to improve the production process of this publication.

These decisions should remind our readers that a journal like PROLETARIAN UNITY cannot survive without financial support from its readers and without their contributions of all kinds. Each reader is responsible for the development and survival of a journal like this one. A way to take this responsibility in hand is to participate in IN STRUGGLE!'s fund-raising campaign (see ad on back cover).

The journal and intellectuals

Recently a reader sent us a letter asking us "Why does IN STRUGGLE! publish a journal for intellectuals?", "Why does it publish a specific tool that is mainly read by intellectuals?". These questions probably cross the minds of many of our readers.

To begin with, PROLETARIAN UNITY is not read only by intellectuals. The results of the questionnaire on the journal that was widely circulated last year indicated

that more and more progressive workers and workers interested in revolutionary ideas read the journal. In the last year, we have made considerable efforts to ensure that the journal's articles are accessible to militant workers who do not have an intellectual background.

However, it is true that this type of publication is still mainly read in intellectual circles. This fact can be explained in part by the relatively recent development of the communist movement in our country. But it is also linked to the role that the journal must play at present. We believe that PROLETARIAN UNITY has an important role to play today in making known the communist point of view in intellectual milieux, where there are many progressive people. The journal aims to become a sort of reference point in that matter, a forum for political and ideological debate, capable of making its voice heard in intellectual circles and the left in general. One has only to look at the impact that journals like Canadian Dimension, Canadian Revolution and This Magazine, in English Canada, and Parti-Pris, and Révolution québécoise in Quebec, have had on the workers' movement and the political trends that developed during the sixties and the seventies to realize that this is an important role.

This is why the journal has done its best recently to diversify its content, to become a forum of debate where feminist activists, Marxist economists or progressive theatre groups can express their points of view and contribute to the political debate in our society at different levels. We believe that we still have a long way to go before the journal fully plays its role in intellectual milieux while continuing to ensure that its content is accessible to as many readers as possible. However, we do not believe that these two objectives are incompatible.

Who can write in the journal?

We also wish to draw your attention to a letter in this issue from a reader in Regina. This reader asks, "Who can write in the journal?". As our reader points out, up to now the writing of articles for the journal has been highly centralized. We have only recently opened up our pages to outside contributors. This has been a very positive initiative, in our opinion, and we have begun to receive more and more letters and even articles, some of which we intend to publish. But this also raises new questions. For example, should the journal have an editing policy? Should it publish articles that it does not necessarily completely agree with? These are just two of the questions that we invite you to share your opinions on before we take a more decisive position in an upcoming issue. Until then, our readers should not hesitate to send us articles or other contributions that they would like to see published in the journal.

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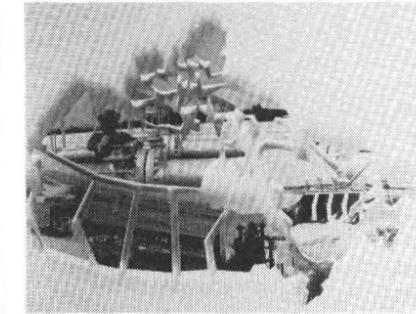
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The economic underpinnings to the constitutional crisis. Our MPs have been debating the patriation of the constitution for several months now. What lies behind this debate, from which the masses of ordinary people are carefully excluded? Our article seeks to identify the contradictions responsible for the constitutional crisis.

Revolutionary work among women. Feminist activists from the International Women's Day Committee in Toronto give us an interview. The result is a frank discussion of their feminist and socialist movement, the trends within the feminist movement and IN STRUGGLE!'s work in women's struggles in the past few years.



Child psychology: a developing science. The recent death of Jean Piaget has spurred renewed interest in his ideas about the cognitive development of the child. A psychologist and a professor of psychology discuss Piaget's theories as well as the way they are applied in teaching and the need to study psychology, a relatively young discipline, in the light of dialectical materialism.

Ronald Reagan in the White House: A sign of the times? In just three short months, the ultra-conservative Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States, anti-Semites bombed a synagogue in Paris and neo-fascists bombed the train station in Bologna, Italy. Meanwhile, the courts acquitted the police who murdered a Black in Toronto and an Indian near Montreal. Is Reagan's election a sign that the right is making progress in a number of advanced capitalist countries?



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Ronald Reagan in the White House: A sign of the times?

"I felt the chill today not from Old Man Winter, but from creeping fascism. You may say that's extremist but when the wolf comes, he comes silently in judge's robe and a policeman's uniform."

(Lennox Farrell, Black activist in Toronto)

The election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States is enough to make one shiver. This former movie actor, who used to play the cavalry officer in westerns, is today taking aim at all the people fighting for women's equality, the right to abortion, the rights of homosexuals, against nuclear power, and so on. Nor is his election an isolated phenomenon — that is what makes it all the more serious. In recent months there has been the anti-Semitic bombing outside a Paris synagogue and the neo-fascist bombing of the train station in Bologna, Italy. At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) has launched a new recruiting drive in Canada. Meanwhile, the courts acquitted the police who murdered a Black in Toronto and an Indian near Montreal. Is the election of Reagan, an ultra-conservative, simply the tip of the iceberg — an international iceberg?

Although Reagan's victory certainly indicates that the conservative right is gaining ground, this is not an entirely unexpected development in American politics. The right has been engaged in a vigorous offensive for some time now in the United States. The presidential election was preceded by a year of patriotic and chauvinist denunciations of the hostage-taking in Tehran. Cuba was the target of similar attacks after it gave the go-ahead for thousands of refugees to emigrate, mainly to Florida. And the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was a golden excuse for heightened militarism in the United States; Reagan has promised to make more decisive and ready use of the military than Carter did.

Reagan's election also coincides with reactionary results in many State and municipal referendums held in the wake of California's infamous Proposition 13. Adopted two years ago, Proposition 13 called for lower taxes and drastic cuts in social service budgets and the number of government employees. Since then, Massachusetts, Arkansas and Montana have all voted similar proposals. In Iowa, the State Equal Rights Amendment has been rejected. Missouri and South Dakota rejected attempts to restrict nuclear power plants. In Dade County, Florida, voters put an end to six years of bilingualism (Spanish-English) by banning the use of any language except English in government communications. In other words, Ronald Reagan's programme is already being applied in a number of states; it cannot be dismissed lightly.

But that is not all. What is worse is that Ronald Reagan was elected through the concerted efforts of the entire American right, and notably the religious right. Following the "Washington for Jesus" rally held in Washington, D.C., the

leading evangelist preachers of U.S. television apparently succeeded in uniting all the most reactionary religious tendencies, including the Lutherans and the Baptists as well as the fundamentalists and the evangelists. "We can be one of the strongest political forces in America," says Jerry Falwell, whose programme on a national network draws six million listeners.

It would certainly seem that the religious right is henceforth a political force to be reckoned with in the United States. When its representatives visited Taiwan in July, 1980, they were given the kind of welcome usually reserved for heads of State, and escorted by Phantom fighters from the U.S. armed forces. The following month, they got three million voters registered on the voting lists. Three million is quite impressive, given that in the United States half of those eligible do not bother to vote in presidential elections — which means that the president is elected by 25% of the eligible voters. As a matter of fact, Ronald Reagan stated in a news conference three days after being elected that he intended to continue to rely on the representatives of the religious groups that helped him to win.

Reagan supporters are in line for the major appointments. Senator Orrin Hatch (Utah), who thinks the solution to unemployment is to lower the minimum wage for young people, is the most likely choice for chairman of the Senate Labour Committee. James McLure, one of the leading opponents of anti-pollution measures, has just been appointed to the Senate Committee on Energy, which is responsible for the most important pieces of anti-pollution legislation. Since Reagan's strong margin of victory in the presidential election was accompanied by a Republican majority in the Senate, he will undoubtedly be able to implement several aspects of his reactionary programme.

The election of Ronald Reagan to the White House is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, it is a sign of our times. It reflects the current economic crisis and its effects on the masses.

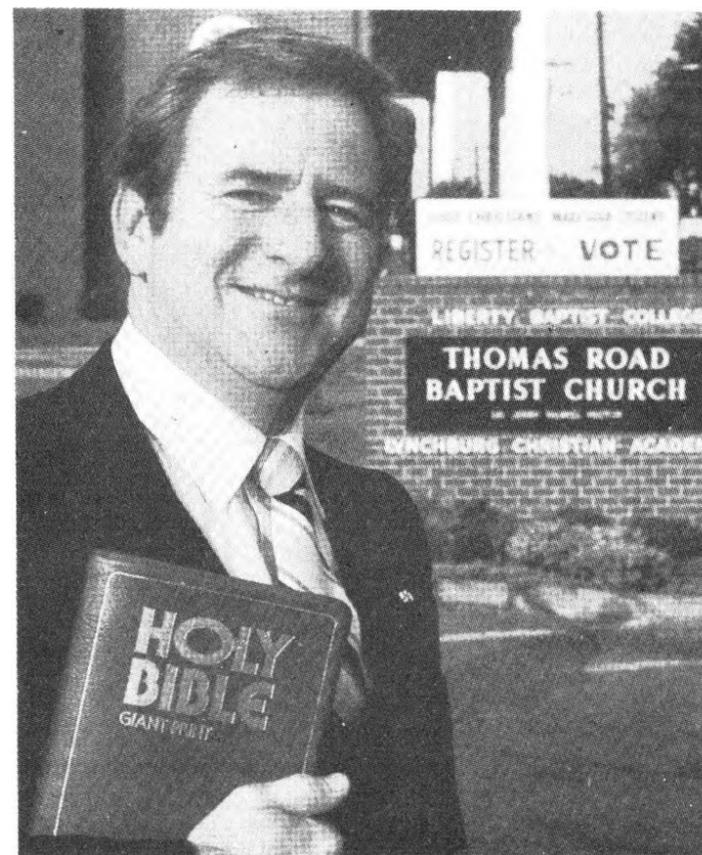
The strategy of free trade based on a solid American dollar and unchallenged U.S. hegemony that characterized the post-war period is giving way to a new strategy. With energy supplies increasingly uncertain today, with Japan capturing more and

more of the American market (notably for cars) and with strong competition from the European Common Market countries and more especially the Soviet Union in underdeveloped countries, American capitalists are looking for new solutions. The free trade of the 1950s and 1960s — the policy defended by Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission — is losing out to a more conservative policy of protectionism, designed to protect U.S. supremacy by different means. The neo-conservative challenge to liberalism is gathering strength.

The crisis is not simply economic; it also has a political, ideological and cultural impact on the masses. The fact that 50% of the electorate did not vote last November speaks volumes about the disillusionment of many, many Americans. The "American Dream" is now a thing of the past, and as people realize this they seek new alternatives. But these new solutions are not necessarily as new as they are sometimes made out to be. Although some react by revolting against the established order of things, others are unfortunately returning to the "traditional values" of the family, the individual and law and order in their search for a solution to a society that seems increasingly degenerate.

* * *

These are some of the economic and social reasons for the rise of the right. But the United States is not the only country where this is happening; the right is also on the march in several other advanced capitalist countries.



In France, there is more and more talk of the "New Right". And the French police, so efficient when it comes to tracking down "leftists" in the streets of Paris, seems curiously incapable of discovering the anti-Semites who mount murderous attacks on Jews. In Italy, there is a new upsurge in neo-fascist bombings. In the United States, Black children are murdered in Atlanta, Georgia. In Canada, the KKK vomits its hate propaganda in secondary schools.

The related nature of these events is too striking to be denied or shrugged off as an unfortunate coincidence. They represent something more than yet another symptom of the crisis; they are a sign that a right-wing ideology, a right-wing movement, is making progress — with the overt or indirect help of bourgeois political power.

The provincial secretary of the Social Credit in British Columbia put it candidly in a recent statement: "We will monitor the Klan and the laws of the land will be used where necessary. But no crackdown is planned at this time".

The U.S. election will certainly have an impact in Canada, for the conditions that have given rise to the growth of the right in the United States exist in Canada as well. Extreme right-wing organizations do not pay much attention to mere political frontiers, and U.S. television preachers also reach Canadian audiences. The recent acquittal of the Ku Klux Klanners who murdered five members of the Communist Workers Party in Greensboro, North Carolina, bears too much resemblance to the acquittals of the killers of Albert Johnson, a Toronto Black, and David Cross, a Montreal Indian, for there to be any doubt about the pattern. Are we supposed to wait for Canada to catch up to the United States in this as well? Are we supposed to wait for a new wave of liberalism — which perhaps will not come?

We cannot choose to wait passively. The 200,000 people of all political persuasions who took to the streets to protest the bombing of the Paris synagogue understood this. So did the thousands who reacted in a similar way to the Bologna bombing. The growth of the right can be fought. Labour and progressive organizations did it in the 1930s, ridding the Canadian West of the KKK. Anti-racist coalitions are doing it today in Toronto, Regina and other cities across the country. The right must be stopped — in Canada and elsewhere around the world — before it has a chance to begin gathering strength.

Reverend Falwell in Lynchburg: "We join hands to revitalize the nation."

Men and women of the working class

The following letter addresses criticisms to a pamphlet published by IN STRUGGLE! a few years ago, **Men and women of the working class: one enemy, one fight!**. Although he agrees with the style and form of the pamphlet, as well as with the general content, our reader criticizes the secondary importance given to the struggle against chauvinism. The reader then goes on to examine the way in which the pamphlet deals with the feminist movement.

... I would have to say that the worst section is the one which deals with feminism and which is in some ways an attempt to justify the first mistake which I just spoke about (the secondary emphasis placed on the struggle against chauvinism — ed. note). Undoubtedly, we arrived at this analysis because of our weak links with the women's movement which we claimed had mainly taken up "a mistaken path". Because they do not spontaneously participate in the global struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, surely they must all define men as the main enemy. There again, as we became more involved in the struggle for the equality of women and men, we were led to change our position. Today, it seems rather stupid to state that "when we talk about feminism...we are talking about organized groups of feminists of all tendencies" (p. 51) or that "the feminists are deceiving women. They too propose that women's problems will be solved by struggling for reforms." (p.53)

We have no need to insist on this because our latest publications and positions (supplement for IWD 1980) have corrected this mistaken position. But we should see that for a long time they had harmful consequences in our understanding of women's struggle and sometimes such sectarian attitudes are long-lived. How many women did we drive away from the revolutionary struggle? How many struggles did we refuse to support?

...Finally, we must also correct the position on page 60 on the autonomous women's movement, since there is some confusion. What we are opposed to is a political organization of women, a "revolutionary" feminist party which would organize a class (women) against class (men) struggle. This trend is represented by the radical feminists who, I might mention in passing, seem to me

to be very marginal in Canada. There is not automatic opposition between a proletarian party and an autonomous mass organization of women, just the opposite. As women have more organizations to defend their rights, they will become more united, and as the proletarian party intervenes in them to assure the victory of the proletarian position it will increase chances for victory, including the overthrow of the capitalist system. On the very same page we are forced to admit that all revolutions have happened because women were mobilized and that these mobilizations were organized by women's organizations. We also state that these organizations continue to exist under the State of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If we apply the same historical materialist point of view to the Canadian situation, it is easy to draw the conclusion and we must clear up all the ambiguity found in this paragraph of the pamphlet....

It is undoubtedly on the basis of the things which I have just raised that the women of a collective in Regina (WACH) have raised serious questions as to our understanding of what the working class is, what class struggle is, the links between mass organizations of women and the party, and the struggle of women under socialism. They were quite right to raise these questions and to criticize us. The majority of them define themselves as feminist socialists who recognize that it is capitalism which oppresses women and that it must be defeated. They also recognize that socialism creates better conditions for women's liberation and that the struggle must be waged in unity with men of the working class and the oppressed masses, but why do we almost exclusively speak only of the struggles of working-women-in-factories-or-in-the-labour-market? What happened to the struggles of other women? This is also shown in the pamphlet's photos...

—why would it be erroneous for us not to struggle for the global struggle? If we struggle for reforms?

—why shouldn't women have the right to organize among themselves while recognizing the need for a proletarian party composed of men and women?

—why should women stop struggling for their liberation once the revolution is accomplished?

These are good questions. I know that we have developed more correct answers, mainly over the past year. But we have to express them more clearly.

A reader in Regina.

Communists and the family

A reader in Ontario sent us this letter stating that he liked our article on **Communists and the family**, published in issue no. 21, very much. However, he feels that the article did not develop some of the historical questions enough. Here is one of the questions which he particularly wanted to point out.

Is it true that the source of the development of the family from out of the clan is the production and reproduction of what is essential to life? How then can we explain the prohibition of incestuous relations in this context? What is the real role of such a social law? How and why did it appear? One thing which was certainly easy for the primitive clan to empirically discover was that **co-operation in the accomplishment of different tasks increases the yield, or productivity of labour..** This was so for hunting, territorial defence and so on. Humans became "aware" that by increasing the number of members in a clan, yield was also increased. (This is of course relative since we are talking about at most a few hundred individuals and not millions). Humans had only one way of increasing the number of members in their clan and that was by allying with other clans. This process was reinforced and finally took the form of mergers between different clans. Even if the entire process, as indicated by Engels, proceeds "intuitively without a clear conception of what the goal is" (our translation) it seems obvious that it was **when this process of mergers between clans began** that the prohibition of incest became law. Why? Simply because the merger of clans became necessary to answer to the development of production and that force of habit (inbreeding) was stronger than necessity. Since their origins, humans had reproduced by inbreeding. It is obvious that the necessity of co-operation, of clan mergers and interbreeding had to overcome this force of habit. The merger of clans was made necessary by the need to constantly produce more, and by the inevitable progress of all of humanity, and represented a way of sealing this new social unity of co-operation.

So the prohibition of incestuous reproduction was an answer to this historical necessity, the necessity to increase the production of the means of existence, the objects needed to feed, clothe

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and lodge, and the tools required, through the greatest co-operation among human beings. When humans became aware empirically and after several generations that their own reproduction was qualitatively (and surely quantitatively) improved after the merger of people from different clans (probably through the inevitable meeting of merged and non-merged clans), this prohibition of human reproduction between children of blood relatives was reinforced and raised to the level of a social law. In the long run, all of the primitive communities which had reached this stage of evolution were forced to severely prohibit incestuous relations in order to eliminate the harmful biological consequences of reproduction between blood relatives.

It is important to see that these harmful biological consequences could not clearly appear until after a long process of interbreeding. It was impossible to become aware of these consequences when the general rule was inbreeding, and it was impossible to generalize interbreeding without: a) the material necessity to push for the merger of clans, b) the adoption of one social law (prohibition of incest) which sanctions another social law which is supposed to assure the stability of this new basis for the more evolved social structure, interbreeding.

This is a far cry from the Church's explanations, which serve the ruling class very well, and promotes the idea that incest is a barbaric act and disgusting filthiness. But, far from resulting from repugnance or instinctive fear, the prohibition of incest finds its roots in the historic necessity to develop the human race, and this, in clearly determined material conditions. Also, the prohibition of incest is not due to the harmful biological consequences which result, but, on the contrary, its harmful consequences worked to reinforce the prohibition of incest and to reinforce interbreeding, to the point of raising it to the level of a social law.

Who can write for the journal?

I have been reading PROLETARIAN UNITY since its publication in 1976. I have seen how you have done your best to diversify the journal's content and to better its style and PROLETARIAN UNITY

layout. Bravo! Today, I am writing to draw your attention to a suggestion that may help you to make the journal even better. This suggestion will also clarify a problem that still leaves me ill at ease when I read the journal.

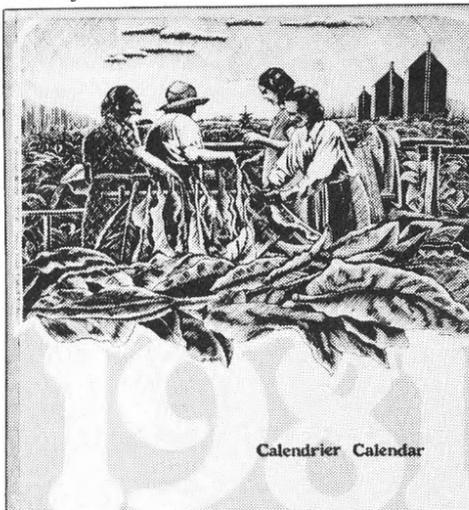
The problem in question is the following: you have called on readers time and time again to write, to participate in making the journal more interesting. I find this attitude very positive. It's a far cry from what you usually find in bourgeois media. But I find that the journal is still lacking one important factor: **a public, clearly-stated policy defining who can write for PROLETARIAN UNITY as well as who can write what.** I insist on on the word **public**, because I find that a policy of this kind would enable the journal to benefit even more from the capacities for research and analysis, and the creativity of the rank and file of the Organization IN STRUGGLE! and of the masses in general.

Let me explain my point of view. First, I will explain how I understand PROLETARIAN UNITY'S present editorial policy: the journal's editorial team must write the main articles in the journal; in some cases, this team calls on different committees within the Organization IN STRUGGLE! or on the Secretary-General for certain particular articles; readers are generally expected to send criticisms, book reviews and other brief comments in the form of letters. If I understand this policy correctly, I can't help but find it highly **centralized**, for only a relatively small chosen group has the possibility of writing articles that will be published in the journal.

I think most readers of the journal could contribute to it much more than they are expected to now. For example, I really enjoyed the contribution of a reader in issue no 21 that dealt with what was happening in the scientific sphere. I believe that this contribution should have been published in full with a title of its own and not edited to cram it into the readers' column. I am certain that among your readers, many could submit very useful articles for publication on such varied topics as history, philosophy, economy, literature, psychology, science, and much more. Marxists should have something to say on all these issues, and the journal should play a vanguard role in that sense. If you stop to think about it for two seconds, you are bound to realize that the journal's editorial team will never be able to deal with all these subjects, even if there were a lot of people on it. But you will also realize that among the hundreds of readers of the journal, there is a gold mine of experts whose knowledge should be put to good use.

I would like you to clarify the situation. Can a reader send you a text on a given subject that the journal might be interested in and hope that it will be published? If a given article put forward ideas that the editorial team does not agree with because those positions are different from the Organization's, or because the Organization has not taken a position on the issues broached, would you publish the article anyway under the author's name or pen name? Last, but not least, what criteria do you base yourselves on to decide what letters and articles will be published or not?

A reader in Regina, Sask.



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The economic underpinnings to the constitutional crisis

Unilateral patriation of the constitution; federal taxes on oil and gas.

Those are the issues that have taken over centre stage from the Quebec referendum in Canada's political crisis. Trudeau claims to be speaking for "all Canadians", while the Lévesques, Lougheds and Peckfords have donned the mantle of noble champions of the interests of their respective provinces. Meanwhile, as they quarrel, ordinary people's demands for equality and political liberties are ignored.

Once again, rival sections of the bourgeoisie are fighting over what the constitution should say, just as they wrangled over Confederation in 1867. Once again, they are trying to line up workers in various regions of the country behind them to support their wheeling and dealings. The various sections of the bourgeoisie are doing their best to cover up the fact that the powers they are arguing over are fundamentally all in the service of Capital and profit. On both the federal and provincial levels, political power is used to enforce national and sexual discrimination and repress ordinary people's organizations.

Why this new round of bargaining? How has the situation changed since 1867? Why are oil and the other natural resources at the centre of all the debates? What are the basic capitalist economic interests underlying the latest episode of federal-provincial quarrels? These are the questions this article tries to answer.

The financial oligarchy takes control

Not so very long ago, it seemed as if Quebec was the only member of the great "Canadian family" strongly opposed to the federal government's ambitions. At the 1971 constitutional conference in Victoria, for instance, Quebec (then governed by Robert Bou-

rassa and the Quebec Liberal Party) was the only province that refused to endorse the proposed formula for patriating and amending the constitution.¹

Why, then, nine years later, is there such strenuous resistance to the federal government's plan for unilateral patriation of the constitution? Does it mean that the provincial governments are

closer to the people and have decided to champion the cause of democracy? Guess again. Canada's first ministers all agree when it comes to ignoring working people's demands. It is obvious that the only causes our democratic champions are interested in all carry pretty price tags of millions of dollars.

But rivalry between sections of the Canadian bourgeoisie is nothing new, although it is sharper than it has been. In fact, it dates right back to Confederation, when the bourgeoisie in four of Britain's North American colonies joined together to found a new country. Canada came into being as the result of an agreement negotiated with the British mother country, in the shadow of the growing threat that the United States represented for the British colonies on its northern border.

Confederation was a marriage of convenience, hammered out only with some difficulty. Before Confederation, the circulation of manufactured goods in the British colonies was hindered by high protective tariffs, although raw materials circulated freely. As well, contention was still strong between the English and French-speaking bourgeoisies. This was rooted in the British Conquest and the ensuing domination of the Quebec nation, and had not been resolved by the Act of Union in 1841 that made Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec) into a single colony.

In 1867, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined toge-

1. The British North America Act (BNA Act), which is as much of a constitution as Canada has, is a law passed by the British parliament. Patriating it to Canada would mean making it a Canadian law. This entails settling the problem of how it should be amended in the future, since once patriated it could no longer be amended by the British parliament.

ther in a Confederation based on the existence of what were already fairly well-defined markets and separate bourgeoisies. And to protect the specific interests of these various bourgeoisies, Canada was designed as a federal State with definite provincial jurisdictions that were to remain in the hands of the bourgeoisies of the former colonies.

It was not long, however, before the new Canadian bourgeoisie began a vast movement of consolidation, using the full powers of the federal State. The National Policy, formulated in 1879, was a three-pronged strategy. It called for:

— high tariff walls to protect Canada's manufacturing industry;

— progressive annexation of the huge territories inhabited by the Native peoples in the West, with the aim of heading off U.S. expansionism and joining up with the colony of British Columbia on the west coast;

— construction of a transcontinental railway to consolidate the national market, with loans guaranteed by the federal government. This was accompanied by huge federal giveaways to the capitalists, and in particular to the Canadian Pacific, which went on to become the leading Canadian monopoly.

The National Policy signalled the rise of the Canadian bourgeoisie as a whole. More specifically, however, it reflected the fact that the Ontario faction, the core of the future Canadian financial oligarchy,² had gained the upper hand within the Canadian bourgeoisie. In its efforts to stand up to U.S. competition, the Canadian bourgeoisie soon found itself involved in a process of monopolization. Big U.S. capital began to make sizeable direct investments in Canada to get around the tariff walls. Between 1897 and 1935, an average of 23% of all direct U.S. investments went to Canada, with Ontario benefiting most from this industrialization. This was the beginning of the pattern of Canadian branch plants of U.S. companies.

But this was not necessarily the case for the entire economy. The Canadian bourgeoisie kept control of some major sectors — agriculture, transportation and communications and, most notably, banking and finance. As early as 1937, three banks held 60% of all banking assets. The Canadian financial oligarchy was born. Henceforth, this oligarchy was to dictate policy and orient economic development in accordance with the development of mo-

PROLETARIAN UNITY



The Depression in the 1930s hit the Prairie provinces hard. Between 1931 and 1937, some 120,000 people left Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

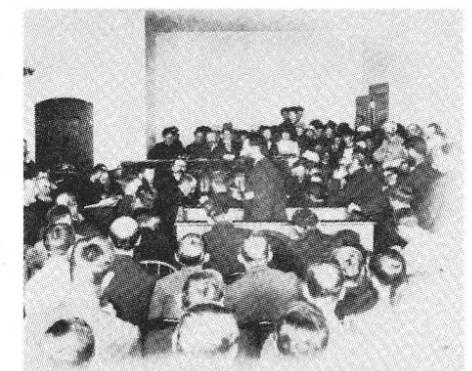
opolies active throughout the country but based in central Canada.

The triumph of the mainly Ontario-based Canadian financial oligarchy resulted in the chronic underdevelopment of the "peripheral" regions of Canada. Consider, for example, the case of Prince Edward Island, which joined Confederation in 1873. Before the founding of Canada, P.E.I. had a relatively autonomous economy, based mainly on agriculture, ocean fishing and small-scale wood industries mainly supplying the shipbuilding industry.

When P.E.I. joined Confederation and came under the control of Ottawa, however, the Island's trade and traditional markets began to decline. Increasingly, its agriculture and natural resources were developed along the lines that best met the needs of Canada. Its small manufacturing industries could not withstand the competition from factories in central Canada that flooded the P.E.I. market with their goods.

Concretely, what did this mean for Prince Edward Island? Between 1881

Louis Riel on trial. The West was opened at the expense of the Native people and the Metis.

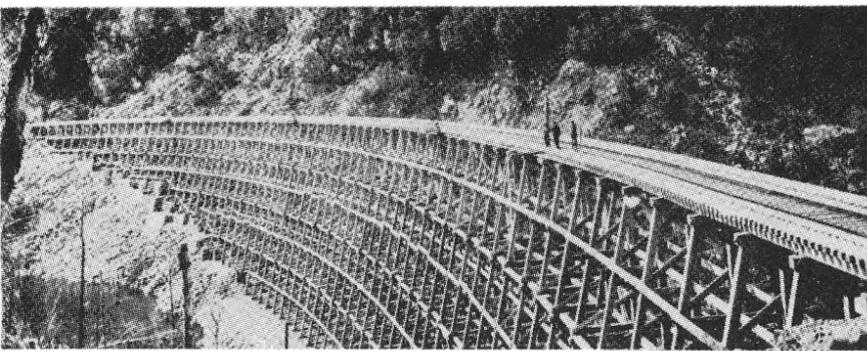


and 1891, the overall number of jobs in manufacturing and industry (excluding agriculture and fishing) fell by 16%. From 1881 to 1911, the population shrank by 14%. And the financial institutions that had handled the capital of P.E.I. and the Maritimes folded — the Bank of Prince Edward Island in 1881 and the Merchant's Bank in 1906.³

The disappearance of regional banks — an inevitable consequence of the concentration of Canadian banks — was in fact one of the major factors contributing to the relative underdevelopment of the "peripheral" provinces. The *Financial Post* put it this way: "... The chartered banks have not developed the regional sensitivity to local industry that's characteristic of the fiercely competitive U.S. banks, whose operations were long confined within State boundaries."⁴

In Western Canada, the consolidation of the Canadian market with Confederation and the railway undoubtedly spurred the development of the Prairies at first. But the control exercised by eastern monopolies soon worked to hinder any industrial development in the West that would create competitors for these monopolies. The result is that Alberta and Saskatchewan, in particular, are still two of the least-industrialized provinces in Canada. These provinces have been the granary of Canada, a storehouse of raw materials and a captive market for manufactured goods produced in Eastern Canada, and especially in Ontario.

2. By financial oligarchy, we mean the restricted club of businessmen and bankers who control big capital and the boards of directors of the banks and monopolies. This control in practice gives them control of the country's economy and therefore of State policy.
3. This is based on data in Errol Sharpe, *A People's History of Prince Edward Island*, Steel Rail Publishing, Toronto, 1976, pp. 124-131.
4. *Financial Post*, October 2, 1978.



Above: the railway in the West, the real economic basis of the Canadian union.



On the right: Confederation, a marriage of convenience between the bourgeoisies of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The conference in Quebec City, October 1864.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, their population was reduced to grinding poverty. So it is hardly surprising that the West gave rise to populist movements like the CCF (forerunner of the NDP) and the Social Credit.

Further growth of foreign investment in Canada

As imperialism expanded, however, and especially after the end of World War Two, raw materials took on an increasingly important role. In 23 years — from 1921 to 1944 — the value of mining production in Canada grew from \$150 million to \$300 million. But in the following seven years — from 1944 to 1951 — it more than doubled, to \$700 million. U.S. imperialism was in full expansion and eager to snap up all the raw materials it could find. This was the period when Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis invited Iron Ore to make itself at home in Quebec's North Shore region and when British Columbia premier W.A.C. Bennett was generously handing over his province's forest wealth to all comers.

It was also the period when the Social Creditor Ernest Manning was the premier and uncontested master of the province of Alberta. The Social Credit in Alberta was a product of agrarian populism and fundamentalist religion. Like the Union Nationale in Quebec, it practised an "open door" policy for foreign industry. When oil was found in the province in 1947, it was offered up to foreign monopolies on a silver platter. Under Manning, for example, the royalties to be paid on oil extracted came up for review only once every ten years.

During this period, Canada became a favourite location for U.S. direct investment, which grew substantially in the 1950s. In 1958, U.S. direct investment in Canada reached the record level of 32% of all direct U.S. investment. Even today, Canada is still the main source of raw materials for the United States. And in 1963, when investment in Canada industry totalled \$52 billion, some \$14 billion was U.S. controlled, while another \$3.6 billion was controlled by other foreign investors. Overall, foreign capital controls just over a third of Canadian industry — in manufacturing, oil, mining, railways, public services, construction and communications.

Most of this new influx of foreign capital went into natural resources. Ca-

pitalist development was speeded up, particularly in northern Canada and the provinces where these resources were concentrated — notably Quebec and Alberta. These new economic conditions made it possible for small Quebec and Albertan capitalists to aspire to become bigger and bigger capitalists and even monopolies, joining the club of Toronto financiers and rich, English-speaking Montreal capitalists. But to make their dreams come true, the "nouveaux



A century later, oil and gas pipelines are the Canadian bourgeoisie's new railway.

riches" had to find ways of compensating for their relatively weak positions vis-à-vis the established Canadian and foreign monopolies. They needed a political arm to serve their economic ambitions, and that political arm was the State.

Conveniently, it so happens that the

writers of the British North America Act of 1867 did not foresee the tremendous growth of the natural resources industry; they gave the provinces jurisdiction over natural resources and their development.

When small capitalists strike it rich

The result was that provincial State structures all across the country underwent considerable expansion in the 1960s. The change was especially abrupt in Quebec, where the situation was aggravated by national oppression. Jean Lesage left the federal scene to take over as leader of the Quebec Liberal Party and went on to become premier of Quebec. It was the beginning of a series of reforms that came to be known as the Quiet Revolution. The system of education was overhauled to train the "competent" — and French-speaking — labour force required by industry and the State. A number of Crown corporations were established, including the Société générale de financement (general financing corporation), which invested especially in heavy industry, shipbuilding, steelworks, etc. The Caisse de dépôts et de placements (a government investment corporation) was founded; by 1975, it had assets of \$3.699 billion.

But the symbol and hallmark of the Quiet Revolution was the campaign by Jean Lesage and a certain René Lévesque, then minister of natural resources, to nationalize electricity in Quebec and become "masters in our own house". Although Hydro-Quebec had been set up under Duplessis back in 1944, it was the nationalizations in the early 1960s that really made it a force to be reckoned with. Today, its assets are worth \$7.068 billion; and with the multi-billion-dollar James Bay project, Hydro-Quebec has become the leading Canadian company in terms of net profits.

One of the people bought out in the nationalization of electric power was a small capitalist called Paul Desmarais. He used the liquidities thus acquired to build Power Corporation, one of the biggest holding companies in Canada with assets of \$6.236 billion in December 1975. Meanwhile, Bombardier gradually expanded a prosperous snowmobile business and bought up MLW (which makes locomotives) to emerge as a major industrial monopoly, exporting more than half its production. The Caisses populaires Desjardins have withstood competition from the big Canadian banks, acquiring assets of \$5.2

billion by December, 1975. This same group (the Caisses Desjardins) control a substantial share (23% in 1975) of the Provincial Bank of Canada's \$3.059 billion in assets.⁵ It also controls the Vachon corporation and supervised the creation of Culinar, a monopoly in the Quebec food industry.

In a matter of years, then, a French-speaking monopoly sector has developed in Quebec, with the backing and support of the Quebec State. Today, this sector is out for its share of the Canadian market as a whole and hopes to break into the U.S. market as well.

The 1960s brought another boom in the capitalist development of natural resources, and with the 1970s this boom gathered speed, as the fight for control of these resources became the focus of contention between imperialist powers.

This is the background to the **growing importance of Alberta**. Skyrocketing prices for oil have given Western Canadian capitalists the chance to catch up with their Central Canadian rivals — if the provincial State intervenes to guarantee the development of Albertan capital. But oil and gas are tremendously valuable resources; and this time, the Canadian financial oligarchy does not intend to let their development slip out of its grasp.

The economic impact of the Western oil boom is substantial. Without going into a detailed examination of it right here, here are a few pertinent statistics: — from 1973 to 1974, Alberta's gross domestic product grew by 40%; in 1975 and 1976, it grew by 20%, and it continued to grow by 10% to 15% in succeeding years. On a Canada-wide scale, economic growth is currently nil.

— the Albertan State takes in revenues from oil and gas at the rate of \$6,000 a minute, or \$3 billion a year. At this rate, Alberta could buy GM Canada (the company with the largest sales in Canada) in 188 days; it could buy up all the shares of Imperial Oil (the biggest oil company in Canada) in one year and 156 days.

— 45% of Alberta's total revenue comes from oil; this figure goes up to 55% if the Heritage Fund⁶ is added in.

The Conservative Party under Peter Lougheed took power in Alberta in 1971. Since then, and against this economic background, Western Canada and Alberta in particular have begun to press the kinds of demands for greater autonomy that were previously put forward mainly by Quebec. On the economic level, there has been a phenomenal growth of provincial companies, some of which have become major mo-



MLW-Bombardier, a Quebec monopoly which exports more than half its production. In the photo, a train produced for Amtrak, a U.S. company.

opolies in the space of a few years.

Take the Alberta Gas Trunk Line (AGTL), for example. It won the contract to manage construction of the Alaska pipeline, the biggest privately-financed project in the world — beating out Arctic Gas, a heavyweight consortium controlled by U.S. imperialism and Eastern Canadian finance capital. Then in June, 1978, it took over Husky Oil, a U.S. company, at the very moment that Petro-Canada was trying to buy it up. The AGTL was established in 1954 as a private company, under the auspices of the provincial government, which charged it with the transportation of gas within Alberta. For the province, it was a way of preventing the federal government from extending its control over the production and marketing of gas. In the 1970s, the AGTL spearheaded the diversification of the petro-chemical industry in Alberta. At the same time, it grew into one of the leading Canadian companies in the field of energy resources. In the past decade, the AGTL has increased its profits tenfold and become the second largest natural gas company in Canada.

Dome Petroleum is another Alberta-based company that attained major status in a matter of years. Operating in the Beaufort Sea, north of the Mackenzie River, it is now the third most important component of the Canadian-controlled part of the oil industry, and half the size of the Canadian operations of the giant Imperial Oil. It is headed up by a fervent Canadian nationalist, Jack Gallager. Dome Petroleum has won major fiscal concessions from the federal government. From 1971 to 1978, Dome grew approximately tenfold: its revenue, for example, went

from \$41.5 million to \$639.2 million. Then in 1978, Dome pulled off a masterful deal and took control of the Toronto-based Trans-Canada Pipe Line away from Canadian Pacific, a clearcut example of the westward shift of capital.

Petrocan is another case that cannot be overlooked. Petro-Canada is a Crown corporation whose head office is located in Calgary. Although it only began operating in January 1976, by the end of 1978 it had assembled assets of \$3.3 billion, making it the second-largest oil company after Canadian Imperial Oil (with assets of \$3.8 billion).

Petrocan grew as rapidly as it did buying up other companies at a rate unprecedented in Canadian business circles. It is slated to grow even bigger as a result of policies announced in the most recent federal budget. This all adds up to a radical change in who controls the Canadian oil industry. While 90% of the industry was foreign-controlled in 1960, Canadians will achieve control of 50% of the industry in the next few years — despite U.S. investment in Western Canada at an annual rate of \$34 billion (according to the September 22, 1980 issue of Newsweek).

5. These figures do not take into account the recent merger of the Provincial Bank and the Bank Canadian National to form the new National Bank of Canada.

6. The Heritage Fund is the investment fund established by the Alberta government and financed by oil royalties.

7. Arctic Gas included:
the three biggest oil companies, Imperial, Gulf and Shell;
—the biggest distributor of gas in Canada, Trans-Canada Pipe Lines;
—the biggest gas companies in Canada, Consumers' Gas, Northern and Central Gas, Union Gas (all Ontario-based) and Alberta Natural Gas;
—seven U.S. Gas distribution companies.

As well, Arctic Gas was backed by the Royal Bank, Wood Gundy and the big Wall Street investment bank of Morgan Stanley.

Syncrude, Alberta — The monopolies are investing billions of dollars to develop Alberta's oil deposits.





James Bay in Quebec. The nationalizations and the development of hydro-electric resources have made Hydro-Quebec a leading example of big capital control by Quebecois.

Shake-ups in store for the Canadian financial oligarchy

The current constitutional debate and what it means for the Canadian bourgeoisie must be seen in this context. What lies behind the federal-provincial jurisdictional disputes is the old familiar fight about how to divvy up the profits.

Historically, capital created locally in Alberta was skimmed off by Canadian finance capital which used it to industrialize Ontario. Alberta's energy resources were channelled into the Ontario manufacturing industry to produce cars, and so on. Eastern manufactured goods were shipped out West to be sold in the markets of Edmonton and Calgary.

But the 1970s brought a huge jump in oil prices and with it a solid and substantial basis for capital accumulation. This in turn provided the basis for the emergence of a bourgeoisie of Canada-wide importance — insofar as the new capital was kept out of the hands of Canadian and American finance capital. For Alberta's newly-rich, oil was the ticket for joining the Canadian financial oligarchy. This explains Alberta's constitutional demands for exclusive provincial control of energy resources and the revenue they produce.

Furthermore, the oil monopolies do not have the same need that Ontario's manufacturing industry does for a strong central State speaking in the world for Canada with a single voice. Canada is one of the world's leading trading nations. It exports four times more per capita than Japan, and a third of all Canada's production is exported. This is why one of the central concerns of the Canadian financial oligarchy is to open up new markets for Canadian manufactured goods. The federal govern-

ment has a decisive role to play in this, by negotiating lower tariffs to help Canadian goods and capital to penetrate other markets.

This helps explain how the powers of the federal State have grown in practice over the past thirty years, even though there have been no actual changes in the jurisdictional provisions of the BNA Act. The federal government has always had exclusive jurisdiction in a number of fields, allowing it to control the amount of money in circulation; devalue or establish a new exchange rate for the dollar; control the amount of credit available by playing with interest rates. Ottawa was given broad fiscal powers, and therefore could engage in deficit budgeting. But today, with the State intervening more and more systematically in the economy, these powers have become much more important.

In the case of manufactured goods, the federal government has always intervened to encourage exports; in the case of oil, however, its interventions have usually had the effect of reducing exports to the United States and reducing or delaying increases in the price of Canadian oil. This is why Lougheed is so intent on winning a decentralization of powers in favour of Alberta. British Columbia, with a similar situation in its forest industry, has similar ambitions.

Newfoundland, represented by Premier Brian Peckford, is a special case. There have recently been important discoveries of off-shore oil, and Newfoundland wants to make sure it gets control of them. Unlike Alberta, however, Newfoundland has no local basis for monopoly accumulation. This leaves the door wide open for foreign oil companies to move in. So the federal government, which is willing to at least talk with the big Calgary capitalists, is taking a very firm stand against Peckford's demands.

All the factions of the Canadian bourgeoisie are involved in the battle

being played out today. First of all, it is in the interest of all factions of Canadian monopoly capitalists to regain control of energy and mineral resources — including Alberta's oil, Saskatchewan's potash and Quebec's asbestos (although in the case of asbestos, the bourgeoisie doesn't agree about whether or not this is a strategic resource at the present time). So Lougheed, Blakeney, Lévesque and Trudeau are each Canadian nationalists in their own way. But at the same time, there are sharp rivalries within the Canadian bourgeoisie.

The new development of capitalism in Canada has given rise to new factions of the bourgeoisie. The factions on the way up would like to join the Canadian financial oligarchy but are confronted with the opposition of established finance capital* which has historically been based in Ontario's manufacturing industry. To fight the dominant faction of the bourgeoisie, the rising factions have relied on the provincial levels of the State and the substantial economic powers associated with these levels. The political struggle has progressed farthest in Quebec, where the PQ's sovereignty-association option co-opts the Quebec people's struggle against national oppression and uses it to its own advantage. Quebec is also the province where the creation of a new monopoly capital is most advanced.

There are also internal reasons for the growing weakness of the dominant Ontario faction of the financial oligarchy. The economic crisis is having disastrous effects on manufacturing in Ontario, causing numerous layoffs. The auto industry is simply the most striking example. It is also undoubtedly significant that more and more big financiers in Quebec and Ontario are speaking out publicly in favour of rapid increases in the price of oil, despite the negative effects of such increases on the competitive position of Canadian manufacturing internationally. The promise of profits in the oil industry is tempting enough to convince them to abandon at least in part the manufacturing sectors where the equipment and means of production are old and out-of-date. This will have to be studied attentively in the upcoming months and years. It is very possible that there will be a substantial shake-up in the Canadian financial oligarchy.

8. Monopoly capital as we know it today in most cases emerged in the first two decades of the 20th century and has changed little since then. Changes in the ownership of capital in Canada have mainly been the result of mergers of monopolies, takeovers and nationalizations. Between 1960 and 1970, for example, there were 2,531 mergers in Canada. So newcomers have an uphill battle when they want to join the club.

Canada, a country founded on unequal development

The "Just Society". Perhaps some people still remember the election slogan that carried Pierre Elliott Trudeau to power in the late 1960s. In practice, the "just society" soon proved to mean the War Measures Act, wage controls and Trudeau's notorious contemptuous remarks, such as telling the Lapalme strikers to "eat shit".

Today, Trudeau is offering us a new interpretation of "justice". The constitutional reform is supposed to serve a very laudable objective — namely ensuring the continued redistribution of the country's wealth among the various regions.

In practice, however, things are once again somewhat different. The existence of Canada has not ensured the harmonious development of the various regions of the country; on the contrary, Canada was founded and has developed by accentuating inequalities. As a result, in 1971 the average income per person was higher in Ontario than in any other province (see table 1). In contrast, the average income in Newfoundland was not even half what it was in Ontario. In Quebec, ranking in the middle of the ten provinces, the average income per person was 27 points less than in Ontario.

It is important to note that the introduction of equalization payments by the federal government did little to change the situation. (Equalization payments are paid by the richer provinces to the poorer ones out of their excess revenues). Despite equalization payments, the average income in Newfoundland is still only 53%, and in Quebec only three-quarters, of what it is in Ontario.

This inequality is a direct result of the concentration of large-scale manufacturing in the central provinces. It is especially concentrated in Ontario, which accounts for two-thirds of all Canadian manufacturing although it only has one-third of the population. Looking at each province's share of manufacturing jobs in Canada (table 2), we see that Quebec's, and more especially Ontario's, share of manufacturing jobs is significantly higher than their share of the population. Ontario, with 36% of the population, has almost half of the labour force in manufacturing.

It is also important to note that Ontario has by far the highest proportion of foreign controlled manufacturing companies. Canadian capitalists control only 45% of Ontario's manufacturing industry; in comparison, Canadian control of manufacturing in the nine other provinces varies from 63% to 76% of the industry. Ontario's industrial wealth is largely the result of foreign — mainly American — manufacturing locating in Ontario. This alliance with monopoly capital is inextricably linked to the federal government's protectionist policy. Since Confederation, this has been what has clinched the hegemony of the Ontario faction within the Canadian bourgeoisie.

The result today is a situation in which the various regions of Canada are characterized by very different concentrations of economic activity. Agriculture is the principal activity in Prince Edward Island, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Mining is very important in Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Alberta, while manufacturing is concentrated mainly in Quebec and

Ontario. And within the manufacturing sector, there are very definite differences between Ontario and Quebec. One-quarter of Canadian manufacturing is composed of "weak" sectors such as textiles, clothing, leather and furniture. In Quebec, 6.3% of the labour force is employed in these "weak" sectors, while the comparable figure in Ontario is only 2.7%.

Finally, if the provinces are ranked in terms of the relative importance of manufacturing for the province (in 1971), the list goes: Ontario (70.6%); Quebec (65.6%); British Columbia (46.0%); New Brunswick (45.1%); Nova Scotia (41.0%); Manitoba (39.5%); Prince Edward Island (24.2%); Alberta (19.8%); Newfoundland (17.3%); and Saskatchewan (12.4%). If they are ranked in terms of the relative importance of mining, the result is very different: Alberta (38.9%); Newfoundland (25.4%); Saskatchewan (20.6%); Manitoba (10.9%); Nova Scotia (8.7%); British Columbia (7.8%); New Brunswick (6.0%); Quebec (4.8%); Ontario (4.4%); and Prince Edward Island (0.1%). In other words, Canada is very distinctly polarized between the "peripheral" regions specialized in extracting raw materials and the central provinces where the transformation of raw materials into finished goods is concentrated.

1. The "gars de Lapalme", the Lapalme strikers, worked for the Lapalme company — one of the regular subcontractors for the Post Office. The Post Office cancelled its contract with this company so as to get rid of the workers' union, which it considered too militant. The workers fought back with one of the longest, but ultimately unsuccessful, strikes in the early 1970s.

Table 1
Average income per person (1970)
(base: Canada = 100)

	Personal income*	Percentage of Ont. average	Personal income plus equalization	Percentage of Ont. average
Nfld.	55	46	63	53
P.E.I.	60	50	67	57
N.S.	75	62	72	61
N.B.	68	57	73	62
Que.	88	73	89	75
Ont.	120	100	118	100
Man.	92	77	93	79
Sask.	70	58	72	61
Alta.	100	83	99	83
B.C.	109	91	100	92

* Job, farm, business or investment income.
Source: Paul Phillips, *Regional Disparities*, Toronto, 1978, p. 10.

Table 2
Provincial distribution of jobs in manufacturing
— percentage of all manufacturing employment and percentage by controlling country

	% of all manufacturing jobs in Canada	% of total Canadian population, June 1, 77	Canadian-controlled (%)	U.S.-controlled (%)	other foreign-controlled (%)
Nfld.	.78	2.4	68.2	5.0	26.8
P.E.I.	.16	0.5	—	—	—
N.S.	1.9	3.6	70.1	14.2	15.7
N.B.	1.8	2.9	75.0	15.2	9.8
Que.	31.4	27.0	64.3	27.8	7.9
Ont.	49.3	36.0	45.4	46.0	8.6
Man.	3.0	4.4	71.1	20.5	8.4
Sask.	0.9	4.0	76.7	16.3	7.1
Alta.	3.1	8.2	67.2	25.1	7.7
B.C.	7.6	10.7	63.7	28.0	8.3
Total * Canada	—	—	55.7	35.7	8.6

* N.B.: The first two columns total slightly less than 100% because we have omitted the figures for the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.
Sources: "Regional Underdevelopment" in *Imperialism, Nationalism, and Canada*, Toronto, 1977, p. 125; and *Annuaire du Canada*, 1978-79.

Revolutionary work among women

PROLETARIAN UNITY met with three activists from Toronto's International Women's Day Committee (IWDC) in November 1980 to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the women's movement in Ontario today, and their thought-provoking evaluation of IN STRUGGLE!'s past and current work in the women's movement. Their sharp but comradely criticisms shed much light on the thorny question of the relationship between a revolutionary organization and a mass movement, and will surely help to deepen and improve revolutionary work among women.

The backbone behind the annual IWD Coalition in Toronto, IWDC defines itself as a socialist-feminist organization. Over the past three years, the committee has become more and more involved in the struggle of working-class women for the right to organize and strike, equal pay, abortion of demand, free universal day care, lesbian rights and an end to all forms of sexual abuse and harassment. IWDC also supports other progressive movements not directly related to women's struggles, such as the anti-racist, anti-Klan movement, and the El Salvador support movement.

PROLETARIAN UNITY: What are the strengths of the women's movement in Ontario today?

Ann: One of its most important strengths is the fact it has politicized such large numbers of people. It's very much a grassroots movement. When you consider there's a Toronto's Women's Yellow Pages, you have a sense that a massive grassroots movement has really settled in. Even Hollywood films now have to take women's liberation into account!

Mary: The situation in the trade-union movement is particularly significant.

For a very long time, the women's movement was viewed as a middle-class phenomenon. But today, more and more working women see themselves as feminists. When the Fleck and Radio Shack women speak out, they identify themselves as feminists, they're no longer willing to sit back and be mistreated because they are women. When the media say the women's movement is dead, it's not dead at all. In a certain way, it's much more vital and basic today, because it has a much wider base. The struggles of working-class women don't make the same kind of

Banner of the International Women's Day Committee at the IWD demonstration in Toronto last March.



media splash as Laura Sabia¹ does, but in the long run, they're going to be much more significant.

The INCO strike is a good example. In 1958, the clergy and municipal officials organized the women to bring their husbands back to work and the strike failed. But in 1979, the women organized themselves to support each other and the strike, and that's extraordinary.

If there had not been an autonomous women's movement, these women would probably have sat at home isolated, dealing with their individual men, and screaming children, and with all the problems that a strike brings every family. Because of the women's movement, they were able instead to organize themselves, to set up food co-ops and day care, and travel all over the province to raise money. So the women's movement has had a ripple effect on women's consciousness. Women are now willing to take stands they weren't willing to take a few years ago, and on issues that go beyond economic demands. The State may be willing to promote a few token women into management, but what is happening in the trade unions, with ordinary women coming together en masse and demanding their rights — this is far more threatening.

Ann: Regarding the trade unions, I think it's interesting that women's caucuses are now in existence not just in Toronto, but throughout Ontario. It reflects a deepening of the women's movement in the smaller towns and rural regions. What's really exciting as well is the fact the trade unions call us (IWDC) now to get support from the women's movement. We find this very important because it means they've come to a certain political perspective. It's an incredibly large step, and it gives us access to the kind of women we want to reach, as well as a measure of legitimacy. To be really concrete, we go to the Bell workers' picket line, and they come to the IWD demonstration in March!

Another strength of the women's movement in Toronto is the alliance between lesbian and heterosexual feminists. The fact lesbian feminists in IWDC see themselves as socialists and are willing to ally with heterosexual feminists on that basis is very unusual. Throughout North America, there has been a general split between these two groups of feminists, and, in most cases, the lesbian feminists adopt radical feminist politics.

What tends to happen in the U.S. is that if you are a lesbian in a woman's group, you represent lesbian issues to

1. Former chairperson of the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women.

When the media say the women's movement is dead, it's not dead at all. In a certain way, it's much more vital and basic today...

the world at large. You don't go and talk about day care, for example. That kind of contradiction has been worked out quite thoroughly in Toronto. We've managed to work out a lot of problems and come together on a clearly socialist basis.

Mary: I think it's still a surprise for most women to learn that IWDC is majority lesbian. Even the lesbian community doesn't fully recognize this because of our politics.

Jane: We've come through a long struggle. Some people have left the women's movement. Some have become Marxists and communists and have left the women's movement to do work in a revolutionary organization, which is one choice you can make. And it has been a choice. There's some correct, and practical reasons for this, in terms of the small size of the existing organizations and also because there hasn't been an understanding of the relationship between the two struggles. But there are also others like us who have stayed and worked primarily in the women's movement and have tried to figure out how to advance the struggle. We've run into lots of problems. Many of us have had negative experiences with certain kinds of organizations. We are trying to build the movement and set up structures that are not alienating, but it's very difficult.

A few years ago people were talking about trying to establish an Ontario Federation of Women; but it didn't get off the ground, mainly because it was trying to be both an organization of individuals and an organization of organizations. It was also an attempt to unite women regardless of their political orientation. IWDC took another approach. We arrived at a basis of unity as socialist-feminists and have seen how liberating that is because once you've agreed on your policy, there's some basis for evaluating activities.

We don't think, as we used to, that the major emphasis of IWD this year should be to unite the women's movement. Our experience is that you can't unite the entire women's movement because there are different political tendencies within it. In building this

year's IWD Coalition, we've decided what political orientation we want to take and are now trying to unite as many people as possible around it.

Mary: As for "burning issues" that confront the women's movement, we feel it's no longer a question of a single issue. There are a number of things, like women in the workplace, sexual harassment, violence against women, etc. But what we are trying to do is link those issues and see the underlying basis of the problems women face. So "burning" is too strong a word. As socialists we don't want to zero in on one issue alone. We don't want to have a single-issue, campaign-oriented organization.

We realize, however, there are certain areas that we have not put enough energy on — i.e. immigrant women. Every year at IWD there's been greater representation from this sector but we want to form a specific committee this year to build links. Our participation in the anti-Klan movement, our presence at the El Salvador demonstration, also reflects a shared understanding that if we expect progressive people to take up our issues, then we have to support their demands, and that's why we try and have a visible presence with our banner at demonstrations like the OFL's October 18 demo. We were quite moved, by the way, by the large number of male trade unionists who came up to us that day and told us how pleased they were to see us there, and promised to attend our demo on March 8!

Jane: But it's not clear within the women's movement what kinds of organizational forms are needed. There's a whole debate going on now. People are writing about what should be happening in the women's movement, what socialist feminists should be doing, etc. There's no one correct line on this at the moment. There are limitations on what IWDC can accomplish, but it's not clear what the possibilities are. It's very much a time of thinking through how to advance the struggle.

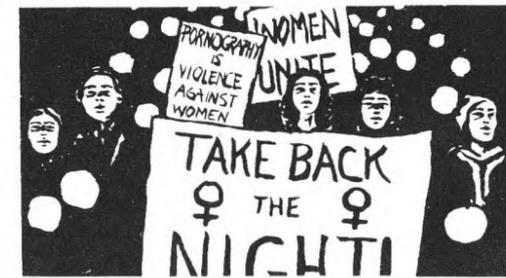
PROLETARIAN UNITY: As a socialist/feminist organization, how do you integrate new women, women who aren't yet socialist but want to do some concrete work? Do you see the need to create more of a mass organization in the future, in addition to IWDC?

Jane: It's something we've debated for ages — how to integrate new people. Where we involve ourselves in a coalition over a period of time such as building International Women's Day, an abortion demonstration or a strike support committee, we are able to attract women to the activity or campaign on the basis of the popular demands that we put forward. They are able to work on issues that concern

them and also to see the particular analysis or perspective that IWDC brings. Some will be attracted to us as an organization.

Recently we have been involved in a series of educationals on topics such as violence against women, sexuality, the family, the sexual division of labor. This has also brought new women to us. There are problems plunking down a new woman in the midst of a high level political debate, but what is interesting is that women are being integrated. Not enough, but we're definitely growing.

Our own working committees are where new women who have been attracted to us can involve themselves and work on concrete activities. Also, a lot of integration happens at the bar after our meetings where we're able to talk to new women as well as each other on an informal basis.



Some of the slogans chanted by hundreds of women across Canada during demonstrations against sexual harassment last August.

As for an organization like Saskatchewan Working Women, we don't feel in a position to comment. All we really know about it is what we read in IN STRUGGLE!. It looks good, at least on paper. One thing is clear: the socialist feminist current is on the rise, despite our confusion on some issues. It means our point of view makes sense to a growing number of women.

Ann: A second weakness of the women's movement is career or bourgeois feminism. Radical feminism is not really the enemy. It's got strong defenders, but it's an isolated movement. Radical feminism is perhaps what fits your definition of "feminism" — i.e. an ideology that says the basic contradiction is the struggle between men and women and all other contradictions or struggles are subordinate to this. But I think the term is often used to discredit the women's movement, to imply we're all man-haters. If you talk to people who are antagonistic to the women's movement, that's what they always bring up. As an actual movement, it's relatively small and only found in very large urban areas. It's very difficult to be a radical feminist if you're living in Timmins!

Mary: From our perspective in the women's movement, radical feminism

may give us more difficulty at times, but in terms of the mass of women, bourgeois feminism is the more dangerous ideology. It's the line that pushes for women's equality within the capitalist system. It accepts the structures of monopoly capital as they are, and demands greater access to power for women. Socialist feminism is certainly not the outlook of the majority of women in Canada today.

Jane: I agree bourgeois feminism is much more harmful than radical feminism. There's also a distinction to be made between career and bourgeois feminism. Career feminism refers to women who make their way in society and sell out on the basis of their activity in the women's movement — that's a problem of particular individuals. But bourgeois feminism confines the struggle to simple demands for more rights, affirmative action programmes, etc. Even though the IWDC is one of the most active groups in the movement, bourgeois feminism has a more pervasive influence. We want to extend our propaganda as socialist-feminists because we've not had such an impact on women's political consciousness as we would like.

PROLETARIAN UNITY: You don't agree with our definition of feminism (an ideology that claims men are the cause of women's oppression). Can you explain why?

Ann: It's perfectly legitimate to define terms, but if your definition has nothing to do with the general social practice, then you are trying to develop a private language, and it strikes me as a very odd kind of thing for a Marxist organization to do. Your definition of feminism is completely idiosyncratic (specific to IN STRUGGLE!, Ed. note) and should be abandoned.

Mary: It should be abandoned for your own purposes, as well as for the women's movement. You won't be understood in the women's movement using that definition. Feminism is understood by most people in Canada to mean fighting for the equality of men and women. There are different currents, of course, within the feminist movement, currents that disagree over the cause of women's oppression and how we should fight it, but generally, when a woman defines herself as a feminist, that's what she means. Your definition just doesn't reflect the actual situation and unfortunately reflects a kind of arrogance. If a mass movement defines itself in a certain way, it's arrogant for a revolutionary organization to try and define it some other way.

Jane: The problem is you collapse a radical feminist position with a Marxist feminist position and make no distinctions between the various currents in

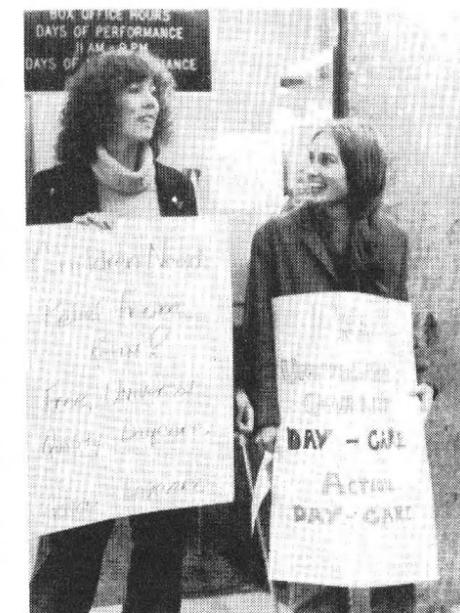
Your definition of feminism is completely idiosyncratic and should be abandoned.

the women's movement. For example, in the pamphlet you produced two years ago, **Same Enemy, Same Fight**, you say: "The feminist movement wants only one thing, regardless of its left posturing — to take women away from the struggle for socialism", and also, "Among those who have spread a lot of confusion about the nature of the enemy and the struggle for the emancipation of women are feminists. We are talking about organized groups of feminists of all tendencies." Those kinds of statements have alienated IN STRUGGLE! from women activists.

Ann: I think it's important to realize that when IN STRUGGLE! or any other group puts out literature saying "No to feminism", the women's movement sees it as nothing but sectarian politics. The women's movement has had a very bad historical experience with Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations, and this kind of "anti-feminist" propaganda just confirms our very poor historical experience. It also puts us socialist feminists really on the spot. Women have come up to us, from a different current in the movement, and said, "How can you be socialist?" Look what those people are saying!"

Mary: This has happened many times. We are clearly a socialist feminist current, but it's extremely difficult to

Feminist activists protest a public meeting on the status of women held in Toronto last October.



convince women of our politics when they've had bad experiences with left organizations that make feminism the main danger. For the women's movement to view the left as anti-feminist, anti-women's movement, just makes our job of winning them to a socialist, and communist, viewpoint doubly hard. **Jane:** The leaflet you produced condemning the IWD Coalition in Toronto in 1978 as feminist was widely distributed, but who was held accountable? Us! It's pretty damned hard to win a progressive orientation when people have ammunition like that against left groups being involved. In a sense, your tactics simply fed the radical feminist current, and women saw us being dupes of the Marxist-Leninist movement.

Ann: IN STRUGGLE! used a type of class analysis which saw only two homogenous classes operative under monopoly capitalism. There are more than two classes, and there are many fractions inside these classes. In order to build a popular bloc, contradictory class fractions have to be won over to a socialist programme. Struggles against the oppression of women speak both to the material bases of the oppression of working women, and to the popular democratic wishes of the middle strata. Participation in the women's movement helps the working class organize itself and brings some of the popular, democratic wishes of the middle strata into the struggle for socialism. The women's movement, rather than something which divides the working class, should be seen strategically as one of the political struggles which can help build a popular bloc and unify the working class. The crudities of IN STRUGGLE!'s mistaken line on the women's movement stemmed from crudities in its class analysis.

Jane: The problem also stems from your lack of analysis of the relation between men and women in this society. You have recently changed your stand on the women's movement, which is very good, but your analysis of women's oppression still needs to be deepened. It's crucial that you understand that men gain privilege in this society, that there's a material basis to male chauvinism. It isn't just an ideological question. It seems that communists back off from the issue of a woman's relationship to a man on a personal level — where it can't be clearly identified that it's the State and the bourgeoisie that's the enemy. You have recently changed your position on this, but in the past you argued that such a focus divided the working class. I think this is why you criticized the 1978 IWD Coalition for including demands around women's bodies, sexuality and lesbian rights.

PROLETARIAN UNITY

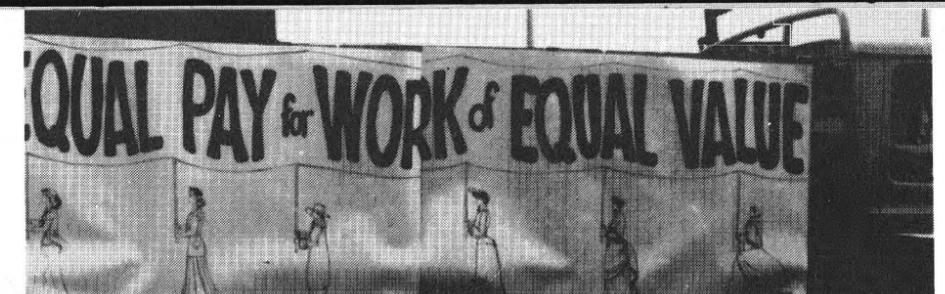
But the fact is, there are real contradictions between men and women in this society. Women do have less power. Obviously, there's a big difference between the kind of power a bourgeois man has compared to a working-class man. But the contradictions remain — every time we walk through the streets at night. If we are going to fight our oppression, we must fight male chauvinism too. It was unfortunate you were not part of the struggle we waged inside the IWD Coalition to have a progressive line on this issue win out. We struggled to have this contradiction recognized, but also to unite with those men who supported women's struggles. We needed your help in this debate, not your condemnation.

Mary: I think the point we want to make is that if a revolutionary organization is going to build itself into a party and make revolution, the issue of women's liberation is key. Unless that party takes the issue of feminism and women's liberation seriously, both inside its own ranks and in its practice with the people, it will end up duplicating what exists in capitalist society, with white middle-class men in the leadership, etc. Unless you make your personal politics the same as your public politics and deal with all the questions around the oppression of women — jobs, representation on various levels of leadership within the organization, the psychological problems women face — you are not going to move forward in the way that you should, so that the "new society" that is created is, in truth, "new". Sexism as we all know is not going to simply disappear overnight, as class society disappears. It has to be worked on through all the period so that when we get to that stage, new forms will be ready, we'll have fashioned ourselves into thinking and acting in more appropriate ways.

Jane: We see ourselves as feminists as much as we are Marxists, communists, or socialists. If I was in a revolutionary organization, I would still call myself a feminist because of my orientation, even if I wasn't doing work primarily in the women's movement. I would want to make sure that the issue of women's liberation was dealt with seriously in all areas of work.

Ann: We've been negative up to this point, but I want to say that I've always found IN STRUGGLE! members to be very principled. The areas of disagreement were not dealt with in a manipulative manner. You were very misguided, but very principled! In fact, you are very good people to organize with because we know exactly where you stand. That's not always been our experience with other left groups.

PROLETARIAN UNITY



Feminist activists join in Labour Day celebrations in Toronto, September 1980.

Mary: I agree. The way you work reflects on an organization, and your members work very well. If it hadn't been for the very principled, honest and open dialogue one of your members maintained with us during the past two years, IN STRUGGLE! would be more discounted than it is today. We feel your self-criticism is honest and it's a breath of fresh air. Some of the recent articles in your paper, for example, have been excellent. The fact the paper is dealing much more frequently and in more depth with various aspects of women's oppression is very good. The articles on sexual harassment and violence against women were excellent

Unless that party takes the issue of feminism and women's liberation seriously, both inside its own ranks and in its practice with people, it will end up duplicating what exists in capitalist society...

because they went into areas beyond simple economic issues.

But because of the past, it's a question of "wait and see" for us. It's one thing to make an orientation, it's another thing to put it into practice. People will be watching you closely!

Ann: It's important for us to deal with the specific oppression which women experience in our society, to deal with our own set of contradictions, and that's why there has to be an autonomous women's movement. Also so that we can protect ourselves, in part, from the manipulation of left groups. We've been sold out too many times, so there is a necessity for autonomy, and IN STRUGGLE! now recognizes this — wonderful! It will be a lot easier to work together. Which isn't to say you should not be involved in organizations like IWD Coalition. You should! You should be clear where you're coming from and where you can provide

leadership, well and good.

Jane: I feel contradictory. On the one hand, I feel very positive about the really important changes that have gone on in your organization, and not just towards the women's movement. It's really good to see a Marxist-Leninist organization open up the way you have and make changes, because usually organizations don't make changes. Marxist-Leninist organizations, in particular, have often been seen as the most dogmatic and closed of all. So it's good to see the changes, but on the other hand, I guess I feel "it's been a long time coming".

The way democratic centralism has worked, I've always felt like I was talking to a brick wall. I never felt there was a give and take — you can't get very far when all a member of your organization can say is bound by the limitations of your current line.

We also recognize that it's a really difficult task to build a revolutionary organization. You are always trying to avoid either right or left errors. You can gain popularity by shifting to the right, and you don't want to do this, so you try and protect yourselves.

You were trying to make a break with economism in order to build a revolutionary organization of the class. You felt you had to get away from a myriad of particular struggles that had made you lose sight of your long-term goals. But you shut yourselves off too much. You developed a language and practice that was protective in itself, and which closed you off from people.

Partly it's a question of leadership, what kind of leadership Marxist-Leninists are capable of providing at this time. I know for myself there are times when I've been closed to other viewpoints. It's really easy when you are a communist and you "understand" the basis of women's oppression, to judge people and issues too fast. When I was in Vancouver, I worked mostly around the Marxist-Leninist movement, and when I came to Toronto I had a certain rigidity in the way I worked. When I started to understand that I had a lot to learn from the women in IWDC — for example the importance of issues like violence against women — things improved, even though we had differences.

You can get yourself into a frame of mind where you feel you must provide

leadership at all costs, even though you don't have all the answers. Many questions are difficult to solve, and unless you really are open to people, you don't advance the struggle.

Ann: I think the women's movement must have had some sort of effect on IN STRUGGLE! for you to be taking the position you are today. It should be emphasized that IN STRUGGLE! has learnt a great deal from IWDC!

Mary: It raises for me the whole question of how a revolutionary organization relates to a mass movement. In the past, you've tended to define "the correct line", from a fairly isolated position, and then laid it on us, "the party gives the masses consciousness", etc.

The question is: what sort of relationship should exist between the women's movement and a party? Are we coming together on an equal footing, where we will both learn from each other, and work together for a common goal? If the party sees itself as the all-knowing vanguard, and the masses don't yet have the consciousness and education to make the right decisions, then this leads to the kind of problems we're talking about today. It brings into question, not necessarily the concept of a Leninist organization, because we agree one is needed, but rather, how such an organization relates to the masses.

Jane: So many of the changes you have made come from having actual experience in the women's movement. You are no longer able to sit on the sidelines and be critical. You worked on the last IWD Coalition and saw in practice what the effect of a lousy stand on feminism would be. So it's a first step. The next step is to deepen both your theoretical understanding of women's oppression in this society and your practical involvement in the women's movement.

Mary: You endorsed IWD last year but pulled out at the last moment on the grounds you had no resources. But resources follow priorities! If its involvement in the IWD Coalition that has brought you to your present understanding, then it's going to be continued involvement, real involvement, being part of the organization, that will help further develop your understanding of women's oppression.

We feel your self-criticism is honest and it's a breath of fresh air.

La conjoncture au Québec au début des années 80

A revealing analysis of the situation in Quebec today

Many progressive Quebecers in unions and community groups are looking for a political alternative. The Quebec left has to ask itself some pretty fundamental questions when it looks at its own evolution and the events of the past decade. The left has witnessed the development of the crisis, the PQ victory in 1976 and the repeated failure of the nationalist dream.

This is the political reality that a still embryonic political current has developed in over the past few years. This current is trying to formulate an "independence and socialism" strategy that would demarcate from the PQ, the social democrats and the Marxist-Leninist organizations. The current does not yet exist in any organizational form, but it can be identified with the Centre de formation populaire (CFP), a network of politicized Christians and the Quebec-Latin America Secretariat whose "independence and socialism" positions have gained influence amongst many activists in community groups and in the labour movement.¹

A book published this year gives the best example to date of this tendency's positions and the questions it is facing. The book, *La conjoncture au Québec au début des années 80* (The situation in Quebec at the beginning of the '80s), can be easily read by progressives and is meant for them.² The authors, Marielle Désy, Max Ferland, Benoît Lévesque and Yves Vaillancourt, are actively involved in the labour and popular movements in various regions of the province.

The following article is meant as more than a simple book review. We will try to explain and address the most important positions now being debated in progressive circles and to understand the political current that the book is a part of.

From the economic crisis to the crisis of Marxism

It is no coincidence that *La conjoncture au Québec...* has been published at this time. Such a book clearly has a place, given the present economic and political situation. Furthermore, it has come out at a time when the traditional political directions offered to the labour movement are being questioned more and more.

We need hardly belabour the point that the economic crisis in capitalist countries is getting worse and that people have been waging struggles under more difficult conditions in recent years. As a counterpart to the economic crisis, the capitalist States have taken the offensive by continually threatening the most basic rights won after massive struggles in the 1960s and 1970s. This crisis has occurred at a time when the revolutionary point of view is still held by only a small minority within the labour movement. What's more, it has come at a time when the enthusiasm generated by the big battles of the past two decades has often been replaced by disillusionment when faced with the failures of the struggle for so-

cialism in the world. These factors have led many to ask some basic questions.

This phenomenon is not limited to Quebec. The same thing can be seen in many advanced capitalist countries. In France, many of the radicals of May 1968 have given up hope in the revolutionary capacities of the proletariat.³ In the United States, a large Marxist movement exists outside of the Marxist-Leninist organizations. It also has

1. The CFP is an education group that gives courses in many unions and mass organizations. Far from being purely a service organization, it has also developed specific political positions on many questions which are put forward as working papers or resource materials. The documents can be consulted in the Cahiers de formation du CFP.

The Quebec-Latin America Secretariat, like the CFP, has taken a stand on many political issues and thus defends a well-defined line within the Quebec left.

Other groups could be added to this list, including the magazines *Le temps fou* et *Les cahiers du socialisme* which defend, in general, ideas similar to those of the "independence and socialism" tendency.

2. Marielle Désy, Max Ferland, Benoît Lévesque, Yves Vaillancourt, *La conjoncture au Québec au début des années 80*. Edition La librairie socialiste de l'Est du Québec, Rimouski, March 1980, 200 pages.

3. See, for example, André Gorz' latest book, *Adieu au prolétariat*, Galilée, Paris, 1980.

drawn lines of demarcation form social democracy, Chinese and Soviet revisionism and the dogmatism of existing organizations.⁴

In English Canada, the Vancouver-based Socialist Organizing Committee has written an analysis in its publication, *Leftwords*, on the situation of the left, which it views as bogged down by the sterility of the Communist Party (CP) and the dogmatism of the Marxist-Leninist organizations.⁵ Finally, practically all left-wing organizations in Canada — from the Revolutionary Workers League to the CP — have undergone splits. What some call "the crisis of Marxism" is an undeniable phenomenon today.

This somewhat lengthy overview has a purpose. It enables us to understand the context in which *La conjoncture au Québec...* appeared, a context of questioning old beliefs in practically all left-wing organizations and the emergence of new political currents, a new kind of 'new left'.

More to the point, *La conjoncture au*

Québec... has appeared not only in a time of general questioning but at the very moment when many nationalist activists have become increasingly disillusioned with the strategy of the PQ, whose referendum defeat was the proverbial last straw. The PQ's social-democratic ideal also took quite a beating during the last round of public sector negotiations. These factors have heightened the political vacuum that the authors of the book describe as the non-choice between a party in power that has become much less deserving of critical support and a left-wing movement that the authors claim has been unable to answer questions activists are asking. They also make it all the easier for this political current to take its distance from the PQ and some of the basic tenets of social democracy.

Significant demarcations

The significant thing about the publication of *La conjoncture au Québec...* is

how it reflects the radicalization of the demarcation taking place within the "independence and socialism" movement with respect to the PQ and some aspects of reformism.

The authors view the PQ as being dominated by bourgeois interests, even though the party is riddled with contradictions, partly due to its mainly petty-bourgeois class composition. While not new, this is an important stand taken by the authors given, among other things, the sheer number of analyses circulating in the labour and popular movements on the petty-bourgeois nature of the interests defended by the PQ. However, it should be noted that the authors state their views while maintaining that the PQ "is a multi-class party where the bourgeoisie has hegemony but where the petty bourgeoisie also plays an active role".⁶ This makes it easier to understand the contradictions that have characterized the PQ's history ever since the dissolution of the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN — an early separatist group that merged with Lévesque's group to form the PQ). These contradictions have regularly resulted in confrontations between the leadership and a substantial proportion of the rank and file over the PQ's programme.

Finally, *La conjoncture au Québec...* correctly analyses the apparent contradiction between the bourgeoisie's support of the PQ's economic and political initiatives and its silence or even outright opposition to the sovereignty-association thesis. As the authors point out, the fact that business groups like the Council of Quebec Businessmen and the Granby Chamber of Commerce opposed the Quebec Chamber of Commerce's campaign for the 'no' option does not mean that business supports sovereignty. The referendum campaign is proof of that. But that does not change the class nature of the PQ, although it does indicate another contradiction that has to be taken into consideration.

It is far from obvious, however, that the attitude of business can be explained as simply as the authors believe. They claim that this attitude is due to business' fear "of being overtaken by the aspirations of the Quebec people and labour movement that (the PQ leadership) claims to have incorporated."⁷ It is

4. See, for example, *Theoretical Review*, published in Tucson, Arizona, by the Tucson Marxist-Leninist Collective.

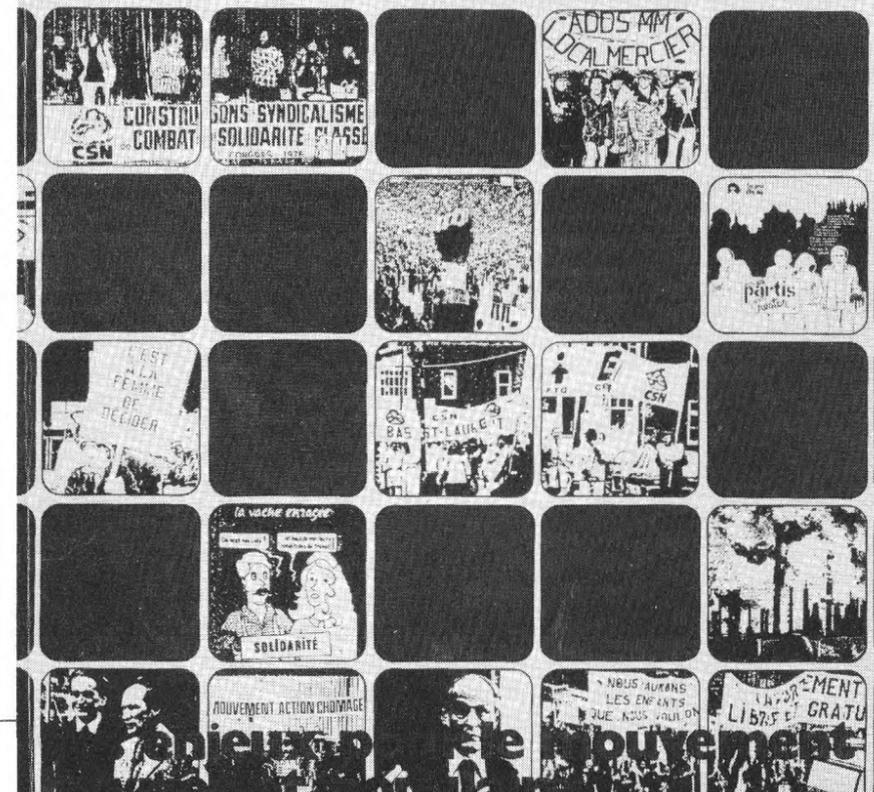
5. See, for example, the July-August and September/October issues of *Leftwords*, published in Vancouver by the Socialist Organizing Committee.

6. *La conjoncture...*, op. cit., p. 77

7. *Ibid.*, p. 92

La conjoncture au Québec au début des années 80, a work written for progressive activists, is the clearest expression yet of some of the points of view and questions raised by the "socialism and independence" tendency. Available at The Spark and L'Étincelle bookstores; price: \$5.50.

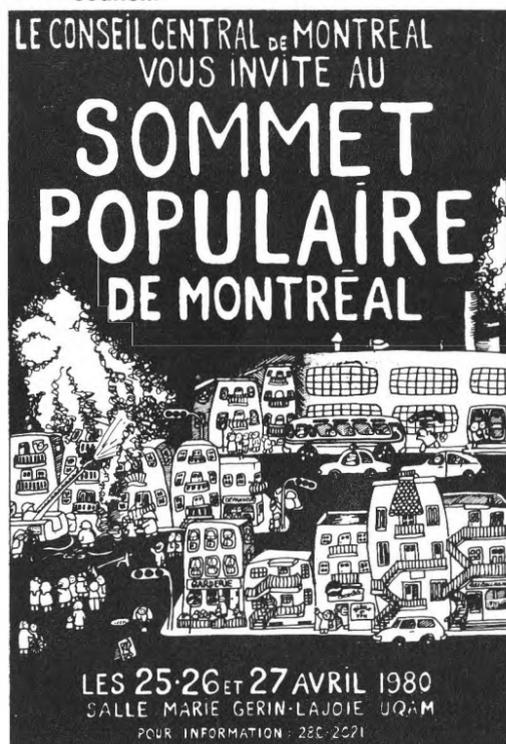
La conjoncture au Québec au début des années '80



difficult indeed to understand the attitude of the Quebec bourgeoisie unless we base ourselves on a more global analysis of the contradictions within the Canadian bourgeoisie. We have to remember the bourgeoisie's interests in maintaining the Canadian market and looking for profits beyond Quebec's border. That is a simple fact, no matter what slogans separatists choose to believe.

We will get a better idea of the evolving demarcations present in the book if we understand the context. Specifically, the authors have strong criticisms of the social-democratic strategy advocated in *l'Appel pour un Québec socialiste, démocrate, indépendant* by Y. Charbonneau, L. Dagenais, J. Dofny, A. Dubuc, G.R. Laliberté and M. Pépin. A few pages of *La conjoncture...* address certain criticisms that the Pépins and Charbonneaus would find in their interests to respond to publicly. For example, why do they refuse to ask questions on the basis of class analysis? What about their ambiguous conception of the State's role, or their thesis of

The "people's summit meeting", a first attempt to bring together labour and community groups and organizations in Quebec, was held in April 1980 at the initiative of the CNTU's Montreal labour council.



a gradual evolution towards socialism with electoralism as an important aspect? Finally, why do they refuse to criticize the NDP?

The criticisms addressed to the PQ's strategy and to the ideas of Pépin and Charbonneau show how sharper lines of

demarcation have been drawn within the "socialism and independence" tendency itself. It remains to be seen, however, whether this analysis will become a springboard for transforming the present situation and helping the labour and mass movements advance.

Turn the analysis right side up

We have already said that *La conjoncture au Québec...* has appeared at an opportune time. Many Quebec progressive organizations are now having trouble mobilizing people, whereas in past years they had much less difficulty. This is the case, for example, with welfare rights groups and groups active on the housing question. Indeed, an important plus for the book is that it deals with this problem openly and has begun a debate on the reasons for this phenomenon.

The authors feel that the demobilization has resulted from many factors: the economy, the State offensive, the PQ, and the attempts of Marxist-Leninists to seize control. They add that "the crisis experienced by community groups between 1975 and 1978 cannot be reduced to so-called infiltration or to groups simply being co-opted".⁸

Unfortunately, the authors were unable to maintain their initial good intentions of not making the analysis simplistic when they tried to analyse specific problems in the labour movement or community groups.

For example, we are told the influence of Marxist-Leninists "is due mainly to the fact that in 1975-76 the Marxist-Leninist tendency was able to impose the liquidation of a whole series of left-wing labour and popular ideological instruments (newspapers, journals, etc.), or at least render them thoroughly dependent and subordinate. They were thus able to obtain a kind of ideological monopoly."⁹

The authors also state that anarcho-trade unionism and populism — in short, the "distrust of anything political"¹⁰ — and the resulting isolation and localism were primarily due to the negative experience with Marxist-Leninist groups. For example, they say that "anarcho-trade unionism and populism were often a means of legitimate self-defence" because "being an activist became thankless in the present situation."¹²

Even within the CEQ (Quebec teachers' union) "the interaction between the development of political groups and of a left-wing in the union caused problems and led to splits that resulted in putting a damper on the momentum of the left in the union."¹³

The authors conclude that "the poli-

tical issues introduced by the M-L activists at least aggravated the crisis experienced by these groups when it did not provoke the crises outright."¹⁴

Well, at least the authors are not worrying about subtleties. The conclusion is clear. By their sabotage, the debates they initiated and their sectarianism, Marxist-Leninists were at least as important a factor in the demobilization of mass organization as were State intervention, the PQ or anything else.

This is an idealist way to look at things. We do not intend to deny the sectarianism behind some of IN STRUGGLE!'s actions. Nor will we examine the many instances of "taking control" that were nearly all due to the Workers Communist Party (WCP) and not of the "M-Ls" in general. We also have little difficulty in agreeing with the authors when they say that the groups that (voluntarily) rallied to IN STRUGGLE! at that time left behind them many important results of their work.

However, we do intend to point out some of the places where the authors miss the mark.

How can they state with straight faces that Marxist-Leninists have the "ideological monopoly" over everything that claims to be left-wing in Quebec? How can anyone say something like that at a time when practically all unions in Quebec are dominated by the PQ or social-democratic — not Marxist-Leninist — ideas? How can anyone talk about populism being a reaction against communist intervention when populism has been present in the left and in labour since at least the 1960s (when Marxist-Leninist organizations simply did not exist)? Finally, how can anyone attach more, or at least as much, importance to the role of communists as to that of the State? Only someone with a totally metaphysical conception of what has happened in the Quebec left and labour movement can reach such conclusions.

Need we belabour the point that we do not live in a society where Marxism-Leninism rules. Surely we agree that the capitalist class and its political currents are dominant. We have to understand what that means for the labour movement and the left in general, in which communists have only a very minor role (so far). At the present time, it means simply increased State intervention in areas previously the reserve

8. *Ibid.*, p. 163
9. *Ibid.*, p. 102
10. *Ibid.*, p. 110
11. *Ibid.*, p. 111
12. *Ibid.*, p. 112
13. *Ibid.*, p. 132
14. *Ibid.*, p. 168



In analysing the problems faced by the labour movement and mass organizations, it is important to keep in mind which political tendencies are dominant today. Above: the QFL's offices in Montreal during the referendum campaign.

of community groups (community medical and legal clinics, day care, etc.). The State is often successful in defining the field of action of labour and community groups through bodies like Centraide which give it the power to continually threaten the very existence of these organizations. If we do not start from this perspective, we will not be able to understand the problems experienced by mass organizations, for they are not simply ideological issues but also bread-and-butter ones.

Nor can we neglect the specific nature of Quebec's governing party for the past four years, the effects of which have been much more significant than the influence of communists. The authors analysed perfectly well the specific characteristics of the PQ. But they neglected to draw all the conclusions about what this meant for the left. They neglected the real influence that the PQ-backed pipe dreaming had on progressive people. For it is a fact that the PQ's well-planned concessions prevented mass mobilization around issues like health and safety, the language of work, day care, old people, etc. For example, Social Affairs Minister Denis Lazure did not proceed with a massive reduction of hundreds of hospital beds in a single stroke, as his Liberal predecessor had. He went about it progressively instead, closing beds in different regions, and eventually achieved the same results. In housing, there was no repeat of the large-scale demolition of houses that was prevalent in Montreal and Quebec City in the early '70s. Nevertheless, housing conditions for most people are as bad as ever. We could go on for pages with examples like this which all made the struggle of popular organizations more difficult.

Finally, we must not neglect the influence of nationalism (and not only in the QFL but in general). It has continued to play an important role in de-

fusing struggles in the name of "building a country" and "tightening our belts". With the PQ victory, certain struggles against the State which had grown under the Liberal government no longer worked. Social democracy played a similar role at another level, but by upholding electoralism, as with, for example, the Montreal Citizens Movement (MCM) and the Rassemblement populaire in Quebec City.

These are not stereotype Marxist-Leninist slogans or abstract concepts. These are concrete problems which continue to be important for labour and community organizations. These problems are certainly more important than the WCP's leadership contests or IN STRUGGLE!'s sectarianism, which could not by themselves mobilize or demobilize the fightback movement at will. We have to examine the present problems of mobilization and orientation in the mass movement from this point of view. In this way, we will be able to understand the relative importance of the attempted takeovers which generally characterized the WCP in these organizations¹⁵ and the sectarianism or wait-and-see attitude that sometimes characterized IN STRUGGLE!'s action. Here again, we feel it would be useful to make certain distinctions, since the term "M-L" is often applied to very different and even totally contradictory practice and positions.

Questions which deserve answers

Nevertheless, the questions raised in *La conjoncture...* should be answered. This requires a better grasp of what the debate now getting under way within Quebec organizations is really all about. Just a few months ago, a people's summit was held at the initiative of the Montreal CNTU labour council

as a result of this debate. In particular, the reasons behind the problems encountered by mass organizations have to be better identified. Among these questions, the meaning of the debate over the role of mass organizations as being either one of service or one of struggle has to be brought out more clearly. This requires recognizing that mass organizations will have to struggle more and be more united than in the past to fight the State's increasingly subtle attacks. It means gaining a better understanding of how the present compartmentalization of struggles is part of the reason behind the problems of mobilization experienced by these organizations. Finally, people taking part in the debate should stop considering communists as little green men just emerged from flying saucers and start treating them as true participants in the debate.

La conjoncture au Québec... analyses problems but does not propose any specific solutions. It is reasonable to assume, however, that different analyses will lead to different tactics. An analysis that identifies the State as the main culprit in the problems experienced by mass organizations will necessarily emphasize the necessity of uniting these organizations. On the other hand, an analysis that says that Marxist-Leninists are every bit as responsible as the State may very well degenerate into less subtle forms of anti-communism and, worse, be a factor of division rather than of unity. While claiming to fight social democracy, it may well find itself in a united front with it. This is a door that the authors, unfortunately, did not close when they speak about giving the benefit of the doubt¹⁶ to the Pépin-Charbonneau strategy, which they themselves describe as social-democratic. The supporters of such an analysis, while denouncing the PQ, may very well have to line up behind it. This is, indeed, another door the authors leave open when they state, against all evidence, that "the PQ leadership's sovereignty-association thesis represents a breach in the Canadian capitalist institutional system." (our emphasis)¹⁷

Leftists in Quebec have to analyse all aspects of the present situation in the fightback movement. But in doing so, they have to keep in mind political stakes and the absolute necessity of strengthening, not weakening, the mass movement.

15. We should note in passing that that the WCP is not the only one that splits mass organizations. Yves Vaillancourt himself recently denounced the role of Christian political activists in the split earlier this year in the Association de défense des droits sociaux (ADDS — welfare rights group).
16. *La conjoncture...* op. cit., p. 108
17. *Ibid.*, p. 149

Harry Magdoff answers some questions for us

Capitalism in underdeveloped countries

Last October, an international conference on *The third world in the international division of labour*, was held in Montreal. During this conference, Harry Magdoff, an internationally renowned American Marxist economist, agreed to an interview with us. Harry Magdoff is currently an editor of the American magazine *Monthly Review* and has a great deal of influence with many progressives in the U.S. because of his analyses on imperialism, U.S. domination in the world and the international monetary and finance systems. His best-known work is still *The Age of Imperialism*, which sets out to confirm Lenin's theses on the basis of a concrete analysis of imperialism in the late sixties.

We spoke to Harry Magdoff about some of the more burning issues discussed during the conference. Notably, we discussed the current forms of capitalist development in underdeveloped countries, the nature of the classes in power and the current development of inter-imperialist rivalries. It is very important to better understand certain recent phenomena in underdeveloped countries, such as the development of industrialization in some of them (Brazil, the Philippines, Taiwan). According to Magdoff, this industrialization is still limited to a few countries and is generally oriented towards the internal market rather than exports. This question is directly related to the question of whether or not pre-capitalist modes of production, such as feudalism continue to exist. During the conference, the majority of speakers pointed out the growing penetration of capitalism in underdeveloped countries, where it either eliminates or dominates the former modes of production. This phenomenon is accompanied by increased dependence on imperialism, as is shown by the enormous increase in these countries' foreign debt.

The interview which follows does not give a clear answer to all these questions. However, it does illustrate how the ruling classes in these countries are inevitably drawn into international imperialist relations. Magdoff also examines these questions from a historical point of view without jumping too rapidly to certain conclusions. We hope that the excerpt of this interview which we are publishing in the journal will spark a debate which is imperative at the current time because of its consequences for the revolutionary strategy of the proletariat and the masses of these countries.

Harry Magdoff, editor of *Monthly Review*, during an interview with PU in Montreal, October 1980.



PROLETARIAN UNITY: One of the things that we would like you to explain a little more is the question of the mode of production in Third World countries. Do you evaluate that the capitalist mode of production is in development throughout the world and particularly in the Third World?

Magdoff: Well, you know, that is a difficult subject. My own feeling is that most of the talk about the mode of production is in fact an academic exercise. The Third World was brought into capitalism by the major centres of capitalist power in one way or another, though it may vary from one area to another. These countries function to serve the capitalist system — by force, if necessary, and most often by force. They are part of the capitalist mode of production, they are part of the capitalist world system.

To start analysing that in this particular area, in this particular country, people pay their taxes by labour instead of paying them in kind, therefore it is not a capitalist mode of production; or that in this one they happen to be working for wages and therefore it is a capitalist mode, and if they aren't working for wages, it isn't a capitalist mode, I think this way of reasoning is making out of Marxism, or Marxist analysis, an academic exercise — the worst kinds of things you find in sociology, for example. This is my opinion, I know that most, or at least many, Marxist writings today don't analyse it this way. Third-world countries have been affected by capitalism or involved in capitalism in one way or another. This, in fact, was the whole experience of colonialism, of the expansion of Western Europe throughout the globe. When there was slavery in the United States, it was part of the capitalist system, at a period when this system utilized slavery. When you have the big landholdings and power relationships that are similar to feudal relationships, this is a system that is supported by worldwide capitalism and it is utilized by this same capitalism. And I think that that is what is important. To analyse whether this is the capitalist mode of production, or that is the capitalist mode of production, I think all that is just useless academic exercise. Is that clear?

PROLETARIAN UNITY: If you look at these *Fortune* lists of the big monopolies in the world, and those outside of the United States, ten are identified for South Korea, seven for Brazil, three for Mexico. These figures compare to ten for Italy, and maybe nine for Belgium. These big monopolies or multinationals are developing in these countries. The question is, what is this

(continued on page 23)

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control of Western growth of the multi- my opinion, of ways exceptions, but ben the national and isies becomes very, red. Whereas there he native capitalists comprador in the directly related to s, even those that ed as national are in the imperialist especially now with trying to develop native bourgeoisies, they try to get invol- busly have to get in- ternational banking tional corpora-

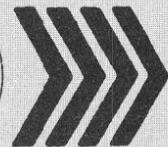
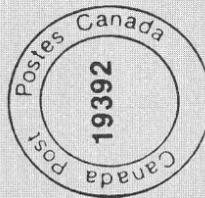
with an enormous increase in the public debt, in the debts and borrowing from abroad, in foreign debts, private and public. And, to that extent, they have become more and more dependent upon the imperialist system as a whole. Their dependency, both with respect to technology and in terms of being uner the influence of the big banks, is such that when push comes to shove, when they come to a crisis or difficulties, then they have only one way, and that is to be subservient or to find favour with the international capital. I think that this same thing applies to South Korea.

If I could see that they were developing internally a mass market, if there really was an elimination of unemployment, a revolution in agriculture, an utilization of the landless farmers, a development in a way that would encourage the growth of the internal market, then I would start to ask myself questions on if they could be developing and becoming an imperialist power. But given the way they've operated until now in terms of becoming a stronger capitalist power on the basis of greater exploitation of the working class and of creating enormous volumes of unemployment and underemployment among the peasantry, and the fact that they are unable to satisfy the food needs of the peasantry because they have developed commercial agriculture in order to get exports in order to pay for

former modes of production. This phenomenon of dependence on imperialism, as is shown by the enormous increases in these countries' foreign debt.

The interview which follows does not give a clear answer to all these questions. However, it does illustrate how the ruling classes in these countries have been drawn into international imperialist relations. Magdoff alludes to these questions from a historical point of view without jumping to conclusions. We hope that the excerpt of this interview which appears in the journal will spark a debate which is imperative at the current juncture of its consequences for the revolutionary strategy of the masses of these countries.

Harry Magdoff, editor of *Monthly Review*, during an interview in October 1980.



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(from page 20)

phenomenon? Is this just part of the extension of, say, the major imperialist powers into these countries? Are these monopolies just General Motors of Brazil, for example? Or is there an autonomous monopoly bourgeoisie developing in these countries?

Magdoff: There are two separate things in that question. I think what you have is obviously the spread of capitalism. As I said, it starts with the early stages of capitalism. Naturally, capitalism itself is not very developed in these centres and you have various forms of expansion. The form of expansion that is typical of the Second World War, with the decolonization, is the growth of multinational corporations in which the corporations enter into these countries usually to take advantage of the local market. By local market, I mean that there is within these countries a section of the population — it could be 15%, 20% — of wealthy people, people who have either obtained their wealth from landholdings or because they are merchants or they have their own businesses within the production activities of the country, and then you have your government employees, your upper middle class that represents a luxury market. And it is these luxury markets that the multinational corporations come in to exploit.

As the multinationals come in, they take over the most important industries and become the dominant factors, especially, in the Third World, in the industries that are most profitable, that are most highly monopolized. They bring with them the major sections of the local bourgeoisie that become involved in one way or another with the multinationals, either directly as employees, managers and so on, or as distributors, or through the banking system; so that more and more, a larger and larger percentage of the native bourgeoisie, if they are not directly comprador, benefit in one way or another from the multinationals — by multinationals, I don't just mean industry but also the multinational banks that are terribly important in these areas, sometimes more important in terms of influencing and controlling the direction of the economy.

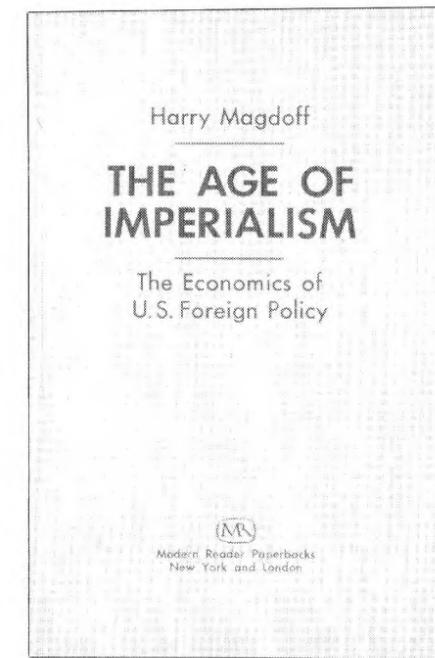
From my standpoint, even though there is a native bourgeoisie, this bourgeoisie becomes very intimately related with the multinationals. But then, we are talking generalizations. I mean, you can always find 1%, like someone who makes matches, who is completely independent, if you want to put it that way. But this isn't really a significant class or group. Even those who are doing import substitutions, for example, in most of these countries have to import

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goods from the Western world, they have to import machinery from the Western world, and they become tied....

PROLETARIAN UNITY: In that context, what happens with the distinction between the national bourgeoisie and the comprador bourgeoisie?

Magdoff: I think that it is usually a false distinction. I think it's a very hard distinction to make, especially with the tremendous growth of the multinationals and the multinational banks — and, I would say, with the spread of United States movies, the use of U.S. television programmes. I mean, you go to a Third World country, you turn on the television, and there you have Kojak. You have the advertising, the whole culture of the West, together with the banking system which comes more



In his book, *The age of imperialism*, Harry Magdoff uses Lenin's teachings to analyse the development of imperialism, in particular since World War Two.

and more under the control of Western banking, plus the growth of the multinationals. So, from my opinion, of course there are always exceptions, but the distinction between the national and comprador bourgeoisies becomes very, very indistinct, blurred. Whereas there are some groups of the native capitalists who are completely comprador in the sense that they are directly related to the imperialist firms, even those that would be considered as national are very much involved in the imperialist system as a whole, especially now with the emphasis on trying to develop exports. Even the native bourgeoisies, to the extent that they try to get involved in exports, obviously have to get involved in the international banking system and the multinational corpora-

tions that control the channels of trade of most export lines.

PROLETARIAN UNITY: Do you see the relation as one of strictly domination? Or can it, in some cases, become a relation of alliance as sometimes happens among bourgeois classes in this period of imperialism? Do you think that it can also bring rivalry that can be very intense? Do these countries have a national monopoly bourgeoisie that, like the Canadian bourgeoisie, is very closely tied to other imperialist bourgeoisies? In other words, are these countries becoming imperialist?

Magdoff: If you asked me is this the case with Taiwan, I would have trouble answering you. But with Brazil and South Korea, it is true that there are strong bourgeois groups developing. Within Brazil, there is a capitalist class and a banking class, a financial class that has been growing much more influential, and there is a yearning to become monopoly capitalist and imperialist themselves.

You'll find for example in Latin America that there are some firms, not exactly multinational firms, but firms that are expanding from Brazil to other countries where there are plants, affiliates owned in other countries. But you have to see that this type of development in Brazil, for example, has come with an enormous increase in the public debt, in the debts and borrowing from abroad, in foreign debts, private and public. And, to that extent, they have become more and more dependent upon the imperialist system as a whole. Their dependency, both with respect to technology and in terms of being under the influence of the big banks, is such that when push comes to shove, when they come to a crisis or difficulties, then they have only one way, and that is to be subservient or to find favour with the international capital. I think that this same thing applies to South Korea.

If I could see that they were developing internally a mass market, if there really was an elimination of unemployment, a revolution in agriculture, an utilization of the landless farmers, a development in a way that would encourage the growth of the internal market, then I would start to ask myself questions on if they could be developing and becoming an imperialist power. But given the way they've operated until now in terms of becoming a stronger capitalist power on the basis of greater exploitation of the working class and of creating enormous volumes of unemployment and underemployment among the peasantry, and the fact that they are unable to satisfy the food needs of the peasantry because they have developed commercial agriculture in order to get exports in order to pay for

the debt, I would say that at most you could consider Brazil playing the role of a sub-imperialism under the wing of the United States in which the economic, the financial, the military is in one way or another subservient. Now, when I talk about subservient, it isn't always a clear-cut case. It isn't a question that someone phones from the White House and says "This is what you must do". There are tensions, of course, competition from the Japanese, from the Germans. There is an attempt from some sections of the capitalist class in Brazil to manipulate the competition to take advantage of one, getting a better deal with one versus another. But it is fundamentally the same thing: they are still tied to the imperialist system. This is very much a case of dependency in which technological dependency is enormous.

PROLETARIAN UNITY: Could you give us your point of view on the development of the rivalries between advanced capitalist countries? How are these rivalries put forward at present and how are they developing in the present context?

Magdoff: ... The system has worked for a long time under the hegemony of the United States where the U.S. dollar was as good as gold, and the U.S.A. had freedom to operate financially on the international level because the dollar was good as gold and therefore it could keep on printing dollars to pay for everything, to pay for having military bases around the whole globe, to pay for the economic aid, to pay for the multinational corporations' expansion,

and so on. This was done by printing more and more U.S. dollars and that was because of the international system that had developed after the Second World War. The Bretton Woods agreement, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the general agreement on trade in Paris were all international institutions that liberalized international trade and created a basis, an institutional basis, for an enormous expansion of world trade in which the allies of the United States, the major capitalist powers, aligned, if you want, with the rivalry with the Soviet Union. But they also benefited enormously from this and got back on their feet as a result of U.S. operations — not just the loans made by the Marshall plan.

But the big expansion of Germany and Japan starts with the Korean war. And it starts with that war because of the direct military business the United States gave them to get supplies for the Korean war. Japan especially got another big boost with the Vietnamese war. So that you have the growth of the other capitalist allies that the United States wants as allies, that it needs as allies. You have a tremendous expansion of trade, and a long wave of general capitalist expansion, one of the longest waves in capitalist history. With the Vietnamese war, the United States could no longer play its hegemonic role. It is still the biggest power and the most influential, but no longer the hegemonic power. There is a breakdown of U.S. currency as an international system, the breakdown of the present Bretton Woods agreement. The U.S. dollar is no longer as good as gold, even though

that dollar still plays abroad an extremely strategic role.

What you have then is the entrance of the advanced capitalist system from the long period of expansion to one of stagnation. This becomes particularly evident in the nature of the crisis of 1973-74. This highlights what has been happening: a shift towards more protectionism, a shift to the beginning of the split-up of the capitalist world. This hasn't happened yet, but you can see the signs of it, for example in the development of the European monetary system, of the continental — and England is also part of that — attempt to develop a European currency. This has its own contradictions. I'm just giving you the first stage of the approach. You have, in Asia, the development with Japan that is becoming a leading power in terms of its trade and the use of its currency throughout Asia, which does not imply that Japan isn't elsewhere too.

What we are seeing is almost the first signs of a potential new development, that is a shift to a separation of trading and currency blocs with a leading capitalist nation as a major force in each one of these and with different countries in sort of a hierarchical arrangement. For example, some are junior partners within this trading bloc, that's where Brazil could play a role as opposed to a weaker and smaller country, or Mexico might play that sort of role. So this is the way I see the next stage, but it isn't here yet. It's a glacial movement in which you see each force emerging slowly.

Child psychology: a developing science

The following article was written by two psychologists after the recent death of the international renowned psychologist, Jean Piaget. This is the first time that PROLETARIAN UNITY has published an article on this important subject. Why speak of psychology in a journal such as ours? Simply because we believe that it is a field in which there are important struggles, a field from which communists have been absent for far too long. This article does not describe Piaget's work as such, but rather attempts to develop a Marxist point of view on these questions: it states that psychology must be considered as a science — a young science that remains to be developed, but a science nevertheless. The goal of this science is to develop a better understanding of the links between the individual and the social relationships in which he functions.

So, in publishing this article, our purpose is to spark debate, to provoke reactions, and to encourage others who believe that it is possible to develop a Marxist point of view in the field of psychology to send in their comments or to collaborate by writing another article. We invite all those who believe that it is possible for this science to serve the working class to speak up...

Jean Piaget, a philosopher and psychologist of international renown, died on September 16, in Geneva, Switzerland, at 84 years of age. His work is enormous. He wrote his first scientific article at the age of 11, on the subject of the albino sparrow, and after that he wrote over 250 papers and numerous articles. He is widely known for his work on the development of the child and his description of the various periods of cognition. He spent 40 years of his life studying the development of intelligence in the child. Yet, Piaget saw the study of child development as a step towards the elaboration of an epistemology, that is a theory of knowledge, on a scientific rather than speculative basis. All his work as theoretician and experimentalist attempts to prove his initial hypothesis: there is a very close link between the biological and the logical structures of intelligence. That is why we find biological and logical concepts throughout his work.

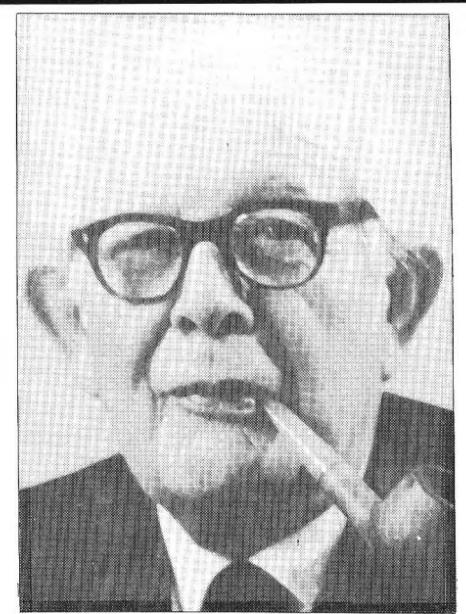
First, we will sum up very briefly the various stages of cognitive development outlined by Piaget and look at whether these stages are scientific and universal. We will then compare his theory of child development to that of another great psychologist, Henri Wallon, who used a materialist-dialectic approach. We will also try to see which of these two theories best explains the links between the human being and social relationships.

Biology, cognition and intelligence

Piaget describes cognitive functioning in biological terms and cognitive structures in logical terms. Let us look at what this means.

We know that the organism absorbs substances which it transforms to obtain food value. In this process, the organism adapts to its environment; it changes under the influence of the environment but never ceases to exist as a structural whole. According to Piaget, intellectual processes, follow this same process of adaptation. He sees intellectual development as a process of increasing adaptation to reality. There are two aspects to adaptation: **assimilation** and **accommodation** (two biological concepts). For example, the newborn first discovers objects by assimilation, by integrating them into his activities. At first, objects are merely things to be sucked, hit, pulled, etc. But, to do this the child must adjust to the object: if the object is big, the baby must open his hand more, etc. This is what Piaget called accommodation.

Piaget believes that the action and then the cognition of the child adapt more and more precisely to reality through a process of greater and greater equilibrium¹ between assimilation and accommodation. The formal thinking of the adolescent is the expression of the



Jean Piaget died on September 16, 1980. An internationally acclaimed philosopher and psychologist, Piaget's name is primarily associated with the psychology of child development and the description of the stages of cognition.

highest stage of equilibrium. Therefore, after the age of 15 or 16, intellectual structures no longer progress.

As a logician, Piaget described the structures of intellectual functioning which, when completed, encompass all the complexity of reality². When completed, these intellectual structures form a system. But don't worry, given the limits of this article we won't attempt to delve into this very complex aspect. Rather, we will sum up the three stages of cognitive development outlined by Piaget.

The periods of cognitive development

The sensory motor period (0-2 years). Piaget explains that at the beginning, the child does not differentiate between himself and the outside world. The child does not perceive himself as an active being. Eighteen months marks a turning point in the intellectual development of the child. For example, around

1. Here Piaget refers to Claparède. According to him, all action (movement, thought, or feeling) is the response to a need. A need is described as being the expression of a disturbance in the equilibrium: something outside ourselves, or within us, changes, creates a disturbance in the equilibrium, and we act to reach a new higher form of equilibrium once again.
2. Piaget described these structures in logical language. A logical description is in fact nothing more than an ideal "model" of the mind, an image of the operating structure of thought, independently of real objects and real actions.

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the age of 18 months, a child becomes capable of grasping a stick and pulling a distant object towards him. This action is preceded by a mental one, because a means has been co-ordinated with a previously established goal: before reaching out for the stick, the child had to understand the relationship between the stick and the desired object.

Piaget's research indicates that it is towards the end of the second year that the child reaches the capacity to use **representation** (or symbolic images). At that time, the child can internally represent in its mind an object or a situation which is not present then. While this is not the case for younger infants, the two-year old knows that objects continue to exist in time and space even if he does not see them. Father who is elsewhere continues to exist: objects have become permanent.

At this age, the child has interiorized his actions and their results in the concrete world which surrounds him, and he is now capable of foreseeing what is going to happen by mere mental processes.

The period of preparation for and organization of concrete operations (2 to 11 or 12 years). From two to seven years, during the first stage of this period, the child perceives objects as a function of his own activity. For example, a child will think that it is dark because he is going to bed. Piaget gives the example of a child of this age who did not want to go to his bedroom "because it was full of dreams". This proves that the child still does not distinguish between the subjective world and the physical world.

Around the age of seven, the child reaches what is called **reversibility**. This means that for every action there is an opposite action which can void the first: addition corresponds to subtraction, "forward" corresponds to "backwards", "yes" corresponds to "no", etc. For example, if you have two balls of plasticine and you roll one into a sausage, the seven year-old will no longer say that the ball is bigger. He will now recognize that they are the same size and that the sausage can be turned back into a ball. During this period, besides learning that actions are reversible, the child also learns that they are **composable** (for example, two additions can be combined into a third which includes both of them). This gives the child the capacity to understand a whole series of systems like family relationships (relations between brothers, uncles, etc.) and numbers.



These two pictures illustrate a stage of symbolic representation for the child. At 22 months, Julie puts down her truck to open the door. She understands that she can pick it up again to go and play in the other room.

The period of formal operations

During this third period, thought becomes **formal** and **hypothetico-deductive**. The child can draw conclusions from purely hypothetical statements. This is the type of reasoning needed to answer the following question: Edith's hair is darker than Jane's. Edith's hair is lighter than Susan's. Which person has the darkest hair? By using formal thought, the adolescent can now build systems, elaborate theories. Having completed the "long march" towards formal thinking, the adolescent now has access to the possible and is no longer limited to the real. It is also during this period that the child learns to master the experimental method based on the modification of only one factor at a time (all others remaining the same). Formal thought is absolutely necessary in order to have a complete understanding of a good part of the subject matter in junior colleges. A recent study by Pierre Desautels (CEGEP Rosemont) and Mireille Lagacé (CEGEP Limoilou) has proven that a significant percentage of CEGEP (Quebec junior college) students do not

fully master hypothetical-deductive thought. We will come back on this question a little further on.

Piaget and educational methods

Piaget's scientific and extremely detailed research on the various periods of cognitive development have contributed to the theoretical bases of new educational methods which take account of what a child is capable of or not of assimilating at a given age. Coming out openly in favour of the new school, Piaget showed the importance of starting from the children's real activities, from their spontaneous work based on their needs and personal interests. The child learns more through action than through intellect; when he plays, his intelligence develops. New games will serve to develop new intellectual capacities.

Piaget's ideas and the authoritarian conception of education, one-way education, are diametrically opposed. We have no reason to be proud of submissive children, who remain quietly seated and whose brains are to be written on as if they were empty blackboards.

Piaget and Henri Wallon

Henri Wallon³ criticized Piaget, among other things, for having mistaken a description, albeit a remarkable one used by all contemporary psychologists, for an explanation.

As we pointed out at the beginning of the article, Piaget tried to explain that the functioning of cognition and of biology was identical, and not the child's cognitive development as such. After Henri Wallon, Tran-Thong⁴ stated that Piaget's approach was **abstract and unidimensional** for he interpreted child behaviour only in the logico-biological perspective. Piaget, in fact, intellectualizes, "logicizes" all of cognitive life.

We must understand that logical activity is only one of the activities of cognition; intervention and discovery are even more important. As a discipline, logic can only develop on the bases of knowledge acquired through the sciences. For example, Aristotle's logic, considered during all the Middle Ages to be infallible standards of truth, developed on the bases of several centuries of development of the sciences and of Greek thought. Logicians do nothing but formalize; observers and researchers are the ones who invent and discover. Since logical categories develop along with the development of sciences in history, we do not understand why Piaget speaks of the final structures of thought.

Moreover, the definition of intelligence in merely logical terms does not take into consideration **all the conditions of intellectual activity**. Michel Tort quite correctly said that Piaget considers logic as the sum of a series of building blocks (the period of cognitive development) which the individual assembles in a predetermined order. Piaget neglects the crucial role of **school**. Yet school plays an important role in the transmission of knowledge, the patterns of thought and the types of logic Piaget speaks of.⁵ The development of thought and of knowledge corresponds to the development of productive forces; the knowledge and know-how of each individual are the heritage of the practice of men and women since the beginning of humanity.

Piaget speaks of social factors, but the problem is that he sees society as the sum total of interactions between individuals. He even sees social relations as a **logical form of co-operation** (once again). His "ideal", abstract description of social relations does not take into account the **actual** relations which exist in society; we cannot say that the social

relations of exploitation are social relations of a co-operative type! This is another example of abstraction.

Coming back to child psychology, though Piaget researched the subject, he did not see the true and essential role of affection in cognitive development. On the contrary, in Wallon's theory, emotions have a fundamental role. Indeed, he explains how at the very start emotions are what weld the individual to social life. It is through emotions that, towards six months of age the individual passes from organic life to psychic life, for emotions are the prelude to representation. And it is not by accident that emotions are so important at that age. Nervous connections become mature in the midbrain (although not in the cortex, where they mature mainly at one year or 18 months), and this is the part of the brain responsible for emotional activity. We mentioned earlier that Wallon took into consideration social factors; now we see that he takes into consideration physiological maturity. This is why Wallon succeeds in explaining how thought (that is, representation) develops. According to Piaget's theory, sensorimotor intelligence brings about the function of representation; yet, we know that sensorimotor intelligence in animals does not bring about thought.

By using the **method** of dialectical materialism, by not isolating the phenomena one from the other, by speaking expressly of the **conflicts** and **con-**

Henri Wallon (1879-1962), French doctor and psychologist and member of the French Communist Party, tried to apply dialectical materialism to the analysis of the cognitive development of the child. Unfortunately, his work is relatively unknown in North America.



traditions which are inherent to child development, Wallon developed a concrete multidimensional theory, a theory which truly explains the phenomena.

As opposed to Lucien Goldman who thought he would find Marxist dialectics in Piaget's conception, Tran-Thong instead drew a philosophical parallel between Hegel-Piaget and Marx-Wallon. "Between one and the other, there are... two fundamentally opposed attitudes towards knowledge; pure knowledge on the one hand, knowledge situated in human activity as a whole, on the other; on the one hand, knowledge turned towards a rather rational understanding of what existed, on the other, knowledge which searches in what existed to find indications of what is going to be" (our translation).

The superiority of Wallon's work rests in the fact that he tried to link **all the aspects** of the human individual as an entity, the organic and the social being one to the other.

Is psychology a science?

A certain number of progressive people and communists believe that psychology is not a science; some will even claim that there is **only one science** — Marxism. This is an erroneous and dogmatic point of view. It is true that psychology, like other social sciences, is highly influenced by bourgeois ideo-

3. A philosopher, doctor and French psychologist, Henri Wallon (1879-1962) joined the underground Communist Party in 1942 after the execution of the communist philosopher Politzer and of the physicist Salomon by the Germans. He was then active in the resistance during the war. His political ideas and the fact that he describes his approach as dialectical materialist have certainly made his promotion to the Collège de France more difficult and has hindered the distribution of his works around the world. In North America, he is almost unknown.
4. A French psychologist who, in his work *Stades et concepts de stade de développement de l'intelligence dans la psychologie contemporaine*, studied the periods of development described by Freud, Piaget, Gesell and Wallon, and finally found Wallon's description to be most satisfactory.
5. In primitive tribes, men do not reach the formal stage of thought. Iranian children are, it seems, two to four years behind French and Canadian children in their intellectual development. Imperialism develops unevenly! We have every reason to believe that if large sectors of the population do not reach hypothetico-deductive thought, it is not unrelated to socio-economic inequalities and the capitalist division between intellectual and manual work. In the technical fields in the CEGEPs (Quebec junior colleges), students are asked to memorize long lists without really understanding. What is important for the ruling class and its State is the efficiency and profitability of future operators. After all the bourgeoisie does not need to send more than 4% of the population to university.

logy. However, just as Marxism has a specific field, psychology also has one. Its field is the individual. We have just seen, by taking a rapid look at Wallon's theory, that it is possible to make a "concrete analysis of concrete reality" to look at the individual without isolating him from his physiological material basis, nor from society and the history of mankind.

Denis Julien, psychologist

France Charbonneau,
professor of psychology



What is the CIP? The CIP is a non-profit organization that distributes progressive films, videos and slide shows on struggles in Canada and around the world.

Two films on the struggle of the Eritrean people



- **Sawrana:** 16mm - black and white - in French - 60 min.
- **Eritrea 79:** 16mm - color - in English - 20 min.

These two films by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front plunge us into the very heart of the struggle of the Eritrean people for a people's democratic republic, a struggle led by the EPLF. The films also show the oppression suffered by the people of Eritrea before the national liberation struggle. You wonder about war? You would like to know what a national liberation struggle is in practice? These films will answer your questions. Show them at union meetings, community group meetings, at school, and in many other places.

Two films on the struggle for the emancipation of women in socialist China



- **Changhai au jour le jour:** 16mm - black and white - in French - 50 min.
- **Red Blossom of the Tianshan Mountains:** 16mm - color - in English - 119min.

These two films illustrate different aspects of the emancipation struggle of women. They were both produced before the restoration of capitalism in China — the first one was made in 1973 and the second in 1964.

Changhai au jour le jour is a documentary on the daily life of women in that city. **Red Blossom of the Tianshan Mountains** tells the story of a woman, Aikuli, who is elected to be in charge of a livestock brigade among the Kasakhs, one of the many national minorities in China.

To rent a film or for a showing in the CIP's hall, phone (514) 523-0285 for reservations.

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How to unite communists

The RCP-USA sidesteps the key issue

In the July 1980 issue of its journal, *Revolution*, the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States (RCP-USA) published an article entitled: "The International Unity of the Proletariat: What It Is and How to Fight for It". This article explains the party's position on the unity of communists throughout the world. The main criticisms in this article are addressed to the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE! for what the RCP-USA describes as IN STRUGGLE!'s centrism.

The article starts off by reaffirming that the proletarian revolution in each country is intimately linked to the proletarian revolution on a world level. The article then goes on to explain how this dialectical relationship demands that the proletariat build an international organization. The RCP-USA also recognizes that it has not been always consistent on this question in the past.

The article continues with the RCP-USA's analysis of the international communist movement as we know it today. According to the RCP-USA, the international communist movement is presently at a crossroads. The victory of the bourgeois renegades in China has dealt a serious blow to the cause of world revolution. Since then, the international communist movement has splintered. Many new trends have appeared, including the position defended by the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA) and its followers. The PLA's position amounts to condemning not only the temporary defeat suffered in China but also everything that was ever revolutionary in that country. The RCP-USA continues by explaining that attacking Mao's line, as the PLA has done, can only mean attacking Marxism-Leninism itself, for Mao Zedong Thought represents the development of Marxism-Leninism on many fronts. Mao Zedong Thought constitutes the theoretical concentration of the experience of the proletarian revolution since Lenin. This is why the question of Mao stands at the centre of today's controversy.

The rest of the article deals mainly with the criticism of one of the most bothersome representatives of centrism, IN STRUGGLE!. The RCP-USA begins by declaring that some people within the international communist movement do not grasp the necessity of demarcation and seek rather to unite all communists without distinction. These people, according to the RCP-USA, limit the question of demarcation to discerning whether this or that gesture was right or wrong. What they are really trying to do, says the RCP-USA, is to unite the two trends represented by Mao and Hoxha, which amounts to trying to reconcile Marxism with revisionism.

The RCP-USA then goes on to give different examples of IN STRUGGLE!'s "centrism" to prove that our Organization is intent on leading everyone down this path. This explains why IN STRUGGLE! is opposed, amongst other things, to the unity of the left at present on the basis of a general principled line. According to the RCP-USA, this unity is possible at present whereas unity based on a programme is not.

The article concludes by saying that IN STRUGGLE! makes a big deal about the necessity of the unity of the international communist movement rather than emphasizing the historical necessity that faces all authentic Marxist-Leninists today: to make a thorough break with revisionism.

The RCP-USA article contains a lot of statements that seem pretty persuasive at first glance. Take, for example, its central thesis about how to unite the international communist movement: unite the left around a principled line to win over the centre and isolate the right. Such a position might even appear mighty attractive to some people, given the present climate of political crisis and confusion in the international communist movement. Put this thesis together with the questions raised by the RCP-USA about the restoration of capitalism in China¹ and the Party of Labour of Albania's opposition to Mao Zedong Thought² and you might well be tempted to start thinking the RCP has a pretty solid case. How could IN STRUGGLE! criticize the RCP for making demarcations with revisionism that remain too superficial?

national communist movement. Put this thesis together with the questions raised by the RCP-USA about the restoration of capitalism in China¹ and the Party of Labour of Albania's opposition to Mao Zedong Thought² and you might well be tempted to start thinking the RCP has a pretty solid case. How could IN STRUGGLE! criticize the RCP for making demarcations with revisionism that remain too superficial?

Why, it's ridiculous.

Or is it? The RCP-USA declares that "... while upholding Mao and opposing the attacks against him is not the only dividing line in the international communist movement, it is the one without which all the others become meaningless".³ We contend that this approach results in a superficial demarcation. It amounts to hiding in the bushes of principles, of ideology, to get out of the rain of practical and concrete problems which the proletariat, and particularly the communists, are confronted with.

IN STRUGGLE!'s positions get distorted...

To begin with, there is just no way we can keep mum about the many half-truths and outright falsifications contained in the RCP article. If we are to believe the RCP, IN STRUGGLE! supports the criticisms of Mao made by the PLA (p. 54). Not only that, but IN STRUGGLE! implies that the differences that emerged in the communist movement at the end of the fifties and in the early sixties were exaggerated and that it ought to have been possible to maintain unity among the parties that split at that time (p. 55). And further, IN STRUGGLE! still supports Albania today despite the recognition of the CPC(M-L) by the PLA because IN STRUGGLE! doesn't like Mao and, when you get right down to it, prefers Stalin to Mao (p. 56)... the RCP article continues on in the same vein.

Those then are IN STRUGGLE!'s positions proof of our centrism. Let us take just a couple of examples of that centrism.

The RCP quotes a statement made in the **Appeal from the 3rd Congress of IN STRUGGLE! to the Communists (M-L) of the World** to show that IN STRUGGLE! considers that the divergences between the Marxist-Leninists and the revisionists were exaggerated in the late fifties-early sixties period: "... the victory of Marxism-Leninism over revisionism is held back considerably by

1. See *The loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tse-tung*, RCP Publications, Chicago, 1978.
2. See "Beat Back the Dogmato-Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought", *The Communist*, no. 5, May 1979.
3. *Revolution*, vol. 4, no. 5, July 1980, p. 53 (emphasis ours). The page numbers in the following paragraph refer to this same article.

the disunity that has existed in the communist forces for over 25 years". The author of the RCP article proceeds to interpret these words to suit his purposes. According to him, IN STRUGGLE! thinks that "unity is always the highest principle, the key to advance, and that Mao should have tried harder to keep together the parties that had together belonged to the Third International, when what was required was a split."

A little later on, the author latches onto another sentence. This one is plucked out of the **Political Report presented to the Third Congress of the MLOC IN STRUGGLE!**: "The struggle against revisionism was then carried out in a way that many people seem to wish to continue it, that is by criticizing various parties and communist leaders one at a time and in isolation from one another. This has been done with Tito, Togliatti, Khrushchev, Liu Shiao-chi, Lin Biao, Deng Xiao-ping... and now Mao Tsetung!"⁶ The RCP author's interpretation of this sentence is as follows: "The only possible meaning of including Mao in this list of renegades is that they were all 'communist leaders', none of them deserving of 'wild and fiery denunciations' — and Mao, who committed this unpardonable sin, in IN STRUGGLE!'s eyes is now getting a posthumous taste of his own medicine."

The commentary on this point concludes: "In this criticism of the form the struggle against revisionism took over the past 25 years... there is more than the whiff of the idea that nobody should have gotten so excited about it because the differences were exaggerated. This is what throwing out Mao as a dividing line leads to."

The mountain of arguments marshaled by the RCP to demonstrate the so-called centrism of IN STRUGGLE! is in fact a sand-castle. The whole thing comes down to speculating on the meaning of the two sentences just quoted to suit the purposes of their argument. The fact is that both sentences are taken from documents which **do not in any way state that the differences in the late fifties — early sixties period were exaggerated but rather make the point that the criticism of modern revisionism has been insufficient and that it must be pursued to get to the roots of revisionism in all its aspects.** Obviously, there is no room here to repeat our entire position on the struggle against modern revisionism. The reader is advised to persuade himself of the truth of what we are saying here by going back to the original quoted documents, especially to pages 15 to 21 of the **Appeal from the 3rd Congress** booklet published in May 1979 (or pages 140-



Bob Avakian, chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the U.S.A., and Jorge Palacios, president of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile. For both these parties, the work of Mao Zedong is the fundamental line of demarcation at the present time in the international communist movement.

143 of the **Proletarian Unity** 17-18 reprint of the same document).

The RCP's argument amounts to nothing more or less than taking some quotations out of context and interpreting them to suit their fancy in complete disregard for our actual positions. It is not hard to prove yourself right in an argument when you use that method. We will keep this in mind.

... in order to sidestep the key issue

All of the RCP's criticisms rest on the idea that IN STRUGGLE!, by refusing to take sides between Mao on one side and Hoxha-Stalin on the other, is really trying to unite the two trends. And this supposedly amounts to an effort to reconcile Marxism and revisionism. The RCP is so caught up in its narrow and simplistic view of the international communist movement (divided up neatly into the "left" who are all those who uncompromisingly defend Mao Zedong Thought, the "right" which describes those who reject Mao and defend Stalin and Hoxha, and the "centre" who are the groups that hesitate between the right and the left) that it cannot see or deal with any other positions without stuffing them into its preconceived and distorted mould.

Here again the RCP's logic rests on a distortion of our views. IN STRUGGLE! is not calling for unity between the two trends presently represented by the groupings defending Mao and those defending the PLA. We are calling for the unity of the international communist movement around a communist programme: "And whereas this unity can only be realized within a single organization that bases its action on a common programme that represents the living application of Marxism-Leninism to the present conditions of the world..." (**Appeal from the 3rd Congress**, p. 3 or p. 135 in PU, no 17-18).

This distortion is all the more unforgivable because it is not a misrepresentation of some secondary point but of the very essence of the question that the RCP claims to be shedding light on with its article, namely the way to unite the international communist movement. What then is the real basis to the RCP's point of view on this matter and ours?

As far as the RCP is concerned, it is not possible to act like a Marxist these days unless you carry out a resolute defence of Mao Zedong Thought which is "the theoretical concentration of the experience of the proletarian revolution since Lenin". The enrichment and development of Marxism-Leninism that the RCP feels Mao has been responsible for (on revolution in colonial countries, revolutionary war and military line, political economy and socialist construction, philosophy, culture and the superstructure, and most especially, continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat) are principles that must constitute an essential line of demarcation between Marxists and revisionists. The way to unite the movement is to start by uniting the "left of the movement" on the basis of these principles.

IN STRUGGLE!'s view is that what the international proletariat, and parti-

4. For the political and organizational unity of the international communist movement. **Appeal from the 3rd Congress of IN STRUGGLE!** to the communists (m-l) of the world, Montreal, May 1979, p. 3. Or see the same **Appeal** reprinted in **PROLETARIAN UNITY**, No. 17-18, p. 135.
5. *Revolution*, op. cit., p. 55.
6. "Political Report presented to the Third Congress of the MLOC IN STRUGGLE!, in *The Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!* (documents), title of **PROLETARIAN UNITY** no. 17-18, June-July-August-September 1979, p. 107. The same passage is contained in an excerpt from the **Political Report in International Forum**, no. 1, April 1980, p. 38.
7. *Revolution*, op. cit., p. 55.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 8

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cularly the communists, need is not just unity around principles. The imperative need is for a common strategy and tactics based on a solid analysis of the class relationships in the various types of countries. That is what we call a communist programme, a guide for revolutionary action which is a living application of Marxism-Leninism to the present conditions of the revolutionary struggle in the different types of countries and in the world.

There will be no success in the battle to unite the movement and defeat revisionism until and unless there is a struggle to develop that kind of programme.

If the RCP really wanted to get to the roots of the differences between themselves and IN STRUGGLE! they should have polemicized about the importance of the struggle for a programme. They could have saved themselves a lot of the time and ink that was wasted distorting our positions.

Why unity around a communist programme?

In all fairness, we must recognize that the RCP did not completely ignore the central point in IN STRUGGLE!'s positions. There is indeed a single paragraph which raises the issue at the very end of the article but just long enough to drop it again like a hot potato.

"But this question of 'general line' versus 'programme' as a basis for unity of the international communist movement can't be considered in the abstract — it is clear in the context of *In Struggle's* own general line that their proposal about a programme has no other purpose than to oppose unity around principles and key living lines of demarcation. Pitting programme against key dividing principles would result in a very sorry programme indeed! What they oppose most is not the form of a 'general line' type document, which is today within the reach of the international communist movement in a way that a fully developed programme — such as the Communist International developed for the whole world and all the key countries — is not. What they oppose is the content of a general line that embodies the principles we listed earlier. It is not really that Mao's line has nothing to do with international communist unity, but rather that they oppose the political and ideological line that he represents and fought for and they don't want that to be in any way, shape or form a cutting edge question in that movement."¹⁰

IN STRUGGLE!, says the RCP, counterposes uniting around a programme to uniting around a general

line because IN STRUGGLE! is against the key principles that Mao systematized. According to the RCP, these principles are the cutting edge of demarcation in the movement at present that would be included within that general line. The author of the RCP article has evidently just plain run out of arguments and is starting to go around in circles.

How are we going to get this debate out of the blind alley the RCP seems determined to keep it in and back out into the street? In our view, that can only be done if we set aside the narrow framework within which the RCP is conducting the debate, a framework which is also the germinating point for the RCP's whole position, namely the search for the ideal general principles which will provide all the answers to our real-life problems once they are conceived.

Let us take the issue of Iran. It is a very concrete revolutionary situation. Yet if there is any question that communists around the world have proven themselves completely incapable of reaching unity of thought and action on, it is Iran. To being with, there is no agreement on the very nature of Iranian society: is it a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society "like China in the thirties"? Or is it a country where the rule of capital has been established in many sectors of the economy, including in the

countryside, even if that capital remains largely foreign capital?

There are also differences over the attitude to take to the various social classes and strata in Iran, especially to the social bloc represented by Khomeini. Should criticism of the reactionary policy of the Iranian government be toned down on the grounds that the local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country have an anti-imperialist side "as was the case in China"? This is the view adopted by the RCP.

More recently, differences among communists emerged even more badly over how to analyze the Iran-Iraq war. Which class interests within Iran are served by this war? Some people think that the whole thing is simply a plot of the "superpowers" against the Iranian revolution. The RCP is among those groupings arguing this view. To buttress the case for this interpretation, they go so far as to contend that Iranian pilots are acting with revolutionary consciousness and hence are only bombing military targets. The Iraqi pilots, on the other, are bombing the civilian population...¹¹

The issue of Iran is a problem of critical importance for Marxist-Leninists to resolve as are the other struggles

10. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

11. See the *Revolutionary Worker*, central organ of the RCP-USA, Oct. 1980.



What the International communist movement needs is not a general line, an expression of principles, but rather a programme that answers the questions raised by the current development of the revolutionary struggle. On the left: an Iranian demonstrator killed by the police in December 1978.

taking place within revolutionary situations in the world. And the problem that continues to stick in the craw is that we communists are still without a solid and reliable analysis of the social classes in those types of countries and the interrelationships between those classes. We do not have a strategy and tactics which are capable of serving as a guide in the revolutionary struggles being led by the proletariat and peoples in Iran, El Salvador, Palestine and elsewhere.

This problem exists just as much for Marxist-Leninists in the oppressed countries as it does for those in imperialist countries. There is disunity on the issues of how to build the party and how to work in the trade unions and mass movements. There is disagreement on what kinds of relationships should be established with the peasantry, with the local bourgeoisie and with other strata which may at one point or another take a stand in opposition to one or another imperialist power. Those are but a few of the divergences over fundamental practical matters that exist that prompt IN STRUGGLE! to say the communist movement needs a programme.

We can all agree at least in words that the struggle for unity will be pointless if it fails to address and come up with satisfactory answers to these practical problems. Yet we are really at loggerheads over the way to carry out the struggle to get at those answers.

The RCP feels that a good part of the solution to these problems lies within principles, Mao's principles of course, which are "the enrichment and development of Marxism-Leninism on many fronts".¹² It is around these principles that the "left" must be united as quickly as possible in order to carry out a fundamental demarcation between the Marxists and the revisionists. It is

precisely this approach to getting unity that we reject.

We reject the approach that results in making superficial demarcations because the path of the revolution in a country like Iran is not a question which will get resolved by repeating a list of principles. It will be resolved by carrying out a concrete analysis of the class forces facing one another and of the specific characteristics of imperialist domination in this type of country. It will be resolved by criticizing these views which, in the final analysis, serve the interests of classes other than the proletariat and the revolutionary struggle. Is the RCP seriously proposing that we can and should unite the communists of the world around a "general line of principles" which requires a priori the acceptance of the thesis that the class relationships in the oppressed countries have not changed since Mao analyzed them in China in 1930-40? Is it perhaps the application of just such a "line of principles" that has led the RCP to support the Iranian bourgeoisie in its war with Iraq? The RCP may well have rejected the "three worlds theory" in words (the theory which is utilized par excellence to justify support for each and every struggle waged by an oppressed country regardless of the specific class interests served by that struggle) but it has yet to reject it in practice.

The approach of uniting around a "general line of principles" is not a new one. The 1960 Statement signed by the Soviet, Chinese, Albanian and other parties was an attempt at that sort of unity. It proved incapable of bringing about solid unity (on this subject, see pages 42 to 49 of issue 21 of PROLETARIAN UNITY). We reject this approach because it has already proven

ineffective in ferreting out the real roots of revisionism and in enabling communists to break in their practice from viewpoints contrary to the interests of the proletariat.

The Letter in 25 points published by the Communist Party of China in 1963 (entitled **A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement**) also proved to have definite political limitations. Take but one example, the question of the path of the revolution in capitalist and imperialist countries. The Letter in 25 points does not draw a solid line of demarcation between the interests of the proletariat and those of the bourgeoisie, far from it: "In the capitalist countries which U.S. imperialism controls or is trying to control, the working class and the people should direct their attacks mainly against U.S. imperialism, but also against their own monopoly capitalists and other reactionary forces who are betraying the national interests."¹³

In Canada and a number of other imperialist countries, the revisionist programme during this period expressed pretty well exactly the same line. In reducing the struggle against imperialism to the struggle against a foreign superpower (in this instance U.S. imperialism), you run the risk of pushing a line which more than anything else serves the interests of sections of the local imperialist bourgeoisie, which see their development being threatened somewhat by American dominance. And with all due respect to the sensibilities of the RCP, we must point out that there has always been a coincidence of views on this major political question between Mao and the Party of Labour of Albania, as the latest book by Enver Hoxha on Eurocommunism demonstrates.

In short, we do not reject the RCP's approach because we reject communist principles (whether they are advanced by Marx, Lenin, Stalin or Mao). We reject it because we oppose the dogmatic and mechanical use of Marxism-Leninism which leads to hiding in a fog of principles and pretending that the problems have been solved because you cannot see them any more.

That, in our view, is the real basis of the differences between the RCP-USA and us.

12. *Revolution*, op. cit., p. 8.
13. "A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement", June 1963, point 10. Reprinted in *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, p. 18.

Documents for the criticism of revisionism

The peasantry and the Soviet State (1917-1932):

From class alliance to split

"Our Party relies on two classes and therefore its instability would be possible and its downfall inevitable if there were no agreement between those two classes." Lenin.

The following article in this issue's column comes from a collaborator who took the initiative of sending us the results of a particularly interesting study on the peasant question in the U.S.S.R. The article deals with a specific subject and concretely illustrates the difficult concrete conditions in which the Soviet communists had to build socialism in the early twentieth century. The article details one of these conditions, the weak development of the productive forces in the U.S.S.R., a country where peasants constituted the majority. The article should be considered as one more contribution to the continuing debate aimed at understanding the actions of communists by looking at the conditions in which they acted.

The observation has often been made that, contrary to what Marx expected, the first proletarian revolution broke out in an economically backward country where the majority of the population were peasants. That is why the issue of a worker-peasant alliance was so critically important in the Soviet Union. It is well worthwhile, then, to take a close look at what became of the worker-peasant alliance from 1917 on.

The mass movement (1917)

February 1917: Tsarism collapses. From this moment on, the peasants are looking ahead to an agrarian reform. In fact they do more than look and wait. Starting in March, some peasants, especially the very poor and those returning from the front, set fire to the big landlords' farms and seized the crops. The pent-up hatreds against the feudal lords burst out before the bourgeoisie had decided to do anything about agrarian reform.

In fact, the bourgeoisie never did do anything about it: Tchernov, the Socialist-Revolutionary Agriculture minister in Kerensky's government, declared that he would not tolerate any spontaneous action by the peasants before the Constituent Assembly met. Let those who contemplated any "extreme" actions be fairly warned.

The peasants had no intention of sitting and waiting. In August, there are 500 recorded cases of land-seizures by

force. In September, there are another 1000. The working class faces a clear choice: support the mass movement or let the government crush it. The Bolsheviks were the only ones to take a clear stand: take advantage of the situation to overthrow the provisional government. The working class thus enjoyed the support of the mass of peasants when it took power since, in the same blow, it was protecting the peasant movement and ensuring that the land would be redivided among the peasants. The first act of the new State was the adoption of a land decree.

The support of the peasantry for the new State was based on the ability of that State to carry out the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end, not its proclaimed objective of building socialism. The Bolshevik revolution meant the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the countryside.

Civil war, grain war (1918-21)

The situation was to change very rapidly. Civil war and famine swept the country. The front and the towns had to be supplied. That meant that the peasantry must agree to hand over all the grain beyond the amount necessary to meet its own needs. The situation of war and famine did not permit elaborate campaigns to be organized to explain all this. It was decided to send armed detachments of workers to requisition the grain. First the civil war,

"Documents for the criticism of revisionism" is the general title for the articles PROLETARIAN UNITY is publishing with the purpose of contributing to a better understanding of the successes and failures in the struggle for socialism so far.

The articles, accompanying comments and other texts in the series "Documents..." do not necessarily represent the point of view of our Organization, which is currently studying these questions. Our Organization will be debating these issues broadly in its own ranks, with its readers and friends and with other organizations and parties before coming to firm conclusions.

All our readers are therefore strongly invited to share their comments, points of view and criticisms with us. We will do our best to circulate all such contributions, either by publishing them or by summing up the basic points made in them.

A correct understanding of our struggle's history will inevitably contribute to its progress in the future. This history is rich in lessons that the proletariat must be allowed to put to its advantage today, free from the distortions that have all too often accompanied our understanding or interpretation of this history.

The editorial board
of PROLETARIAN UNITY

then the grain war.

The peasant thus had a dual attitude to the Soviet State. On the one hand, he could see that it was the only thing stopping the landlords from coming back to repossess the land. On the other, grain requisition made him hostile to the same State. The petty entrepreneur peasant saw the grain as the product of his labour. He should be setting the price of its sale. The Soviet State, caught in the grips of famine and war, had neither the time to talk nor the wherewithal to pay.

The peasants reacted in two ways to the detachments that came to requisition their grain. At first they hid their extra grain. Later, they simply did not produce more than what was necessary

1. Lenin, *Collected Works*, volume 36, p. 594, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966.

Demonstration to free Bob Avakian in Washington, D.C., in November 1979.





for the survival of their own family. This of course only made the famine worse.

This is how Russian peasants lived under the Czar. Peasant homes and boatwomen on the Sourga.

It is easy enough to see what kind of contradiction can develop between the peasantry and the working class. The Soviet State was first obliged to do what was necessary to supply the front and the towns and then later it had to collectivize agriculture. The first task was thus not carried out through persuasion but by military compulsion. This could not avoid undermining the accomplishment of the second task. The situation was not due to anyone's will or to the political line of the bolshevik party. It was the product of two objective factors: civil war and famine.

The contradictions between the working class and the peasants came out after the civil war over in a series of peasant uprisings. The Soviet State was in a critical situation. It had to redefine its relations with the peasantry.²

New Economic Policy (1921-27)

The redefinition of those relations was contained in the New Economic Policy (NEP). It had two goals: (a) to revive agricultural production so that the needs of the towns could be supplied; (b) to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance which had been shaken somewhat, by making concessions to the peasantry.

Concretely, Lenin proposed that grain requisitioning be replaced by a tax in kind. No longer would the State commandeer from the peasant all the grain above and beyond what he needed to just survive himself. A specified amount would be taken in the form of a tax and the peasant would be free to sell

the rest, either to the State or to private buyers. The development of commodity exchange and competition is obviously capitalist. But that is what was necessary to stimulate agriculture in the conditions of devastation that the Soviet Union faced.

The economic basis to the worker-peasant alliance was necessarily the exchange of grain for the industrial products needed by the peasants. If the Soviet State had been in a position to provide the peasant all the industrial products he wanted then it would have been able to buy up all that the peasants produced in exchange. But Soviet industry was not in a position to do this; hence the State made it legal for the peasant to engage in private exchange and thus develop competition and production for a market.³

The peasantry responded very well to the NEP. The taxes in kind were readily paid. Agricultural production improved markedly. In 1926-27, the pre-war level of production was exceeded by 6%. The one exception was cereals, which were slightly behind. There was a big jump as well in trade between the towns and the countryside.

At the same time, the inequalities in land holdings, amount of instruments of production to work it with, etc. led inevitably to increased social differentiation among the peasants. The middle peasants who mostly owed their origins to the 1917 land decree, were the biggest group. A Soviet source from that period estimates that in 1926, 67.5% of the peasants were middle peasants, 29.4% were poor peasants and 3.1% were rich peasants.⁴

Agricultural production developed

considerably in this period. But the socialist sector remained very small. In 1926-27, 96.7% of agricultural production was due to the private sector. The co-operative sector accounted for a mere 3.3%. Only 2.9% of the farm population was involved in collective production. In 1927, socialist agriculture was but a tiny island in the middle of a vast capitalist sea.⁵

The bad harvest crisis (1927-29)

In 1927-28, the harvest was not as good as it had been the year before. It was 73.6 million tons, down 2.8 million. The take from the tax in kind was thus expected to be a bit lower. In fact, there was a major drop. The crops and other

2. For more detailed analysis of Bolshevik agricultural policy between 1917 and 1922, see Robert Linhart, *Lénine, les paysans*, Taylor, Paris, Le Seuil, 1976.
3. On NEP, read volume 32 of Lenin's Collected Works, especially the pamphlet "The Tax in Kind", pp. 329-365.
4. This study, carried out by S.G. Stoumlin for the central bureau of statistics, was based on the classifications proposed by Lenin. The poor peasants are classified as those who do not get enough from the land to live off; they are obliged to do some work for pay. Middle peasants have a slight surplus which enables them to accumulate savings. Rich peasants have a constant and large surplus. They are thus able to accumulate savings and to exploit other strata by hiring on wage labour, engaging in money-lending at high rates, etc.
5. For more statistics on the countryside during the NEP, see Charles Bettelheim, *Class Struggles in the U.S.S.R., Second period: 1923-1930*, (vol. 2), MR Press, 1978.

products taken in from July to October 1927 were on a base of 3.74 million tons as compared to 3.96 million the year before, a slight drop. But in November and December, the reduction was 55%. It was a crisis situation.⁶ The supplying of sufficient food to the cities was far from assured. The whole industrialization plan and export trade were threatened.

The party's response was to adopt the "emergency measures" — the grain held by the kulaks (rich peasants) would be requisitioned. However, most of the grain was in fact held by the middle peasants since there were so many of them they accounted for the bulk of the production. To meet their quotas, the local cadres had no choice. They had to apply the emergency measures to not only the kulaks but to the middle peasants too. This was a violation of the principles upon which the NEP was based. The worker-peasant alliance was shaken. The Soviet State found itself faced with a new contradiction. It was still unable to provide the peasants with all the industrial products they needed, and thereby to pay for the whole crop. The peasants ended up holding on to some of what they produced. The State was obliged again to resort to compulsion to get it.⁷

The Central Committee of the Bolshevik party was aware of the errors that had been made with regard to the middle peasants. It decided to go back to the NEP policies again. But the relaxation of pressure led to a vertiginous plummeting in the yield going to the State. The party was forced to go back to a broad application of the emergency measures. The kulaks exploited the situation to the hilt and increased their political influence among the middle and poor peasants.⁸ The extremely weak presence of the communist party in the countryside made it all the easier for the kulaks to succeed in this.⁹ A vicious circle set in. The tension created by the implementation of the emergency measures made it more and more difficult to relax the pressure again and withdraw the measures. Emergency policy became regular policy. We are almost back to the requisition policy of the civil war period again.

Tension built up to a peak by the end of 1929. The newspaper *Pravda* reported that there had been some 2,000 different peasant demonstrations during that year in the Moscow region alone. Things could not continue on like that. The revolution was at a **great turning point**: the party decided to turn from the NEP to collectivization.

The great turning point (1929-30)

The emergency measures produced the same effects as the requisitions had during the civil war. The acreage that was planted diminished which made supplying the cities all the more difficult. The party concluded that the solution was rapid development of the socialist sector of agriculture.

The first stage of the farm collectivization movement was from June to October 1929. The percentage of peasant families on the collective farms went up from 3.9% to 7.5%. Most of those who joined the kolkholzes were poor peasants. It was essentially a voluntary movement.

In late 1929 and early 1930, administrative pressures started to make themselves fully felt. The Soviet government set a objective of 50% of agricultural production coming from the collectivized sector by the end of 1930. The expropriation of the kulaks began.

A number of documents indicate that this phase of collectivization was mainly forced.¹⁰ The bare statistics alone show this: in March of 1930, 59% of peasant families were on collective farms; by October of 1930, that percentage was down to 21.7%. What had happened in the meantime was that Stalin

In its first decree, the Soviet State distributed the land to the peasants. A peasant receiving title to his land.



Soviet peasants turn out to greet the first train in Siberia.

himself had condemned the forced way in which collectivization had been carried out in many places¹¹

March towards total collectivization (1930-32)

After Stalin's intervention, a decree was issued on March 15, 1930 which

6. *Ibid.*
7. According to Bettelheim, the shortage of industrial goods is due to errors made by the Bolshevik party. Those errors were connected to the line on industrialization promoted by the majority of the Central Committee.
8. This fact was confirmed by articles published by a number of Bolshevik leaders in 1928 and 1929.
9. The number of party members in the villages went from 0.26% of the total peasant population at the time of the 13th congress (1924) to 0.37% at the time of the 14th congress (1925). In 1929, there were only 242,000 party members in the rural areas out of a peasant population of 120 million.
10. Here is one example: in mid-February 1930, the delegates to the meeting on collectivization in the Sosnovski district received the order to collectivize the localities assigned them within five years. Those who failed to fulfill their quotas would be hauled before the judicial authorities within 24 hours. Cited in Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, p. 447 (in the French version).
11. Stalin, *Le vertige du succès, Oeuvres (Works)*, vol. 6.

Documents for the criticism of revisionism

enabled the peasants to decollectivize if they wished. Sanctions were taken against those who were found responsible for the excesses.

However, the party determined that the industrialization plan could simply not be carried out with only 21% of the peasant families in the collective sector. Hence, the 16th party congress, which took place in the summer of 1930, reaffirmed the necessity to carry out a widespread and rapid collectivization.¹²

The collectivization movement started up again in early 1931. By 1932, 61.5% of the peasant families were on collective farms. The victory of collectivization was assured. The movement continued on at a slower pace until the process was completed in 1937.

The price paid for collectivization was very high. The peasants who opposed collectivization slaughtered their own livestock. There was a dramatic drop in livestock production between 1929 and 1934: the horse herds were down 55%; cattle were off 40%; sheep dropped 66%; the number of pigs declined by 55%.¹³

Cereal production got worse also. The pre-war levels of production were exceeded by a small amount in 1930, which was an encouraging achievement. But it dropped the following year. It was even worse in 1932, dropping 15.6% below the 1926-27 level which had been

the best year of the NEP. The pre-war levels would not be reached again until 1948 in the case of cereals and 1953 for livestock.¹⁴

The immediate result of this was the reappearance of famine which had disappeared during the NEP period. Rationing was reintroduced between 1931 and 1935. Theft of grain became a capital offence. Social tension increased. The working class had increased in numbers in the last few years. Industrialization was directly threatened. The number one priority was to feed the workers in the cities. Historian Moishe Lewin estimates that one million peasants died of hunger between 1932 and 1935.

The consequences of collectivization

How was it that the worker-peasant alliance had come to the point of breaking down? The confluence of two factors must be taken into consideration to answer that question: the relative economic backwardness of the Soviet Union and the hostile imperialist encirclement.

If the Soviet Union was to avoid becoming a primarily agriculture and natural resource extraction based economy, which would have

condemned it very quickly to become dependent on the developed capitalist countries, it absolutely had to develop its industrial base. Surrounded by enemy forces, the Soviet Union could only rely on its own internal resources. Industrialization required more workers and the accumulation of foreign exchange gained from the export of agricultural products. The problem of supplying the cities became sharper and sharper because: (a) there were more and more workers in the cities; (b) the workers came from the countryside, thus there was a simultaneous reduction in the agricultural workforce; (c) a sizable chunk of agricultural production had to be exported.

It is highly unlikely that petty commodity production from individual plots could have met this constantly increasing demand. The Bolshevik party was certain it was impossible. Agriculture absolutely must be mechanized and

12. The report presented by Stalin to that congress can be found in volume 12 of his *Collected Works*.

13. Hélène Carrière d'Encausse, *Staline l'ordre par la terreur*, Paris, Flammarion, 1979, p. 32.

14. Bettelheim, *op. cit.*

Peasants ask to join a kolkhoz.



that could only be accomplished through collectivization.

The mass of middle peasants who had made all they had by taking advantage of the NEP policies were not particularly interested in abandoning the approach which had worked well enough for them. It must be understood that the middle peasants were small-time capitalists who were mainly interested in selling the commodities they produced. The almost complete absence of communists in the countryside made the prospects for carrying out a patient struggle to persuade the peasants slim indeed. The field was left pretty well clear for the kulaks to operate and they managed to exercise significant influence on the other peasants.

Thus when the drive for collectivization got under way, the majority of the peasantry opposed it. This is shown by the fact that the expropriation of the kulak measures which were supposed to be applied to rich peasants only were in fact applied to 15% of the peasants. Kulaks were only 4% of the peasant population. The scope of the repression does not mean that the State organs were striking out blindly. What it does mean is that the kulaks had considerable influence on other peasants and that the hostility of the middle peasants was very measurable indeed. By 1932, agriculture was in large part collectivized but the collective farms were filled with peasants hostile to the Soviet State. Many peasants slaughtered their livestock and worked as little as they could get away with. And although it happened less and less often with the passage of time, some even engaged in local rebellions and killed communists.

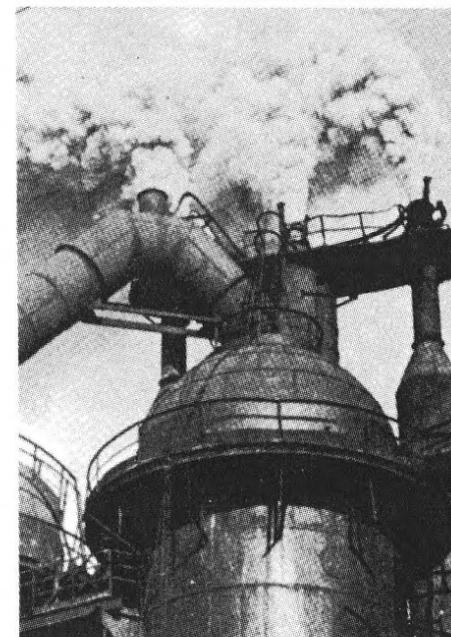
It can be said therefore that collectivization led to the breakdown of the worker-peasant alliance. This is not to say that the breakdown was the product of a conscious political decision either. The explanation lies rather in the factors that brought about the political decisions that were taken during this period. Those factors come down basically to the economic backwardness of the country, the dominant position of petty commodity production in the economy and hostile capitalist encirclement.

The immediate effect of the breakdown of the alliance of the two labouring classes was an important shrinkage in the basis of support for the Soviet State and Bolshevik party. Before collectivization, the party was basically concentrated in the towns but it enjoyed the support of the majority of peasants who were satisfied with the NEP. After

PROLETARIAN UNITY



For many years, the Soviet State was faced with the basic task of any society: feeding the population. Above: line-up in front of a food store.



The U.S.S.R. was industrialized in the space of a few years. Above: the Magnitogorsk steelworks in 1932.

collectivization, that support waned considerably which made it all the more difficult to recruit new party members in the countryside. The Soviet State had to do something to make up for this weakness. It had no choice but to develop a bureaucratic and extremely repressive State apparatus. Collectivized agriculture had to be supervised. Grain stealers had to be hunted down as did all those who speculated on the black market, etc. Those were all things that had to be done all right, but doing them

required a bureaucracy and repressive apparatus.

Conclusion

This brief analysis certainly does not answer all the questions that need to be answered about the history of the relationship of the peasants to the Soviet State. To begin with, a study of how collectivized agriculture developed in subsequent years need to be done. Further, such an analysis would have to be tied in with a look at the industrialization and concomitant growth of the Soviet working class. Finally, a closer look should be taken at the impact of balance of power between classes and countries on a world scale on the internal situation in the U.S.S.R.

It is already clear though that the backwardness of the Russian economy, of which the numerical preponderance of the peasantry is but one aspect, put the Soviet State up against a lot of contradictions from the very start which could not be resolved through sheer will power. Tragically, the very moment that the Soviet Union achieved the socialization of agriculture it found itself, to use Lenin's expression, shackled with the most elemental task of any society: fighting off famine.

A one-sided method in the study of revisionism

The following text consist of excerpts from a letter sent to the journal by one of our readers. It directly criticizes the point of view defended by Charles Gagnon in an article published in issue 212 of the paper IN STRUGGLE! entitled "For a materialist understanding of history". It is therefore a criticism addressed to the method put forward by Charles Gagnon which, in its analysis of the past failures of the struggle for socialism, emphasizes the importance of the weak development of the productive forces. Our reader thus deals directly with the link between the development of productive forces and the transformation of the social relations of production in building socialism.

... In issue no. 212 of the paper IN STRUGGLE!, a quotation from Marx's "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* is used to draw the following hypothesis: "This statement by Marx might be the key to a scientific explanation of the reverses in the struggle for socialism thusfar. He says that "no social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed." We say Marx's perception might be the key advisedly, because we do not wish to jump to any conclusions before the historical analysis has been properly made. Nevertheless, Marx's observation certainly shows clearly how to avoid falling into the idealist trap which we criticized above."

In PROLETARIAN UNITY (no. 15, p. 37), a longer quotation from the same passage is repeated: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the task itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."

From this, the editors of PROLETARIAN UNITY draw what I think are two very correct conclusions:

1. The conscious factor (the "ideological forms") intervenes in the revolu-

tionary process. It "fights out" the conflict between the productive forces and the relations of production. Marx does not reduce this to a passive and mechanical reflection of the economic base....

2. Marx observes that the material conditions of existence of the new society must already be present before the passage to a higher form of society is possible. However, Marx is very careful to add "or (be) at least in the process of formation". That qualification closes off another avenue for the vulgar materialists and revisionists. They would like nothing better than to be able to infer from Marxist theory that the socialist revolution can only take place in societies that are highly industrialized....

It is quite obvious that this statement from PROLETARIAN UNITY is somewhat in contradiction with the method presented in issue 212 of the paper IN STRUGGLE!. By trying to demarcate at all costs from idealism and famous men, one only succeeds in demarcating from a dialectical point of view. That the Organization intends to take into account material conditions cannot be denied; and it is something that the communist movement has not done to a great extent. However some are going to the other extreme and are victims of **one-sidedness and of the theory of productive forces....**

In Russia, the Mensheviks opposed the Bolsheviks on this very question. According to them, it was not realistic to advocate passing directly to socialism without going through a prolonged period of capitalist development. This is why they supported Kerensky against the Soviets. The same debate occurred between Mao and Liu Shaoqi. Lenin's theories, far from being proven wrong by history, have in fact been confirmed by more than twenty years of socialism in Russia. The revolutionarization of the relations of production in backward Russia had a striking effect, at both the political and economic levels. **The argument which says that "no social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed..." (no. 212) cannot apply to the era of imperialism. Since the beginning of the century, imperialism, far from stimulating productive forces, has in fact constituted an obstacle to their development. When we**

consider, for example, El Salvador or South Africa, can we say that the present social system (the dictatorship of imperialism) still has sufficient room in it for the productive forces to develop? The Salvadoran peasants have certainly not seen any signs of progress in it for them....

By attempting to explain everything solely in terms of economic development, one succeeds in explaining nothing. By attempting to demonstrate the objective limits to the achievement of socialism, one ends up ignoring the existence of revisionism and its influence on men's actions. In terms of class struggle, revisionism is the betrayal of the interests of the working class for the benefit of the ruling class. **Revisionism has a material basis. It corresponds to the interests of the bourgeoisie and its agent within the working class. Revisionism stems from the influence of the labour aristocracy which in turn is rooted in the material foundation of society.** To raise the question of revisionism is not to fall into the trap of idealism; to raise this question is to take into account that in the present era, the determining factor is the active role played by man in his efforts to revolutionarize capitalist relations of production. It is this active role which, since the beginning of the century, has been sabotaged ideologically and politically by revisionism.

I think that there is a link between the way the debate on the question of revisionism is being treated, through a method which is one-sided and leans towards the theory of productive forces, and the underestimation of the importance of the debate on the evaluation of Mao being developed in the communist movement. It is possible that my positions are not well articulated and rest on unproven statements, but I am convinced of the validity of my questions....

Le grand hiver by Ismail Kadare A history and a country unknown to many

What could be more interesting to a progressive to know what has happened in Albania, especially at the time of the break with Russia? Albania remains a mystery to many and that period is very rich in political implications that none could suspect at that time. These events are the basis on which Kadare's latest novel is built.

The story starts in October 1960. A month later would be held the Moscow Conference of the 81 communist and workers' parties, where the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA) was to attack the revisionist and imperialist line held by the Russian leadership. The novel ends in March of 1961, when diplomatic relations between Albania and Russia were broken off definitively. Through the numerous political events, we can observe the unfolding of the personal life of the novel's main character, an Albanian journalist who is acting as translator for the Conference. Shaken up by the events of the Conference and understanding the consequences this would have for Albania, he is so upset on returning that he goes so far as to call off his engagement. From then on, the parallel is established: the relations between the communist parties will deteriorate at the same pace as those between the fiancés.

At first, the reader is amazed by the literary vivacity of the book where so many characters mingle, thus creating a real mosaic of Albanian society. The main character is surrounded by many people, including the defeated bourgeois elements who dream of a return to the old order, the hesitant intellectuals, the veteran communists discussing the War of Liberation, the almost "Shakespearean" reception held in Moscow, the work of Enver Hoxha and the meetings of the PLA's Central Committee. The reader is drawn into this lively social panorama which is well-served by the breathtaking style of the author.

However, despite the high quality of the book there are some weaknesses that must be mentioned. The book deals mainly with the popular intelligentsia and, when the working class is mentioned, one has the impression it is done in a token way. It seems we are dealing with stereotypes more than human beings.

The second criticism that can be made concerns the role played by women. The novel presents women either as very harsh (like Dolores Ibarruri, a leader of the Spanish Communist Party, or the description made of the old bourgeois woman hoping for better times), or as mothers (the aunt of the main character during the war), or lovers (the fiancée or the sister). Never do the women play an important role (the only high ranking woman is expelled from the Political Bureau of the Central Committee) and their lives seemed to be closely linked to those of men whose role it is to participate in the struggles.

L'Affaire Marty The story of a man and a party

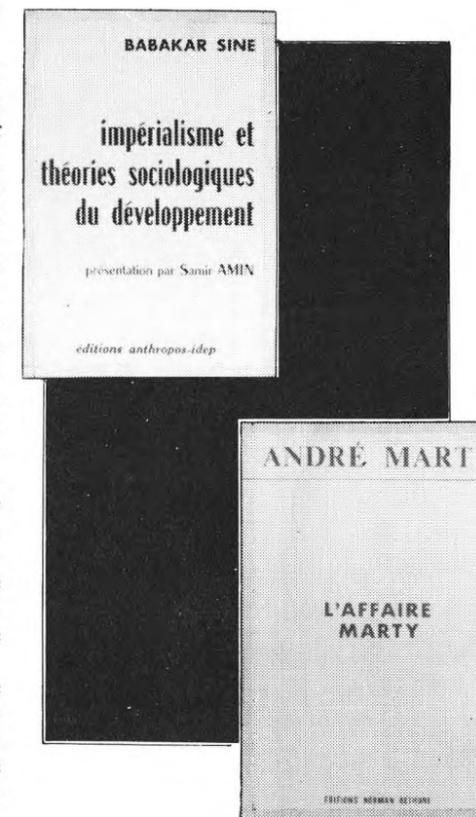
André Marty (1886-1956) was once a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party as well as one of the Comintern's secretaries. In his book, "L'Affaire Marty", he shows how the leadership organized his exclusion from the Party and how they went about developing a slander campaign against him.

The interest of the book lies in the fact that it shows concretely how a revolutionary party can fall into the swamp of open collaboration with the bourgeoisie. For example, the French Communist Party sabotaged the general strike of August 1953 to ensure that its united front with the bourgeoisie remain intact! Marty provides many historical facts to support his political analysis of the path followed by the Party up to the mid-1950s. He puts forward the call for the building of a communist international and explains its necessity in the political situation that prevailed in the 1950s. He demonstrates how "we must first base ourselves on the defence of the interests of the working class and that we must always uphold a revolutionary perspective". His life was that of a very courageous activist, completely devoted to the working class. Written in a very rigorous and agitational style, his book is thrilling...

Impérialisme et théories sociologiques du sous-développement by Babakar Sine Underdevelopment, the product of imperialism

Is there any validity to the point of view that underdeveloped countries are simply lagging behind, that they are at an early stage of their development and can be equated with Canada 100 years ago? Is their future progress to follow the same path as the one followed by the capitalist countries in the 19th and 20th centuries? And, if this is the case,

1. Ismail Kadare, *Le Grand Hiver*, Editions Fayard, Paris, 1978, 515 p. \$25.00 (published in French only).
2. André Marty, *L'Affaire Marty*, Editions Normand Bethune, Paris, 1972, (in French only)



There is also the very ardent Albanian nationalism: the novel does not clearly indicate that it is revisionism that is at the root of the imperialist aims of the Russian policy towards fiercely independent Albania. Those who only know about Albania through what they have read in *Albania Today* will be pleasantly surprised by the style of the novel as well as by the nature of the contradictions at work in Albanian society. This book is a must but, because of its price (\$25.00) I would suggest borrowing it from a friend or waiting for the paperback version to be published.

will we not succeed in overcoming underdevelopment by intensifying international "aid" through the export of capital, experts and technology?

These widespread theories are the target of the book **Impérialisme et théories sociologiques du sous-développement** by Babakar Sine¹, a Marxist sociologist from Senegal. According to Sine, imperialism is characterized today by the contradiction between the imperialist countries and the dominated ones, between the "centre" and the "periphery". Despite formal decolonization, the colonial economic structures have remained intact with the consequence that the former colonies are mainly **dependent** countries.

All significant economic activity is undertaken in the sole interest of the "centre", according to the position the imperialist countries want to occupy in the world markets (the production of peanuts, for example).

In other words, the limited development taking place in these countries does not constitute true economic development. Therefore, imperialism, whether it be with its capital or its so-called "aid", only perpetuates underdevelopment by reproducing its cause: dependence.

Thus, Babakar Sine shares the views of those who, like Samir Amin, who signed the preface, put forward the theory of "dependence". It is therefore quite clear for the author that underdevelopment does not originate from the persistence of pre-capitalist relations of production, constituting obstacles to development. On the contrary, these relations have disappeared or just retain the formal aspect of pre-capitalist relations. In fact, capitalist relations of productions are dominant in underdeveloped countries. In order to eliminate underdevelopment, the colonial structures must be abolished, imperialism must be thrown out and these countries must liberate themselves from the world market. To achieve this, it is also necessary to attack the bourgeoisie of the dependent countries; for the more developed this bourgeoisie is, the closer its ties with imperialism.

Unless the class struggle within the dependent countries themselves is developed, the anti-imperialist struggle can only degenerate, as the experience of decolonization in Africa has demonstrated.

Although difficult to read at times, this book nevertheless raises important questions.

1. Babakar Sine, *Impérialisme et théories sociologiques du sous-développement*, Editions Anthropos-Idep, Paris, 1975, 396 p.

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Education should be Dimensionless.
 That's what the federal government thinks.

Canadian Dimension's publisher — the Manitoba Foundation for Canadian Studies — has had its charitable registration revoked.
 The Reason? Revenue Canada claims Canadian Dimension's goal "is not to educate the reader in the sense of training the mind in matters of political science but to promote a particular ideology. Accordingly the purpose of the magazine does not come within the meaning of education in the charitable sense." For sixteen years Dimension has been an independent journal of fact and opinion, unaffiliated with any political party or organization, receiving no government or corporate funds. The Editorial Collective feels this is a crude act of censorship on the part of the federal government to deprive Canadians of a truly independent critical voice for these critical times.
 Dimension is appealing the Revenue Board decision but will need moral and financial support.
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Education has to have DIMENSION

Quebec has a new cultural magazine: **Offensives**

The battle for decent housing in Montreal; the conflict at the Animation and Recherche culturelle Department at the Université du Québec in Montreal; mental health in a community centre; the State and community organizations; youth; materialism and religion; commentaries on the Vancouver Folk Festival and folk music in general; criticisms of progressive books and records... A few of the subjects taken up in the first issue of **Offensives culturelles et communautaires**, a new cultural magazine recently published in Montreal, Quebec.

A few dozen cultural workers, community organizers, and activists in different milieux got together to produce this new magazine that aims to answer a need for information, exchange, and debate between different schools of thought, different community and cultural practices in the hope of possibly drawing this rich experience together.

The collective that produced **Offensives** did so by the "skin of their teeth" without any grands and hardly any publicity. The collective is particularly counting on subscriptions and donations to keep the new magazine alive. A subscription for a year (3 issues) is \$5.00. For your subscription, write to: **Offensives**, P.O. Box 127, Succursale Rosemont, Montreal H1X 3B6, Quebec.

THE SPARK and L'ETINCELLE bookstores

The Spark bookstore carries books, periodicals, newspapers, records and posters of the revolutionary and people's movement in Canada and throughout the world.

The Spark bookstore sells any document that can help make the history of societies known, understand today's social problems, and give perspectives for changes in society. These documents address many subjects: political economy, history, philosophy, culture, the national question, the oppression of women, education of children, current affairs in science, etc...

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FORUM INTERNATIONAL

International Forum is a vehicle of information and polemical debate. Its objective is to step up the struggle for the unity of Marxist-Leninists on an international level.

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Editorials, theoretical articles, in-depth analyses and information pieces, special reports, letters and book reviews — that's PROLETARIAN UNITY. We try to get below the surface and shed some light on the most important aspects of political and economic life in Canada and the world. Subscribing to PROLETARIAN UNITY guarantees that you will get a journal hot off the press every 3 months that lets a different voice be heard: the voice of the working class.

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IN STRUGGLE!

IN STRUGGLE! is the newspaper of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada EN LUTTE!/IN STRUGGLE!. It is published weekly in French and in English and is distributed across the country from Halifax to Vancouver. To publish a weekly newspaper, we greatly need the support of all Canadian workers and progressive people.

One of the most important forms of support is to subscribe to or sustain the newspaper, as this provides a stable income that we can count on to move forward.

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The fund-raising campaign

Needed: \$150,000

Did you know that the journal you are reading cost \$6,000 to print and distribute? Did you know that this amount does not even take into account all the hundreds of hours of work that activists have given to write, translate, prepare and correct the articles you read?

Well, when you take these facts and you add them to the costs of IN STRUGGLE!'s other publications, especially its weekly, it suddenly hits you square in the face that it is **impossible** to ensure the survival of all these publications without our readers' financial support.

Faced with mounting production costs, IN STRUGGLE! has decided to launch a fund-raising campaign. The goal set is \$150,000.

The last issues of PROLETARIAN UNITY are proof positive that IN STRUGGLE! is doing its utmost to debate and analyse history and the present situation in order to draw lessons from the victories and defeats of the struggle for socialism in our country and around the world. These debates will only be productive if they reach all those who, at one level or another, are involved in the daily struggle against oppression. The debates must not only reach these people but also encourage them to participate. This is why the journal has met with theatre groups who gave us their point of view on people's culture (see issue 22). This is also why this issue has an interview with activists from women's groups on the

struggle against the oppression of women and the role of communists in this struggle, as well as an article by some psychologists giving a critical evaluation of Piaget's works. The fact that more and more readers and collaborators are writing to the journal to express their criticisms and points of view is also a sign that IN STRUGGLE!'s work is bearing fruit.

PROLETARIAN UNITY has thus become a forum for debate, a tool of analysis that should be supported even by readers who have differences with IN STRUGGLE!'s programme and political line but who believe that the questions raised by the Organization should be broadly debated.

There are many ways to participate in the fund-raising campaign. If you don't have a subscription to the journal, why not take a sustaining subscription or give one as a gift? If you have already subscribed, why not send us a donation of \$5.00, \$10.00, \$15.00 or more? What about contacting teachers, intellectuals and progressive professionals to collect money so that PROLETARIAN UNITY and the rest of IN STRUGGLE!'s publications can continue to exist and become better and better?

Participate in all IN STRUGGLE!'s fund-raising activities! (Send all donations addressed to IN STRUGGLE!, care of The Spark or L'Étincelle bookstores — addresses on the back of this page).