

# **INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN**

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## **DOCUMENTS FROM THE LSA/LSO**

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# SPLITTERS FROM CANADIAN SECTION JOIN REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST GROUP

## Summary of the Events

On October 4, 1973, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT) wrote the Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action/ Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO), Canadian section of the Fourth International, announcing its split from the section. The RCT, which had been supported by less than 15 percent of the LSA/LSO membership, walked out of the Fourth International to join the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG), a small organization claiming to be Trotskyist which had been conducting a unity maneuver with the Canadian section.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency's walkout was the third from the section in the last 15 months, completing the desertion of the forces who constituted themselves in March 1972 as the "Unified Minority Tendency."

The RCT walked out only six months after a convention of the Canadian section, where 85 percent of the delegates rejected its positions. The split occurred while the oral discussion in the branches preparatory to the coming world congress was in progress, and six weeks before the pre-world congress convention of the Canadian section.

The organizers of the carefully-prepared and planned walk-out gave no reason for their action except for a reference to "events in Winnipeg."

What happened in Winnipeg was that the majority leadership of the branch refused to carry out instructions of the LSA/LSO Political Committee to build a public meeting there on September 19 where a member of the Political Committee would speak on the events in Chile. Furthermore, the Winnipeg branch leadership publicly attacked the meeting. The majority of branch members, all members of the RCT, endorsed these actions. At their next meeting they proceeded to suspend the branch members who had carried out the Political Committee's instructions to build the meeting.

Six Winnipeg branch members were given the opportunity to avoid harsh disciplinary action by a trial committee, by agreeing to accept the discipline of the elected bodies of the section and appeal to the coming convention. Instead, they reaffirmed to the trial committee that they rejected the right of the Political Bureau to decide to organize a public meeting of the section in Winnipeg. They were therefore expelled or suspended from the LSA/LSO on October 1 by a trial committee.

Four other branch members, who without giving cause did not appear before the trial committee, were suspended pending their making contact with the trial committee.

On October 4, before the Political Committee could meet to hear a report of the trial committee and review its findings, the RCT resigned from the section. The national convention of the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG) took place October 5-8. Leaders of the former RCT attended it and accepted positions on the RMG Central Committee that was elected there. On October 13, the former members of the RCT informed the LSA/LSO that they were "commencing" fusion negotiations with the RMG. Two days later the LSA/LSO received a letter from the "unified political committee" of the RMG

declaring that the fusion had taken place.

### The Line of the Fourth International Was Not an Issue

RCT steering committee members told LSA/LSO Political Committee representatives on October 10 that the real reason for their action was the expulsion of RCT members for "presenting the line of the Fourth International."

There is no basis for this charge. No member of the Canadian section has ever been charged or disciplined for presenting the line of the Fourth International.

The events in Winnipeg concerned quite another issue. The RCT members rejected the authority of the elected political leadership of the LSA/LSO, carried through a public split in the Winnipeg branch, and used their majority in the branch to suspend every single branch member who accepted the authority of the Political Committee.

The one other case in Winnipeg where the Political Committee took disciplinary action arose when another RCT member read excerpts from the internal discussion bulletin of the Fourth International to a public forum -- a breach of discipline that was completely premeditated, as the comrade admitted.

Nothing in the charges against any of the RCT members related to the political line of the Fourth International, or, for that matter, to the political line of the Canadian section or the political line of the RCT.

### How it Began -- The Campaign Against the Coup in Chile

The RCT and its predecessors held a majority in the Winnipeg branch of the LSA/LSO, and in the Winnipeg Young Socialists, from August 1972 to October 1973. A minority within both organizations in Winnipeg supported the majority leadership of the LSA/LSO, and the positions of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in the world movement. The internal life of the Winnipeg LSA was not without friction and crises. These were resolved, through the intervention of the Political Committee, without resort to disciplinary actions, for a year following the establishment of the RCT majority in Winnipeg.

The Winnipeg branch split publicly on September 19, 1973. The split did not occur over the right of RCT members to "present the line of the Fourth International." The issue was the right of the Political Committee to organize a public meeting within Winnipeg's city limits.

The Political Bureau, responsible for the implementation of Political Committee decisions, scheduled a meeting in Winnipeg for a spokesperson of the Political Committee on September 19, as part of an emergency country-wide campaign of defense actions and meetings, decided upon by the Political Committee in response to the coup in Chile. The scheduled speaker was Al Cappe, a member of the Political Bureau and executive secretary of the YS/LJS.

The RCT majority leadership in the Winnipeg branch refused to organize the meeting decided by the elected central leadership -- an unprecedented defiance of the authority of the Political Committee. It announced that instead it was going to hold a different meeting on Chile, to be addressed by Brett Smiley, a Toronto

member of the RCT. These plans, it said, made it impossible to organize the meeting scheduled by the Political Bureau.

The Political Bureau contacted the Winnipeg executive a second time to insist that it carry out the decision to organize the September 19 public meeting on Chile with Cappe as speaker. Since the planned meeting with Smiley had been posed by Winnipeg RCT leaders as the barrier to organizing the meeting proposed by the central leadership, the Bureau instructed the Winnipeg branch to cancel the Smiley meeting, or reschedule it in a context which would not interfere with carrying out the decision of the Political Committee. The Winnipeg RCT leadership refused again to hold the Cappe meeting. The meeting was organized by five comrades in the branch who accepted the authority of the Political Bureau whether they agreed with its decision or not.

On September 19 Murray Smith, the Winnipeg branch organizer, spoke at the public meeting organized in accordance with the decision of the Political Committee. He disassociated the majority of the members of the section in Winnipeg from the meeting. It was not a meeting of the Winnipeg LSA, he said, it was organized by a minority faction within the branch. The real meeting of the Winnipeg LSA would take place two days later -- the meeting where Brett Smiley was to speak.

At a meeting of the Winnipeg branch held that evening, the RCT majority voted to adopt an executive report that rejected the authority of the Political Bureau to organize the Cappe meeting. It voted to proceed with the meeting for Brett Smiley. This meeting had now been publicly defined by the branch organizers as being rival to the one organized by the elected central leadership, and as a meeting organized by a rival grouping within the Winnipeg branch.

Three days after the Smiley forum the Winnipeg branch received charges laid against the five comrades in the branch who had built the meeting under Political Committee instructions. They were charged with a breach of branch discipline for carrying out the instructions of the elected central leadership in building the Chile campaign. Without waiting for a hearing or a trial on the charges, the branch majority suspended these five members from membership in the LSA/LSO.

### Is the Political Committee Empowered to Organize a Public Meeting?

Charges relating to these events were laid before the Political Committee against ten members of the Winnipeg branch. The Political Committee sent a subcommittee to Winnipeg to conduct trials on these charges and to take appropriate action.

The Canadian section's leadership made every effort to find a solution to the dispute that would avoid disciplinary measures. Before the trial committee held its hearing in Winnipeg, Art Young, organizational secretary of the LSA/LSO, phoned Comrade Ernest Mandel, one of the two members of the IEC Majority Tendency on the United Secretariat Parity Commission, to inform him of the events in Winnipeg.

Comrade Mandel said this was the first he had heard about this dispute.

Comrade Young urged Comrade Mandel to contact Walter Davis, a member of the LSA/LSO Political Committee who was a leader of

the RCT, with a view to helping overcome the crisis. Comrade Mandel indicated that he would do this.

The PC subcommittee conducting the trial posed questions to the six, to enable them to pull back from their stance of defiance of the authority of the Political Bureau to organize a public meeting in Winnipeg, and thus open the door to a resolution of the crisis without disciplinary action.

Only six of the charged members attended the trial. They were asked by the trial committee whether they accepted "that the members of the Winnipeg branch, when informed of the (Political Bureau's) decision to build the Chile meeting with Al Cappe as speaker on September 19, were obliged to carry out this decision." All six answered, "no." All six still rejected the authority of the elected central leadership of the LSA/LSO. For this reason, and for this reason alone, five of the accused were expelled from the LSA/LSO, and a sixth, a Central Committee member, was suspended.

Four other accused members failed on two occasions to appear before the trial body, without giving any reason. They were suspended from the LSA/LSO, pending another effort to have them contact the trial body.

RCT members of the Winnipeg branch refused to accept the authority of the Political Bureau to organize a public meeting in Winnipeg. RCT members split the branch over this question. They publicly attacked the meeting organized by the Political Committee, announced plans for a rival meeting, and defied the authority of the elected leadership of the section in proceeding with this meeting. They then suspended from membership and from all political activity those members who accepted the Political Committee's authority. They consummated the split both publicly and internally. At the trial, the accused members reaffirmed their defiance of the authority of the Political Committee. They thus left the leadership no alternative but disciplinary action.

#### Questions of Political Line Were Not at Issue

A great deal of argument took place in the Winnipeg branch around the conflicting political lines on Chile presented by the speech of Cappe and the speech by Smiley. The organizers of both meetings claim to have correctly presented the Fourth International's position on Chile. Both sides stated that their positions rested on the public statements of the Fourth International, interpreted in the light of changes in circumstances.

The trial committee ruled that this dispute was not relevant to the disciplinary charges against Winnipeg RCT members. "The comrades are not charged with presenting the line of the Fourth International," the trial committee report explained. "Nor are they charged with violating the line of the Canadian section. Therefore the question of the political line of the meetings on Chile addressed by Al Cappe and Brett Smiley is not relevant to the issue before us. Whether the accused comrades violated the political line of the Canadian section in advancing what they consider to be the 'line of the Fourth International' is not relevant to this case, and is not a factor in our decision."

#### Charges Relating to Political Line were Dropped

Six weeks earlier, another forum in Winnipeg had led to a disciplinary case. It ultimately led to the expulsion of an RCT member,

Michael Tregobov. But here too, the question of "advancing the political line of the Fourth International" was not a factor in the expulsion.

Michael Tregobov spoke to a public meeting on August 16 on the question of Latin America. He informed the Political Committee before the meeting, and confirmed again after the meeting, that he had decided to present a line contrary to the decisions of the Canadian section's convention, to present a line which he considered to be "the line of the Fourth International." However, instead of presenting the public positions of the Fourth International, he read long excerpts from an internal document of the Fourth International -- "Bolivia, Results and Perspectives" -- submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency to the internal bulletin for the pre-world congress discussion and consideration.

Charges were laid against Tregobov for violation of the discipline of the section and for public presentation of an internal document.

On August 30, fourteen Winnipeg RCT members declared in a written statement submitted to the Political Committee that in planning the Tregobov forum, they had decided "consciously not to present the line of the Canadian section on Latin America, as it is articulated in Labor Challenge and convention resolutions," and thereby "to violate the section's discipline." (Emphasis in original) They were charged with a violation of the discipline of the section.

The Political Committee delayed a decision on these charges for several weeks, hoping that a political solution could be found. In addition to repeated discussions in the Political Committee, the Canadian representative on the United Secretariat discussed this problem in September with Comrade Mandel.

Comrade Mandel was informed of the Canadian leadership's concern over the matter, and of its desire to resolve it without resort to disciplinary action. He was asked to speak to the comrades in Canada and communicate to them any suggestions he might think helpful.

On September 30 the Political Committee dropped the charges against the 14 signers of the August 30 statement of the branch majority, and the charge against Tregobov on the question of violating the line of the section -- let alone being disciplined for presenting the line of the Fourth International.

Yet one charge against Tregobov remained. On his own authority, or in consultation with some others, Tregobov had arrogated the authority to present publicly an internal document of the Fourth International. This action of presenting the dispute inside the Fourth International to persons outside the ranks of our world party, occurred at a public forum where Tregobov was speaking in the name of the LSA/LSO.

The Political Committee felt that it was its responsibility to call a halt to such irresponsible actions which threatened the ability of the entire movement to pursue its internal discussion in a disciplined manner. Authoritative elected bodies of the Fourth International can vote to make internal material public. Individuals cannot take this upon themselves or no discussion can remain internal.

This was the issue that had to be resolved in the Tregobov case. It could be solved quite simply, through a statement by Tregobov that he would not repeat in the future such an action. No such state-

ment was ever made. The Political Committee was left with no choice but to expel him.

### The Political Committee Asks the RCT To Reconsider Its Course

The RCT split letter of October 4 stated that "we are terminating all financial commitments to the League for Socialist Action," that is, to the Canadian section of the Fourth International. It thus repudiated the conditions of membership in the LSA/LSO as determined by the LSA/LSO constitution, which specifies that regular payment of dues is a condition of membership in the section (Article VII, Section 1).

In its letter the RCT further specified that it "will no longer respect the authority or actions of the Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action." The Political Committee is defined by the LSA/LSO constitution as the central leadership body of the section, acting with the authority of the Central Committee between Central Committee meetings.

The letter made clear that the RCT's members no longer accepted the constitution of the section. They no longer accepted the conditions of membership in the LSA/LSO.

Despite the categorical terms of the RCT's letter of resignation, the Political Committee decided, after weighing its contents, to request discussions with representatives of the RCT. The Political Committee wished to make a final attempt to reach a resolution of the organizational conflicts with the RCT, and to press the RCT once more to change its split course. It also wanted to determine whether the RCT's decision to split was final and irrevocable, and whether the RCT had discussed its decision with the leaders of its international tendency.

Walter Davis, named by the October 4 letter as "coordinator" of the RCT, agreed to meet with representatives of the Political Committee on October 9.

The PC representatives asked Davis whether the RCT letter had been discussed with the international leadership of the IEC Majority Tendency. Davis replied that he had discussed it with Comrade Vergeat. He had not been able to contact Comrade Mandel, he said. It was agreed to have another meeting the following day, to permit the RCT to attempt once more to contact Comrade Mandel, and to permit the RCT Steering Committee to give further consideration to its move.

On October 10, three members of the RCT Steering Committee met with three representatives of the LSA/LSO Political Committee. The RCT representatives repeated the positions taken by Walter Davis the previous day. They had nothing new to add.

The LSA/LSO representatives asked if the RCT could name any specific actions which the LSA/LSO could take which would help resolve the crisis. Davis said that the LSA/LSO should stop using the section's resources for factional purposes, and should readmit the expelled members of the RCT in Winnipeg.

The LSA/LSO representatives said they believed that the RCT's grievance on the question of use of the movement's resources was based on a misunderstanding, since the movement's funds had not been and would not be used for factional purposes. This misunderstanding could easily be resolved. As for Winnipeg, the Political Committee desired now as before to



work out a political solution to the crisis there. In this framework the problems posed by disciplinary actions could be overcome. Davis of the RCT said that he agreed that a solution to the Winnipeg crisis could probably be worked out on paper. But, he said bluntly, the RCT in Winnipeg would prove unable to respect the agreement.

The LSA/LSO Political Committee representatives asked the RCT under what conditions it would consider retaining membership in the LSA/LSO. The RCT said that their condition was the resignation from the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction by the leaders of the Canadian section.

The LSA/LSO asked if the RCT would recognize the authority of a plenum of the LSA/LSO Central Committee, or of an LSA/LSO convention. The RCT representatives said no, not unless the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction supporters resigned from the faction.

The RCT representatives said that the RCT would operate as a "public faction," and that it would not be under the discipline of the LSA/LSO. They said it had not yet been decided under what name they would function publicly.

The LSA/LSO representatives asked if the RCT had any proposals on how to overcome the crisis. Davis replied that there was nothing the RCT could do.

The PC representatives did not know at the time that the persons with whom they were speaking had already joined an opponent organization and been elected to its central committee. They were representatives not of the RCT - it had ceased to exist - but of the Revolutionary Marxist Group.

#### The "RCF" -- Faction for a Day

In its October 4 letter announcing the RCT walkout, the RCT also renamed itself the "Revolutionary Communist Faction" (RCF).

This faction lasted only one day. On October 5, the members of the "RCF" joined the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG), an opponent of the Canadian section, at the RMG's national convention. The convention elected leaders of the RCT, including Walter Davis, to the RMG Central Committee.

Davis informed the Political Committee that he had no time to meet with its representatives between October 5 and October 8 (when the RMG convention was taking place).

It was not until one week later that the "RCF" formally informed the LSA/LSO that they had joined the RMG. During this week, the leadership of the Canadian section, not knowing they had already joined the RMG, had made every effort to get the "RCF" to reconsider its split declaration.

The RMG, which claims to be Trotskyist, has carried out a unity maneuver with the Canadian section over the past year. During this time, it concentrated its efforts, not towards achieving unity in action with the section in interventions in the class struggle, but towards attacking the section and encouraging splits from its ranks.

Based on its experience with the RMG, the Canadian sec-

tion came to the conclusion that this grouping was clearly operating as an opponent of the section. Any fusion without positive common experience would be an unprincipled adventure.

The RMG's unity maneuver scored its first success during June 1973, when 25 members and supporters of the RCT deserted the Canadian section and its sympathizing youth organization to join the RMG. In a letter to the LSA/LSO, the RMG justified the splitters' action. Their "unity" proposal was thus revealed as a crude raiding operation the aim of which was to chip away members from the Canadian section and recruit them to the RMG. The raid achieved its second victory in October, as the remaining members split from the Canadian section to join the RMG.

### A Ban on Factions?

The RCT leaders had explained that they were not interested in attempting to resolve the real problems facing the Canadian section, such as the crisis of the Winnipeg branch. Even if other demands were met they still insisted that their precondition for functioning loyally within the movement was the resignation of the majority of the leaders of the LSA/LSO from the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

The majority of members of the Political Committee support the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction in the Fourth International. They reserve the right to caucus, and discuss questions that fall within the framework of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction program. But this fact hardly justifies a split.

The RCT claims that the adherence of a majority of Political Committee members to the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, and their private meetings to discuss implementation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction's program, "objectively dissolved" the PC by converting it into the leadership of a faction.

This is nonsense. When tendencies or factions exist it is necessary and normal that their members in a leadership body meet in private caucus periodically for discussion. Among other things, it facilitates the normal functioning of the leadership body. Both sides were doing this in Canada. Regular PC meetings were held; Davis attended and voted, attesting to their authority. A request for a PC meeting by Davis or any other member of the PC was always honored.

The further charge was made that the LSA/LSO had been converted into a tool of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction (LTF) through the use of resources of the movement for the LTF. There is no basis for such a charge. Funds of the Canadian section have never been used for factional purposes. Every expenditure of funds was authorized and open to the scrutiny or challenge of members of the PC (including Walter Davis) and members of the Control Commission.

If the RCT believed the Political Committee to be misusing the movement's resources for factional purposes, its proper course would have been to press its case with the appropriate leading bodies of the movement.

The Control Commission of the LSA/LSO received a letter

from Walter Davis on September 7, where he said he was submitting disciplinary charges to the Control Commission against the Political Committee majority on a number of questions. But he submitted no charges. Instead of asking the Control Commission to take action -- a body he had voted to elect and which contains a member of the IEC -- he walked out of the section.

The RCT's attacks concerning private caucus meetings and alleged diversion of funds are only a smokescreen, as is the demand that leaders of the LSA/LSO must resign from the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The smokescreen was aimed at covering up the preparations for a split and justifying it after the walk-out and adherence to an opponent grouping.

The RCT presented the LSA/LSO with an anti-Leninist ultimatum when it insisted that the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction dissolve: an ultimatum against the constitution of the LSA/LSO; against the statutes of the Fourth International; against the rights of every Trotskyist.

### Three Walkouts

The RCT's resignation is the third walkout in 15 months from the Canadian section by IEC Majority Tendency supporters.

The process began in July 1972, a month after the opening of a preconvention discussion in the Canadian section. Unwilling to wait for the verdict of the membership in convention on their views, the ten adherents of a grouping around Michel Mill in Montreal walked out. Three were members of the section; seven were members of its sympathizing youth organization, the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes. Their split has been condemned by the leadership of both the majority and minority tendencies within the International Executive Committee.

The preconvention discussion lasted 11 months. Over 90 written contributions by LSA/LSO members were printed for circulation to the membership. For almost a year, LSA/LSO branch meetings debated the disputed issues. The discussion resulted in a clear majority decision on all the main disputed issues. When the convention assembled in April 1973, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency won the votes of only 15 percent of the members, and received 15 percent of the votes of convention delegates.

At the close of the convention, RCT spokespersons pledged that the RCT would abide by convention decisions, and accept the authority of the leadership elected by the convention. The convention was accepted by all tendencies as a democratic expression of the decision of the LSA/LSO membership. RCT delegates joined in the unanimous election of the Central Committee.

Six weeks after the convention a second split began. Between June 3 and July 3, 1973, five members of the LSA/LSO and 21 members of the YS/LJS resigned and joined the RMG. The main justification they gave for their split was that they disagreed with the decision of the LSA/LSO convention on the need for a principled basis of unity with the RMG before any fusion should take place.

Their split was unanimously condemned by the United Secretariat, which reasserted the need for minorities to respect majority decisions of the section, and called on those who resigned to reverse their course and rejoin the section on this principled basis.

The October 4 letter of the RCT marks the third and culminating walkout. Twenty-eight members of the section, and one remaining RCT supporter in the youth organization, were listed as adhering to the RCT's split letter.

The decision of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency members to leave the Canadian section and join the RMG has been accompanied by a number of charges. The majority leadership is accused of operating in a factional manner. It is accused of not correctly carrying out the decisions of the Fourth International. It is accused of being wrong in insisting on the necessity for a principled basis of unity with groups like the RMG. It is accused of having made errors with regard to discipline in Winnipeg. No doubt further accusations will be thought up.

All these charges have one feature in common: they do not justify a split.

The Revolutionary Communist Tendency has a right to its opinions on these and other questions. The obligation of its members, as the United Secretariat said in reference to the second of the three walkouts, was "to recognize majority decisions, trying to change them within the normal limits of democratic centralism." The RCT refused to accept the authority of the elected leadership bodies of the Canadian section. It refused to recognize even their authority to organize a public meeting on Chile. It refused to wait for a convention of the section only six weeks away.

Drawing the logical conclusion from its own actions, it deserted the Canadian section of the Fourth International, thereby walking out of the Fourth International.

Political Bureau, LSA/LSO  
October 19, 1973

## APPENDIX I

### Chronology of Key Events

- April 20-24, 1973: Convention of the LSA/LSO, Canadian section of the Fourth International, and election of Central Committee. Unanimously accepted as authoritative.
- June 3 - July 3: Split of five groups of RCT members and supporters from the Canadian section and its youth organization -- 25 in all.
- August 16: Public presentation of an internal document at a Winnipeg LSA meeting.
- August 30: Statement of 14 Winnipeg LSA members on August 16 forum.
- September 13: Political Committee decides on campaign on Chile.
- September 16: Bureau informs Winnipeg executive of planned Chile meeting in Winnipeg.
- September 19: Public meeting on Chile in Winnipeg organized by the Political Bureau, with Al Cappe of PC as speaker.
- September 19: Winnipeg branch meeting.
- September 21: Rival meeting on Chile, in Winnipeg, with Brett Smiley as speaker.
- September 24: Winnipeg branch suspends five members who built September 19 meeting.
- September 30 -  
October 1: Political Committee trial subcommittee meets in Winnipeg.
- October 4: Letter of the RCT resigning from the LSA/LSO.
- October 5-8: RMG convention. RCT members secretly attend RMG convention. RCT leaders secretly accept posts on RMG Central Committee.
- October 9-10: Political Committee discussion with RCT steering committee.
- October 13: "RCF" announces "beginning" of fusion negotiations with RMG.
- October 15: RMG announces results of raiding operation.

APPENDIX II

The RCT's Letter of Resignation

October 4, 1973

Dear Comrades of the LSA Political Committee:

Events in Winnipeg have confirmed our suspicions that previous actions of the Political Committee were leading in a direction of serious consequences.

Those events have led us to decide that we have no choice but to dissolve the Revolutionary Communist Tendency and reconstitute ourselves as the Revolutionary Communist Faction.

We will no longer respect the authority or actions of the Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action.

We also wish to inform you that we are terminating all financial commitments to the LSA and will submit future financial commitments directly to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The Political Committee of the LSA has, by the decisions of its former majority, dissolved itself as a cross-section leadership and now functions as a leadership of a faction.

We will submit further documentation on this and related matters to the LSA and to the United Secretariat.

Communist greetings,

s/Walter Davis  
Coordinator of the RCF

cc: USFI

APPENDIX III

The RCT "Fuses" With the RMG

October 15, 1973

Comrades:

We wish to inform the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction of the Canadian Section that the Revolutionary Communist Faction and the Revolutionary Marxist Group have fused.

The new formation will continue to be called the Revolutionary Marxist Group.

Communist greetings,  
s/Walter Davis,  
for the Unified Political  
Committee

## OPEN LETTER FROM LEADERS OF THE SPLIT

October 15, 1973

To members of the LSA and copies to all sections of the Fourth International:

Comrades:

One week ago, the so-called Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action defined the formation of the Revolutionary Communist Faction to be a statement of split. We wish to resolve any confusion in the minds of comrades and state unequivocally that we did not and will not resign from the Canadian section. At the Toronto LSA Metro Assembly yesterday, members of the Revolutionary Communist Faction were physically excluded from an internal meeting yet we have neither resigned nor been expelled.

Sometime ago, the majority of the Political Committee decided to transform itself into the "Leninist-Trotskyist" faction of the LSA and to "turn over all" the resources and cadre of the section" to the international faction which they supported. The one RCTer on the Political Committee challenged this action. While we recognize the right of comrades to constitute a faction, we do not accept that that faction has the right to use the resources of the section in a factional manner in the Fourth International simply on the basis that a particular faction happens to coincide with the majority of the central leading body of the section. No decision of the convention nor a plenum of the Central Committee authorized the PC majority to take such steps. The PC majority faction constituted itself formally on international issues yet it took unified positions on national issues and integrated itself and its decisions into the very life of the organization. It caucused outside of the PC on all issues and carried unified positions in the PC on all questions. This faction caucus, in fact, smothered the differences within its own numbers in order to impose its decisions on the political committee. The PC became nothing more than a body to formalize the decisions of a faction.

It is our view that the Political Committee of the Canadian section no longer exists and that a faction which has constituted itself only on the level of the Central Committee has overturned the elected leadership and norms of the section. The elements that made up the Political Committee are now divided into two factions. We have no reason at this point to believe that the Central Committee will not be similarly liquidated by the PC majority faction especially if members of the RCF (elected as CCers by unanimous vote of convention) are excluded from the LTF plenum.

At the same meeting where the majority of the Political Committee constituted itself as a faction it laid charges of disloyalty against Michael T. of the Winnipeg branch for "carrying the majority line of the Ninth World Congress and therefore in direct violation of the line of the section". Walter D. challenged the validity of such charges, called for a Control Commission investigation and/ or minority representation on the investigative body established by the PC. The PC majority defeated him on every point and then proceeded to follow disciplinary actions completely outside of the norms of the section. The RCF restates that as Walter indicated on the former Political Committee we do not recognize the disciplinary actions carried out by one faction in a witchhunt against another.

Before the PC majority faction had reached any decision on the Winnipeg disciplinary cases (which had been extended to include charges against members of both tendencies in the Winnipeg branch), the PC majority supporters in Winnipeg established a separate headquarters and publically split the section along their preconceived notion of how the events would unfold. RCT members, the majority of the branch and the leadership of the branch, were subsequently attacked publically by the PC majority faction supporters and by PCer Al Cappe as being "on their way out of the Fourth International". Nothing justified such actions, comrades.

The PC majority faction representatives investigating charges in Winnipeg violated every norm in the hearings in Winnipeg and decided to expel comrades after a hurried "Kangaroo court". Phil C., John R., Al Cappe, and Joan N. did not take up any of the charges against their supporters in Winnipeg and, in fact, overturned interim disciplinary action without reviewing any of the evidence. The Revolutionary Communist Faction does not accept that any of the expulsions in Winnipeg were valid especially given they were completely the action of a faction in the leadership.

The Winnipeg expulsions and now the reading out of the Revolutionary Communist Faction complete a process launched by the PC majority at the LSA convention. At that time, the PC majority began to operate as an unprincipled bloc whose sole purpose was to drive the Revolutionary Communist Tendency out of the section. Later, with the declaration of a formal faction, it defined itself as a challenge to the elected international leadership. Having realized that its organizational offensive during the summer and early fall were inadequate to forcing the RCT out, the PC majority faction turned to less indirect means of resolving the RCT problem. The RCT had won new supporters to its positions and had lost only six members who resigned from the section since the LSA convention. Meanwhile



the supporters of the PC majority began to drop away in increasing numbers in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal with no significant new recruitment to offset the losses. The suppressed letter of resignation of ----, former CC member, and similar resignations in Montreal and Vancouver (such as another leading post office militant) stand in stark contrast to the relatively minor attrition of the RCT. The atmosphere inside of the LSA is such that criticism is no longer considered valid and individuals with critical minds are recurrently attacked in the most ludicrous and personalist forms. This is the reality faced by the LSA as it approaches the Tenth World Congress and it is a direct result of one year of escalating sectarian hostility to militants open to our ideas and the blind factional recruitment followed by the leadership over the past period. It is also very much a reaction to the growing and obvious influence of the pro-international majority Revolutionary Marxist Group whose presence as an independent Trotskyist force increasingly poses problems for the leadership. The RMG's press now represents a most significant pole in left thinking and the group's level of intervention far and away exceeds that of the LSA and the barely existent Young Socialists. How has the leadership responded to the RMG? As a fraternal group wanted in the Fourth International? As a welcome addition to Trotskyist forces in Canada? No, the leadership of the PC majority faction has engaged in hysterical smear campaigns most notably in the press. The comrades in other sections may not grasp that there are little grounds for the smear unless, of course, they read the Old Mole which has never returned the Labor Challenge's apolitical abuse. In external work, the LSA has seen fit not to engage in collaboration but rather sectarian maneuvers which have historically caricatured Trotskyism in Canada. Chile solidarity work is but the latest example. The RMG, with relatively limited forces, responded very rapidly to the events in Chile, much earlier than the LSA and was able to draw into action layers that the LSA did not have the capacity to reach. While the RMG fought for the international majority line on Latin America, it stood solidly behind united action around principled areas of agreement. It also fought for the right of left-wing groups to put forward their positions (including both the LSA and the Maoists on several occasions). The LSA stood aside from the mobilizations until its comrades began to realize that the RMG's activity was winning it broad respect in the revolutionary and independent left. What then followed was an incredible spectacle but an all too familiar one, of the LSA leadership sending five times as many of its comrades to Chile Solidarity Committee meetings as it had sent on demonstrations.

For the LSA PC majority faction, "broadening a committee" is a catchword for organizational control. For the LSA PC majority faction, a "united front" is a committee with an LSA numerical majority and an imposed "democratic" slogan.

Before you finally attempt to close the doors of the LSA headquarters on the RCF and the RMG, comrades of the PC majority faction, we caution you to consider what has been our influence in the LSA. As comrade Porter once commented, the RCT prevented the LSA from making serious errors that could have become strategic mistakes. We also caution the comrades of the United Faction represented by comrade Dowson in the PC majority faction to consider what our exclusion implies for your future.

The signers of this statement are members of the Central Committee of the Canadian Section of the Fourth International and we will continue to be such until a convention of the unified forces of Canadian Fourth Internationalists removes us. You want to expel us but you cannot justify it before the ranks of the international and we have not and will not resign. The faction now in control of the so called Political Committee has violated the norms of the section and objectively dissolved the leadership body of the section.

Nonetheless, we call upon the PC majority faction to engage in joint work with us. We have already proposed concrete steps to do so.

As always in questions such as these, it is the test of history that will weigh the correctness of our decisions. We ask the Tenth World Congress to assess the total balance of the experience of both factions in Canada and to judge for itself whether both sides have honestly acted in the interests of unity of Canadian Trotskyism. We are convinced that the record stands to affirm that the majority faction's actions have been divisive to Trotskyist forces in Canada and the building of the Fourth International.

Long Live the Fourth International!

Signed, Walter Davis      Ruth Taillon      Stu Sinclair  
Murray Smith

## COMMENT ON THE OPEN LETTER

The October 15 open letter of Davis, Taillon, Sinclair and Smith is signed by the four former members of the LSA/LSO Central Committee and leaders of the former Revolutionary Communist Tendency in the LSA/LSO. The four authors of the open letter led the RCT in its split from the Canadian section to join the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). The letter addressed to all section of the world movement, stands as an authoritative statement by the new leaders of the RMG on the split, a statement made immediately after the events it describes.

The open letter accurately portrays the splitter's chief reasons for their split. On six key points, it underscores the correctness of the October 19 statement of the Political Bureau of the LSA/LSO, a statement whose line has been approved by the LSA/LSO Political Committee. The letter confirms that the key issue was the rejection by those who split of the authority of the section's convention, and of the leadership it elected -- as explained in the Political Bureau's statement.

1. The first reason given by the leaders of the split for their action is that the "majority of the Political Committee decided to transform itself into the 'Leninist-Trotskyist' faction of the LSA." The Leninist-Trotskyist Faction members are further accused with being in agreement not only on "international" but on "national" issues, with holding private caucuses, and with "imposing its decisions on the Political Committee". Such developments were sufficient for the splitters to declare that "the Political Committee no longer exists" -- and that they will not recognize its authority.

(The open letter "quotes" a "decision" of the Political Committee to "turn over all the resources and cadres of the section to the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction." No source is given for this "quotation", and no source exists -- the "quotation" is a fabrication. The Political Committee took no such decision, and the resources of the section have not been used for factional purposes.)

2. The open letter tacitly admits that there is no basis for charges that RCT supporters were driven out of the section for "presenting the line of the Fourth International."

It is true that a passing reference is made to "charges of disloyalty ...for 'carrying the majority line of the Ninth World Congress ...'." But the topic is then abruptly dropped. Once again, the "quotation" is a fabrication of the split leaders themselves. No such charges were laid. No member of the Canadian section has ever been expelled or otherwise disciplined for presenting the line of the Fourth International.

There is no further mention of this question in the open letter. It does not claim that any member of the Canadian section was disciplined for "carrying the line of the Fourth International." The open letter, like the statement of the LSA/LSO Political Bureau, does not consider this issue to be relevant to the split in the Canadian section.

3. The open letter like the Political Committee, traces the split's origin to the events in Winnipeg around the Chile defense campaign carried by the Canadian section. According to the open letter "the PC majority supporters in Winnipeg established a separate headquarters and publically split the section... " The reference to a "separate headquarters" is a total mystery -- no such action was taken. But the reference to a "public split" deals with the fact that two rival meetings were organized on Chile in Winnipeg on September 17 and September 19, one organized by the Political Committee, and another by RCT members who did not recognize the Political Committee's authority in this matter. The open letter differs with the Political Committee on which of these meetings should have been supported by Winnipeg LSA members, and lays blame for the split on those who carried out the Political Committee's decision. It agrees with the Political Bureau statement, however, on how the split originated in the events around the Chile defense campaign.

4. The open letter of the splitters does not challenge the accuracy of the charges against the seven RCT members in Winnipeg who were disciplined. It does not challenge that there were sufficient grounds for disciplinary actions.

The open letter gives two different reasons for its decision not to recognize these actions. First, according to the open letter the disciplinary actions of the Political Committee in Winnipeg have no validity because PC representatives "overturned interim disciplinary action without reviewing any of the evidence." In other words, the Political Committee is accused of not having recognized the suspension by the RCT majority in the branch of the five members of the Winnipeg branch who accepted the authority of the Political Committee.

It is true that a trial committee established by the Political Committee insisted on its right to hear evidence of members of the Winnipeg branch who had been suspended by the RCT majority in the branch. It is also true that the RCT held firm on its suspensions, refused to negotiate the question, and spurned the efforts of the Political Committee to ameliorate the Winnipeg situation. It did not take the elementary steps required to make a political resolution of the crisis in Winnipeg possible.

The authors of the open letter disagree with the Political Committee on whether these suspensions carried out by RCT supporters in Winnipeg were correct. But it agrees in viewing the problems posed by the suspension of the five non-RCT members of the Winnipeg branch as one of the two key factors which blocked a resolution of the crisis in Winnipeg.

5. The second reason given by the leaders of the split for not recognizing the disciplinary authority of the Political Committee is that the PC's actions were those "of a faction in the leadership." Once again, the splitters confirm that once a majority of the PC members had joined the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, it no longer recognized the authority of majority decisions in the Political Committee. Like the Political Committee, the open letter considers the second key issue in the Winnipeg crisis to be whether RCT members could recognize the authority of the elected leadership body of the LSA/LSO.

6. The open letter justifies its actions with a lengthy description of the "correctness" of the politics of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the organization it joined when it split from the LSA/LSO. It describes the supposed political successes of the RMG, and contrasts this with the supposed degeneration of the LSA/LSO. (Once again, its view does not correspond to the facts.)

There is nothing new about the open letter's criticisms of the political line of the LSA/LSO including its opposition to the decision of the LSA/LSO convention on the need for a principled basis for a fusion with the RMG. The open letter, however, reveals the reason for their split: the RCT rejected the perspective of working within the Canadian section to win a majority to its views. It regarded the Canadian section as beyond reform. It therefore left the LSA/LSO to join an opponent organization.

In each of these six points, the open letter confirms the October 19 statement of the Political Bureau.

The open letter neglects to mention their letter of October 4 which announced the split. This crude omission aims to leave the impression that the RCT was expelled without cause from the LSA/LSO.

The letter fails to mention that the RCT repudiated the responsibilities and duties of membership in the section. The RCT said it would not accept the section's discipline, and would not abide by its constitution. It would not accept the authority of any leading body of the section. The RCT said it intended to function as a public organization not under the discipline of the LSA/LSO. It implemented this intention by immediately joining an opponent organization, the Revolutionary Marxist Group.

What, then, do the authors of the October 15 open letter regard as the issues in the split in the Canadian section?

1. They hold that the majority of the Canadian section leaders, who joined the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, acted in a factional manner. They are dead wrong. The Political Committee has faithfully applied the decisions adopted by the last convention.

2. They hold that errors in procedure were made in disciplinary actions carried out by the Political Committee. They are dead wrong. The Political Committee did everything possible to avoid disciplinary action.

3. They hold the Political Committee ought to have recognized the suspensions carried out by the RCT majority in Winnipeg. They are dead wrong. The suspensions were carried out in violation of the norms of democratic centralism.

4. They hold that the Canadian section was incorrect in insisting on a principled basis for fusion with the Revolutionary Marxist Group. They are dead wrong. An unprincipled fusion

would have soon proved to be a disaster for the Canadian section.

5. They hold that the Canadian section is gripped by organizational decline and political degeneration, and that the revolutionary Marxist Group is forging ahead. They are dead wrong. The Canadian section was injured by a split backed by the RMG. But the section has survived worse blows.

Both the open letter of the leaders of the split and the Political Committee agree that these are the questions over which the split occurred. The open letter and the Political Committee disagree on which position is correct on each of these questions.

One fact, however, is unambiguously clear. Even if the Revolutionary Communist Tendency was right on each of these disputed questions, its obligation was to remain in the section, and seek to win a majority to its view. Even if the Political Committee and the majority of the Canadian section was wrong on each and every one of these questions, it was no justification for the split.

The unprincipled nature of the split bodes ill for the future of the Revolutionary Marxist Group. The rationalizations and even the outright fabrications used to justify the split will plague the new jerry-built combination, serving as an example and precedent to be repeated when the first serious differences flare up.

John Riddell  
Executive Secretary

October 29, 1973

NOTE: the "suppressed letter of resignation of John Bannon," referred to on page 16 of the Open Letter, was addressed to the Political Committee, and was shown to all members of the PC, including Walter Davis.

## POLITICAL COMMITTEE POSITION ON UNITY WITH THE RMG

NOTE: The following is a synopsis of the report to the United Secretariat meeting of Sept. 17-19 by Art Young on the question of relations between the Canadian section and the Revolutionary Marxist Group. Comrade Young made the report on behalf of the Political Committee of the Canadian section.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group is a recently-founded group in Canada which incorporates the members of two smaller groups, the Red Circle and Old Mole, which had engaged in a unity manoeuver with the Canadian section. It also includes a group of persons who split from the Canadian section and its youth group in June.

When the RC and OM forces first approached the section affirming their acceptance of the program and traditions of the Fourth International, and their willingness to abide by the section's discipline, the Canadian section greeted their initiative warmly. Comrade Crandall reported on this development to the United Secretariat one year ago, and expressed the hope that unity would prove possible.

To explore this possibility, the LSA/LSO entered into political discussion with them in order to clarify their views. From the beginning it insisted on the importance of developing collaboration in areas of common activity, and it made a number of suggestions of how this could be done.

But the RC and OM were not heading towards the section; in fact, their evolution was in the opposite direction. Major political disagreements with them became apparent very early. These did not mean that unity was impossible. But they made the test of practical work the crucial determinant. The section and the RC/OM proved unable to work together for any period in any significant field of activity. In fact, the work of the two forces more and more diverged, and even led to several public confrontations, notably in the struggle against the Vietnam war and in the fight against the leadership of the social-democratic labor party, the New Democratic Party. The different suggestions for collaboration made by the section were either turned down outright, or did not work out in practice.

A peculiar situation had developed. Common work had proven impossible between the two groups. Instead, different political lines were sharply counterposed in action in every major field of activity. If there was not a single area in which the section and the RC/OM could collaborate, how could they work together in a common democratic-centralist organization active in all areas? Unification was obviously premature; what was necessary was increased efforts to find ways to work together in order to lay the basis for unity.

Yet the RC/OM did not agree. It insisted that it be immediately admitted into the section.

The reason for this odd attitude soon became clear when

some minority members split from the section and its youth group in June. A few days earlier, the RC and OM had formally fused to form the Revolutionary Marxist Group. The splitters declared they were leaving the section in order to build the RMG.

This split from the Canadian Trotskyist movement was a blow to the unity of the entire Fourth International and was condemned by the July meeting of the United Secretariat. But the RMG hailed the split, blaming the leadership of the LSA/LSO, and announced its intention to recruit the splitters to its ranks.

This revealed the real intentions of the RMG towards the section, and showed why it continued to pursue in action a course hostile to the section while all the while stating verbally its desire for unity. The LSA/LSO stated:

"This attitude on the part of the RMG to those who have struck a blow against the Canadian Trotskyist movement, placing themselves outside and in opposition to it, is a hostile act against the LSA/LSO....(The RMG has) sponsored a split in the Trotskyist movement. Far from promoting the 'unity' of the Trotskyist movement, they have conducted a raid on the Canadian section of the Fourth International and its youth organization." (Labor Challenge, July 9, 1973)

Thus, within days of its founding, the RMG had a new component -- those who had split from the Trotskyist movement. The RMG continued to say that its members would function as a loyal part of the LSA/LSO if accepted, and obey discipline. Yet half of the organization was composed of people who found themselves unable to accept that discipline, concluding that the section was no longer a viable instrument to carry out revolutionary work.

The experience of the LSA/LSO demonstrates that the RMG is not interested in the unity of Trotskyist forces, but rather in splitting the Canadian section. The RMG's letter to the Secretariat, written two weeks after it announced its support of the split in Canada, clearly aims to provide cover for the splitting operation.

When the question of unifications and splits arises, the United Secretariat always seeks to act in such a manner as to reaffirm the authority of the section. It indicates by its comportment that the only way for revolutionaries to enter the world party is by joining one of its component parts, the national sections.

The LSA/LSO continues to strive for unity with the RMG on a principled basis. But in order for this to be possible, it is necessary for the RMG to take a clear stand in favor of the unity of the Canadian section and its youth group, and against splits. In addition, ways must be found for the organizations to come together in common work against the common enemy. This is the only road leading towards the RMG's entry into the section and the building of a united organization.