

January 8, 1978

Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

Attached for your information are the following items:

1. Letter from Gus to Barry and Caroline, dated January 8, 1978.
2. Translation of letter from the AJS to the SWP, dated December 17, 1977.
3. Reports from the RWL/LOR Political Committee minutes.
4. Excerpts from Rouge by Rousset on the Vietnam-Cambodian events, dated January 2, 1978.
5. Excerpts from Rouge by Rousset, dated January 3, 1978.
6. Letter from Gus to Barry and Caroline, dated January 7, 1978.
7. Letter to Political Committee from Dave Keil and Scott Cooper, dated January 1, 1978 and enclosure.

Natalie

New York
January 8, 1978

Dear Barry and Caroline,

We intend to invite the OCRFI and Lutte Ouvrière to our coming plenum, and, as with the convention, we assume that there will be no objection. But can you please check on this. It is not likely that anyone from these organizations would come from Europe, but perhaps the GSTQ and Spark would.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter we received from the AJS asking for a speaker at a public meeting of theirs. We told the AJS comrades who attended the YSA convention that we would consult on this and get back to them later. They said that they could put off the meeting a few weeks, and we agreed to give them an answer by the end of January.

Could you please consult on this with the ICR comrades and the others there. We wouldn't want an incident over this, but we do think it would be a real opportunity to be able to accept. Among other things, the SWP speaker could talk about the important new issues for the world Trotskyist movement, such as the women's liberation movement, the national question in the advanced capitalist countries, the role of immigrant workers, and questions like the anti-nuclear movement, the ecology question, etc. It would certainly make an impact to bring up our ideas on these points directly to an AJS audience. We hope the comrades there can be convinced of the value to be gained if we accept the invitation. Please try to get an answer on this soon so we can respond to the AJS in time.

Regards,



Gus Horowitz

translation: letter from Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialism
[Young Socialist Alliance], the youth group associated
with the OCI of France

Paris
December 17, 1977

Jack Barnes
National Secretary, SWP

Dear Comrade,

In the coming months the Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme intends to organize a series of forums with representative figures from different currents in the workers movement, intellectuals, and artists on problems relating to Marxist theory, culture, and the problems confronting the workers movement today, etc.

These forums will be aimed at a broad audience of young workers and college and high school students. They will be governed by strict democratic rules. Each speaker will have an hour to present his position. Then questions will be posed from the audience, but only in writing. The Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme also intends to publish the transcript of these discussions, after the texts of their remarks have been gone over and edited by the two participants.

For the first of these forums, which will take place at the beginning of February, the National Committee of the AJS has chosen the subject, "Thirty Years After the Foundation of the Fourth International: The History and Problems of the Trotskyist Movement."

The National Committee of the AJS has invited Comrade Pierre Lambert to be one of the speakers on this subject.

We would also have liked Comrade Ernest Mandel to be the other person to participate in the forum. But as you know, Comrade Mandel is forbidden to travel to France, and so we have not asked him. And, naturally, given the SWP's role in the history of Trotskyism,

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we would like an SWP leader to take part in this discussion.

Given the nature of the forum, we think that it would be best if the comrade who participates is one who was active at the very beginning of the Fourth International. A comrade such as Joseph Hansen seems best to us. But, of course, it is up to you to decide. Our proposal stands no matter whom you designate.

It goes without saying that the AJS will pay the travel expenses of the comrade from the SWP who comes to speak in Paris.

We want to repeat that what is involved is not a confrontation between organizations, but a discussion among comrades, in the framework of workers' democracy. We eagerly hope that you will accept our proposal.

In any case, a member of our National Committee will be accepting the YSA invitation to come to the United States, and he will take advantage of his stay in New York to get in touch with you.

Revolutionary greetings,
For the National Committee of the
Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme,

s/ Jean-Louis Vandeire,
National Secretary

REPORT TO THE PC ON THE LANGUAGE QUESTION, given November 14, 1977 by
Simone Lachance

APPENDIX TO THE ENGLISH CANADIAN NATIONAL BUREAU MINUTES = 2

The language question in Quebec was one of the questions left aside during the fusion process. The ISA/LSO had a well-elaborated line on the question; whereas the GMR and the RMG had not had many discussions on it.

The object of this report is to initiate a discussion with a view towards the elaboration of a line for the RML.

Clearly there is a very broad agreement on the general approach that must be taken towards this question. These are the elements of that agreement, not necessarily agreement on precise formulations.

1. Elimination of English language privileges

Our analysis of the linguistic oppression of the Quebecois (francophones in Quebec) flows from our analysis of the oppression of the Quebec nation. The French language constitutes one of the characteristics which defines this nation (on a par with culture, territory and a well-defined national consciousness).

After the defeat of the 1837 rebellion Lord Durham foresaw the elimination of this nationality through forced linguistic assimilation of francophones into the English language and culture. However, obviously, he didn't succeed.

Since then, the Canadian bourgeoisie has revised this strategy to profit from the division of the working class between the oppressed francophones and the anglophones. All studies demonstrate that unilingual francophones are the lowest paid (other than the Inuit and Indians). The unilingual English are the best paid. French is the language of cheap work and unemployment.

The question of the right of francophones to live, to study and to work in their language without discrimination reappears continuously in various struggles in the course of Quebec history.

At the same time ~~as~~ the rise of Quebecois nationalism during the 60's, a series of language demands were advanced: 1) at Ste. Genevieve in 1966 against attempted transformation of a French school into an English one; 2) the 1968-69 crisis for a French McGill and against Bill 63 which guaranteed English schools; 3) at General Motors for the right to work in French; 4) the 1968 struggle at St. Leonard for a single French school system with the abolition of the parallel English system. The mobilization against Bill 63 was massive and largely contributed to the fall of the Bertrand government.

2. Bilingualism

On the federal level, the Liberals have tried to introduce a solution to the crisis of Confederation and the rise of the independentist movement through propaganda for bilingualism. A program was initiated at the federal government level to make the public service bilingual. Bilingual bonuses were introduced. Trudeau toured the West to try and convince the population to take French courses. But it was a total farce.

There still isn't service in French on the CN between Montreal and Toronto! The real aim was to convince Quebec francophones that in exchange they should learn English.

We are opposed to this bilingualism. Certainly we are not against the idea that people in one nation or the other learn other languages. But we defend the right of Quebec francophones to live without the obligation to speak a single word of English. Equally, we defend the right of francophones outside Quebec to have schools in their language and to be able to protect their language and culture. As opposed to Trudeau, we do not find it acceptable that francophones outside Quebec be hostages in exchange for the maintenance of the privileges of the minority in Quebec which is not at all in danger of losing its language and culture. *English

We reject the positions of the Stalinists and the Spartacists in favor of the "equality" of the languages. We recognize that to establish a real equality, there must first be a socialist revolution as the precondition to the elimination of national oppression. But we struggle now to compensate for the current inequality of francophones throughout the Canadian state. In the name of working class unity, our opponents of the left place themselves in the camp of the imperialist bourgeoisie against the struggles of the Quebecois against their linguistic oppression. A true unity of workers of the two nations will be forged on the basis of the recognition of the non-francophones of the oppression of the Quebecois and the French-Canadians outside of Quebec.

3. Concessions to the Quebecois

The Liberal government and now the Pequistes have tried to make relatively minor concessions to the Quebecois. The introduction in 1974 of Bill 22 by Bourassa was an attempt to resolve opposition to the Union National's Bill 63 without at all conceding on the crux of the matter--English privileges and an English school system. That law declared French the official language of Quebec, a concession to francophone demands, but established an unjust formula on the schools which forced immigrants to send their children to French schools while leaving intact the privileges of indigenous anglophones.

But the anglophones violently opposed these few concessions to the francophones while at the same time the francophones were not satisfied at all. The fall of Bourassa was in part a result of the opposition of both sides to Bill 22.

4. Bill 101

The PQ introduced Bill 101 last summer. The introduction to the text of the Bill goes a long way in explaining the oppression of francophones. But in its real content the bill is within the same framework as Bill 22. The law contains progressive aspects but very secondary ones like signs in French. Concerning French as the language of work, it provides for the right to strike if this right is not respected but there are many ways for large corporations to get around the law with ridiculous penalties for infractions. French is recognized as the official language of the courts, but there are possible exceptions which render this provision practically insignificant. More importantly, the law provides for the maintenance of an English school system parallel to the French system just like Bill 22, placing the burden of francicization on the backs of the immigrants by leaving the indigenous anglophones their schools. **francicization

Now we come to the question where disagreements seem to exist:

IMMIGRANTS

The sections of Bills 101 and 22 on the schools give ammunition to the anti-Quebecois chauvinists who oppose these two laws with the slogan

"freedom of choice" in the language of education, in the name of defending immigrants. They use the immigrants as pawns to reinstate their chauvinist campaign against the language rights of francophones and against the independantist movement. In reality, there is no real choice because the objective situation leads them to choose English.

Rather than obliging francophones and immigrants to attend French schools, the same measures must be applied to anglophones. Otherwise, immigrants and even francophones can complain with justice that they have been left in a francophone ghetto leaving only the anglophones by birth the privilege of instruction in the language of social advancement--English. For this reason, we must call for a single secular French school system for all, the only way to eliminate the privileges and divisions between anglophones, francophones and immigrants as well as the religious divisions, the only way to unify the working class.

Certainly we recognize the necessity for immigrants and anglophones to have a program of transition towards French classes, I recognize the necessity of a discussion on the concrete method of elaborating a program for immigrants like that in the U.S. where classes are given in the maternal language to allow a transition towards English. In the case of Quebec, this would obviously be a transition towards French. In addition, we defend the right of everyone to learn as an option English or any second language and to maintain their language and culture. We must demand free French classes for all adults who want the opportunity to learn to speak in Quebecois French. This doesn't exist today.

The only exception is the case of the native peoples. We defend their right in so far as the native peoples themselves determine the languages which they want to speak. (We are all in agreement that there must be a single secular school system.)

IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM DEMANDS

We demand the language rights of Quebec francophones; the right to work in French, the unconditional right to strike, if this right is not respected, and committees controlled by workers to ensure respect for these language rights. We call for serious measures like nationalization of companies who refuse to respect these rights.

I believe it is necessary to call for the abolition of the English school system and the establishment of a single system which is secular and French.

But we recognize also that only the Workers Republic of Quebec can lay down the basis for the elimination of the national oppression of the Quebecois and allow everyone a real freedom of choice in languages, free from the obligation to speak English.

Obviously, the language question is a very important aspect of the struggle for independence. Reactionaries, in particular the Federal government, recognize this fact and use the controversies over the language laws to fuel the fires of their campaign against Quebec independence. Against this offensive, we defend the right of the National Assembly to legislate on this question without federal interference and in this sense we defend Bill 101 against the reactionaries at the same time as pointing out the insufficient and ever reactionary nature of its contents.

REPORT ON THE 3rd CONGRESS OF THE GSTQ by Corbiere

APPENDIX TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES of Nov.11,12/77-- APPENDIX 3

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This report takes up the general lines of the first balance sheet of the GSTQ congress which I presented to the Quebec National Bureau on October 19, 1977. I am only going to make some minor modifications which integrate some more recent developments in our relations with the GSTQ.

Overall the 3rd Congress of the GSTQ, which held 2 sessions (the first from October 6-10, 1977, the second from October 29-30) confirmed the general lines of our evaluation of this organization which was presented to the first meeting of the Political Committee (see Our Relations with the GSTQ, Internal Bulletin no. 2, October, 1977, in French only. See RWL Information Bulletin no. 1 to be published in English).

It's understood, firstly this organization is undergoing a process of real political evolution and secondly that this evolution in its general lines is going in the direction of greater political convergence with the LOR (although in other respects there are many problems which remain.)

1. LOR-GSTQ Relations

One of the most striking elements of the congress was the fact that LOR/RWL genuinely appeared centrally in the concerns of the organization. The resolution "On recent developments within the United Secretariat and the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International" is essentially centred on the fusion and the dissolution of the LTF. The political report, in its evaluation of the NDP-RMS coalition is marked by the concern to self-justify and separate themselves from us, above all it takes up some of the criticisms the LSA/LSO and the GMR had addressed to the program of the coalition. The resolution on "The GSTQ and struggle for a Labor Party" and the construction of the RMS includes a polemic, against the text "Tactics and Tasks of Construction" adopted by the fusion Congress. The report on youth work contains an important section on the balance sheet drawn by the GSTQ of its work with the LSA/LSO and GMR in the student milieu. The report on the women's work tries to sketch a general orientation, and demarcate them from the ex-GMR and SWP on the question of the autonomous women's movement. This simple enumeration is sufficient to indicate the importance which the GSTQ accords to the birth of the LOR. We can note that at the end of the 2nd Congress of the GSTQ, neither the GMR nor the LSO were central preoccupations for these comrades.

It is clear that the GSTQ was taken by surprise in relation to the fusion, (like the OCRFI in relation to the dissolution of the LTF). The leadership of the GSTQ by all evidence was at first disoriented in the face of the fusion and had rapidly to reorient itself to a new situation for which it was not politically prepared. The GSTQ is now confronted: 1) by a Trotskyist organization which is larger than itself in Quebec and which commands a much more developed national presence; 2) which exists on a pan-Canadian scale, in the face of which the miniscule SWG (Socialist Workers Group) has no weight, and 3) which on key questions of the class struggle in the current period has a position very close to its own (NDP, independence, workers party...).

The conclusion to be drawn is clear: the construction of a pan-Canadian revolutionary party cannot by-pass the existence of the LOR-RWL.

The leadership of the GSTQ has however re-acted in a conservative way, at least initially. This reaction characterized their Congress and preparatory debates (if one can judge this by the texts which were made available to us). It was the extreme concern of the leadership to differentiate themselves from the LOR, and to close the ranks of the organization around them:

- a) by playing up the international differences
- b) by denouncing the fusion as unprincipled (without at the same time engaging in a political debate, on the basis of the fusion as such)
- c) by blowing up certain real differences and making them (the NDP-RMS coalition) almost questions of principle
- d) by adopting a very ultimatum tone towards the LOR ("unacceptable tactics", the LOR must do a balance-sheet or its non-participation in the united front, in the last elections, etc.)

Nonetheless, inspite of these defensive reflexes, and in spite of the sometimes brittle tone of "Tribune Ouvriere", the central element, the real significance of the Congress is elsewhere. It lies in the will, affirmed by the GSTQ, to continue the debate and unity of action with the LOR. This is for us the determining factor in our orientation towards them. It is equally the determining factor in their orientation towards us. They can raise the tone, close ranks in the face of the LOR, play up international or past differences; but it still remains that all those reactions are the product, in reality, of an objective political rapprochement between the two organizations. The GSTQ cannot ignore that, and it knows this. This is essential for us and not the sectarian tone of their resolutions and of some relations and interventions. It is by maintaining a common debate and intervention that these sectarian thrusts, will be beaten, and an opening will be made for a healthy political debate. Thus, we must persevere on this course, whatever the occasional shifts in humor of "Tribune Ouvriere" or the factional tightness of several members or leaders of the GSTQ.

2. The Political Meaning of the Congress

The political event which most marked the Congress was undeniably the changing of the line on the national question. The turn was preceded by 3 internal conferences on the national question. We have not been informed of the character of their debates. Whatever the character of the debates, the resolution submitted to the Congress was passed unanimously. After having tried for a whole period to ignore the question, then reducing it to a simple task among the other democratic tasks not resolved by the Canadian state (the Quebec national question was to be resolved in the framework of pan-Canadian constituent assembly), the GSTQ has now come out for a "Free Republic of Quebec".

Independently of the mistaken character of the formulation of the slogan, this represents an enormous step forward for this organization and a step in our direction. Many formulations in the resolution (and report) remain unclear and ambiguous. We still do not know how this turn will be concretized in practice. The evolution of the GSTQ on this question is moreover not finished. It creates a new problematic of which they are not able to master all the dynamics. This was evident in their October 14, 1977 leaflet where the GSTQ put forward the slogan for a Government of the Worker Organizations United Around the NDP Against the Trudeau Government; succeeded in not mentioning independence; and was satisfied with opposing a conference of the trade union centrals to the Levesque government. This leaflet was moreover criticized by several militants of the organization in the 2nd session of their Congress and the criticisms were taken up

by the leadership. Whatever problems still exist it nonetheless remains, that on this crucial question of class struggle, the LOR and GSTQ are working in a largely common political framework. The basis of the debate between the two organizations are no longer the same ones that existed before this 3rd Congress. Earlier we had to centre the debate on the question---"must revolutionary-marxists take up the slogan of independence". We must now centre the question, on the concrete articulation of our slogans in order to link the national struggle and the struggle for socialism. This effects a qualatative leap.

Also important was the discussion on the balance sheet drawn on the NDP-RMS coalition. The report and resolution effected a critical re-evaluation of some aspects of the coalition, most particularly its programme, which according to the Congress, contained "reformist slips" (for example demands on budget cuts for the army and police and on taxation of profits etc.). But otherwise the line which was presented by the coalition was characterised as fundamentally correct. This will be for the LOR a central axis of the debate with the GSTQ. It incorporates a conception of the United Workers front, a conception which is at the base of the whole orientation of the GSTQ. But it is clear that the partial self-criticism on the program of the coalition is a step forward, opening larger breeches in their traditional problematic and opening the door to a broader self-criticism.

On the youth question, it is necessary to note a greater will to construct the RJS on the one hand and important changes in the conception of the GSTQ on party-youth relations on the other. The perspective of constructing the RJS as a vaguely socialist regroupment has been replaced with that of constructing a youth organization "in political sympathy with the GSTQ". Thus a tendency to realignment on classical leninist norms. Unfortunately the discussion revealed an enormous confusion. No one seemed to have a clear idea of what type of youth organization it was necessary to construct. The RJS is still characterized as a "broad" organization without being clearly defined. The confusion was moreover aggregated by some propositions contained in the resolution: therefore the young militants of the LOR are invited to be militants in the RJS... sympathizing organization of the GSTQ! The Congress of the RJS which will be held soon, will perhaps permit some problems to be clarified.

On the women's question there was some bending of the position of the GSTQ. They now accept in principle (it remains to be seen what it will mean in practice) to work in women's groups external to the union movement, "even if this is not a priority". Further, the organization took on more openly the struggle for abortion (the 2nd Congress stressed more the right to maternity), and made a small self-criticism of the inadequacy of their work on the question. Above all a major debate is necessary with them on our position on the autonomous women's movement. The GSTQ shows a quasi-total incomprehension on this question (although even here, there was some softening in their formulations: the GSTQ is not opposed to the existence of autonomous women's groups, even "if this is not our perspective".) It was interesting that a comrade from the LOR was able to intervene in this discussion in order to present our position on the autonomous women's movement.

On the RMS. They attempted to clearly re-affirm the broad character of the regroupment, the necessity of a flexible policy within it, the fact that it is within the framework of a workers united front; that the GSTQ could very well eventually find itself a minority in the RMS, etc. The major projects passed at the Congress include a national conference on the labor party organized by the RMS and the publication of a monthly newspaper. Currently the RMS regroupes (outside of the LOR) mainly the GSTQ and its periphery. In spite of the GSTQ's fine statements at the congress, the GSTQ maintains a very rigid control on the RMS.

This Congress was a Congress of turns, re-adjustments and political shifts. They were due to the capacity of this organization to react empirically to the class struggle. The turn on the national question was very clearly provoked by November 15. The shifts and re-adjustments in their other sectors of intervention reflect some difficulties in their mass work. The RJS, conceived as a vague regroupment, found itself with a very heterogenous base, including elements sympathetic of CPC (ML). It was necessary to strengthen and redefine the role of the RJS. The April 2 demonstration on abortion and the weak development of the union women's committees to date, probably led the militants of the GSTQ to a more supple, less formalist view of the women's question. In the trade union movement, the GSTQ was taken by surprise by the rise of the Mao-Stalinists on the one hand and the right backlash (pequist) on the other. This resulted in their loss of the executive of the Montreal Alliance of Professors (CEA) among other things. In brief, the whole experience of the last year has forced this organization, often very empirically and very confusedly, to modify its positions.

3. The GSTQ seen from the inside

From what we could see at the Congress, it is an organization of about 60-75 militants, concentrated in Montreal with a few isolated comrades elsewhere (Three Rivers, Amos, Quebec City). We can't really talk about a national presence of the organization, nor of a real pan-Canadian presence (the Toronto group is very small). It is mainly present in the trade union movement and the proportion of its unionized members is high, especially among the teachers.

We are not talking about a monolithic organization, even if it seems relatively homogeneous at present (all the principal resolutions were adopted unanimously). It seems to us that there were three types of slightly different currents which surfaced at the Congress. One current was very hostile to the LOR, ferociously "anti-Pabloist", sectarian, which believes that the GSTQ is too soft towards the LOR and which would like it to adopt a position like that of Lora (it will probably be necessary to organizationally destroy the Pabloists). Next, the leadership of the GSTQ, who I described above. Finally the "younger wing" of the GSTQ, some of the militants of the RJS who have quite an open attitude towards us. This is not astonishing, for it is in student work that we have developed the closest and most lasting area of common work and it is also in this area that the Mao-Stalinist pressure makes itself most strongly felt on the GSTQ—from which has developed a reflex of "us" vs the Stalinists.

Despite the more or less sectarian traits or attitudes this organization shows from time to time, it is not at all a sect. On the contrary, the last Congress as a whole shows that it is capable of considerable political evolution, that it knows how to make the correct political adjustments in the light of the concrete experience of the class struggle. Several comrades of the GSTQ criticized certain resolutions or reports (particularly the report on the international situation). Several questions were raised on several others (the concretization of their line on the national question, for example).

The leadership of the organization has strong political authority among the membership and party patriotism is highly developed. We will have to take account of this in our relations with them. Given the real political reapproachment between our organizations, we have absolutely no interest in manoeuvring with the GSTQ. On one hand, the line sketched out in my first report to the PC must be rigorously maintained;; on the other hand, we must maintain absolutely correct organization to organization relations. We are interested in discussing with the

GSTQ as a whole. We want to involve the memberships of the LOR and the GSTQ in joint discussion; we don't want to limit ourselves to discussions at the leadership level. The existence inside the GSTQ of a layer of militants which is open to us, with whom we come in regular contact, can increase the pressure toward rapprochement inside this organization and we must not lose sight of this. But we are not developing any kind of split perspective. If possible, we want to fuse with the GSTQ as a whole. Nor are we developing an orientation to the base which will bypass the leadership of the organization. Such an attitude would be disastrous and would compromise relations between the two organizations for a long time.

On several different levels, this organization found itself on the defensive until its Congress. On one hand with respect to us: how to justify the existence of two separate Trotskyist organizations which have similar positions on a whole series of key political questions? What to do about the sudden appearance of a Trotskyist organization which is both larger and has a more significant national presence? How to develop their pan-Canadian perspectives? If in the period immediately preceding our fusion the GSTQ could more or less ignore the LSO and the GMR, after the fusion this attitude became impossible.

On the defensive also with respect to the Maoists. After contenting themselves for a long time with treating them disdainfully as "petty-bourgeois ultra-leftists", they found themselves faced with a CCL (ML) having an influence and mobilizatory capacity much larger than theirs, including in the trade union movement. That fact seems to have traumatized some of their militants who demanded polemical material on China, Maoism, etc.

On the defensive in its mass work, In addition to the loss of the Executive of the Alliance of Montreal Professors, they saw the RMS relatively marginalized and numerically weakened following their disastrous NDP-RMS campaign.

On the defensive with respect to the political situation. The reports to the Congress were often very abstract, particularly the two principal political reports--on the national question and on the political situation. The GSTQ seems to take in events (it wasn't prepared for November 15) and adapt to them rather than understanding them. In its mass work, the perspectives of the organization are rather schematic: for a conference of the trade union centrals on the national question, for a conference of the trade union centrals on the demands of women workers, for a conference of trade union centrals on unemployment (the main campaign of the RJS), etc....

The Congress was clearly designed to re-establish the cohesion of the organization in face of the events of the past year. In some cases, that resulted in important and positive political changes (the national question); in others to extremely insufficient responses or balance sheets (NDP-RMS). A joint debate with the GSTQ, closely tied with common practice, can make sure that this evolution doesn't remain frozen but continues to make progress in the right direction.

4. The GSTQ and the CORQI

The CORQI is a real point of reference for the militants of the GSTQ. Their affiliation is not just a formality. Although the GSTQ as an organization seems more or less well integrated into CORQI, its militants, as good Trotskyists, search out international connections for themselves and find them in "La Verite"

and "Informations Ouvrières", the publications of the OCI. Also, in our relations with the GSTQ, the question of the CORQI must be seriously evaluated. More particularly, we must carefully determine our axes of international debate with this organization. The international debate on Stalinism, for instance, will be unquestionably an important point of discussion between the GSTQ and the LOR. Certain specific debates can also arise, notably on Spain, if only because of the similar positions of the Spanish OCI and the GSTQ on the national question. Finally, it is unthinkable that we could leave aside the question of the nature of the International that it is necessary to build.

The representative of CORQI at the Congress was comrade Raoul from the OCI. His role, in its own way, was overall, positive. Reaffirming the perspectives on international discussion of CORQI, his remarks contributed particularly to moderating the "anti-Pabloist" ardor of some of the GSTQ militants. Characterizing the declarations of Lora as of an individual opinion, he warned the GSTQ against a too one-sided view of the recent events and of the nature of the United Secretariat. The essence of his remarks can be summarized as follows:

If there exists inside the Usec revisionist forces which are probably beyond reform (the majority of the French section, for example), one cannot place all the forces of the Usec or even of the IMT into this camp. Organizations like the Swedish section or the RMG-GMR are young and inexperienced and cannot automatically be placed in the camp of incurable revisionists. Certainly they have revisionist approaches, but this problem exists inside the CORQI as well. Certainly, the fusion occurred under the worst possible political conditions, just like the dissolution of the LTF. But this does not close the door to all debate, to all common perspectives and we have every reason to remain optimistic about the situation in Canada and Quebec.

You can think what you like about this evaluation of the situation. Different comrades will likely interpret the significance of this intervention in different ways. But the main thing is the following elements: 1) the intervention was directed "against" the ultras of the organization, 2) it maintains the policy of the "open door" and ratifies and encourages (rather than brakes) the debate/common work perspective of the leadership of the GSTQ. For the CORQI, if the situation worsened somewhat with the dissolution of the LTF and the fusion, there was no qualitative change in the situation.

5. Common Work

It is developing to different degrees in mass work. Inside the RMS, where we are currently participating in the building of a national conference on the workers party. This work is not without its problems: on the one hand because of the rigid control exercised by the GSTQ over the RMS; on the other hand by a certain tendency of the GSTQ to want to substitute the RMS for the unions. But in general, our integration into the RMS is much more real than it has ever been and it is an essential terrain of common work between the two organizations. Common interventions are also being planned for several trade union congresses (Federation of Social Services-Affaires Sociales, National Federation of Quebec Teachers, etc.) It is in student work that we have advanced the furthest up till now. A common list of the LOR-GSTQ-RJS was put forward in different elections to QUAM with a common platform. LOR-RJS collaboration in the QUAM has moreover had the effect of strengthening the Trotskyist pole against the Mao-Stalinist pole. In the area of womens work, the situation is less advanced. Some common work has developed inside the women's committees in the CSN, but where that can go is not

very clear. the line of the GSTQ on the women's question, even if it has become somewhat less rigid, is none the less very deficient.

The important thing is that in the 3 principal sectors of intervention of the LOR, we can now begin to work jointly with the GSTQ. Practical proof in mass work will be decisive for any perspective of fusion with the GSTQ.

In other central projects also common work exists. Firstly, a series of joint meetings in three cities (Montreal, Sherbrooke, Quebec City) on the theme "The PQ--One Year Later". A meeting with their leadership is planned for Nov. 19 where we will discuss our respective balance sheets of their Congress and perspectives for common mass work. Finally, we must plan as soon as possible for the beginning of discussions on the next federal elections. Speaking for myself--we will have to talk about this at our next Political Committee--I think that we should orient ourselves toward presenting a common ^{list} LOR-GSTQ if possible, with a common platform.

Taken as a whole, despite all the problems, we can say that at this stage, the relations between the two organizations are very much better than they ever were with the founding components of the LOR, even during the best period of GSTQ-LSO relations.

Finally, we have begun to develop a project of a common journal. This project came out of the GSTQ's Convention's adoption of a motion to publish a "joint public bulletin". We have some apprehension about this proposal. Firstly, that it would be a confidential "public" bulletin, essentially oriented to the membership of the two organizations and their periphery, where the organizations would confront each other "line against line". Secondly, that this would be the only terrain for debate between the two organizations, which could substitute for joint membership meetings, etc. So we should make the following proposals:

- 1) that the publication must essentially be externally oriented and present general Trotskyist positions. Only a small part of the publication would be devoted to the debate between the two groups around axes which deal with central political questions related to the real political concerns of militants.
- 2) At the same time we would plan the publication of a joint bulletin internally which would conduct the essential debate between the two organizations.
- 3) The joint journal and the internal bulletin should lead into joint membership meetings where we would discuss their contents.

The GSTQ leadership seems favourable to these proposals. So in the discussion on this report, we should deal with this question because it has certain implications for English Canada. The GSTQ prefers (for obvious reasons) a pan-Canadian publication.

(The question of a joint journal produced a debate on the Political Committee on the appropriateness of such a journal. There was not agreement. A compromise motion was formulated: that the discussion continue, and that in the meantime we propose to the GSTQ the publication of a joint supplement to Lutte Ouvriere/Tribune Ouvriere. This publication would allow ^{us} to concretely test the possibilities of publishing a journal without definitively committing ourselves to a regular publication. This proposal was integrated into the report whose general line was adopted by the Political Committee.)

[Translation: Excerpts from a back-page article by Pierre Rousset on the Vietnam-Cambodia fighting: Rouge, Jan. 2, 1978]

The situation in Cambodia right after the victory [over imperialism] was not qualitatively more difficult than that in Laos. Given the agricultural wealth of the country, the situation was probably even less critical. There were no obstacles to working out bilateral or trilateral agreements between the new Democratic Kampuchea and its Indochinese neighbors, nothing, that is, except the orientation of the Angkar leadership, the PCK [Khmer CP]. In closing off the country, in setting up a qualitatively more authoritative regime than in Vietnam or Laos, in undertaking a series of drastic social measures, and in making nationalism the only ideological cement of the regime, the Cambodian leadership was led, willy-nilly to treat its Vietnamese neighbor as a hereditary enemy against which the population had to be mobilized.....

The tone [of the statements by Hanoi] is quite different than that used by Phnom Penh, which likens Hanoi to Hitler on the eve of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and which states that the Vietnamese forces are acting in a fashion "worse than the mercenaries of Ky and Thieu and the South Korean troops," well known for their savage excesses during the Indochina war. While the Vietnamese too now denounce the "atrocities" committed in the border areas by the Cambodians, the axis of their declarations remains an appeal to the tradition of solidarity and to negotiation....

Given our lack of information, and the lack of a collective discussion on the latest events, one has to be careful in giving an exact evaluation of what is behind the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict. It is not a matter of lining up with one of the sides against the other, or of absolving one of the leaderships of all responsibility. The fact is that the roots of the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict go beyond the boundaries of Indochina alone...

The Indochinese revolutions, in their own way, continue to
(over)

teach lessons. The signing of the 25-year treaty of cooperation between Laos and Vietnam has confirmed the importance, after the victory, of pursuing active regional solidarity among peoples engaged in a very difficult struggle for the reconstruction of their war-ravaged countries. The degeneration of the Vietnam-Khmer conflict illustrates the costly effects of allowing free rein to nationalist ideology in a national liberation movement, even in one of communist orientation. The rise of the colonial and semicolonial masses around the Second World War showed how well the national question, if taken up by the leaderships of the liberation movements, can propel revolutionary struggles forward. This lesson remains valid today. But the brutal outbreak of the Vietnam-Khmer conflict has painfully reminded us that nationalism as an ideology remains one of the most pernicious enemies of the revolution, even if it is a national one.

None of the Indochinese leaderships are exempt from responsibility in the latest events--because all have adapted to the national limitations of their revolutions, and to the bureaucratic deformations of their regimes, limitations and deformations without which the Vietnam-Khmer conflict would be unthinkable. But the responsibilities are not equal in the various capitals affected by the complete degradation of relations between Vietnam and Cambodia. Those of the Cambodian and Chinese leaderships seem particularly heavy. But the present "fratricidal" conflict is just the most recent phase in the abandonment of internationalism (the Indochinese communist movement went through such a phase in the 1930s) and in the progressive development of "national communisms" that were ill-equipped to resist the dangerous awakening of nationalism; it is also the most recent phase in the Stalinist revisionism of the "building socialism in a single country" variety--a revisionism drawn out to an absurd caricature by the PCK leadership...

[Translation from Rouge, Jan. 3, 1978 (brief excerpts) article by Pierre Rousset]

Nearly three days after Phnom Penh broke diplomatic relations with Hanoi and the brutal aggravation of the military conflict between the two countries, it is still not possible to have a clear picture of the situation...

The apparent stabilization of the "front" and the prudence of the Vietnamese declarations, which are the only things we have to go on, show that Hanoi is not aiming for a military conquest of Kampuchea. Hanoi has a crushing relationship of forces in its favor...If it had wanted to, Hanoi would have already conquered Phnom Penh by now, even though this would have been at the cost of serious losses inflicted by the Cambodians.

The apparent stabilization of the "front" clearly entails political problems. The Vietnamese leadership knows how costly it is for a "power" to try to occupy a foreign country. The present fighting probably aims at forcing a negotiated political solution, aside, perhaps, from imposing some military guarantees in the border areas. The big unknown is what is happening in Phnom Penh, within the leadership of the Khmer Communist Party...

New York
January 7, 1978

Dear Barry and Caroline,

You have already been sent a copy of the document, "For a Change in the Position of the Fourth International on Cuba," by David Keil and others. The January 1, 1978 cover letter by David Keil and Scott Cooper to the SWP Political Committee says that the signers in each country (Belgium, Costa Rica and the United States) are asking the leaderships of their respective organizations to submit the document to the IIDB. So it seems to us that what is called for before making a decision is consultation with the leaderships of the respective organizations. We would like to know the opinions of the Belgian and Costa Rican comrades on this.

There are also a couple of problems to be considered. First, the signers include both rank-and-file comrades and comrades of central committees from three geographically distant countries. How did these comrades get together to produce their document? Are they a tendency? A second problem is that the form in which the signatures are listed can be construed to imply that they are signing on behalf of their organizations. (At least, comrades who do not know the situation first-hand could get that impression.)

So, please take this up with the comrades there and let us know your thinking.

Regards,



Gus Horowitz

FOR A CHANGE IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL'S POSITION ON CUBA

(Introduction to the Discussion)

Introduction

It is seventeen years since capitalism was overthrown in Cuba. The Cuban Revolution is a new experience for the Trotskyist movement. In spite of the resemblances which it has to the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions, it also presents important differences in that the Castroist leadership was not a Stalinist leadership from the beginning.

Today, after the holding of the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party and the adoption of the new constitution, it is time to pause to reevaluate the positions of the Fourth International on Cuba. Our aim should be to establish a broad agreement in our movement on what Cuba is today and on what we should do now. Differences on the interpretation of the history of the Cuban Revolution should not be an obstacle to such agreement.

The comrades who are submitting this document are doing so in order to reopen discussion on Cuba in the ranks of the

Fourth International. We think that the line of these theses should be adopted by the sections of the Fourth International and approved at the next World Congress.

Belgium, Ligue Revolutionnaire de Travailleurs:

François Massion

Costa Rica, Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores:

Andrés

Rodrigo

Sara

United States, Socialist Workers Party:

Scott Cooper

David Keil



December 18, 1977

Theses

1. The Cuban Revolution resulted in the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a workers state in late 1960 with the nationalization of capitalist property and the institution of a state monopoly of foreign trade and a planned economy. A central task of the Fourth International is to defend this revolution and the social gains it has won.

2. Today, a privileged bureaucratic caste exists in Cuba. It is to be found in the state apparatus, the army, the party, the unions, and in the factories. It defends its ^{own} interests and holds power in Cuban society. The masses are excluded from all control of the activity of the government and the state. Cuba is therefore a bureaucratized workers state.

3. Among the evidence that a privileged caste exists are the existence of ranks in the army, the privilege of exemption

from national rationing for middle and upper ranks in the army, and the possibility beginning in 1974 for technicians, engineers and party cadres to acquire private automobiles and other goods. These party cadres and technicians have acquired considerable importance in the state apparatus. Livio Maitan, in an article published in Intercontinental Press, March 15, 1976, explains quite well the existence of this privileged layer:

"It is precisely these cadres who have been taking on more and more actual administrative functions and have largely adopted paternalistic and authoritarian attitudes.

"Inevitably they have tended to consolidate their positions of power, at the same time gaining privileged social status.... Thus privileges in consumption, housing, means of transport (in addition to advantages associated with positions of leadership, such as trips abroad), have had a significance beyond their intrinsic value." (p. 413)

But Comrade Maitan does not acknowledge that these privileges are held by a crystallized caste which holds power.

At the First Congress of the CCP, Castro recognized

that 40% of the members of the party had positions in the administration and in political life.

The wage policy followed by the CCP only reinforces the social inequalities and widens the wage differential. 48% of Cuban workers have their wages tied to meeting quotas; that is, workers who fail to meet quotas are paid less. 20% have their wage tied directly to the amount they produce (piecework).

4. This bureaucracy has been integrated into the international Moscow-dominated apparatus. It subordinates the needs of the proletariat to defense of its own interests and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Castro said, in his speech to the First Congress of the CCP, "Our confidence in Lenin's homeland is unbounded because, in the course of more than half a century, the Soviet Revolution has proved its adherence to the principles and consistent line of behavior in its international policy. It has shown this not only in Cuba but also in Vietnam, in the Middle East, in the Portuguese colonies fighting for their independence, in Chile, Cyprus, Yemen,

Angola and every other part of the world where the national liberation movement confronts colonialism and imperialism, as it once did in an exemplary manner with the heroic Spanish people."

(Granma, December 28, 1975, p. 5.)

Additional evidence is the Stalinist policy of the Cuban Communist Party: peaceful coexistence, socialism in one country, advocacy of class collaborationism, support for the theory of revolution by stages. The bureaucracy's political instrument is the Cuban Communist Party, a Stalinist party.

Clear indications of this Stalinist policy are contained in Castro's speech at the First Congress of the CCP.

He supported the theory of peaceful coexistence and socialism in one country: "We cannot but take into account the fact that this process of détente includes a growing awareness among important political and economic sectors in the United States that it is only through peaceful coexistence, which provides a means for averting a third world war and the use of nuclear weapons, that their own social system can long survive." (Granma, January 4, 1976, p. 10.)

He advocated class collaboration: "The growing influence of the Communists and the probable unity among the Communists, Socialists and other democratic forces there offer hopeful prospects." He also said, "While the masses of Latin America's workers and peasants continue their struggle, governments are appearing which in some cases are inspired by political concepts that lead to socialist aspirations and in other cases are guided by a clear anti-imperialist idea and by the defense of their countries' natural resources and economies in a purely nationalistic context. As a whole, these concepts and policies are the groundwork for widespread Latin-American unity to resist and defeat the imperialist policy..." It is clear that Castro's advocacy of class collaboration is related to the theory of revolution by stages.

The Cuban Communist Party functions bureaucratically, to the exclusion of all internal democracy and all control of the leaders ^{hip} by the ranks.

6. a. The Cuban CP gave full support to the capitalist popular-front Allende government in Chile. The disastrous military

...
coup in Chile in 1973 showed the bankruptcy of the Cuban Communist Party's foreign policy.

b. The Cuban leadership has supported the capitalist military government in Peru, calling it a "fraternal revolutionary government." It calls upon the Peruvian masses to have confidence in their government, which it says is carrying out its "own process," which is different from the Cuban one but which is nonetheless revolutionary. During a mass rebellion in Lima in 1975, Radio Havana spoke of "the counterrevolutionaries who were trying to overthrow the fraternal revolutionary government in Peru," supposedly with the aim of opposing the "revolutionary" process which the Peruvian military was carrying forward.

c. The Cuban leadership has likewise given full support to the neocolonial Torrijos government in Panama, urging the Panamanian people to have confidence in it. For example, during Torrijos's trip to Cuba in 1976, Fidel Castro said that while Panama was not a socialist country, "the National Guard of Panama is the vanguard in the struggle for the country's sovereignty...."

Now, for the first time, the people of Panama have a government that is truly defending their country's sovereignty..." (Granma, January 25, 1976)

d. In Angola, the line of the Cuban leadership had a dual character. On the one hand, with the aid of the USSR, Cuba succeeded in defeating the South African imperialist aggression. The Fourth International was quite correct in noting the positive aspect of this ^{Cuban} intervention.

On the other hand, the Cuban leadership's line has been to give political support to the procapitalist policy of the petty-bourgeois Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). This Stalinist line has led to the use of Cuban troops in training the repressive forces of the neocolonial MPLA government (which were used against the masses) when it came to power. Their ~~role~~ role in remaining in Angola today is to stabilize the capitalist MPLA government.

e. The Cuban leadership has also followed a criminal policy in Ethiopia, where the Mengistu regime has killed leftist

dissidents in the streets of Addis Ababa and waged a murderous campaign against the Eritrean national liberation movement.

Castro has supported the Mengistu regime, which he presents as leading a "revolutionary process."

7. The foreign policy of the Cuban Communist Party corresponds to its internal policy. This domestic policy is contrary to the interests of the workers and contrary to workers' democracy.

The new Cuban constitution, which replaced the bourgeois constitution of 1940, is based on the 1936 constitution of the USSR. Its principles are the same: the officially-decreed leading role of the party in the state--a single-party system, the prohibition of all opposition, the subordination of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the unions to the CCP's line, and the bourgeois mode of election. The latter system, as applied in the USSR, Trotsky denounced in The Revolution Betrayed, saying that "the distinction of the new constitution from the old is its return from the Soviet system of election according to class and

Industrial groups, to the system of bourgeois democracy based upon so-called 'universal, equal and direct' vote of an atomized population." Trotsky continued, "This is a matter, to put it briefly, of juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat." Although soviet forms have never existed in Cuba, the institutionalization of the electoral system ('so-called "universal, equal and direct" vote of an atomized population') clearly represents the institutionalization of a preventive measure directed against the formation of soviets, and a calculated obstacle to the independent and autonomous organization of the class.

The Matanzas elections in Cuba did not go even so far as the forms of a bourgeois democracy. The formation of parties and tendencies was forbidden.

The same is true of the institutionalization of Matanzas-type "People's Power" structures throughout Cuba. The "directing" role of the Communist Party is officially written into the "Constitution of the Organs of People's Power."

The general tendency is not the disappearance of the state, but on the contrary its reinforcement.

8. The Castroist bureaucracy has removed all possibility for the masses to legally reform the Cuban state. The struggle against the bureaucracy necessarily becomes a struggle for a

Cuba

political revolution. This political revolution will keep the conquests of the social revolution of 1959-60.

9. The Fourth International should immediately begin the task of building a section in Cuba. In opposition to the Stalinist-Castroist leadership, a real Leninist, Trotskyist leadership is necessary to lead the political revolution and create a genuine soviet state in Cuba. The Cuban section of the Fourth International will demand an end to bureaucratic privilege and mismanagement; it will demand the free election, with the right of immediate recall, of workers' representatives to organs of proletarian rule; the legalization of all parties and tendencies which agree not to overthrow by arms the social bases of the Cuban workers' state established in 1960; and justice for those who have been imprisoned or persecuted for their ideas by the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Cuban section of the Fourth International will defend the conquests of the working class against all the attacks of imperialism and reaction.