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IN REPLY TO COMRADE GERMAIN, by John Riddell
and Art Young**

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The Real Record of the Canadian Section: In Reply to Comrade Germain

by John Riddell and Art Young

INTRODUCTION

"In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," the document by Ernest Germain whose general line forms part of the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency, introduced a number of new themes and new differences into the discussion in the world movement. This contribution will discuss the portion of Comrade Germain's document which criticizes the alleged "tail-endism" of the Canadian section of the Fourth International.

Comrade Germain's central theme is to call attention to the "danger of opportunist tail-ending" which, in his view, threatens the Fourth International today. His polemic contains six sections devoted to demonstrating the existence of this danger, no fewer than four of which concern the record of the Canadian section of the Fourth International, the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO). His conclusions are grave indeed, and fully justify his placing of Canada in the center of his over-all polemic.

In these four sections, Comrade Germain outlines six major examples of a common error: "crass right-wing opportunism and tail-endism." Here are the examples:

1. In its orientation to the Canadian Social-Democratic labor party, the Canadian section is guilty of "tail-endist reformism," and of a "clear tailist deviation from Leninism." ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," P. 26.)

2. In its assessment of the revolution in Quebec, the Canadian section has reverted to "a new edition of the

Menshevik 'theory of stages.'" (P. 32)

3. The line of the Canadian section in the unfolding class struggle in Quebec has been governed by "tail-endism," that is, waiting "till the masses had already clearly shown a given 'mood' before" adopting their slogans. This is proven by the concentration of the section's leadership on slogans for the rights of the French language in Quebec during the massive labor upsurge of April-May 1972. (P. 32.)

4. The Canadian section's leadership "stubbornly refused to raise the independence slogan till the very eve of the outbreak of an independentist mass movement"—a further example of a tail-endist method. (P. 32.)

5. The LSA/LSO's support of Quebec nationalism constitutes "tail-ending petty bourgeois nationalism." (P. 32.)

6. The tail-endist method of the Canadian section led it to adopt a position of supporting "Canadian nationalism"—that is, it is guilty of "tail-ending imperialist nationalism." (Pp. 35-37.)

The first part of this contribution will set the record straight on each of the six charges of Comrade Germain. In each case, it will test his charges against the real record of the Canadian section. This will show that in each case, he has attacked the LSA/LSO for positions it does not hold. The second part of the contribution will examine a number of key points in Comrade Germain's argumentation in the framework of the reality of the Canadian class struggle. The third part will examine its significance in the present international debate.

I. COMRADE GERMAIN'S CHARGES AGAINST THE CANADIAN SECTION: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

1. Is the LSA/LSO 'Tail-Ending Reformism'?

a) *Comrade Germain's Accusation*

Comrade Germain brings to our attention two passages from publications of the Canadian Trotskyists, both of which formed part of material presenting the LSA/LSO's

stand of critical support in the October 1972 federal elections to the labor party of Canada, the New Democratic Party (NDP). The first passage is from a leaflet issued in October 1972 by the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (YS/LJS), the sympathizing youth organization of the Fourth International in Canada. The second is from an editorial in the Sept. 27 issue of *Labor Chal-*

lenge, the English-language newspaper of the Canadian Trotskyists.

Comrade Germain makes a long series of criticisms of these passages. Two central points however stand out. First, while the passages are part of articles attempting to argue the case for support of the NDP in the elections, they do not, in his opinion, advance a revolutionary critique of the social-democratic leadership of the NDP. Second, the passages argue that an NDP victory would propel the class struggle forward, which is by no means guaranteed in advance.

There is no question that these criticisms are absolutely correct. A number of formulations in the passages are erroneous. Nor does Comrade Germain anticipate any disagreement from Canadian comrades on the points he has raised: "Obviously, it is A.B.C. for the leadership of the LSA as well." (Ibid., P. 27.) It would therefore seem A.B.C. that Comrade Germain would then round out his criticism of these two passages by noting that such erroneous formulations contrast with the correct line carried by the LSA/LSO in its convention resolutions and its publications as a whole. Instead, he leaps to a sweeping conclusion:

"The position which the LSA/LSO (Canadian section) leadership—and staunch supporters of the minority position on Latin America—has adopted towards the reformist social-democratic party, the NDP in its country, and its position on the October 30, 1972 general elections in Canada in particular, expresses a clear tailist deviation from Leninism." (P. 26.)

This denunciation is based solely on the two short passages quoted by Comrade Germain. He goes on to make a further serious charge.

Comrade Germain notes that Lenin posed as conditions for the tactic of critical support to a social-democratic party, that communists denounce the bankruptcy of the social-democratic leadership and use the occasion to "make communist propaganda in favor of workers democracy and soviets, against parliamentary and reformist illusions." He continues: "... the Canadian section of the Fourth International, while calling on the workers to vote NDP, *abstains* from any such revolutionary propaganda, and indeed increases the hold of reformism upon the workers by presenting things as if a 'fundamental social change' and 'breaking from capitalism as a system' could be conquered by the masses through an electoral victory of the NDP." (P. 28, emphasis in original.)

What basis is there for his charge that the LSA/LSO abstains from "any revolutionary propaganda" against the NDP leadership?

Let us listen to the comments of another reader of *Labor Challenge*, one of the NDP leaders whom the LSA/LSO is accused of supporting uncritically. His comments correct the misimpression left by the presentation of Comrade Germain. The following is the text of a letter written by Gordon Vichert, Provincial Secretary of the NDP in Ontario, to *Labor Challenge* editor George Addison, in reply to a routine request for advertising space in the NDP newspaper:

July 31, 1973

"Dear George,

"Thank you for the copy of *Labor Challenge* (of July 23, 1973), and for your letter of July 25.

"I found the paper most interesting because it sums

up better than I could the fundamental differences between the L. S. A. and the N. D. P. May I quote from page 7?

"The NDP cannot be 'reformed'; it cannot become the instrument for socialist victory in Canada. This requires nothing less than a Leninist party, with a revolutionary Marxist program and a democratic centralist organizational structure, a party which can only be built on the program and cadres of the Fourth International. It will be built in the struggle against the reformism of the NDP and trade union leadership—a struggle which now unfolds on the political plane in and around the NDP, and which will continue in the coming period to maintain the NDP as its frame of reference.'

"Later, the article says of the L. S. A. that 'Our aim is more ambitious—to provide a program for the broad struggle against the bureaucratic rightwing leadership, and for a socialist course, and to lead this struggle in action.' (page 10)

"We accept these statements at their face value, and will therefore consistently deny membership in the N. D. P. to all members and adherents of the L. S. A. or the Young Socialists. Clearly the cadres of the Fourth International intend to work against the democratically-chosen leadership and policies of the N. D. P. from a point of view which is in fundamental opposition to the democratic socialism of the N. D. P. We do not choose to permit the L. S. A. to use the N. D. P. as its 'frame of reference'. We have found in practice, and now see confirmed in writing, that the role of the L. S. A. in the N. D. P. has been consistently destructive.

"As you know, I am recommending to the Provincial Executive the expulsion of Cliff Mack. To his name I must now add yours, since your identification with the L. S. A. is incontestable. . . .

"We will doubtless continue to find ourselves standing together on many political issues. We should be under no illusions about our relationship however, so I would be grateful if you would give this letter as much publicity as you can. Your road to socialism is not ours.

"Yours truly,

Gordon Vichert,

"Provincial Secretary"

How could Ernest Germain miss the clear line of revolutionary criticism of the NDP in *Labor Challenge* which so annoyed Gordon Vichert? Is it because the paragraph in *Labor Challenge* quoted by Vichert reflects some change in line by the LSA/LSO? Of course the LSA/LSO has learned a great deal in the course of its experience in the NDP. But there's nothing new about the LSA/LSO's revolutionary criticism of the NDP leadership, or its vigorous struggle against that leadership, inside the party and the trade unions.

The paragraph quoted by Vichert is from the Political Resolution adopted by the April 1973 convention of the LSA/LSO—a resolution which was published in February, some six weeks before Comrade Germain's document was submitted for publication in the *International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIDB)*. Although the resolution reached Comrade Germain some time after his text was first written, it would automatically have attracted his attention as an up-to-date and authoritative statement

of the LSA/LSO leadership's policy, and might have merited at least a footnote in his document.

Nor did the Political Resolution add anything new to the public positions of Canadian Trotskyism in this respect. Here, for example, is what *Labor Challenge* had to say in a front-page article by John Steele in its issue of August 21, 1972, written just one month before the offending editorial cited by Comrade Germain.

"A condition for this kind of revolutionary change however is the willingness of decisive sectors of Canada's working people to organize politically as a class, independent of and against the political parties of the ruling class, and to engage in mass action in their own interests on every level of struggle, around a class struggle program. For this a mass revolutionary party will be needed in the tradition of the party of the Russian revolution headed by Lenin and Trotsky.

"The New Democratic Party is not such a party — nor will it ever be. Fashioned and led by an entrenched leadership committed to the principle of parliamentary reform within the framework of capitalism, the NDP is not a sufficient instrument to enable the working class to mobilize in a struggle for state power with Canada's rulers."

The same issue of *Labor Challenge* contained extensive coverage of the provincial elections in British Columbia (BC), designed to present the Canadian Trotskyists' stand of critical support for the NDP in mass sales at campaign rallies. The lead article explained the limitations of the BC NDP leadership, headed by David Barrett, in the following terms:

"The outlook of the Barrett leadership is basically limited to doing 'a better job' than the other parties. They confine the NDP campaign and activity to electoral gimmicks rather than leading the party forward as a dynamic force in support of the struggles of labor, of teachers, of women, students, the native peoples. They express the social outlook of the 'labor statesmen' who see themselves not as fighters for the oppressed but as mediators between the bosses and the workers. They only want to patch up the system, not change it fundamentally. This leadership is incapable of implementing the fundamentally anticapitalist measures that are necessary to resolve the problems of working people."

Did Comrade Germain somehow overlook these passages? A long list of similar articles in other issues of *Labor Challenge* in this period could be drawn up — articles which explain the Trotskyist approach to the NDP, counterpose the Trotskyist program to that of the NDP, criticize the bankruptcy of the NDP leadership, report on efforts to organize the rank-and-file struggle against this leadership, and attack parliamentarist and reformist illusions.

Indeed the September 25 issue, criticized by Comrade Germain, is far from proposing uncritical support of the NDP. One featured article, for example, reports on the campaign of the LSA/LSO's own candidate in the general elections, running in a Montreal electoral district also contested by the NDP.

The next issue shows that the editorial board recognized the faults of the previous editorial just as did Comrade Germain, and set about correcting them. The front-page editorial of the October 9 issue on the campaign of NDP

federal leader David Lewis is headlined: "Lewis campaign: socialist answers needed," and makes a socialist critique of the NDP's program in the elections.

A similar balance sheet could be drawn up from the publications of the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes. But the conclusion is already clear. Comrade Germain's attempt to present two faulty quotations as representative of the politics of the Canadian section has no basis in fact. The political position which he condemns as "tail-ending reformism" bears no resemblance to the real positions of the section. The effect of such a false polemic can only be to mis-lead cadres who are less acquainted than he with the publications and work of the Canadian Trotskyists.

2. The Case of the Nonexistent Theory of Stages?

a) Comrade Germain's Accusation

The second point of Comrade Germain's indictment against the Canadian section is, like the first, a serious one: "tail-ending a new 'stage-theory' of the revolution." (p. 30.) Once again, the charge is based on a quotation from the Canadian Trotskyist press — this time from an article by Alain Beiner, national organizer of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Quebec wing of the LSA/LSO, discussing the split from the Canadian section of a minority tendency led by Michel Mill. (Mill, together with two members of the section and seven members of the youth movement, split in July 1972, and set up the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire — GMR.)

"Contrary to the positions of Lenin and Trotsky on the national struggle of an oppressed people," Comrade Beiner wrote, "the tendency [i.e., the Mill grouping] refused to support Quebec nationalism unconditionally. The tendency did not accept the theory of permanent revolution, formulated by Trotsky and confirmed by the Russian revolution, according to which the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation (like Quebec), owing to its dependence on world imperialism, is incapable of breaking all ties with imperialism in order to lead a national liberation struggle against foreign oppression to a successful conclusion. For the tendency, the dangers of an 'easy cooption' of nationalism and the national struggle in Quebec by the bourgeoisie and its parties outweighed the thoroughly revolutionary significance of the struggle for national emancipation." (*Libération*, Sept.-Oct. 1972, quoted by Germain, p. 30.)

This quotation, Comrade Germain would have us believe, proves that Alain Beiner and the Canadian leadership hold that the Quebec revolution will be a "revolution by stages." No further evidence is introduced to sustain the charge, or to explain it.

Yet there is not a trace of any "theory of stages" in the passage quoted. It is a *refutation* of the theory of stages. Its thesis is that there can be no "bourgeois democratic stage" of the Quebec revolution. The national bourgeoisie cannot lead the struggle for national liberation to its conclusion; the process will be one of permanent revolution.

Comrade Germain's polemic against the LSA/LSO's "theory of stages" extends over dozens of paragraphs.

His debating style is most peculiar. He makes no reference to the definitive statements of the Canadian section on this question—the resolutions of LSA/LSO conventions. Comrade Germain avoids the Stalinist technique of distorting quotations or presenting them out of context—by presenting no quotations whatsoever. He gives no evidence of the real views of the section.

His only other piece of direct evidence is a curious reference at the end of this section to a document of the LSA/LSO's pre-convention discussion:

"In its so-called 'Action Programme,' of July 1972, which the LSO leadership never officially repudiated, the reversal to a new edition of the Menshevik 'theory of stages' of the Québécois revolution is pushed to its logical extreme. The programme culminates in the demand for a 'democratic republic', complete with blueprint how to organise bourgeois democracy. . . ." (p. 32.)

This attack dissolves in the face of a few facts. Circulated to the membership in July 1972, as a draft resolution for the projected convention, the "Action Program" had not been approved by any leading body of the LSA/LSO.

It was withdrawn the same month by the Political Committee. The September plenum of the Central Committee decided to write a new document to replace it. This is the resolution which was published in November and adopted by the April 1973 convention.

Comrade Germain quotes from this resolution. Surely he has the responsibility to analyze whether it contains the errors which he has spotted in the "Action Program." Surely he has the responsibility to come to grips with the resolution put forward by the leadership of the Canadian section, rather than presenting as theirs the positions of a document which they have withdrawn and replaced.

The definitive positions of the LSA/LSO on the character of the Quebec revolution are contained in the resolutions adopted by the last three conventions of the section: "Vive le Québec Libre" (1968); "For an Independent, Socialist Quebec" (1970); and "The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec" (1973). The first two resolutions have been published in pamphlet form. The third was published internally in November 1972; Comrade Germain quotes from it in his document. It has already been published in English, in the July-August 1973 issue of the *International Socialist Review*. All three provide ready material which Comrade Germain might have quoted to test his thesis that the LSA/LSO holds a "stages theory."

The 1968 resolution explained how the national liberation struggle in Quebec is interlocked with the struggle for workers power:

"The struggle to establish the national rights of the Québécois is shaping up as a class struggle for political power, headed up by the working class. Only the mobilization of the workers and their allies against the present system, against capitalism, the real cause of the injustices, can open up the road to the national liberation of French Canada. . . .

"The only road to remove the source of [class and national] injustice is a socialist revolution. . . ." (pp. 13-14.)

The 1973 resolution builds on this analysis, arguing against the idea that Quebec's national liberation can be

achieved as part of a separate stage of the struggle, within capitalism. Here is a passage placing Quebec's struggle in the world context:

"History affords no example of capitalism's ability, following the post-World War I period, to carry the struggle for national liberation forward to victory. On the contrary, revolutionary Marxists have concluded that in our epoch, where imperialism has blocked the completion of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, they can be carried through to completion in their totality only through the victory of the socialist revolution and the establishment of workers' power—through a process of permanent revolution." (p. 39.)

The resolution later describes how national oppression, far from uniting the nation, tends to deepen class divisions. It further rejects the peculiar "stages theory" of some "periphery to center" theorists, who see the national struggle as predominant in some early stage of the struggle, before the working class gets moving, but who believe it is quickly bypassed when the class radicalizes.

"The national struggle in Quebec, far from cutting across class conflict and subordinating struggles to the interests of unity of the nation, has acted as an accelerator or catalyzer of class conflicts, laying bare the internal class divisions of the nation. The national oppression of Quebec limits the national bourgeoisie's share of the economic surplus, and requires it to move drastically to limit the workers' living conditions and democratic rights in a time of general economic crisis. At the same time, national consciousness, the revolt against national oppression, has increased the combativity of the working class and of middle layers of the population, driving them toward confrontation with imperialism, and its local agents.

"National oppression polarizes the nation, accelerating the class conflicts within Quebec society. National struggles and national demands do not disappear as the class struggle intensifies. Instead they may well come to the fore as key mobilizing issues in the workers movement." (p. 43.)

Moreover, the LSA/LSO has noted from the outset the *specific* shape of the class struggle in Quebec, and its points of difference from the struggle in countries like Algeria or Angola:

"In the classical colonial or semi-colonial countries, the class differentiation within the national movement and rise of the working class to the leading role necessary to carry the bourgeois democratic revolution through to the end via the socialist revolution is usually established only after a series of complex struggles and at a late stage in the process. Quebec however is distinguished from the classical colony by the fact that it is an industrialized area where the farmers, though impoverished, own their own land and constitute only a small part of the population, and the class antagonisms characteristic of capitalism dominate social relations, with the working class a developed, independent and powerful force." (*Vive le Québec Libre*, pp. 13-14.)

There is no sign of a "stages theory" in any of this. Nor can it be found in *Libération*, which has carried an ongoing polemic against Quebec defenders of the stages theory. In denouncing the LSO's stages theory, Comrade Germain is arguing against a product of his own imagination.

3. The LSA/LSO's Record in the 1972 Quebec Labor Upsurge

a) *Comrade Germain's Accusation*

After a lengthy digression on the theory of the permanent revolution, whose relevance to his charges is not clear, Comrade Germain returns to his theme—the tail-endist backsliding of the Canadian section. His criticisms focus on the record of the LSA/LSO in the massive upsurge of Quebec labor in April-May 1972.

His first point concerns a headline in *Libération*, monthly newspaper of the Quebec Trotskyists.

"Prisoners of their backsliding into a new version of a theory of stages, the editors of the July-August issue of *Libération* blandly present in a huge headline this issue general strike [sic] as an example of 'the struggle of the Québécois for national liberation' on the same level and in the same spirit as the 'patriots rebellion' of—1837."

At first glance, it is not clear what *Libération's* headline-writer was trying to say. It is certainly valid to point out that the coming Quebec revolution will revive the best traditions of the revolutionary struggle of the rebellion of the "patriotes," as the revolutionary current of 1837-38 called itself. We can also affirm that the coming Quebec revolution will complete the bourgeois-democratic tasks left uncompleted by the movement which culminated in 1837-38. On the other hand, it will be more than a struggle for national liberation. It will be a socialist revolution, and it will establish workers power.

It is difficult to summarize a political program in a headline. The headline in question created unnecessary confusion on this point. Still, more than an ambiguous headline is needed to prove the existence of a theory of stages. Comrade Germain seems to agree on this, for he hurries on to his next "proof."

Referring again to the massive labor upsurge of April-May 1972 in Quebec, Germain claims that "the leadership of the section stubbornly clung to the concentration on language slogans in spite of a general strike of 200,000 workers with the appearance of workers control." (p. 32.) Language slogans (such as "French as the language of work") have been the focus of many strikes in Quebec, but they played little role in the 1972 upsurge. If Comrade Germain's charge is true, the Canadian leadership would be proven to be blind to reality, and degenerated beyond hope of reform.

b) *What the LSO said in April-May 1972*

Once again, Comrade Germain provides no evidence of the LSO's stubborn "concentration on language slogans." A rapid glance at the issues of *Libération* during the upsurge is enough to disprove his contention.

Here are the front-page headlines of *Libération* during the crisis:

"Unionists of the public sector: Respond with a general strike!" (April 1972—the reference, of course, is to a "general strike" of public employees.)

"Down With Law 19! In place of the anti-union Bourassa government; a workers, and farmers government!" (May

1972—"Law 19" is the law ordering public workers back to work.)

"Free the Union Leaders! Down with Law 19!" (June 1972)

During the week of wildcat protest actions in May, about 100,000 unionists (in a nation of 7 million) were on strike at one time or another. Over twelve radio and television stations were temporarily occupied and operated under workers control. In about a dozen small cities, almost all union members were on strike. In one city, a strike committee began to displace the town council and to take control. But given the inaction of the union leadership, and its failure to give any direction or project any clear goals for the movement, it declined rapidly. The intervention of the LSO was aimed at raising demands which could help generalize and deepen the protest movement, enable it to become coordinated, and start it in motion towards a general strike. The 1973 convention resolution on Quebec reports on this:

"The Trotskyists of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière participated in the May upsurge with special issues of their newspaper and massive distribution of leaflets at union meetings and demonstrations. The LSO put forward a broad program of demands designed to overcome the inadequacy of the trade-union leadership and to lead the movement forward. This included mass demonstrations to generalize the upsurge and draw in new layers of workers; publication of a daily strike paper to counter the lies of the bourgeois press and to develop the programmatic side of the struggle; and the formation of action committees in each factory and workplace, and at a city-wide level. . . .

"The LSO also projected throughout the April-May upsurge that the unions, confronted with the Parti Québécois' craven support for the 'forces of order,' should launch a mass labor party." ("The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec," in *ISR*, July-Aug. 1973, P. 49.)

The labor upsurge was a rich experience, and much can be learned from a review of the events and the challenge they posed. However that is not what Comrade Germain has done. Rather than discuss the LSO's record, he has merely launched a slander into orbit.

4. When to Raise the Demand for Independence

a) *Comrade Germain's Brief For a Splitter*

"There is no justification for comrade Mill's group's split from the LSA/LSO," Comrade Germain informs us on page 32. "But this being said, objectivity demands to state unequivocally that Comrade Mill has been proved right against the majority leadership of the Canadian section in both instances where he differed with it on the national question. He requested the section to take up the demand for an independent Quebec several years before the leadership came around to that position. Thereafter he requested the leadership to acknowledge the dynamics of the class struggle in Quebec, which he understood correctly to be the most advanced in North America, and to combine more and more in its propaganda and its agitation socialist with national demands."

This surprising paragraph contains Comrade Germain's summary judgment in support of the group led by Michel Mill which split from the Canadian section in 1972. After having led minority currents inside the LSA/LSO for six years, Mill and his two remaining supporters in the Canadian section walked out in July 1972. Together with seven supporters in the youth organization and some supporters outside the Trotskyist movement, they constituted the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire (GMR). It has published five issues of a newspaper, *Taupe Rouge* (Red Mole), since that time.

Comrade Germain's sole proof for his second point, about the LSO's failure to "combine socialist with national demands," is a reference to its record in the 1972 labor upsurge. We have already seen that this charge is baseless. That brings us to the demand for Quebec's independence.

"In the first instance," Comrade Germain says, "the leadership of the section stubbornly refused to raise the independence slogan till the very eve of the outbreak of an independentist mass movement." He contrasts this to what he claims to be the record of Mill, and concludes: "Should the main distinctive quality of communists inside the mass movement not be the one to understand and spell out the direction in which the movement has to develop because of its objective logic, and the historical class interests which it represents. . . ." (P. 32.)

A look at the record shows that the debate on the slogan of independence followed an opposite course to that suggested by Germain, and that the position of the Mill grouping was clearly opposed to the long-standing position of Trotskyism.

b) *For 'Separation—if it is the Will of the Majority'*

The LSA/LSO decided to raise the demand for the independence of Quebec only in 1970, when several developments, particularly the massive vote in Quebec elections for the bourgeois pro-independence Parti Québécois, indicated a qualitative increase in support for independence among the Québécois masses. Previously, advocates of independence had been a minority current in the Quebec nationalist movement—a current particularly weak in its working-class contingents. The 1970 convention resolution argued as follows:

"The workers party defends unconditionally the democratic *right* to self-determination for all oppressed nations, up to and including their right to separate. But whether socialists in an oppressed nation like Quebec should demand political independence depends on how we see the direction of the struggle unfolding, and above all on whether the mass of the population in the oppressed nation shows a clear inclination to mobilize in support of the demand for political independence in its struggle for national emancipation.

"Where the struggle is clearly orienting toward political independence, the international workers party has always been the foremost defender of the independence movement." (*For an Independent and Socialist Quebec*, P. 10.)

The Canadian section's reasoning was firmly founded in the established positions of Trotskyism. For example, Trotsky dealt with this question with respect to the Catalan

nationality in Spain:

"Even on national questions the proletariat defends the democratic slogans to the hilt, declaring that it is ready to support by revolutionary means the right of self-determination, even to the point of separation. But does the proletarian vanguard itself raise the slogan of the secession of Catalonia? If it is the will of the majority, yes; but how can this be expressed? Obviously, by means of a free plebiscite, or an assembly of Catalan representatives, or by the parties that are supported by the Catalan masses, or even by a Catalan national revolt. Again we see, let us note in passing, what reactionary pedantry it would be for the proletariat to renounce democratic slogans. Meanwhile, as long as the national minority has not expressed its will, the proletariat itself will not adopt the slogan of separation, but it pledges openly in advance, its complete and sincere support to this slogan in the event that it should express the will of Catalonia." (*The Spanish Revolution, 1931-39*, Pp. 60-61.)

The position of the Mill grouping was outlined in a 1966 document, "The Reconquest of Quebec." Mill predicated his position on Quebec independence on the belief that the national bourgeoisie had set its course for independence and had sufficient power and leverage to achieve its goal relatively rapidly. Given this fact, revolutionists had to act to prevent the national bourgeoisie from co-opting the workers movement. Therefore, Mill continued, Trotskyists had to accept independence as the framework for the demand for workers power. Our central slogan would then be: "For a workers' republic of Quebec."

Mill's position of 1966 contradicts that of Trotsky. Mill did not wait until it was clear that independence was the will of the working masses of Quebec. For him it was sufficient to assert that independence was the will of the Quebec bourgeoisie, and was within its grasp.

Since the Mill group split from the Canadian section over one year ago, it has not carried a single article in its newspaper discussing the national question. It has not raised a single democratic demand related to the national struggle. In no way has it "taken up the demand for an independent Quebec."

Mill's position since 1972 rejects Trotsky's admonition to "defend the democratic slogans to the hilt," with respect to the national struggle. Far from defending them, he ignores them.

Comrade Germain believes that we should have been able to "understand and spell out the direction in which the movement has to develop because of its objective logic, and the historical class interests which it represents." (P. 32.) Therefore, we should have been able to foresee that the masses would raise the demand for independence, and thus raise it ourselves, presumably *before* it corresponded to the will of the masses.

The LSA/LSO certainly has understood from the start that the objective logic of the class struggle in Quebec will drive it toward striving to eliminate Quebec's national oppression. It has therefore raised a series of democratic demands which correspond to this "objective logic," centered on Quebec's right to self-determination. But why does this "objective logic" require that self-determination be realized through independence, rather than through integration, federation, national autonomy, etc.?

Marxists do not hold that there is any inherent merit in separation—or in federation, integration, or any of the other options through which national self-determination can be expressed. In Palestine, we support *integration* of both nationalities within one state, because it is the will of the oppressed nation. In Quebec, we support *separation*, because it is the will of the Québécois, the oppressed. These demands have become the concrete expression of the demand of the oppressed nationality for self-determination.

How were we supposed to argue the case for Quebec independence in 1966, when the substantial majority of Quebec nationalists and working-class militants still opposed this demand? Were we to say that independence was necessary because of the backwardness of English Canadian workers? That independence is inherently superior, because every nationality needs its own state? That only through independence can national rights be achieved? Or perhaps, as Mill proposed, that we should support independence because the national bourgeoisie was headed that way?

This course only leads us to the trap set by the ideologists of petit-bourgeois nationalism. It leads us to argue the case for independence on fallacious grounds rooted in petit-bourgeois nationalist illusions, rather than on the firm grounds of the class struggle. Marxists argue for Quebec independence because it is the concrete form today of the struggle against national oppression and for self-determination. They cannot argue for independence until it has become the expression of the demand for self-determination for decisive layers of the oppressed masses.

An objective logic presses Québécois to fight for self-determination—the logic of national oppression. What "objective logic" led them to opt for independence? At other periods of Quebec history, the demand for self-determination has taken quite different forms. Mass support for Quebec independence has appeared in this century only in the past decade. Should we have foreseen it in 1966, or perhaps in 1945, or in 1917? If we had foreseen it in 1917, would we have raised the demand for independence then, because it corresponded to a development of the class struggle going to take place some decades later? Demanding Quebec independence before it corresponds to the will of the oppressed masses has nothing to do with the tasks of a vanguard party. This position is based on a methodological error, which has been encountered in other aspects of the positions of the IEC Majority Tendency. It consists of calling on us to put at the center of our program *today* demands and methods of struggle which correspond to a situation thought likely to exist at some point in the *future*, but which do not correspond to today's conditions.

c) *Comrade Mandel Corrects Comrade Germain's Error*

At least one staunch supporter of the IEC Majority Tendency has correctly presented the Marxist method for determining our position on independence of oppressed nations. Comrade Ernest Mandel, in a presentation to the Montreal Branch of the LSO, on Dec. 21, 1971, discussed the nationalism of the Wallonian workers in Belgium,

which developed after the defeat of the Belgian general strike of 1961. He explained how Belgian Trotskyists developed their program on the question:

"The Walloon workers came out of this strike with a feeling of frustration, and there was a very, very rapid, and very, very sharp development of national consciousness. Since that time, the majority of the Walloon working class—this may well shock you Québécois—is federalist. This is because Belgium is a unitary state, and by comparison with the centralized unitary state, federalism seems the most sensible solution for the management of their affairs. Well, we supported this movement on the basis of general principles, because we are clearly partisans of the right of nationalities to self-determination. We do not impose separation on those who do not want it. The day when the Walloon workers demand separation, we will support them. Right now they demand federalism, so we support the movement for federalism."

The IEC Majority Tendency can correct the error of Comrade Germain by adopting the position of Comrade Mandel on the conditions for our raising the demand for separation.

5. Are Canadian Trotskyists 'Tail-Ending' Petit-Bourgeois Nationalism?

a) *Comrade Germain's Accusation*

The quotation from *Libération* which served as a phantom basis for Comrade Germain's assault on Canadian Trotskyist "Menshevism" is enlisted again in the next section of his document, to sustain the view that the Canadian section is supporting petit-bourgeois nationalism. This time, a single sentence is sufficient evidence for his charge. Comrade Beiner said that the "positions of Lenin and Trotsky on the national struggle of an oppressed people" implied the need "to support Quebec nationalism unconditionally." (Quoted by Comrade Germain, p. 30.)

For Comrade Germain, this is quickly refuted. "Nationalism," he explains, "is an ideology, the ideology of national solidarity irrespective of regional, ethnic or social differences. . . . With the epoch of imperialism, nationalism, *as a rule* becomes reactionary," and is universally counterposed to the concepts of proletarian class independence and internationalism. (Pp. 32-33, emphasis in original.)

And since the LSA/LSO supports "nationalism" in Quebec, it is therefore tail-ending petit-bourgeois class-collaborationist ideology. What could be simpler? The logic is iron-clad, and excludes any appeal to the facts—either the facts about the Quebec national struggle or about the LSO's role in it.

But what was Alain Beiner talking about when he spoke of supporting Quebec "nationalism"? Did he really mean we should support the ideology of national solidarity irrespective of class differences? Let us take a closer look at what Comrade Beiner meant.

b) *What the LSA/LSO Means by Supporting Quebec Nationalism*

The LSA/LSO convention discussion on nationalism was based on an unambiguous definition of national-

ism, and of the conditions where nationalism has a progressive character. The convention resolution on Canadian nationalism, "Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism," puts it this way:

"In general terms, nationalism is an identification with the integrity, independence, values, culture or language of the nation; the belief that the nation as a whole has common problems, goals or tasks; and the concept that a struggle or common endeavor in pursuit of these goals is called for. . . .

"Nationalism has a progressive character only where it promotes the struggle against real aspects of national oppression suffered by a people—that is, where it corresponds to real national tasks (winning of national independence, establishment of the national language, etc.) left unachieved by the bourgeois revolution, and which can now be achieved in their totality only through socialist revolution. In such struggles of oppressed nationalities, the working class does not develop a 'different' nationalism from the bourgeoisie. Rather it is the most thoroughgoing and revolutionary advocate of the full achievement of the tasks of national emancipation, and has the most consistent interest in carrying through such tasks. In contrast, in imperialist nations where such tasks are already realized, nationalism serves only the bourgeoisie." (*International Socialist Review*, July-August 1973, P. 25.)

So defined, "nationalism" encompasses the Québécois' consciousness of national oppression, identification with the struggle against this oppression, and desire for national independence. These ideas cannot be reduced to the common denominator of the "ideology of national solidarity," which serves as Comrade Germain's definition. At first glance it seems that Comrade Beiner and Comrade Germain are talking about different things when they speak of Quebec nationalism.

Secondly, the progressive character of the nationalism of the oppressed is defined in a specific context: the struggle against national oppression. Comrade Beiner elaborated on this point in his report on Quebec at the LSA/LSO's April convention:

"Our complete support to Quebec nationalism is explicitly limited to whatever is democratic and anti-imperialist in content, and is directed against national oppression and national inequality.

"It is this democratic content that gives the nationalism of an oppressed nation its progressive and revolutionary content. This democratic content of this nationalism outweighs the reactionary ideas which some nationalists may hold."

Revolutionary Marxists support unconditionally the struggle of an oppressed nation against their oppression, regardless of the leadership which may head up this struggle or the demands it may thrust forward at any given time. Marxists support the nationalism of an oppressed nation which is directed against the oppressor, and thus serves to promote the class struggle. This context is clearly presented in the brief sentence of Comrade Beiner quoted by Comrade Germain. Comrade Beiner advocates support for Quebec nationalism in a specific context, that of "the national struggle of an oppressed people."

c) *The Test of Practice*

There remains the question of substance. Does the Canadian section actually make concessions in its work

to the pressure of petit-bourgeois nationalists? Germain makes no effort to demonstrate this. In fact the polemic against the bourgeois nationalist "ideology of class solidarity" is a prominent theme of the propaganda of the Quebec Trotskyists, as a glance at a few issues of *Libération* will quickly show.

Almost alone of all left political groupings in Quebec, the LSO opposed the mass bourgeois nationalist party, the Parti Québécois, from its foundation in 1966. The LSO ran a candidate against the Parti Québécois in the 1970 provincial elections. Opposition to the class-collaborationist "nationalism" promoted most successfully in Quebec by the Parti Québécois is a constant and prominent theme of the propaganda of the Canadian section. The following is an example from the time of the 1972 labor upsurge, the period chosen by Comrade Germain to provide two of his examples of capitulation to "Menshevism":

"The workers cannot sacrifice their interests to those of another class. They cannot permit themselves to be duped by the facile demagoguery of the leaders of the Parti Québécois, who speak of the 'need to unite all classes in Quebec against English-Canada,' and to 'overcome conflicts among the classes'—because the PQ aims, once it takes office, to call on the workers to be quiet and patient, to continue to go to work as usual, in order to avoid, 'excesses' and 'disorder.'" (*Libération*, April 1972)

Quebec's dynamic labor movement has yet to find expression in any mass political formation, be it Stalinist, social-democratic, centrist or revolutionary. The unions remain chained by their leadership's support (overt or back-handed) for the bourgeois Parti Québécois. In this context, the choice between support for the PQ or for independent labor political action has become an acid test of every political current. This test has revealed more than a few genuine "tail-endists" among those who call themselves revolutionists and socialists. The Quebec resolution published in November 1972 and adopted by the April convention spoke of them:

"'Socialists' like Pierre Vallières and some 'left' union leaders have openly capitulated to the bourgeois PQ under the pretext that it is necessary to unite all social classes in Quebec within a single party capable of winning the 'first stage,' which is independence, a stage isolated from the class struggle and the struggle for socialism. They ignore the social content of the struggle for national liberation, and the fact that the class struggle is indeed the driving force of the national struggle, the force upon which depends the struggle for national rights against the imperialist system.

"In the epoch of imperialism, a national liberation struggle can only be genuinely solved by means of a mass struggle led by the working class as an independent political force, resulting in the establishment of a workers' state. At the same time as it expels imperialism, a workers' state proceeds necessarily to break up capitalist property relations within the nation. Instead of preparing the Québécois working class for this indispensable vanguard role during the national struggle, the support that these 'socialists' give to a bourgeois party can only disarm the workers and drag them into the mire of class collaboration and into a state of dependence upon the bourgeoisie. This smothers for a whole period the revolutionary capacity of the working class and thus con-

tributes to the betrayal of the national struggle." ("The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec," *ISR*, July-August 1973, P. 56.)

There have been no lack of "tail-endists" and capitulators to the pressure of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois class-collaborationist nationalism in Quebec. The Canadian section has not been found in this current. It has been its firmist opponent.

6. Comrade Germain 'Tail-Ends' the Discussion on Canadian Nationalism

a) Comrade Germain's accusation

Comrade Germain begins the fourth and final section of his critique of the "tail-endism" of the Canadian section by granting us a glimpse of what he terms "an extraordinary spectacle": "Within the space of a month," he writes, "the Central Committee of the Canadian section, the LSA/LSO, first nearly unanimously adopted the general line of a political resolution expressing support for 'Canadian nationalism' as against 'US domination of Canada', and then rejected the very same line by an overwhelming majority." (p. 35.)

The pages which follow present in themselves "an extraordinary spectacle": Comrade Germain convicts the *majority* of the Canadian leadership on the basis of positions held by a *minority*, positions against which the majority had mounted a vigorous attack over the months previous to the writing of his document.

Comrade Germain argues strongly against the view, which was defended in the Canadian section by Comrade Ross Dowson, as well as a number of other comrades, that there can be a progressive nationalism in imperialist Canada. In conclusion, he writes, "Comrade Dowson's grave mistakes on the question of Canadian nationalism flow from the wrong method used by the majority of the Canadian section's leadership in determining its position on Québécois nationalism, too,—a method of tail-ending mass moods, instead of starting from an assessment of the dynamics of class relations and class struggle." (p. 37.)

In Comrade Germain's view, the majority leadership of the Canadian section employs a method of "tail-ending mass moods," a method which led, straight as an arrow, to the position that Canadian nationalism is progressive. Yet Comrade Germain tells us exactly nothing about the dispute in the Canadian section over this question, despite the fact that the majority resolution and the main minority rebuttal were published well before his document was completed.

Such an examination would provide an objective test of his criticisms of the LSA/LSO's "wrong method." Has the majority leadership succeeded in correcting the error satisfactorily? Does the majority leadership use a correct method in developing its position of opposition to Canadian nationalism? How did the membership—presumably educated in the method of "opportunist tail-endism"—react in the debate? How did the majority leadership explain the source of the error? Comrade Germain neither asks nor answers such questions.

Comrade Germain argues forcefully against support of Canadian nationalism. He fails, however, to mention

that his position generally coincides with the position of the majority leadership of the Canadian section, as expressed in its resolution, "Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism." In fact he does not even mention the existence of this resolution, published two months before his document was written.

b) *The Real Debate in the LSA/LSO*

The resolution "Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism" was adopted by the delegates at the Canadian section's April 1973 convention by a vote of 39 for, 5 against, with 9 abstentions. Eight of the abstentions came from the delegates supporting the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, the supporters in the Canadian section of the IEC Majority Tendency.

A good summary of the counterposed views in the Canadian nationalism debate is to be found in the article on the LSA/LSO convention in *Intercontinental Press*, May 21, 1973. This account fills a yawning gap in Comrade Germain's polemic, and is worth reproducing.

"An important development in Canada in recent years has been the development of Canadian nationalism, much of it directed against the growing weight and influence of U.S. capital in the Canadian economy. This wave of anti-U.S. feeling has had a big impact in the left. In the province of Ontario, the main industrial center of the country, the mass left wing in the NDP split last year, and a large number of militants abandoned organized work in the labor party in order to build a nationalist 'Movement for an Independent Socialist Canada.'

"Much of the preconvention discussion was devoted to analyzing this phenomenon of English-Canadian nationalism and how revolutionary socialists should approach it so as to promote anticapitalist consciousness.

"The Political Committee position was presented by John Riddell, executive secretary of the LSA/LSO. His report, based on the PC's draft resolution, 'Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism,' reaffirmed the validity of the traditional Leninist position of opposition to nationalism in imperialist, oppressor nations.

"[The resolution] noted that while U. S. capital now owns an absolute majority of the assets of Canadian secondary manufacturing and mining industries, and holds a substantial share in some other sectors, this process has not altered the fundamental character of Canadian capitalism or the Canadian state. The Canadian ruling class is an imperialist bourgeoisie, with highly monopolized holdings concentrated in Canada. It is in firm control of the Canadian state, and uses that state power to defend its class interests, distinct from those of the U. S. and other bourgeoisies, and uses the Canadian state as an instrument to defend them. Its national interests include defending the interests of Canadian capitalism as best it can against its imperialist competitors.

"In imperialist nations, which suffer no national oppression and where there are therefore no national tasks, nationalism can only play a reactionary role, blunting the cutting edge of the class struggle. The Canadian bourgeoisie employs nationalist demagoguery in support of its negotiating positions in its conflicts with U. S. imperialism, to rally workers in defense of wage controls or in sup-

port of federal repression in Québec, to help detour developing class consciousness and to fracture the organization of workers along class lines.

"Since no 'national' tasks exist in English Canada, its nationalism does not correspond to any objective needs of the working class and its allies, and there is no basis for revolutionary Marxists to support or identify with Canadian nationalism.

"On the contrary, they must combat nationalist illusions in the working class. Where workers voice their social indignation in a nationalist form, revolutionary socialists must put forward a class-struggle program which can draw out whatever anticapitalist sentiments and real class interests are represented in this nationalism and direct their struggle against the Canadian ruling class, 'the enemy at home.'

"The reporter held that the establishment of a correct theoretical framework, through the adoption of the Political Committee resolution, would lay the basis for further progress both in the study of the specific relationship of Canadian capitalism to U. S. and world imperialism, and in the working out of a correct line of tactical intervention.

"A minority tendency, formed primarily around the question of Canadian nationalism, held that a 'new nationalism' had appeared with an essentially anticapitalist thrust — a unique phenomenon based on popular reaction against the 'domination' of important sectors of the Canadian economy by U. S. capital. This view was rejected by the delegates in a vote of 5 for, 48 against, 0 abstentions."

The views of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT) evolved during the debate. Their initial document, "The RCT Position on the Nationalism Debate," by Murray Smith, gave critical support to the Political Committee resolution. While making a number of criticisms, it praised the resolution as "in many respects one of the best documents that has been produced by the Canadian left" on the question. The line of this document seemed close to that of the Political Committee — and the line later contained in Comrade Germain's document.

Two months later, in April 1973, the Political Counter-Resolution of the RCT, while affirming the reactionary character of Canadian nationalism, put forward a somewhat different view. It was summarized by Dick Fidler as follows: "On Canadian nationalism, the RCT denounced the majority for what it termed their 'ultra-left-abstract calls of 'workers of the world unite'. It held that Canadian nationalism is mainly confined to the liberal petty bourgeoisie, that the working class is 'relatively indifferent' to it, that the bourgeoisie has little use for nationalism 'because its main thrust is directed against the project to which the bourgeoisie is most committed, the further integration of the North American economy', and that if the bourgeoisie were to promote nationalism at some time in the future, its clearly reactionary use as a defense of the existing order would be unlikely to win it mass support." (*Intercontinental Press*, May 21, 1973, Pp. 607-8.)

Comrade Germain's document paints a more ominous

and more accurate picture of the danger of nationalism in Canada, mentioning in particular that it may be used by the bourgeoisie in a "De Gaullist" manner. Perhaps he will wish to revise his position in the light of the contribution of his Canadian supporters.

Comrade Germain identifies a "somewhat disturbing formal aspect" in this debate. This refers to the fact — as he tells it — that the Central Committee first nearly unanimously adopted the line of a resolution supporting "Canadian nationalism" and then rejected the same line three weeks later. It is true that the Canadian leadership made an error, and rapidly corrected it; Comrade Germain records the other facts incorrectly.

A draft Political Resolution was published in July 1972, by an editing commission set up by the LSA/LSO's Political Committee. This draft contained the incorrect view that anti-U. S. "Canadian nationalism" is progressive. While published in the name of the Central Committee, the draft was not placed before any leading body of the movement before publication. This error in leadership functioning contributed to aggravating a political problem.

The publication of this document at the beginning of July immediately set loose a heated discussion in the Central Committee. The Political Committee (not the Central Committee) responded to the development of this discussion by taking a stand, by a divided vote, for a statement arguing that Canadian nationalism could be progressive. Three weeks later it reversed its stand, repudiating the pro-Canadian nationalist position.

What are the "disturbing formal aspects" of this process? Would it be less "disturbing" to Comrade Germain if the error was left uncorrected?

When the Central Committee met in September, it supported the Political Committee's stand in reaffirming the LSA/LSO's longstanding opposition to Canadian nationalism. It further called on the Political Committee to prepare a fundamental document on the whole question, which could initiate the debate in the ranks.

This document was published in November. The membership debate proceeded for five months. Tendencies were formed around the two main contending positions. Twenty-eight written contributions on the topic were distributed for the membership. Representatives of both points of view toured the branches to defend their opinions. The thoroughness of the discussion permitted a decisive resolution of the question through the vote of convention delegates. The discussion was an example of how to handle the emergence of serious political differences in a leadership.

The test of a leadership is not infallibility, but the capacity, when an error is made, to correct it quickly and effectively. By this test, the Canadian section has every reason for pride in its handling of the question of Canadian nationalism.

Where, in this entire record, is the "tail-endist method" of the Canadian leadership? Comrade Germain's attempt to pin a pro-Canadian-nationalist position on the Canadian leadership has no foundation in fact. The record of the debate tells a far different story.

II. TOWARD DISCUSSING THE REAL ISSUES

Comrade Germain's polemic against the Canadian section directs its attack at false issues, and misrepresents the positions of the LSA/LSO. Nonetheless, it touches on several real issues which have posed major theoretical challenges to Canadian Trotskyists. If Comrade Germain's attack has any positive effect, it will be in encouraging an examination of some achievements of the Canadian section which are of general importance to the world movement.

Quebec nationalism is only a particularly acute example of the rising national struggles seen in many imperialist countries. The New Democratic Party is not the only mass reformist workers party whose internal struggles and internal contradictions pose a sharp challenge to Trotskyists. Parallels to the rise of Canadian nationalism can be found in the nationalist demagoguery associated with the struggle against the Common Market in many European countries, and the agitation against foreign ownership in Australia.

If discussion of these problems has proceeded faster in Canada, this is in part due to the more acute form in which these questions have been posed in the Canadian class struggle.

When the misdirected charges and false issues of Comrade Germain's polemic are swept aside, we are left with a number of important questions. His opinions on issues of the Canadian class struggle carry weight, since the IEC Majority Tendency has incorporated them as part of its general line for the Fourth International.

The second part of this contribution will examine six of these issues, each of which raises questions worthy of further discussion. These questions can be summed up as follows:

1. Should Canadian Trotskyists use the tactic of critical support of the New Democratic Party, the labor party formation in Canada? What concrete form should this tactic assume under Canadian conditions?

2. Is it conceivable that Quebec's national oppression can be ended within the capitalist framework? Are the basic concepts of the theory of permanent revolution, as applied to colonial and semi-colonial countries, applicable to Quebec? Can Quebec break free of foreign imperialist domination without socialist revolution?

3. How should revolutionary Marxists raise democratic demands directed against national oppression in Quebec? How should they proceed in integrating these demands into their broader socialist propaganda?

4. Should separate national sections of the Fourth International be established in oppressed nations like Quebec?

5. What is the significance of the massive holdings of U. S. imperialism within the Canadian economy? Is Canada headed toward becoming a semi-colony?

6. How do we determine whether the national struggles of the Québécois, or of English Canadians, can have a progressive character?

1. Some Starting Points for an NDP Debate

a) *Is the NDP a "Labor Party"?*

The orientation of the LSA/LSO to the NDP is a response to a major problem before Canadian Trotskyists: how to destroy the massive obstacle posed before the growth of the revolutionary vanguard party by the social-democratic leadership of the English Canadian labor movement.

In historic terms, the NDP is a detour for the English-Canadian working class. While the formation of a mass labor party was a historic step forward, the absence of a revolutionary vanguard organization with mass working-class influence permitted the establishment of a labor party which was social-democratic in character.

The first steps by a significant layer of Canadian unions away from their traditional abstention from independent political action took place only in the 1940's. The NDP is an even more recent development, founded only 12 years ago. While it lacks roots in Quebec, in English Canada it is the only mass political organization of the working class. It has some 75,000 direct and 300,000 affiliated members, and receives about 25 percent of the popular vote in English Canada. Its nearest rival on the left, the pro-Moscow Communist Party, probably has fewer than 1,000 active members, and receives an average of less than one percent of the vote in those electoral districts which it contests.

While firmly controlled and shaped from the outset by a social-democratic bureaucracy, whose social base is the bureaucratic layer at the head of the trade unions, the NDP has reflected in its ranks and in its conventions almost the entire range of left political opinion in the organized labor movement. The right-wing leadership is relatively united. But it has faced recurrent challenges from rank-and-file based left-wing oppositions, in which the Canadian Trotskyists have played a prominent and leading role. Their intransigence has led to repeated waves of expulsions of Trotskyist militants.

The LSA/LSO has termed the NDP a "labor party." Its use of the term is based on Trotsky's exposition of the meaning of the labor party demand in America.

In his discussions of the transitional program with comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, Trotsky pointed to three ways in which mass working-class political parties have been constituted. One of these is the formation of such a party by the trade unions, seen for example in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The term "labor party" has been used to describe parties of this type. In the United States, in Quebec, and in English Canada prior to 1961, Trotskyists have raised the demand for a labor party, under certain conditions, to point to the need for the working class and its allies to break with bourgeois political parties and build their own political

instrument.

Canadian Trotskyists' designation of the New Democratic Party as a "labor party" emphasizes the NDP's working-class base, and its character as the sole mass political party of the trade unions. The term helps explain the great step forward for the Canadian working class represented by the formation of the NDP in 1961.

Comrade Germain makes no direct comment on the significance of the formation and consolidation of the NDP over the last decade. But he alludes to it when he writes, "We are not dealing here with a hypothetical Labor Party, arising from a young rebellious and still partially democratic trade-union upsurge, similar to the one Trotsky projected in the late Thirties for the USA in relation to the rise of the C. I. O." (P. 27.)

Comrade Germain's comment is correct. The NDP was formed on the initiative of the labor bureaucracy in a period of relative quiescence of the labor movement. But the kind of labor party to which Comrade Germain refers was only one of three possibilities for a labor party projected by Trotsky, in a discussion on the transitional program in 1938. Another of the three variants he mentions describes the New Democratic Party very accurately:

"Then it can be a labor party created in a less critical period, in less turmoil, in rather calm conditions, quiet conditions, with the predominance of the conservative reactionary leaders, with a more or less centralized machine which will keep us out as a party. Then, of course, we continue existing as a party outside such an opportunistic party, and we consider only the possibility of penetrating such a labor party—but as a party we remain outside such a centralized opportunistic labor party." ("Three Possibilities with a Labor Party," *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, p. 155.)

Trotsky's definition provides a good starting point for a concrete analysis of the contradictory character of the NDP, and its contradictory and complex relationship to the struggle of the Canadian working class. Comrade Germain's polemic fails to indicate the road toward such an analysis.

b) *Critical Support to the NDP?*

Comrade Germain expresses no opinion on whether the LSA/LSO is correct to utilize the tactic of critical support to the NDP. The question has international significance, all the more in the framework of the debates over critical support to social democratic parties, and the class character of social democratic parties, which have developed in several sections of the Fourth International, including the British, French and German sections.

The LSA/LSO holds that the tactic of critical support to non-Trotskyist currents in elections is limited to candidates or parties who represent currents within the working class movement, or whose candidature represents a step toward independent working-class political action. There is no principled basis for critical support to candidates of bourgeois political parties, or of class-collaborationist electoral alliances, no matter how these candidates are viewed by the working class. This question has provoked some discussion in the Fourth International: for example over whether we should give critical support

to the French "Union of the Left," or to Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile.

As a social democratic party, the NDP has a pro-capitalist, bourgeois *program*. This fundamental characteristic has led Leninists to refer to social-democratic parties as "bourgeois parties," reserving the designation "proletarian" for parties with a revolutionary Marxist program.

At the same time, the NDP, like other social-democratic parties, is a current within the labor movement. Its leadership is a petit-bourgeois bureaucratic layer whose base is the trade-union bureaucracy. Its composition, in terms of membership, financing, and voting base, is working class and rooted in the union movement. Representatives of affiliated unions, moreover, have a commanding voice in party councils. As a party which is working class in its *composition* and social base, the NDP stands in contradiction to the parties of the bourgeoisie. Its contest against these parties, to use Comrade Germain's phrase, "takes the objective character of a class confrontation." (*Quatrième Internationale*, mai-août 1973, p. 59.) This decisive characteristic has led Leninists to speak of the "working-class character" of parties like the NDP, to refer to them as "parties of the workers movement" or as "workers parties."

The analysis of the NDP as a party of the working class is the principled basis for critical support of the NDP.

Comrade Germain warns us against leading the masses closer to "the reformist fakers, the labor lieutenants of capital (to whom our comrades in Canada now refer to, for shame, as 'the party of the working people!')" (P. 27.)

The passage draws an equal sign between the character of the reformist *leadership* of the NDP and the character of the *party*. It glosses over the contradiction between the petit-bourgeois character of the leadership and the working-class composition of the party. Comrade Germain agrees, we assume, that the NDP is a party of the working class movement, in terms of its composition, its social roots, and the historic roots of its social-democratic leadership. The Young Socialists leaflet-writer, in attempting to popularize this concept by terming the NDP "a party of the working people," chose a poor formulation. Nonetheless the phrase attempted to express a correct and vital idea: the difference between the class character of the NDP and the parties of the bourgeoisie.

c) *Does Critical Support Help Win the Vanguard?*

Comrade Germain proposes some criteria to enable us to judge whether critical support is an appropriate tactic. He tells us that Lenin specifies that the task of critical support to social-democratic candidates "poses itself especially when it is a question of winning a majority of the workers to a communist party which has already set itself upon the road to such conquest. He underlined that *before* setting upon that course, it is imperative to assemble, steel, and educate the vanguard." (P. 27.)

It would seem from this that the tactic of critical support is appropriate once the revolutionary vanguard has completed the process of assembling and winning the "vanguard," and after it has constituted itself as a *party* with

some degree of mass influence.

The LSA/LSO has evolved its position on a different basis. First, we do not see how any "vanguard" can be assembled, educated or steered in Canada today except in struggle against social-democratic reformism. This means not only propagandistic critiques, but the active engagement of the revolutionary organization in the struggle against the NDP bureaucracy unfolding in the NDP and the other mass organizations of the labor movement. Critical support of the NDP is a correct tool for this job.

We are very small. We cannot yet contest directly against the NDP for the adherence of the majority of the workers. These facts are added arguments in favor of the tactic of critical support, not against it, as Comrade Germain seems to say. The smallness of our forces makes critical support of the NDP all the more useful in this state, in seeking the road to the masses, and educating advanced workers and radicalized youth in principled Leninist politics.

Comrade Germain's criteria might be interpreted as signifying that the tactic of critical support to mass working-class parties is wrong during a period when the main party-building orientation is "winning hegemony in the vanguard." Such an interpretation would lead to precisely the wrong conclusion about how small revolutionary organizations should go about winning the support of the most advanced layers of youth and worker militants.

Comrade Germain does not state the source of the quotation from Lenin. In the one passage in *Left Wing Communism* to which it might refer, Lenin calls on British Communists to unite their four weak parties into a single Communist Party, on the basis of the principles of the Third International, before proposing an election agreement to the Labor Party. (*Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 431, English edition.) If this is indeed the source of his reference to Lenin, then Comrade Germain has taken Lenin's *specific* advice for British Communists in 1920 and converted it into a *general* formula for Trotskyists today in all countries. In so doing, he substitutes the word "vanguard" for the word "party.")

d) *Why the LSA/LSO Opposes Entrism Sui Generis*

"Then, of course, we continue existing as a party outside such an opportunistic party, and we consider only the possibility of penetrating such a labor party—but as a party we remain outside." In these words, Trotsky describes the framework for the present orientation of the LSA/LSO to the NDP. This orientation consists of critical support to the NDP as the mass political party of the English Canadian labor movement. It is not an "entry" into the NDP. It entails the work of a portion of LSA members ("fraction work") inside the NDP, and an orientation of intervening in the politics of the NDP and the labor movement through independent activity outside the NDP: independent propaganda, independent mass campaigns on particular issues, and all the public activity of the LSA. Thus we intervene in the politics of the NDP both within the NDP, within the unions, and from the outside. The balance of the different sides of this work depends on the political conjuncture. Its aim is not to build a centrist or left-centrist current in the NDP. Its aim is to increase the working-class influence and build the cadres of the Canadian Trotskyist movement.

The vicissitudes of the class struggle have on occasion

obliged Trotskyist groups to carry out entries into mass parties, in which they have given up part of their public face for a short period. But as a rule, the political independence of the revolutionary movement, which Lenin insisted on as a condition of the tactic of "critical support," finds expression in concentrated efforts to strengthen the public face of the Trotskyist movement: its press, its meetings, its headquarters, its independent intervention in its own name in the class struggle. These are the means at our disposal for public expression of our line of revolutionary criticism of the social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders.

It is ironic that Comrade Germain should attack the Canadian section for lacking such political independence vis-à-vis the NDP. The Canadian section has centered its work on the building of a strong public face of revolutionary Marxism, including during the hard days of the 1950's. The successes of this line contrast with the disastrous record of entrism *sui generis* in Canada. ("Our Orientation to the NDP," by Ross Dowson, in *IIDB* Vol. VIII, No. 6, sets down a record of the struggle of the Canadian section against this erroneous line, as it was applied in Canada.)

More relevant material for the discussion of the need to maintain an effective public expression of revolutionary Marxism could surely be found in the experience of the many sections, in Europe and elsewhere, which *did* carry out entrism *sui generis* over a period of almost two decades. In contrast to the approach of the Canadian section, this approach entailed, among other things, closing down or drastically cutting back the public work of the sections. The Canadian section substantially increased its forces during the 1950's and early 1960's. European sections, practicing entrism *sui generis*, lost valuable opportunities and cadres through their entry experiment.

An examination of this experience is all the more pressing since the IEC Majority Tendency has asked the Fourth International to approve and underwrite entrism *sui generis*, as part of the line of the European perspectives resolution.

e) *The Real Debate in Canada*

Comrade Germain's document, submitted for publication three weeks before the April convention of the Canadian section, bore little relationship to the discussion under way in Canada, a discussion which of necessity dealt with the real policies of the LSA/LSO, rather than with its imaginary "errors."

The Political Resolution, adopted by a 75 percent majority of convention delegates, described the work of Trotskyists in the NDP in these terms:

"Revolutionary Marxists give critical support to the NDP as the elemental class alternative to the parties of the bourgeoisie, while giving no support to its reformist program and leadership. They join the NDP, and intervene in it, in order to go through the experience of struggle against reformism in the NDP along with the working class, to participate in the battles and political differentiation which takes place within the NDP, to promote the building of a class struggle caucus, and to win forces to the revolutionary vanguard organization. . . .

"The intervention of revolutionary socialists in the NDP

would have no purpose if it aimed only to recruit a revolutionary faction, or to build a caucus which merely brought together members of different quarreling revolutionary groups. Our aim is more ambitious—to provide a program for the broad struggle against the bureaucratic right wing leadership, and for a socialist course, and to lead this struggle in action. Such a caucus will be built around a platform of key democratic and transitional demands." (reprinted in *Labor Challenge*, July 23, 1973.)

Canadian supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency, organized in the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT), vigorously contested this perspective. The RCT held that the "NDP has a minimum implantation in the proletariat as a party. . . . Its hold over the loyalty and consciousness of the masses is extremely weak," and predicted a coming split between the leadership of the party and the trade-union leadership. Rising working-class militancy would soon break free of the NDP framework. The majority believed this to be mere wishful thinking. It is not likely that the social-democratic obstacle, like the walls of Jericho, is about to crumble before our eyes.

The RCT also proposed that instead of striving to build a broad class-struggle opposition in the NDP, the LSA/LSO should establish only "fronts for revolutionary intervention" to regroup revolutionary elements in the party. In the majority's view, the issue was whether the programmatic intervention of the LSA/LSO, in the NDP and elsewhere, should be adapted to "the concerns of the vanguard" in the sense of being limited to revolutionary propaganda in narrow "vanguard" layers, or whether it should be based on the objective needs of the class as a whole.

The LSA/LSO has used many vehicles to attempt to intervene in the rank-and-file struggle against the NDP leadership, and to lead it with our program. As well as fraction work inside the NDP, these include working in the unions in favor of their affiliation to the NDP, and to build opposition in them to the NDP leadership; building independent campaigns, like that against the Vietnam war, which can rally support of the NDP ranks and put maximum political pressure on the NDP leadership; and independent initiatives in the name of the LSA/LSO. An example of the latter is the Canadian section's campaigns in municipal elections, which are normally uncontested by the NDP in Canada—campaigns which not only provide an example of effective revolutionary agitation in a broad arena, but which help generate pressure on the NDP leadership to alter its "non-partisan" stance in civic elections.

All this, of course, has been vigorously contested by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency. Applying the European Perspectives Document to Canada, it finds the present work of the Canadian section in contradiction to an orientation to English Canada's miniscule "revolutionary vanguard."

The leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency have yet to indicate formally and openly whether they consider that the RCT's rejection of the LSA/LSO's NDP orientation is correct. When they speak on this question, they should explain why they were unable to perceive earlier the "error" of policy which the Canadian section has pursued since before the reunification of 1963.

2. An End to Quebec's National Oppression under Capitalism?

a) *Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question*

The sections of Comrade Germain's document which deal with the theory of the permanent revolution and with the national question have opened up an important new area of debate in the Fourth International. They contain a series of errors which mark a big step backwards for Comrade Germain and his supporters, away from the Trotskyist positions on these questions. Comrade Germain's errors are discussed in Comrade Gus Horowitz's excellent contribution, "Comrade Germain's Errors on the National Question" (*IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 10.).

Comrade Horowitz refutes serious theoretical errors in Comrade Germain's discussion of nationalism in Quebec. He discusses what is wrong with Comrade Germain's assertion that nationalism is reactionary not only in oppressor but also in oppressed nations. He deals with the errors of thinking that national oppression can be ended within capitalism by the granting of an independent puppet state. He summarizes "the two main errors in the Germain document in terms of implications for practical work" as follows:

"1) It downgrades the importance of the national question in the world socialist revolution, precisely during this era in world history where it has been shown to have increasing importance. Its treatment of this question tends to call into question part of the foundation of the theory of permanent revolution.

"2) It tends to put primary emphasis in the national struggle on the danger that nationalist demands will play into the hands of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, rather than on the proven potential that nationalist demands have shown for advancing the class struggle." (P. 5.)

This contribution will not attempt to add to what Comrade Horowitz has said. It will take up a few particular themes of the Germain document which pertain directly to Quebec, and which provide further illustrations of some of Comrade Horowitz's basic points.

b) *Does Formal Independence End National Oppression?*

Comrade Germain criticizes the LSA/LSO for failing to recognize that imperialism, under certain circumstances, can grant formal independence to Quebec. No fundamental class interest, he says, prevents imperialism from transforming Quebec into an "independent puppet state." (P. 35.)

In fact, the LSA/LSO resolution also states that "such a development cannot be excluded." ("The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec," *ISR*, July-Aug. 1973, p. 39.) It argues forcefully that this variant is most unlikely. Yet the key point of difference between Comrade Germain and the LSA/LSO is not to be found here. The difference rather is that Comrade Germain holds that such token independence would mark an end to Quebec's national oppression by imperialism.

Foreign national oppression has been ended, Comrade Germain states, not only in advanced capitalist countries like Norway and Finland, but in "most of the former colonial countries of Asia and Africa who conquered independence after 1947." (P. 30.) Formal independence, the transformation of a "colony" into a "semi-colony," is for him equal to the end of national oppression.

Comrade Germain attacks Comrade Alain Beiner for stating that in the colonial world, national oppression cannot be ended under capitalism. On one level, he merely distorts Comrade Beiner's view. He uses his unique definition of national oppression to make Comrade Beiner appear to say the opposite of what he means. For Comrade Beiner, like the LSA/LSO, uses the term "national oppression" to refer not merely to the lack of formal political independence, but to other forms of foreign imperialist domination. Comrade Germain agrees that in the backward colonial countries at least, foreign imperialist domination cannot be ended within capitalism.

On another level, however, an important political question is at stake. The definition of "national oppression" used by the LSA/LSO corresponds to reality: the intertwined character of political and economic expressions of imperialist domination. Comrade Horowitz has examined this question, and rightly concluded that Comrade Germain's definition of national oppression "miseducated revolutionists about the importance of the fight against national oppression that these nations still do suffer. Comrade Germain's statement is as astounding as it is wrong, and makes a caricature of the scientific exactitude of Marxist terminology." (Pp. 5-6.)

c) *Quebec in the Age of Permanent Revolution*

Quebec is far from a colony of the classic type. The land question in its most acute form has been resolved, the proletariat forms the vast majority of the population, the economy is industrialized and modernized, the rural population is small and dispersed, and the petit-bourgeoisie is small.

Does this mean that the oppression of Quebec by imperialist domination can be ended under capitalism? To use Comrade Germain's phrase, can Quebec complete the "process of formation of a classic nation in the historic sense of the word" under capitalism? Comrade Germain does not give a direct answer to this question, but clearly implies that he believes that the answer is, "yes."

He emphasizes that "The whole notion of applying the formula of permanent revolution to imperialist countries is extremely dubious in the best of cases." (P. 34) "The danger of a mass struggle in an imperialist country based solely on demands for national self-determination being absorbed by the bourgeoisie is very real," he continues, and warns that democratic demands may therefore become "a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat." (P. 35.) Finland and Poland are cited as examples where foreign domination has indeed been ended within capitalism.

How likely is this in Quebec today? To answer this question correctly, one must descend from Comrade Germain's plane of abstraction, where considerations of time and place are ignored. A good way to start is with a

look at the character of the present historical period.

How able is modern imperialism to liberate oppressed nationalities from foreign domination—particularly oppressed nationalities in its industrialized heartland? Comrade Germain cites only the examples of Poland (independent in 1918), Finland (1917), and Norway (1905). Why not add other examples such as Romania (1856), Italy (1861) or Greece (1829)? For we all know that the "process of formation of a classic nation in the historic sense of the word" progressed for many centuries without socialist revolutions. It continued within the capitalist framework right up to the conclusion of the First World War.

But he cites no example from the past 50 years. Nor has any oppressed nation escaped from imperialist domination during this period, except through socialist revolution. In general, imperialism has deepened the oppression of subject nationalities within its industrialized heartland. Examples of this are found not only in North America (Blacks, Chicanos, Québécois), but in Europe, where a number of minority nationalities have renewed struggles against national oppression.

The national liberation of the Québécois from imperialist domination, within the capitalist framework, would contradict a powerful trend of degenerating imperialism. Would it be wrong to conclude from fifty years experience that oppressed nations can no longer win full liberation from imperialist domination, even in the imperialist heartland, without the establishment of workers power?

The possibility of Quebec's national liberation within capitalism must also be judged through a concrete study of the situation of the Quebec nation, of its history, economic and class structure, and the dynamics of its class struggle.

The nature of national oppression in Quebec serves as the starting point of the LSA/LSO's 1973 convention resolution. It emphasizes the denial of self-determination, the system of economic and cultural discrimination against French-speaking Québécois, and the deformation of Quebec's economy by imperialist domination: a relatively backward economy serving as a pool of cheap labor, high unemployment and reliable, cheap supplies of raw materials within the North American market. ("The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec," pp. 37-39.)

(The character of Quebec's national oppression refutes Comrade Germain's contention that it consists merely of the lack of an "independent puppet state." Its character reveals the interconnectedness of political and economic forms of imperialist domination.)

This national oppression is woven into the fabric of bourgeois rule in Canada. The LSA/LSO resolution mentions the "complex web of political, social and economic relations [which] have been created on this foundation. While it can grant certain concessions in the face of mass pressure, the Canadian ruling class is unable to abolish Quebec's national oppression without abolishing the foundations of its own class rule." (P. 39.)

The weakness of the Quebec bourgeoisie, and the overwhelming weight of foreign imperialist monopolies in the Quebec economy is also a central consideration. These monopolies not only control the pattern of investment and economic growth; they also dictate and maintain

the policy of language discrimination, a most immediate expression of Quebec's national oppression in the lives of the working masses.

The right of Québécois to live and work without hindrance in the French language is inconceivable without massive incursions against capitalist property rights.

Quebec's relative economic backwardness, and the distortions imposed by imperialism on its economy, its status as a pool of cheap labor and high unemployment, cannot be ended without confronting the power of the imperialist monopolies. Ending Quebec's national oppression is hardly likely through a "cold" process of parliamentary and constitutional reform.

The heavy weight and high degree of organization of the Quebec working class must be considered, as well as its proven tendency to surge to the head of the mass upsurges of the national struggle which are required to confront the power of imperialist domination over Quebec. The theory of permanent revolution emphasizes the unwillingness of a national bourgeoisie to lead national struggles into revolutionary confrontations, even where the strength of the working class is far less than in Quebec.

Comrade Germain's apparently optimistic projection for the possible liberation of the oppressed Québécois under capitalism flows from the abstract character of his analysis: abstraction from time, place, and the specifics of Quebec's national oppression. A concrete study shows that the completion of national liberation from imperialist domination is no more probable under capitalism in Quebec than in India, Ghana or Brazil. For this reason, the national struggle of the Québécois can properly be referred to as part of a process of permanent revolution.

d) *Playing into the Hands of the 'Theory of Stages'*

Comrade Germain's approach places a serious barrier in the path of Quebec Trotskyism. In Quebec, he says not only is formal independence possible under capitalism, but an end to imperialist domination *per se* is quite possible without workers power. This is exactly the theory of Quebec proponents of the "theory of stages," who, for the most part, project the bourgeois Parti Québécois as the vehicle of Quebec's national liberation.

Comrade Germain continues by insisting that the class struggle cannot wait until this "stage" is complete. Rather revolutionaries must press forward with "proletarian and socialist demands" to head off the danger of a bourgeois cooptation of Quebec's independence struggle. But in warning us that democratic demands in Quebec can become "a democratic noose" fastened to the neck of the proletariat" (p. 35), he draws dangerous practical conclusions. He downgrades the importance of the national struggle and of democratic demands. As we shall see, the group which he believes to be correctly applying his theory in Quebec has ended up by drawing the same practical conclusions as defenders of the "theory of stages" (of the sectarian variety). This group has abandoned democratic slogans and the national struggle entirely, leaving uncontested the terrain of the national struggle now largely dominated by the bourgeois Parti Québécois.

3. On 'Integrating National with Socialist Demands'

a) *Making Sense of Some Admonitions*

The third of Comrade Germain's criticisms against the LSA/LSO was its alleged failure to combine "national with socialist demands." He pointed to the LSO's record in Quebec's 1972 labor upsurge as sole evidence to illustrate the meaning of this charge. We have seen that the LSO's record gives no grounds for this criticism. What can be said about the validity of the basic concept?

Comrade Germain is quite vague on the meaning of "socialist" demands. Presumably, they are demands which cannot be realized under capitalism. But there will be no disagreement with his general concept. Nor is there any doubt that he is right to point to the danger if a mass struggle in an imperialist country remains restricted "solely" to national demands.

Nor is there any disagreement when Comrade Germain says, echoing the LSA/LSO's resolutions, that the national struggle in Quebec rapidly becomes intertwined with proletarian, objectively socialist goals. Yet Comrade Germain obviously regards these self-evident generalities as a pointed criticism of the politics of the LSO. What is he getting at?

Comrade Germain comments on the fact that the decaying imperialist bourgeoisie sometimes grants democratic demands. He believes it may well grant the full program of the national liberation struggle of Quebec. (The LSA/LSO disagrees on this point.)

Because the democratic demands of the national movement may well be granted by the bourgeoisie, he contends, the national struggle may be absorbed by the bourgeoisie. Revolutionists must block this by combining democratic with socialist demands, in their propaganda and agitation.

We had thought that the combination of these demands, in the program of permanent revolution, was necessary precisely because of the objective impossibility of ending national oppression, and breaking free of the bonds of imperialist domination, within capitalism.

Moreover, Comrade Germain does not explain how to go about making this combination of "national" and "socialist" demands in the daily life of the class struggle. This opens the door to serious error.

Does he mean that revolutionists in Quebec must find a way to raise "socialist" or "proletarian" demands not only in their overall program, but also in each and every partial struggle where they intervene? Does he mean that whenever revolutionists find themselves engaged in a struggle around demands of a nationalist character, their task is to point to the danger of such demands, and fight for the movement to adopt additional, "socialist" demands? Does he mean that whenever a struggle breaks out for demands which could conceivably be granted within the framework of capitalism (like "French as the language of work," or "Repeal anti-labor laws"), that revolutionists

must struggle for the mass movement to immediately adopt demands which cannot conceivably be granted by capitalism (like "nationalize all monopolies" or "workers power")?

"Of course," Comrade Germain will doubtless reply, "such ridiculous notions never entered my head. Trotskyists reject reformism, but they do not reject the struggle for reforms." Very good. Why then should they reject the struggle for the democratic demands of the national liberation struggle of the Québécois—all the more in that all evidence indicates there is no prospect of these demands, in their totality, being achieved within capitalism?

Comrade Germain's meaning is unclear. But his hailing of the Mill grouping for its success in "correctly" combining "national" with "socialist" demands is ominous. The Mill grouping, since escaping from the "Menshevik" clutches of the Canadian section, has written nothing on the national question. It has raised no national demands whatsoever—let alone "combining" them with "socialist" demands. It has not advocated independence for Quebec, or full rights for the French language, or French as the language of work, or any other demand arising from the national struggle. Its record is absolutely unblemished: complete abstention. The effect of such a policy would be to leave the field uncontested, and to permit reformist and pro-capitalist forces to mislead and betray the national struggle, without meeting the challenge of a revolutionary alternative.

b) *The LSO's Use of National Demands*

The approach of the LSO contrasts with Mill's abstentionism and with Germain's downgrading of the importance of democratic demands. Key elements of this approach are touched on in "The Mounting Class Struggle in Quebec":

"We have projected the theme 'For an independent and socialist Quebec' in order to express concisely the combined nature of the Quebec revolution, the close interconnection between the national struggle and the struggle for socialism, as well as the impossibility of achieving Quebec's full national liberation without overthrowing the capitalist system. Revolutionary socialists give full support to all struggles for national and democratic demands that are directed against real oppression and imperialist domination. Such struggles advance the workers' cause.

"In Quebec today, these national struggles have an anti-imperialist, revolutionary character. Struggles for democratic demands arising from national oppression have repeatedly shown their capacity to inspire the masses and propel them in struggle against the state.

"Some have suggested that socialists should support such nationalist, democratic demands only if they are explicitly and immediately linked with demands of a socialist character. Another variant of this position is to insist that we can support nationalist demands only if they have an 'explicit working-class character.' We reject such an approach, which violates the method of the Transitional Program.

"The slogan 'For an independent and French Quebec' is one of the expressions of the Quebec nationalist movement as it has taken form to date. Our movement supports this slogan, but recognizes that it is insufficient

to express our strategic conception of the Quebec revolution, which is summed up in the theme of 'For an independent and socialist Quebec.'" (*ISR*, July-Aug. 1973, P. 55.)

The Quebec Trotskyists are the most militant and most consistent partisans of the struggle for national liberation and of the democratic demands that grow from this struggle. In contrast to the vacillation, the half-measures, and the treachery of bourgeois nationalists, the LSO calls for carrying this struggle forward to completion. Where the Parti Québécois is for a "partial independence," defending the need for a monetary union and common market with imperialist Canada, the LSO calls for complete independence from imperialist Canada, and breaking the bonds of imperialist domination. The LSO points out that real independence from imperialist domination is only possible through expropriation of the monopolies, and a planned economy under workers control.

The LSO aims to propel the nationalist movement along the road of mass struggle. To the parliamentarism and electoralism of the Parti Québécois, it counterposes the course of mass mobilization, demonstrations, rallies, and direct action by the labor movement.

The LSO projects the need for the movement for national emancipation to link up with the heavy battalions of the labor movement, and conversely, the need for the trade unions to break with the Parti Québécois and take the lead in mass action for national rights.

The LSO points out that action for national emancipation must take the road of independent political action. This means mass action independent of the bourgeoisie. It means a break with electoralism and with the bourgeois parties, including the Parti Québécois, which betrays the national struggle. The LSO calls for nationalists to join in working for the constitution of a mass workers party based on the trade unions, and armed with a revolutionary program, as an instrument of struggle not only for the specific interests of the working class, but for the struggle against national oppression. The aims of the nationalist movement, the LSO explains, require the establishment of a workers and farmers government.

4. An Unmentioned Side of Mill's Position

One of the most dubious "achievements" of Comrade Germain's document is its attempt to draw up a balance sheet of the complex debate on Quebec nationalism between Michel Mill and the majority of the Canadian section between 1966 and 1970. Comrade Germain claims that Mill was "right" in "his two disagreements" on Quebec nationalism. But on both points, Comrade Germain lauds Mill for positions Mill did not hold. Meanwhile Comrade Germain remains completely silent on the real differences which separated Mill from the leadership and the overwhelming majority of the membership not only of the Canadian section as a whole, but of its Quebec wing, too.

Comrade Germain forgets to mention what Mill considered to be one of his most important differences on the national question: his opinion that a separate Quebec section of the Fourth International was absolutely essential because of the specificity of the Quebec social formation. Given Comrade Germain's newly discovered af-

finity for Mill's political positions, he is called on to state whether he favors Mill's idea of splitting the Fourth Internationalists in Canada into two national sections.

In accordance with the Leninist theory of party organization, the LSA/LSO holds that the revolutionary vanguard in Canada must be structured as a unified instrument. This flows from its task—overthrowing the centralized state apparatus which perpetuates the national oppression of the Québécois, and the capitalist exploitation of Québécois and English Canadian workers. The fact that a separate Quebec state *may* be created at some point in the future is no reason to build a separate revolutionary party in Quebec today. Revolutionists can best fight for the overthrow of the state which rules Quebec *today*, the federal Canadian state, if they are united in a single multi-national party, a section of the Fourth International. Should an "independent" state be set up in Quebec before the overthrow of capitalism, the necessity for a separate party in Quebec would have to be reassessed.

The 1970 convention resolution of the LSA/LSO explained this position as follows:

"As long as Quebec is a part of the Canadian state, it is in the interests of revolutionists in both nations to participate in a single, centralized combat party best able to coordinate our common struggle against a centralizing, imperialist bourgeoisie which dominates both nations and maintains its rule in part by seeking to foster and exploit national differences between the workers of the two nations." (*For an Independent and Socialist Quebec*, p. 30.)

The sections of the Fourth International, if organized on Leninist lines and steeped in Leninist policies and traditions on the national question, can cope quite effectively with the peculiarities of a distinct oppressed nation which is structurally integrated, as Quebec is in Canada. Lenin's Bolshevik party was well able to cope with the much more complex and varied problems of the many nationalities imprisoned in the Tsarist Empire. Lenin and the Bolsheviks argued strongly that a single unified party was required to lead the struggle against the Russian state.

It would appear that Comrade Germain considers the Belgian section well able to cope with the complexities of work among both Walloon and Flemish workers. He does not appear to consider the Socialist Workers Party inherently incapable of coping with the complexities of the struggles of oppressed nationalities in the U. S. Surely "objectivity demands," as he would say, that his balance sheet of Mill's political positions include an assessment of Mill's view on this question.

Such an assessment is all the more required because of the wide-ranging implications of the Mill position. Will the Fourth International recognize, in addition to a Spanish section, sections for the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia? Is the Indian section to be divided along the lines of India's many nationalities and regional governments?

Mill's support for a separate section represents a rejection of the Bolshevik concept of party-building. It is a concession to the prejudices of Québécois petit-bourgeois nationalist circles, whose narrow-minded provincialism leads them to reject the idea that Quebec and English

Canadian workers can unite in a common organization—even a combat party of the Fourth International. Yet Mill doggedly refuses to support the revolutionary and anti-imperialist content of Quebec nationalism—the democratic struggle against foreign oppression.

In conformity with Lenin's teachings, the LSA/LSO unconditionally supports the Québécois struggle for independence and national emancipation, while consistently opposing any attempt at dividing the Trotskyists of Canada along national lines.

5. Is Canada a Semi-Colony?

a) Comrade Mandel's Views Attract Attention

In discussing Canadian nationalism, Canadian comrades felt that they were up against a theoretical question of some importance. U.S. investment in Canada has been rising rapidly for some decades, and its bulk is increasing fairly steadily as a proportion of the Canadian economy. Supporters of the Political Committee resolution estimated U.S. ownership at between 30 to 40 percent of the wealth of non-agricultural corporations (including publicly owned corporations). More than half of the larger private corporations are owned in the U.S.

Does this degree of foreign ownership, concentrated in the hands of one power, mean that Canada has become a semi-colony? If not, will not the increase of U.S. investment reduce Canada to semi-colonial status at some point in the future?

It is unfortunate that Comrade Germain does not touch on this question—all the more in that the degree of U.S. ownership in Canada is unprecedented in the history of imperialism. He might have wished to comment on the position of a comrade whose writings played a major role in the Canadian nationalism discussion: Ernest Mandel.

In his book *Europe vs. America*, Comrade Mandel stated that when foreign investment inside an imperialist power reaches a certain level, a process is set in motion through which "a once independent imperialist power can be transformed into a semi-colony like Brazil or Greece." No such process was taking place in any imperialist power today, he continued. But in a footnote, he added: "It is true that there is an exception: Canada, a modern industrial nation where ownership of an absolute majority of the non-agricultural means of production has fallen to the USA. . . ." (*Europe vs. America*, pp. 21-24)

The same argument is restated in Comrade Mandel's article on "The Law of Uneven Development" in *New Left Review*, No. 59. "There is not the slightest evidence to show that US imperialism controls more than 10 percent of the industrial means of production and much less of the financial means of exchange, of any other imperialist power (with the exception of Canada, which is indeed a border case)."

"There is for that reason," Comrade Mandel continues, "not the slightest evidence that these powers (France, Britain, or Italy, not to speak of Japan or West Germany) have lost their basic independence as imperialist powers and have become US semi-colonies." (Quoted by Ross Dowson, "The Key Issue at Dispute. . ." *LSA/LSO DB* No. 25, p. 2.)

Comrade Mandel said that "semi-colonial nations only arise when in fact the key industries and banks in the country are owned or controlled by foreign capitalists, and when for that reason the state itself fundamentally protects the interests of the foreign imperialist class."

The implication is that Canada is on the edge of becoming a U.S. semi-colony. If it is not now a semi-colony, it would seem on the road to becoming one, as soon as U.S. ownership of the Canadian economy has risen past a certain qualitative turning point.

Comrade Mandel had occasion to touch on the topic again during a speaking tour in Canada late in 1971. In a speech at McMaster University in Hamilton, he replied to a questioner that he did not think that Canada was a colony. "The situation of Canada is a very peculiar one," he continued. "I think that the best way to describe it is with the formulation used by the American Marxist Nicolaus. . . . He has spoken about an 'imperialized imperialism' and I think that this hits the nail right on the head." (quoted by Ross Dowson in "A Step Backward Instead of Forward," *LSA/LSO DB*, No. 18)

If U.S. investment is "imperializing" Canada, or is heading toward converting Canada into a semi-colony, then is there not an objective basis for a struggle of a progressive character to block Canada's degeneration to semi-colonial status, or, if you prefer, to end Canada's "imperialization" by the U.S.? Should we not aim to lead this struggle, with the program of socialist revolution? This seemed to many Canadian comrades to be the implications of Comrade Mandel's statements.

Should we not at least recognize that the nationalist sentiments which have arisen in response to the "imperialization" of Canada have a progressive essence which we should aim to link up with? This was the thinking of the current led by Comrade Ross Dowson. When he based his argumentation on the positions of Comrade Mandel, Comrade Dowson based his argument on what seemed like firm authority.

Comrade Germain, of course, holds that Canadian nationalism is reactionary, just as he holds nationalism to be reactionary in Quebec and in every other nation where there is a bourgeois layer. Speculation on Canada's possible colonization by U.S. imperialism will not change his position on that point. Even so, do not Comrade Mandel's statements at the very least contradict the positions of Comrade Germain and of the *LSA/LSO*, which deal with Canada as an imperialist country like Britain, France, etc., and make no mention of its "imperialization" by U.S. capital?

b) *The Arguments Against the 'Semi-Colony' Thesis*

Defenders of the position of the *LSA/LSO* Political Committee in the pre-convention debate in Canada felt that Comrade Mandel's brief comments were misleading.

An analysis of the character of Canada must start not with the quantity of U.S. investment but the character of Canadian capital, and the Canadian state. The holdings of the Canadian bourgeoisie are not marginal to the economy and are not merely an apparatus to service U.S. industry. The holdings are concentrated in large-scale industrial and financial corporate giants, whose interests are heavily concentrated inside Canada's bor-

ders. The Canadian bourgeoisie therefore has a strong interest in defending the competitive position of industry in Canada against U.S. and other foreign competition. It also has substantial economic resources which it can bring to bear to defend its control of the state.

Furthermore, in the Canadian state, the Canadian bourgeoisie has a highly-developed and powerful instrument which it has built and which it controls—an instrument for the defense of its national and class interests.

It is excluded that there could be a gradual, imperceptible transfer of control of the Canadian state from the Canadian bourgeoisie to forces representing U.S. interests. Such a process would entail a political struggle to oust one capitalist band from power and install another. There is no sign of such a struggle.

Further, the state itself has massive means of self-defense. There is no example where the bourgeoisie of an imperialist country has lost control of its state apparatus, except through war or revolution.

Moreover, contrary to the positions of Canadian nationalists who hold that U.S. capital is "de-industrializing" Canada, there is no sign that U.S. investment is tending to transform the economic structure qualitatively toward a form characteristic of semi-colonies. In general, the contradictions between local and foreign imperialism are similar to the pattern found in Britain, France, etc.—even if the relationship of forces may differ.

The stability and power of the Canadian state is crucial to U.S. imperialism as a bulwark against revolution on the North American continent. In any political shoving-matches which would disturb the firm control of the Canadian state by the Canadian bourgeoisie, U.S. imperialism would stand to lose much more than it gained.

The reaffirmation that Canada is not a semi-colony was a determining factor in the Canadian section's conclusion that there is no progressive essence in Canadian nationalism. The passages of Comrade Mandel seem to contradict this, and at the very least indicate that the question is of some complexity. It is unfortunate that Comrade Germain did not discuss these questions when he chose to write on Canadian nationalism. Instead of a contribution which might aid political clarification on an important question, he limited himself to a cheap polemical shot at the Canadian leadership—based on a misrepresentation of their real positions. We have the right to expect more of leaders of the Fourth International.

6. Germain vs. Germain on the Method of Analyzing Nationalism

a) *Discovering "Methodological Roots" of "Tail-endism"*

Comrade Germain concludes his polemic on Canadian nationalism by pointing to what he considers the methodological roots of the errors of the *LSA/LSO*:

"Comrade Dowson's grave mistakes on the question of Canadian nationalism flow from the wrong method used by the majority of the Canadian section's leadership in determining its position on Québécois nationalism, too—a method of tail-ending mass moods, instead of starting from an assessment of the dynamics of class relations and class struggle." (P. 37.)

Comrade Germain's logic is neat and consistent. But

what method did the Canadian section really use to develop its position on Quebec nationalism? Once again, Comrade Germain is consistent with his own unique polemical style—he provides no evidence, and refers to no documents of the Canadian section to buttress his allegations.

b) *The LSA/LSO's Method in Analyzing Quebec Nationalism*

All the resolutions of the LSA/LSO on Quebec have a common point of departure: the objective situation of the Quebec nation, and the character of its national oppression by imperialism. This objective fact gives a radical dynamic to the struggle in Quebec for national emancipation. It provides a basis for deducing the positive impact on the class struggle of rising Québécois national consciousness. This method was summed up (in a single sentence) in the LSA/LSO's resolution on Canadian nationalism:

"Nationalism has a progressive character only where it promotes the struggle against real aspects of national oppression suffered by a people—that is, where it corresponds to real national tasks (winning of national independence, establishment of a national language, etc.) left unachieved by the bourgeois revolution, and which can now be achieved in their totality only through socialist revolution. ("Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism," p. 25.)

In other words, what determines our attitude toward nationalism is whether or not it corresponds to the struggle of an oppressed people against their oppression. The nationalism of oppressor nations is reactionary.

Supporters of the Political Committee resolution believed that the problem with the pro-Canadian nationalist position was one of method—just as did Comrade Germain. But they pointed out that the error on Canadian nationalism had been made precisely because comrades departed from the method used in analyzing Quebec nationalism—the method which starts with the objective situation of the nation and its class structure. This method excluded any concept that nationalism could be progressive in an imperialist, oppressor nation like English Canada, whatever the mood of the masses.

c) *Comrade Germain's Two Methods on Nationalism*

Comrade Germain's analysis of Canadian nationalism proceeds for the most part along the lines of the method he recommends: basing the analysis on a concrete study of social conditions and class relations. He holds that the specifically imperialist character of Canadian capitalism determines the nature of Canadian nationalism. It would be an error, he says, to exclude a "De Gaullist" use of Canadian nationalism "to canalise and divert temporarily a mass explosion towards channels compatible with the survival of the capitalist relations of production. . . . To exclude that possibility is to eliminate the difference between Canada as an imperialist country and backward semi-colonial and colonial countries." (P. 37.) In these passages, Comrade Germain appears to be using the same method which the LSA/LSO used in analyzing Quebec and Canadian nationalism.

Earlier, when discussing Quebec, Comrade Germain used quite a different method. He did not discuss and did not even refer to the concrete "dynamics of class relations and class struggle" in Quebec. His argument dissolved the concrete in abstract and general assertions. "With the epoch of imperialism," he argued, "nationalism *as a rule* becomes reactionary." (P. 32, emphasis in original.) The sole exceptions he permits are nations where there is no bourgeoisie. No need then to discuss Quebec; the concrete is dissolved in abstract and general assertions. Nationalism is reactionary in oppressed and oppressor nations alike. The difference between the two categories is merely that the struggle against the reactionary nationalism of oppressed nations is best left to the revolutionary movements within those nations. (P. 33.)

Nor does Comrade Germain feel the need to analyze Quebec reality to draw his conclusions about the dynamics of the struggle against national oppression in Quebec. The struggle of all oppressed nations against national oppression can be victorious either under bourgeois or working-class leadership. Nothing can be deduced from objective conditions about the dynamics of the struggle. Everything depends on the capacity of revolutionary Marxists to combine national with socialist demands, in order to block the ending of national oppression within capitalism, and ensure that it ends through the victory of workers revolution. (Pp. 30-31.) His method is thus both abstract and subjectivist.

d) *A Lapse on Canadian Nationalism.*

Comrade Germain's conclusions on Canadian nationalism, and even his approach, appear to be in accord with that of the LSA/LSO. One paragraph of his document however stands in sharp contrast to the general thrust of his remarks:

"It follows that anti-U.S. Canadian nationalism has no automatic 'anti-imperialist' or even 'anti-capitalist' thrust, as Comrade Dowson tries to imply. It could have this only under very concrete conditions of *conscious political* working class hegemony inside the mass movement, i.e. hegemony by the conscious revolutionary Marxists, by the Canadian Trotskyists. To consider this hegemony as guaranteed in advance is to be guilty of a gross over-optimism. In reality, there will be a constant struggle between revolutionary and reformist (i.e. objectively pro-class collaboration and pro-bourgeois) political forces inside that mass movement." (P. 36, emphasis in original.)

The meaning of this passage is not entirely clear. But the context indicates that what he is talking about is the circumstances under which an anti-imperialist nationalist mass movement could have an anticapitalist thrust.

His conclusion is that whether such a mass movement will have an anticapitalist thrust depends entirely on the quality of its leadership. He drew exactly the same conclusion about national struggles in Quebec. Moreover, it seems to flow from the same method he used in Quebec—abstracting from the dynamic of the class struggle. This method of abstraction has erased the very distinction which Comrade Germain elsewhere holds to be so vital: that between the nationalism of oppressed and oppressor nations.

Comrade Germain appears to propose that Canadian Trotskyists join the "Canadian nationalist movement" and attempt to lead it. His lapse into subjectivism has brought him to exactly the same conclusion as that reached by the current led by Ross Dowson in the LSA/LSO, whose positions he criticizes so vigorously. Utilizing two opposed methods, he reaches two opposed conclusions.

The LSA/LSO has concluded that the struggle for national liberation in Quebec has an "anti-capitalist thrust,"

in the long run, regardless of the leadership it may receive at any given moment. It also sees no objective basis for a Canadian nationalist struggle of a progressive character—regardless of what political force may head up such a struggle. The contrast between the nationalist movements of oppressed and oppressor nations is rooted in the method which Comrade Germain recommends but does not himself follow: one rooted in "a clear notion of historical and economic conditions."

III. A FRAUDULENT POLEMIC

1. Balance Sheet of Comrade Germain's Criticisms

What remains of Comrade Germain's criticisms of the "opportunist tail-ending" of the Canadian section, once false attacks and distortions have been stripped away?

a) The charge of "tail-ending reformism" turned out to be based on isolated quotations, passages which represent neither the political positions of the Canadian section, nor the LSA/LSO's public propaganda.

b) The charge of "tail-ending a new 'stages-theory' of the revolution" was not backed up with any evidence of any concessions to a stages theory in the work of the Canadian section, or in its political positions. The charge lacks any foundation.

c) The charge of trying to impose "language slogans" on the 1972 Quebec labor upsurge is totally unsubstantiated. Comrade Germain introduces no evidence of any "language slogans" having been utilized at all—let alone utilized wrongly. He makes no criticism of the program which the Canadian section actually put forward during the upsurge.

d) The charge of "tail-ending petty-bourgeois nationalism" turned out to be based on a bizarre distortion of a single phrase in the Canadian Trotskyist press. It has no basis either in the political resolutions or the work of the Canadian section.

e) The charge of "tail-ending imperialist nationalism" turned out to be based on a document withdrawn and replaced by the Canadian leadership, and to have no basis in the real positions of the LSA/LSO.

Five shots; five misses. Not only does Comrade Germain miss the target; closer inspection shows in each case that the target was a figment of his own imagination.

But in fairness to Comrade Germain, we must underline that *one* of his six major criticisms of the Canadian section did indeed correspond to a real position of the LSA/LSO:

f) The charge that the Canadian section failed to raise the slogan for independence of Quebec before mass support had emerged for independence in Quebec—is entirely accurate. The LSA/LSO holds this position, which conforms to the Trotskyist view. It is Comrade Germain who departs from the Trotskyist view.

As for the balance of Comrade Germain's comments on Canada, they include many well-chosen quotations from Lenin and Trotsky, and re-state many correct ideas. They are in serious error on the question of nationalism and permanent revolution. When his comments deal with

Canada, they solve few problems, and are frustratingly ambiguous and abstract. On the methodological question which Comrade Germain places at the center of his polemic—the method of assessing nationalism, and struggles against national oppression—his document furnishes a very clear example of the type of error which he holds the Canadian leadership to have committed.

2. Argue from the Record!

International discussion of the work of an individual section, indispensable as it is, suffers from an unavoidable handicap. Few members of the world movement have direct knowledge of the conditions of the country being discussed, or of the character of the national section's activity. Any comrade undertaking such critique has a heavy responsibility to ensure that the positions and activity of the section under scrutiny are accurately portrayed.

Critics who locate errors in the work of a section must also ask if the errors were corrected, and if they were representative of the section's overall line. Particular weight must be given to the resolutions adopted by a section or its leadership as authoritative statements of its politics.

Comrade Germain utilizes quite a different method in his document. On the New Democratic Party, his critique is based on two isolated passages in the Canadian Trotskyist press, and he does not mention any of the passages that might have a different impression, or any of the resolutions of the section.

On Quebec, Comrade Germain's polemic is based on a paragraph from the Trotskyist press, a headline, and an internal document which was withdrawn and replaced by the Canadian leadership. It does not refer to any of the three major resolutions of the LSA/LSO on Quebec.

On Canadian nationalism, Comrade Germain's polemic is based on a document withdrawn and replaced by the leadership, and on the positions of a minority current. It does not refer to the resolution by the majority leadership on this subject.

Comrade Germain's method of argument is not adapted to influencing the members of the Canadian section. They had little difficulty in perceiving that the politics of the section are totally different from the politics attacked by Comrade Germain.

This peculiar type of polemic, which does not state the real positions of the Canadian leadership and presents positions which they do not hold as theirs, will of course have its maximum impact among those unfamiliar with the Canadian section. The effect of this pro-

cedure is to block discussion of the real experiences and real problems of Canadian Trotskyists. Its effect is to prejudice readers against the politics of the leadership of the Canadian section, and the positions they hold on other questions, such as the guerrilla strategy in Latin America. Its effect is to create a diversion in the international discussion, through conjuring up demons of "Canadian tail-endism" which can distract attention from the *real* errors of sectors of the Fourth International in Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere.

3. Leadership Responsibility and International Debate

Comrade Germain tells us that Comrade Joseph Hansen, seized by "all-consuming passion" for slaying the "dragon of rural guerrilla warfare," turns "a strangely blind eye" to such "right-wing opportunist deviations" as the position that Canadian nationalism is progressive.

What exactly was Comrade Hansen supposed to do during the three-week period of July 1972, during which the majority of the Canadian Political Committee seemed to be on the wrong track on this question? Presumably he was to follow Comrade Germain's example, and rush to his typewriter to write a denunciation of the Canadian leadership. He was then to submit it to the international discussion bulletin, while simultaneously allowing a copy of his manuscript advance private circulation among some personal contacts in Canada.

If Comrade Hansen did not follow this course, it is perhaps because he has a different concept of how an international leadership should function.

When a national leadership faces problems in applying the Trotskyist program to its country, the task is surely to aid it in recognizing these problems for what they are, and to help enable it to work out for itself, through

its own experiences and discussion, a correct solution. Such a procedure is consistent with promoting the emergence of national leaderships which can stand on their own feet, and solve the problems posed by the class struggle in their own country.

The September 1972 plenum of the Canadian Central Committee came to grips with the problem of Canadian nationalism and corrected an error made on this question. It also corrected some other errors, some of which Comrade Germain has mentioned, and some of which he has not mentioned. It marked that the Canadian leadership had passed a watershed in dealing with a political problem of no small proportions.

The executive secretary of the Canadian section reported on the decisions of the September plenum to the October 1972 meeting of the United Secretariat. His report elicited neither questions, nor discussion, nor expression of opinion. At least, no opinions of the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency were expressed to the leaders of the Canadian section. The opinion of the IEC Majority Tendency reached Canada only five months later—in the form of a manuscript of Comrade Germain's document, circulating privately among Canadian supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency.

The nature of the critique in this document was curious. It did not refer to the positions being advanced by the Canadian leadership. It criticized the Canadian leaders either for positions they had never held, or for errors they had made but had corrected. The method was familiar: it was the polemical method employed against the PST of Argentina.

This is not the kind of polemic that can help clarify differences and advance the discussion in the International. It is time to halt such fraudulent polemics, and focus the discussion on the real issues before us.

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