

GSTQ calls for independent Quebec

By Danielle Frogault

MONTREAL—"While the Maoists' ranks are torn apart by increasingly sharp disputes, among the Trotskyists we note a growing convergence."

This was the theme of the greetings to the October 6-10 convention of the Quebec Socialist Workers Group (GSTQ) by the representative of the Revolutionary Workers League/Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (RWL). "The convergence between the RWL and the GSTQ means that we, the Trotskyists, can show to the whole workers movement our ability to do everything possible to overcome our organizational and political divisions," the RWL representative said.

She spoke to the GSTQ's third convention in the name of both the pan-Canadian Political Committee of the RWL and of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The GSTQ is affiliated to a different international formation, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The RWL responded to the GSTQ's invitation with a strong delegation to the convention, including members from Montreal, Quebec, Sherbrooke, Toronto, and Vancouver.

The GSTQ convention focused on the most fundamental questions which Trotskyists in Quebec and Canada must resolve in their task of building a mass revolutionary party in the Canadian state and a mass revolutionary international.

Many differences on these points still separate the GSTQ and the RWL, and the two international organizations to which they belong.

But two extremely important facts stand out. First, these differences are posed within a common framework: the Trotskyist program. Second, the GSTQ convention took a number of decisions that reveal a process of political convergence between it and the RWL.

establish between the women's and the workers movements.

The convergence is also shown in the collaboration between the RWL and the Socialist Youth Alliance (RJS), an independent youth organization in political solidarity with the GSTQ.



Lutte Ouvrière

Quebec Socialist Workers Group (GSTQ) convention discussed key questions of revolutionary strategy. Decisions showed political convergences between GSTQ and RWL.

The RWL and RJS are running a joint campaign on a common political program in the student elections at the University of Quebec in Montreal.

Explore fusion

Trade-union activists of the GSTQ and the RWL work together as well, particularly in the Trade Union Militants' Tendency (RMS), in the struggle for a mass workers party based on the union movement.

Several delegates to the GSTQ convention underlined the importance of this collaboration.

The RWL's greetings cited this and other examples of collaboration as signs that the RWL and GSTQ must work systematically to unite in action. They must also continue political discussions free from any spirit of compromise or sectarianism on the questions that remain un-

reflects the GSTQ's viewpoint, expressed the same view.

The RWL explained that it was not born from a hasty fusion, but rather from the culmination of a lengthy process in all three founding groups of political evolution, debate, and assessment of experiences in the class struggle.

Differences in a common framework

The GSTQ also claims that the groups who founded the RWL disregarded international differences in carrying out their fusion. In reality, the discussions that prepared the fusion showed that these differences did not stand in the way of working together in a common framework.

For the RWL does not have a monolithic conception either of the party or of the international that it is working to build.

Given programmatic agreement, and agreement on what tasks revolutionaries should accomplish, there is room for different tendencies and different currents of thought. The confrontation of such currents and tendencies provides a necessary safeguard in the life and political activity of the revolutionary organization.

The RWL believes that the revolutionary party will not be built simply by linear numerical growth of the existing organizations. Political regroupment and fusion is at the heart of the process of building the party.

The RWL stressed in its greetings that "The fusion that created the RWL is only the first step in a whole process of fusions and regroupment that is opening up today." And the GSTQ stands today at the center of the RWL's policy of regroupment in building the mass revolutionary party and international.

—translated from
Lutte Ouvrière

clear or where there are still differences.

The RWL believes the goal of this process should be to explore the possibility of fusion of the GSTQ and the RWL.

Nature of the RWL

One of the remaining differences concerns the foundation of the RWL itself. The RWL united three organizations: the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Revolutionary Marxist Group, and the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire. The GSTQ convention characterized this fusion as "unprincipled" and "precipitous." *Tribune Ouvrière*, which

For Quebec independence

The convention adopted the perspective of a struggle for Quebec's independence, and the slogan "For a free republic of Quebec." By this decision it recognized the importance of Quebec's national struggle in the fight to destroy the Canadian state.

It also recognized the need for Quebec revolutionaries to concretize the Marxist principle of the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, by supporting the struggle for Quebec independence.

The RWL can only welcome this decision of the GSTQ convention. However, discussion is still needed on the slogans raised by the two organizations. The RWL argues for the perspective of independence and socialism, for the workers republic of Quebec. This clearly ties the perspective of Quebec independence to a working-class content—only the working class, through the establishment of socialism, can actually end national oppression. The GSTQ's slogan does not make this link explicit.

On women's liberation

The GSTQ recognized the importance of the fight for free abortion on demand: another example of its positive evolution. It aims to participate in the mass movements around this demand, and to ensure that this struggle is taken up by the trade unions.

As on the question of independence, there is a wide field here for united action by the RWL and GSTQ. However a discussion is also needed to clarify the GSTQ's attitude to the development of the women's movement, and on the kind of ties that revolutionaries should seek to

Quebecois want to control own destiny — socialist group

As the first year of the Parti Quebecois government draws to a close, English Canada's capitalist media are marking the occasion with distorted "evaluations" that reflect little more than their desire to head off Quebec's drive to national independence.

But other, more positive, developments are also taking place. One prominent example is the evolution of the International Socialists (IS), an organization based largely in southern Ontario. In the August issue of their paper, Workers' Action, IS comments that in the present period "it is all the more crucial for socialists to staunchly defend the right of the Quebecois to self-determination, including supporting their political independence from English Canada."

In the future, IS adds, their paper "must see one of its major functions as combatting the anti-Quebecois prejudices among English Canadian workers."

The International Socialists' support for the Quebecois has not remained confined to empty abstractions, as is the case for many groups on the Canadian left who actively campaign against independence while paying lip-service to the right of self-determination. Subsequent issues of Workers' Action have regularly taken up the ruling-class attack on the Quebec national struggle.

The following article, reprinted from the November issue of Workers' Action, provides some indication of IS's views.

By Richard Collins

"Support for separatism fades" proclaimed a banner headline in the *Toronto Star* during the recent Southam News editorial series on Quebec entitled "A Searching Nation."

The Southam series was based on a poll conducted by Goldfarb Consultants Ltd. Relying on simplistic questions like "Do you consider yourself a federalist or separatist?" or "Do you favor or oppose separatism?" the poll was stacked from the beginning. It attempted to suggest that support for separation had fallen from 33 percent to 25 percent of the Quebec population.

Support risen

The results of another poll commissioned by the *Reader's Digest* (hardly a bastion of separatism) tell quite a different story. Conducted by the Centre de recherche sur l'opinion publique (CROP), the *Reader's Digest* poll also showed that a majority of Quebecers oppose outright separation.

But on more specific questions, the poll showed that support for the PQ's "sovereignty-association" program (i.e., political independence coupled with economic association with Canada) is growing rapidly—up from 32 percent to 44 percent support from March to August.

What's more, a clear majority are willing to give the Quebec government a mandate to negotiate such an option with

Ottawa. And close to three-quarters of the Quebec people favor some major changes in the current federal arrangement. A clear majority also stated that they favor the PQ's new language law.

Expose

These results expose the Southam News editorials, along with most English coverage of the PQ government, for what they really are—attempts to downplay the deep sense of national oppression felt by Quebec people.

The English press would have us believe that Quebecers voted for the PQ not because of any national aspirations, but because of poor performance by the Liberals. Yet, according to the CROP poll, if an election were held today, the PQ would obtain a larger share of the vote than it did last November 15.

Despite the fact that unemployment has risen during the PQ's year in office, 51 percent of Quebecois would vote for the PQ today compared with 41 percent a year ago. Clearly, any attempt to explain the PQ's popularity in strictly economic terms is inadequate.

Beyond any doubt, the PQ's popularity is an expression of the desire of the Quebecois to control their own destiny. The PQ is a middle-class nationalist party tied to capitalist interests and thus cannot fulfill those aspirations. But it is the job of all socialists to defend those aspirations against the attacks and distortions of the English media.