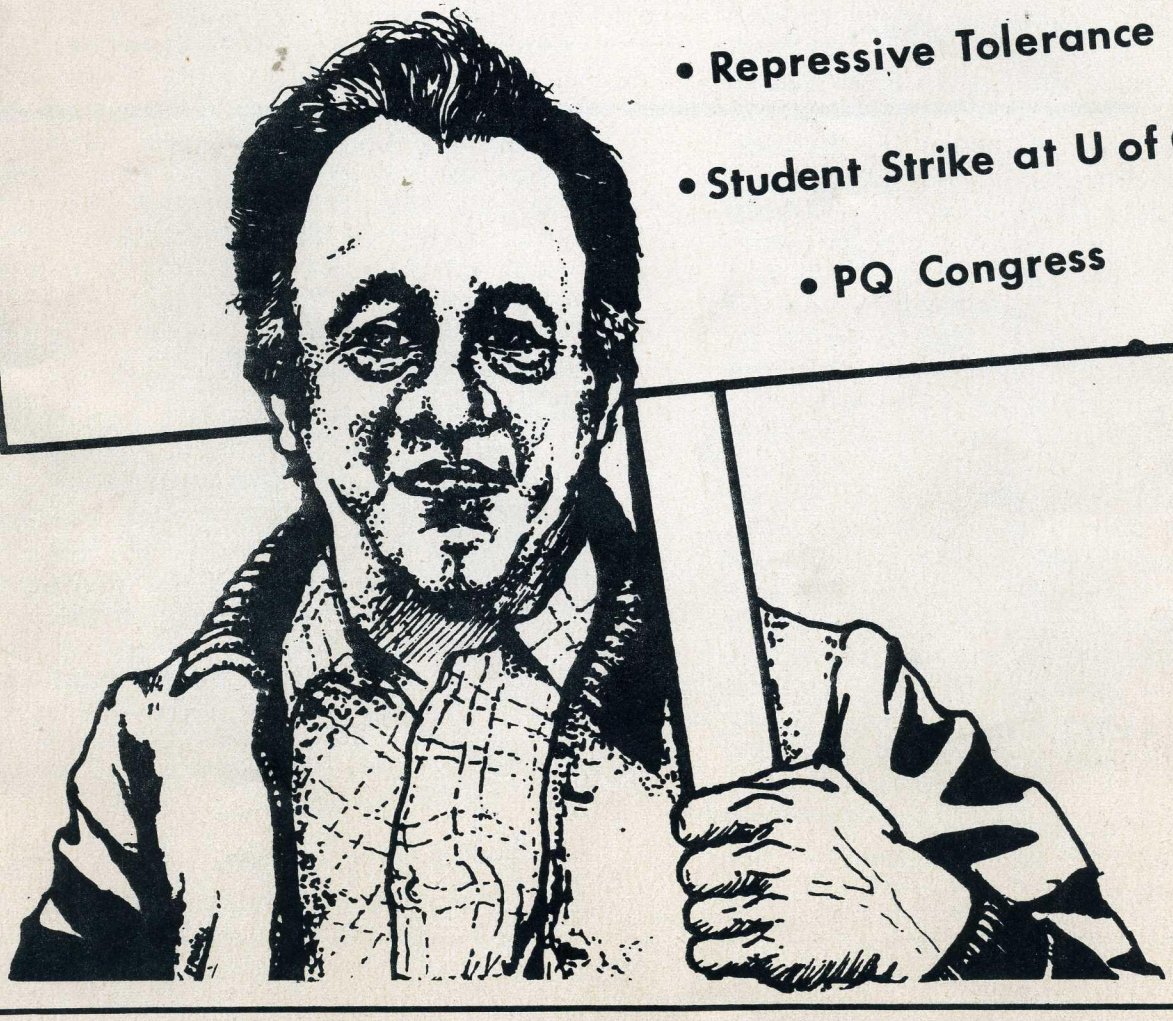
SOLIDAIRE

montréal, québec

no.5 september 73

in this issue:

- The AUTONOMOUS LEFT in QUEBEC
- Repressive Tolerance
- Student Strike at U of Q
- PQ Congress



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Solidaire

Box 461, Station N,

Montréal, Québec

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#3 - the May/72 General Strike and Québec's union movement.

#4 - The Parti Québécois: Reform or Revolution?

50¢ each

SOLIDAIRE is a magazine put out by a group of English-speaking Québécois to inform Anglophones in Québec and progressive people in Canada and the U.S. of the growing struggle for independence and socialism in Québec.

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Introduction

The last two Solidaires dealt respectively with the radicalization in Québec's union movement and the nature and activity of the liberal nationalist Parti Québécois. This issue's main focus is on the growing autonomous workers' movement in Québec. When we began work on Solidaire #3, we were responding to events (the strike of the Common Front and the General Strike). We were largely unaware of the complexity of the questions we were raising. However, through discussions, internal and external, it became clear that we had to deal with all aspects of the struggle here, in order to deal with one effectively. The three issues form a unit and ideally should be read together since the left, the unions and the PQ are interconnected and clearly influence each other. One must be conscious of all three to have an adequate idea of what is happening here.

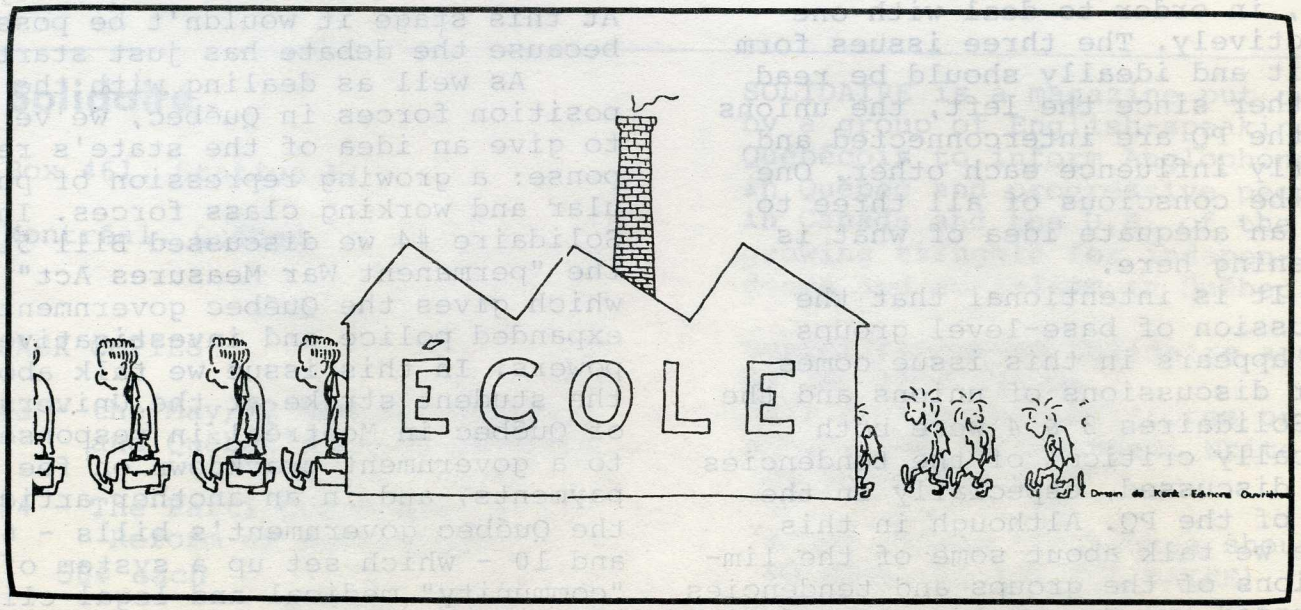
It is intentional that the discussion of base-level groups that appears in this issue comes after discussions of unions and the PQ. Solidaires 3 & 4 were both basically critical of the tendencies they discussed, especially in the case of the PQ. Although in this issue we talk about some of the limitations of the groups and tendencies discussed, we are more concerned with showing developments towards an autonomous workers' movement in Québec. As far as we are concerned, a revolutionary movement must be built on the revolutionary activity of the workers themselves, and it is on developments in this direction that we have tried to focus.

The struggle is only beginning, and there are many questions facing the growing workers' movement in Québec. What does autonomous working class organization mean, how should it be built, and what direction should it take? People are only just beginning to consciously raise these questions, and although we mention some of them (in the conclusion to the main article), we don't pretend to have discussed them adequately. At this stage it wouldn't be possible because the debate has just started.

As well as dealing with the opposition forces in Québec, we've tried to give an idea of the state's response: a growing repression of popular and working class forces. In Solidaire #4 we discussed Bill 51, the "permanent War Measures Act" which gives the Québec government expanded police and investigative; powers. In this issue we talk about the student strike at the University of Québec in Montréal in response to a government crackdown on fee payments, and in an another article, the Québec government's bills - 65 and 10 - which set up a system of "community" medical and legal clinics. For a capitalist system, Bills 65 and 10 are very "progressive" laws. They are aimed directly at making the system run more smoothly and co-

opting the radical, citizens'-controlled medical and legal clinics that already exist. It is a pattern that will be used more and more by the capitalist state - not only in Québec.

Hopefully, this issue will relate fairly directly to the kinds of struggle going on outside of Québec. We would like to hear your criticisms in terms of strong and weak points on how we have dealt with this issue. As well, we would like information on forms of organizing, successes and failures, and debates going on in your area.



SCHOOL from "Le Journal CHOC"

Follow up:

The Fourth Congress of the P.Q.

The Parti Québécois, since the last election, has been caught in a growing contradiction. Being a petty-bourgeois movement whose primary focus is nationalism, the PQ is dependent on support from either the bourgeoisie or the working class to gain electoral power. The bourgeoisie finds the existing situation too profitable to support the PQ at this point. Thus the PQ has to depend on the working class.

However, the decline of the economic situation over the last few years has led to a radicalization of the Québécois workers' movement, as shown by the increasing politicization and militance in the unions. In order to keep the support of the workers, the PQ has been forced to create an image of itself as a popular party offering not simply a capitalist system where the bosses speak French, but a viable alternative to the present economic system.

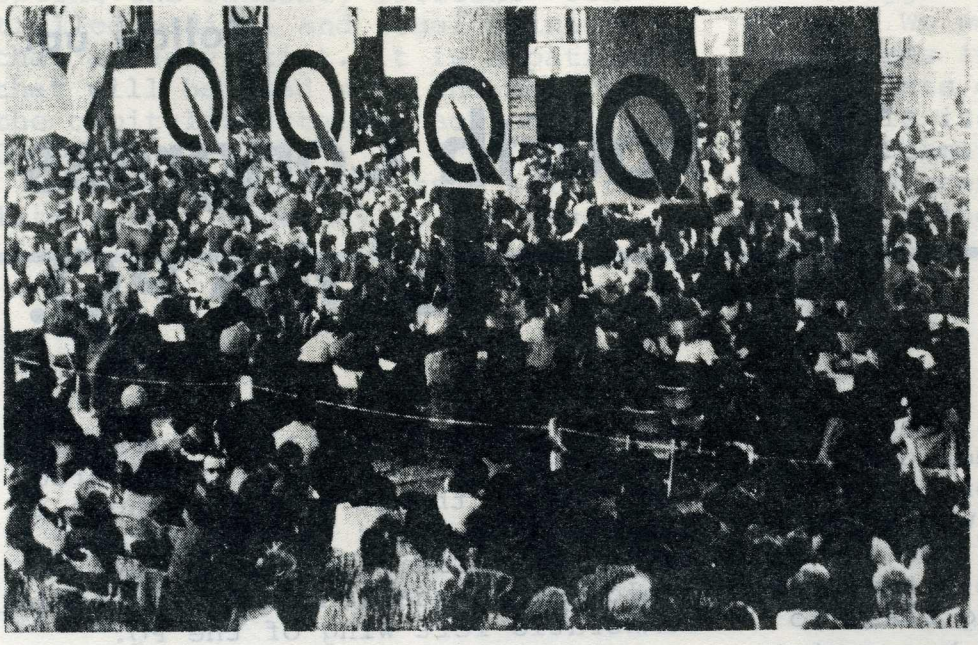
It is in the light of this contradiction that the Fourth Congress of the PQ should be seen. Held from February 23 to 25, the congress met to prepare a programme for the next provincial election, which could occur as early as next fall. The urgency created by the impending election made it easy for the leadership to keep things under control. Various critiques were presented by PQ associations from different regions of Québec, of the national executive's position and its involvement - or lack of involvement - with areas outside of Montréal. Election viability was the priority, however, and the idea of any fundamental changes in the party's position was considered too great a threat to its chances in the election. Thus the state capitalist orientation of the party could not be challenged by the social democratic left wing of the PQ.

However, the party leadership was willing to use this "left wing" to help create the image of a party working in the interest of the working class, thereby camouflaging the real class interest of the PQ.

The left of the PQ falls mainly into two tendencies _ the unionists and the participationists. The unionist tendency is made up of union militants such as Jean Gérin-Lajoie, president of the Québec branch of the United Steelworkers of America - Metallos (FTQ), and Michel Bourdon, head of the National Federation of Building and Wood Trades (CSN). These people claim to represent the workers to the PQ and the PQ to the workers.

The participationists are mainly intellectuals - professors and students - who maintain that the problem is one of party democracy. But the concept that the decentralization of decision-making will make the party representative of the people is essentially an idealistic application of bourgeois democratic thinking to the party structure. It is dangerous because it aids in the mystification of the PQ as a popular party.

Both groups tend to gloss over questions of class orientation. In doing so, they serve to legitimatize the party in the eyes of the workers



A scene from the 1973 P.Q. Congress

while generally supporting moderate positions. In spite of the fact that there are individuals within these tendencies who are more radical, it is the reformist elements of each group which are the most influential. These tend to oppose propositions such as those concerning self-management as being too far advanced for the workers.

Proposals from the left wing of these social democratic tendencies resulted in some curious resolutions at the Fourth Congress; for example, the resolution calling for "the creation of an economic policy based on human and social objectives and, to this end, the establishment of an economic system which eliminates all forms of worker exploitation and which responds to the real needs of all Québécois rather than to the demands of an economically favoured minority." This can be nothing but rhetoric when it is seen in the light of the party programme, which states clearly that the capitalist system is to be retained. Exploitation cannot be eliminated without the elimination of the mechanism of exploitation - capitalism. The party leadership seems to hope that the radicalized working class will not notice the contradiction and will vote for this "party of change".

This opportunistic approach of the PQ came out again in their suppor for the liberation of the three union leaders in jail because of their actions during the general strike in May, 1972. The PQ sided with the unions because, it claimed, the Québec government was practicing "the politics of class struggle" through their attacks on the union movement and the working class in general. The union leaders must be released, they said, because they represent an important element of Québec society which must be able to work in harmony with all the other elements for the benefit of all Québecois.

The national question is a basic factor in the struggle in Québec. But only now are left wing groups beginning to develop a clear class perspective on national liberation. The PQ, through its opportunism and the mystification of "everyone working together", is an important obstacle to the evolution of such a position. It is becoming increasingly necessary for the left to demystify the PQ, show whose interests it serves, and to provide a working class alternative.

The following is an excerpt from an article that appeared in RESISTANCE, a workers' paper in St. Jerome, Quebec, in May, 1973. It discusses the activities of the local PQ association.

The PQ and the Base

At the local level, the situation must be seen in light of the fact that during the three or four years in which there has been a local PQ organization, it hasn't defended the interests of the working class in any concrete way.

Let us explain. To our knowledge, the energy of the PQ militants from the region has, as elsewhere in Québec, been put largely into fund raising drives directed by the national executive. In other words, their militance has served to sell membership cards and raise funds, all for the elections.

In a region like St. Jerome, which might be considered a bastion of disintegrating capitalism, the PQ has never given any systematic support to campaigns against the corrupt economic system or struggles of the workers against their bosses.

The only action that we know to have been taken by the local PQ is its recent position in support of the workers at the Regent Knitting Mills.* It should be added that if the union executive at Regent hadn't taken the initiative to meet with Mr. Levesque (René Levesque, head of the national executive of the PQ) .... the PQ would certainly have put off taking a stand on the struggle at Regent.

What did the PQ do during the strike in the public and semi-public services and the May (general) strike? It didn't say a word. Even more senseless, it remained silent during the imprisonment of one of its brave militants, Françoise Courtemanche, who was jailed following Bill 19.**

Sure, the PQ took part in the Common Front of the Laurentians in 1971, but again, it was the officers of the PQ and not the militants, who were present at the Common Front.

What can be said about the position taken by the local PQ at Hotel Lapointe, even though it dealt with the integration of various forms of political action. The resolution said that the PQ should work with local unions, concern itself with municipal and school politics; in fact, it proposed that the PQ deal with the daily problems of the underprivileged, of consumers, etc. But since this resolution was voted in, there has been hardly any word of real links between the PQ and the people...

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* Workers at the Regent Knitting Mills in St. Jerome, north of Montreal, have been occupying their factory since December 1972, primarily to protest the increasing transfer of operations to Montreal, thus causing unemployment in St. Jerome.

** Bill 19 was anti-strike legislation enacted following the general strike in May 1972.

The following is a chart, reproduced from Agence de Presse Libre du Quebec (Quebec Free Press Agency), showing the background of the delegates to the 1973 PQ congress.

Economic and Social Background of Delegates to the 1971 and 1973 PQ Congresses

		1973	1971
SEX	Men	79.2%	79.5%
	women	20.8%	20.5%
AGE	17 to 24 yrs.	20.4%	23.4%
	25 to 34 yrs.	41%	37%
	35 to 44	22.7%	24.1%
	45 to 54	12.1%	
	55 to 64	3.1%	14.6%
	65 and over	0.7%	
EMPLOYMENT	Professionals, managers	18.5%	20.5%
	Professors, students	34%	32.5%
	White collar and service workers, civil servants	26.9%	26.6%
	Skilled and semi-skilled workers	9%	6.6%
	Unskilled workers	2.3%	3.2%
	Farmers	1.8%	1.2%
	Unemployed, pensioners, retired	2.6%	2.1%
	Housewives	4.9%	6.6%
MARITAL STATUS	married	69.1%	
	single	30.9%	
EDUCATION	primary	5.0%	
	secondary	19.7%	
	technical	7.5%	
	CEGEP (junior college)	20.9%	
	University	46.9%	
INCOME	Less than $3000	17.3%	
	$3000 - $4999	5.7%	
	$5000 - $6999	13.4%	
	$7000 - $8999	18.8%	
	$9000 - $10,999	16%	
	$11,000 - $12,999	11%	
	$13,000 - $14,999	6.6%	
	$15,000 and over	11.2%	

Repression and Student Response:

The Strike at UQAM

The Strike Begins

The students at the University of Québec at Montréal (UQAM) went out on strike in January and February of this year. The strike was called in reaction to a decree by the university administration that all debts owed the school be paid up by the 15th of February. Because the administration had followed a polic of letting students hold debts to the university,there were several hundred students who owed more than $500; these students were threatened with expulsion if they didn't pay up on time.

The attitude of the administration seemed to be a dramatic shift from the philosophy of the university. Founded in 1968, the university was presented as a popular university, open to the "lower classes". Having learned a great deal from the "student power" struggles in the U.S. and Canada, the Québec government created a university structure which, it claimed, included student and teacher participation. However, this participation was kept on levels which, while they gave an illusion of control, did not affect the real functioning of the university.

Along with this supposed openness in structure, the government made available a certain number of loans and grants, and the administration allowed student debts to pile up. This attitude reflected a confidence in the economy's ability to absorb trained personnel, because of the modernization and expansion of the economy during the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960's.

However, with the slowing down of the economy, with inflation and

high unemployment, it became evident that there were not enough jobs for all the people coming out of the universities and technical schools. This was in spite of the fact that only 6-7% of francophone Québécois go to university, as compared to about 25% in the U.S.

The government's response to the situation was a general crackdown at all levels of education, a crackdown that goes hand in hand with the increasingly repressive state measures against workers (Bill 89, the crushing of the Common Front struggle in 1972 with law 19, increasing numbers of injunctions against militant strikes, etc.). At the pre-university and technical school level, the government tried to enforce a system that had among its characteristics a 40-hour school week - making it just about impossible to go to school and work at the same time. This would inevitably lead to the virtual elimination of working class kids going beyond the high school level (grade 11). After considerable protest on the part of students and teachers, the government proposal was retracted, probably to be re-introduced in an altered form later on.

At the U. of Q., the government's change of attitude came in the form of the decree to "pay up or get out".

The student response to the moves by the administration was the formation of COPE (provisionary student organizing committee), a body which was to be given mandate to action by the student general assemblies. At one of the first general assemblies, a proposition was passed to organise a boycott of students against the registration for the winter session. The boycott was proposed by some of the more militant students, but opposed by others as being too radical for the students. This opposition of tendencies was to remain in COPE throughout the strike without ever being resolved.

The boycott was aimed at stopping the administration from throwing out those students whose debt was more than $500. In terms of numbers of students who didn't register the boycott was surprisingly successful, especially in the social sciences departments, where student conciousness was higher. However, the administration retaliated with a mechanical solution geared to ignore the political import of the boycott; the extension of the registration period, and a fine for those who had boycotted the original registration and then registered late.

In reaction, the general assembly decided to register, but not to pay the fine. The proposition had been introduced not by COPE, but by the same group of people who had opposed the original boycott, and was supported by the Trotskyists on campus. This tactic had the effect of demobilizing the student body in the period between the boycott (Nov.) and late registration (Jan.). However, the February 15 deadline remained for all students with debts, and students with over $500 of debt were just not allowed to register in January.

COPE undertook negotiations with the administration, hoping to arrange a "collective" settlement for endebted students. They proposed a period of three years after graduation be allowed students before payments began on their debts to the university. The administration insisted that the individual students present themselves,prove their ability to pay (their solvability), and arrange a payment plan. No general criteria were considered acceptable.

A Student Movement: On What Basis?

On January 24, the general assembly, deciding that the administration was not negotiating in good faith, voted an ultimatum. If the administration did not begin to negotiate seriously, there would be a strike beginning January 26th. The strike began that Friday. From the beginning, there was almost total support from the students and university staff. Few people tried to cross the picket lines.

However, for a week the administration tried to ignore the existance of the strike, claiming that the university was open as usual. But, after a week without students, teachers or maintenance staff, the administration was forced to act. Their tactics involved phoning up university workers and insisting they report for work, constant police harrassment of the picketers and the setting up of an "ad hoc committee" of students against the strike. Yet,despite all of these attempts to sabotage the strike, the students continued to vote to carry on the strike, and the number of students participating in the general assemblies and on the picket lines continued to grow. And the professors and maintenance staff continued to respect the lines. The administration then closed down the university for a period of "reflection." During that week, they conducted a private poll to determine if students were against the use of force on the part of the police against the picketing students. The non-alternatives presented to the

students in the poll were the cancelling of the semester,or the use of voilence to break the strike. The administration didn't get the response it wanted: most students boycotted the poll. However, when the university reopened a week later, it ordered its staff back at one of the administration buildings and arranged a police escort to assure entry. Strangely enough, a struggle developped when they tried to cross the picket line. Three students were injured when hit by a policeman's motorcycle. After this, the students on the lines decided in assembly that the COPE negotiating committee refuse to continue negotiations with the administration until all police were removed from the university. The committee disregarded this and continued negotiations that night. It was at this meeting, that the administration, using the incident of the morning, presented injunctions it had obtained against picketing. Without picket lines, the maintenance staff was forced to return to work. Despite this, the strike lasted another week. Finally, the professors were forced back by a decree threatening their expulsion if they didn't co-operate with the administration. The professors' union was split down the middle

over the question of returning to work,and the progressive professors decided to return in order to save their union. In the end, the general assembly voted on the recommendation of COPE to return because the professors and maintenance workers had been forced back and the students were faced with the threat of annulation of their semester. The leadership insisted that the students were not strong enough to continue the strike in face of these measures; that this would divide the students or separate the militants who remained outside from the mass of the students who would probably return. COPE proposed to continue the struggle from within, emphasizing the necessity of building a stronger student organization, but not defining on what basis.

The mass movement built up during the strike was totally demobilized (by the end of the strike, the general assembly had grown from a few hundred to three thousand out of ten thousand students) leaving a small group of militants struggling to define a strategy for the fall session.

The strike succeeded to the extent that the " pay up or get out " ultimatum was suppressed for the time being, although a few students were indeed thrown out. In terms of the specific aims of the strike, the administration did emerge as the victor. The measures were effectively just postponed and later on the struggle will have to be fought all over again. This is, perhaps, inevitable as the administration has behind it all the mechanisms of the state: the law, the courts, the police, etc.

However, in the process of the strike, a few thousand students were mobilized and the majority of those who weren't actively involved did support the picket lines. All administration attempts to mobilize students against the strike fell flat and attempts to break student-worker-professor solidarity also didn't work. (This three-way

solidarity has almost become a tradition at the university. Students have always come out, at least in part, in support of the struggles of the professors or the maintenance workers.) Support was voiced from the CEGEPs and from McGill and, for as long as possible, the maintenance workers and professors (both groups are unionized) respected the strike and even gave aid in certain cases.

Yet, after the administration played its final cards: the injunction and the decree against the teachers, the large mobilization of students built up during the strike collapsed despite the call issued by COPE to continue building a strong student organization. Part of the demobilization is probably due to the discouragement of having lost the struggle, but part is also due to the disorganization of COPE and their lack of strategy for a continuing struggle.

The weakness of COPE at the end of the strike was not an accident, but symptomatic of its leadership throughout the strike. Early in the struggle, the COPE had been enlarged to include any student who came to the meetings. This resulted in the presence of several political tendencies. On the one hand, there were those who had a more reformist orientation, who wanted to limit the strike to the basic economic issues involved - the question of fees - and who didn't want to mix in politics. On the other hand, there were the more radical elements who wanted to enlarge the struggle to an understanding of the role of the university in a capitalist society and, thus, try to link it to struggles outside the university. However, the left consisted of several tendencies and, thus, could not present a common front, especially after the struggle was over and it came the time to build a continuing student movement.

This leads to the questions of how to effectively organize students and on what base? These are questions which were understood to a certain extent but also skirted around during and after the struggle.

Of the two reprints that follow, the first is from an evaluation of the strike made by COPE after the end of the struggle. It is indicative of the level of consciousness of at least a part of the militants who took part in the strike.

Students Against the State

The struggle of the students at UQAM, student struggle organized around a militant and politicized student movement, has a great political importance at this time in Québec. The role of the STATE as a repressive apparatus in the service of the big companies and of financial capital is becoming more and more clear to the Québécois workers, unemployed, teachers, and students. The police violence at the demonstration at La Presse, the Common Front struggles, the injunctions, the decrees, laws like 51, 19, 89, are just clearer indications of the fascisization of the state in reaction to the growth of popular movements.

We could even talk about a state offensive to destroy worker and student organizations. What is at stake now is virtually these organizations themselves; their existence and their development as autonomous organizations capable of resisting all attempts by the state to destroy them.

In the last few years, the presence of students in social conflicts as well as their presence in popular movements has been negligable. The student movement, combative, but disorganized and de-

politicized, hasn't successfully integrated itself into the workers' struggles against the capitalist state. The students at UQAM have understood that their struggle against the university administration is in reality a struggle against the government: the school that they want to change is directly controlled by the government and serves the same interests that it does. It's because of this that the struggle is hard, and will stay that way. But it's also because of this that the struggle must continue.

This extract was taken from the statement of principles of Mouvement Revolutionaire des Etudiants du Quebec (Quebec Revolutionary Student Movement), a movement began at the Universite du Quebec and now with organizations in the CEGEP's and the English universities in Montreal.

Students and the Revolutionary Movement

The place of students in this working class struggle against capitalism can be understood only by first recognizing that students as such do not constitute a social class. Rather, they form a transitory social group whose members are drawn from all classes of society.

In the universities, the working class and the bourgeoisie both furnish a minority of the student body, while the majority comes from the petty-bourgeoisie. The university acts to complete the process of integrating students into existing social structures by diffusing bourgeois ideology designed to create subservient and cynical adults. At the same time, students are trained to enter a specific class— the petty-bourgeoisie— through the skills they are taught by the university.

For most students, then, their class position is merely confirmed by attendance at university. For the "privileged" working class minority, it is the final stage in the process of rising to petty-bourgeois status.

It is above all by creating and propagating the ideology of the bourgeoisie that universities serve to perpetuate existing class relations. The class character of university education is evident both in the content of courses and in the artificial barriers that the university sets up between theory and practice, and between students and the work-world. This sterile vacuum which surrounds bourgeois knowledge acts to emasculate all conflicts within the university. It renders meaningless ideological struggles which are not directly related to the extra-university struggles against the capitalist class itself.

It is easy for the student movement to remain isolated from the working class struggle, to concentrate only on issues involving the university itself, and to venture no further than the campus. These issues, be they the cost of higher education, student employment and summer unemployment, or the mercantile policy of the university, are only of secondary importance. Concentrating solely in this area does not further the workers' struggle, nor does it change the structure and function of the university. This can be done when the working class takes power.

As students,we should investigate not how we can improve our own lot as students; rather, we should question which class the educational system would have us support.

Our student movement must fight against all types of reformist ideas. We must expose the myths of participation introduced by the Parent Report* and by the creation of so-called "popular" institutions such as Dawson College [an English CEGEP] and the Université du Québec. It is possible for the bourgeoisie in a " magnanimous gesture of generosity" and under pressure from the academic Marxists to create a university with departments that profess Marxism. As soon as the separation of theory from practice is assured, anything is acceptable within the university.

The political and economic powers and their servants Trudeau and Bourassa, will be only too pleased to see students organizing themselves inside the school system without concern for the position of the working class, without participation in the struggle for the future of the Quebec people. The administrators of schools, CEGEPs, and universities can call for student participation, but they do so only to integrate us into those institutions which are designed to bolster the interests of the capitalist exploiters, and not to further the interests of the working people. For this reason, we will not let ourselves be duped by the setting up of corporate-like unions (e.g. the Front des Etudiants du Québec) or students' councils which isolate st students within the confines of their schools and separate us from the struggling workers. The call for student participation launched by administrators or professors, the illusion of student power, is merely a "new" reformist proposal to interest the students in the smooth functioning of the school.

Beyond denunciation ot the school system now serving the established social order and resistance to repressions in the high schools and the ideological conditioning in the CEGEPs and universities, students must join the struggle of workers who oppose capitalist exploitation. In an educational system controlled by the government and big business, there is only one criterion to determine if a student actively opposes the social system which oppresses the Québec people: does he or she take part in the struggles of the working class?

The task of progressive students within the school system is to make students aware of the position of the working class. In the absence of a revolutionary workers' party guiding the struggle of the working class, to support the working class must be to commit oneself as a student to the working class movement in the form of active support for workers' actions each time a struggle is undertaken against capitalist exploitation.

Mouvement Révolutionnaire des Etudiants du Québec.

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* The Parent Report, result of the provincial Parent Royal Commission on Education recommended a revamping of the education system in Québec. The forming of the CEGEP's and the Université du Québec were a result of this report. The reforms were aimed at producing qualified personal for the American branch plants and the growing Québec civil service.

Towards a Workers' Movement:

The Autonomous Left in Québec

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Introduction

Over the last ten or so years in Québec, numerous citizens' and community groups have come into existence in order to deal with problems facing ordinary working people in their day-to-day lives. In the course of this process some individuals and groups have moved in a more political direction-- i.e. toward realizing that it is the economic and political structure of society as a whole that must be changed, rather than dealing solely with specific problems. This has led to the formation of various political groups and coalitions with differing ideas on what road to take toward a socialist Québec.

Some of these groups with a clearer class analysis have come to the position that only an autonomous workers' movement based directly on the organization of working people, where they work and live, can build a real socialism and a truly independent Québec. This article focuses on the development of this latter position in the context of popular-based groups.

The article is divided into two major parts: the first deals with the development of the community and popular-based groups in the Montréal area; the second with similar organizations in the rest of Québec. We felt that events inside and outside Montréal were usually different enough that it was better to deal with them in two sections. Montréal can easily be treated as a unit because of relatively high levels of communication between people and groups as well as often overlapping activities. Outside Montréal, struggles tend to be isolated from each other but they can be treated as a unit because they tend to happen under similar conditions. It should be realized that there has always been some level of communication between struggles in Montréal and in the rest of Québec through the media, the union structure, personal contacts, and so on. Nonetheless the effects of this communication have been limited.

We consider that there are various limitations on this article as it stands. From reading it people could perhaps get the impression that the groups and tendencies we are talking about are stronger and more developed, both ideologically and numerically , than they actually are. The numbers of people in the groups discussed is relatively small. On the other hand, they are growing in both size and importance and they are just beginning the process of developing a clear analysis.

At times the article may seem general and sketchy. We sometimes lacked necessary information, particularly in terms of events outside Montréal. Most of our information has come from personal contacts and accounts published by the various groups involved. Published accounts often give no more than a group's general and minimal consensus on an issue, rather than an account of the ideological and political struggles that led up to such a position. Finally, at times we felt it was necessary not to go into too great detail about specific events.

This article is an attempt to present and analyse a continuing process, and such an analysis is only just being developed by the groups involved here. We feel that the events we describe have significance not only for Québec but for the practice of socialist movements elsewhere.

Developments in the Montréal Area

The Origins of Community Groups

Through the fifties and sixties, outside investment in Québec's economy, both American and Anglo-Canadian, grew at an ever-increasing rate. This growth created a demand from the big corporations for skilled technicians and managers that the existing Québec educational system was not providing, and for a general modernization of Québec society that would serve modern capitalist needs. The newly elected Liberal government (1960) instituted reform in all areas - government, social welfare policy, and education, among others - aimed at "bringing Québec into the twentieth century". One result of this so-called "Quiet Revolution" was a rapid expansion of educational opportunities for working people. Québec's "cheap labour" needed to be modernized like everything else. The government, meanwhile, began to develop an ideology of "citizens' participation" and consultation in the solution of their immediate problems.

The period of 1963-68 saw the formation of community citizens' groups ("groupes populaire") in various "low-income" areas of Montréal. They were often formed on the initiative of "social animators"- social workers, sociologists, and other professionals - some of whom were paid by government welfare agencies. These people tended to be progressive members of the new professional petty bourgeoisie that was emerging from Québec's reformed universities, and often enough came from working class backgrounds themselves.

The animators saw poorer citizens being neglected by the government. Their goal was to give them a voice in determining their own living conditions. Usually their tactic was to set up programs that would help people recognize some of their immediate problems - poor housing, lack of leisure space, inadequate schooling and so on - and involve them in finding solutions. They often worked in cooperation with the local petty bourgeoisie: clergy, small merchants, etc. As many of the animators were working class in origin, they genuinely hoped that conditions in their neighbourhoods could be qualitatively improved through these programs.

A number of small scale victories were won - a long-needed school was built in one area, a parking lot was converted to a childrens' playground - and the number of citizens' groups grew rapidly in working class districts of the city. But at the same time, frustration began to develop inside

the citizens' organizations for various reasons. People began to realize that a new school did not do much good if the quality of education inside it was still poor.

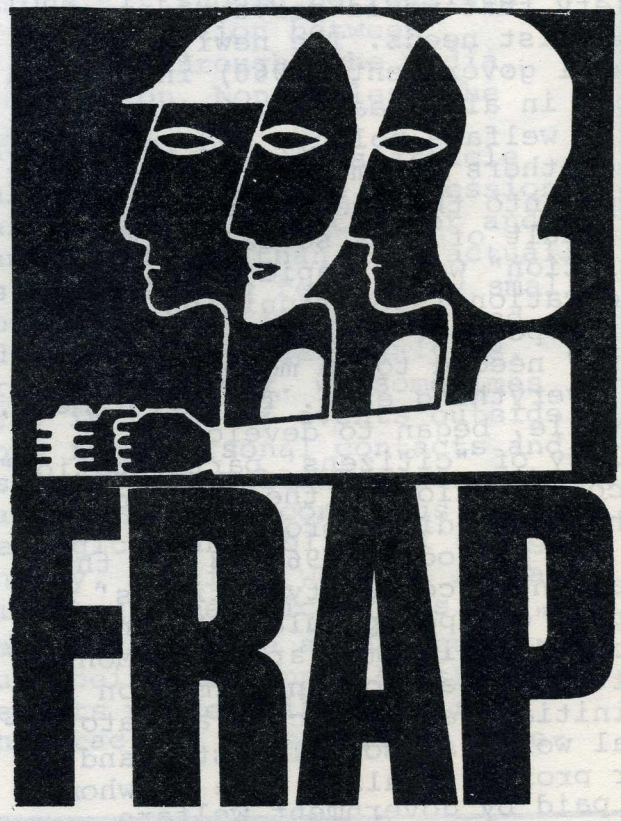
The Development of a Political Perspective

People in the groups, and some of the animators, began to question whether the solution of short-term, isolated problems could bring about any real qualitative change in people's lives. They began to question the value of the citizens' groups in their existing form. It became clear to many that ordinary people weren't really gaining any influence on government policy, but only the possibility of consultation, and that depended on the whim of the government. People were coming up against the contradiction of attacking short-term and specific problems without dealing with the overall problem-- the basically exploitative nature of capitalist society and the state's role in maintaining that exploitation - although few people at the time were viewing things in precisely those terms.

Within the citizens' groups, class differences began to show up. Working people realized in practice that their interests were not always the same as those of the petty bourgeois people involved. Not only did their interests differ from those of local establishment figures (clergy, merchants, etc.), but also more and more people gradually started to reject the professional , "social work" approach of the social animators. In a growing number of cases the two tendencies came into direct opposition, and this led to the formation of some separate "workers' committees". (It should be realized that these new committees were not made up mainly of "typical" workers, but were generally composed of young workers, students, and some petty bourgeois intellectuals already having a clear class analysis.)

Out of the frustration of the early citizens' committees, these more militant people and groups tried to explain the general failure of the committees. They began to see the necessity of a more long-range political perspective on which to base their programs. At this stage - around 1967 - this involved a general criticism of the way the capitalist system operates, but without developing any clear alternative to it.

The first practical results of this developing analysis were the setting up of alternative structures which attempted to deal with peoples' immediate needs while at the same time placing these needs in a political perpective. In various parts of the city one saw the establishment of food cooperatives, tenants associations, community health clinics and so on. Probably the best and most advanced example of this is Clinique St. Jacques, founded by the St. Jacques Citizens'



Committee in 1968 after aid was refused them by both the provincial and federal governments. The political purpose of the clinic was to create an awareness among people using its services that their health problems were related to the conditions in which they were living - poor housing, bad working conditions, inadequate schooling and so on. (See article in this issue.)

From the beginnings of citizens' and workers' organizations in Montréal, union militants had often had an important influence. Individuals active in the unions were often members of local community groups. By 1968 the union federations as a whole were becoming interested in social and political action outside of the usual limits of syndicalism. In the forefront of this move was the CSN (Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux - Confederation of National Trade Unions) with its "Second Front" - an attempt to organize around workers' needs outside of the workplace. This and similar developments in the unions reinforced the tendency of union militants to play an important role in citizens' and workers' groups.

The Formation of FRAP

Between 1968 and 1970, discussions began among the citizens' groups about co-operation and the possibility of forming some kind of wider political organization. CSN and other union militants in the groups were beginning to push strongly the idea of direct political action, along with militants who had previously been active in the student movement.

In the summer of 1970, the citizens' committees, with financial and organizational help from the CSN, formed the Front d'Action Politique - FRAP (Political Action Front). It was to be a municipal party, primarily to run in opposition to Montréal mayor Jean Drapeau. This first political grouping of the citizens' organizations took the form of a municipal opposition because it was Montréal's unresponsive city government that had jurisdiction over most of the problems the citizens' groups had tried to deal with - urban renewal, distribution of welfare services, and so on. The following is a statement of policies and goals reprinted from FRAP's first newspaper:

> The Front d'Action Politique wants to bring democracy back to City Hall. For this reason, FRAP will run candidates for councillor in the October 25th municipal elections.
>
> FRAP wants to give salaried workers the place they deserve on the municipal council. Over 90% of the present councillors are professionals, businessmen and merchants, while 80% of the population is made up of salaried workers.
>
> FRAP wants citizens to be aware of what is going on at City Hall.

The rest of the newspaper talked about what FRAP saw as Montréal's five major problems: housing, health, social and economic development, transportation, and leisure and culture.

FRAP was a general umbrella structure made up of fourteen neighbourhood political action committees - CAPs (Comités d'Action Politiques). Six of these grew out of already existing citizens' committees, but the rest were created expressedly for the elections.

As a unit, the CAPs issued a document outlining their basic position:

> In Montréal, the Workers Move on to Political Action
>
> The ultimate goal of the CAPs is to create a society built on the will of the workers and

based on priorities which they themselves establish.
Our aims are:

I. to establish a real urban democracy in Montréal, based on the participation of workers on all levels of decision-making.
2. to allow the greatest number of workers possible to participate in the political life of Montréal.
3. to unite all workers in Montréal, whether unionized or non-unionized, unemployed or on welfare, tenants or students.

(n.b. We do not mean participation of the type offered by governments, but rather the kind a political organization of workers would allow.)
We will refuse to participate in ways which will let us be controlled, or which would restrict our freedom.
Thus our present and future plans are to organize struggles in three areas:

I. in the area of consumer problems and co-operatives: housing, health, food, credit, etc.
organize workers according to their immediate interests and needs.
2. in the area of work: salaries, working conditions, workers' control in factories and offices, etc. Organize solidarity at work.
3. in the area of politics on the municipal level: Organize ourselves on the municipal level to make politics function in the interests of the majority. Check up on municipal candidates, run candidates in districts, confrontations through public meetings, etc.

Above all, FRAP stressed the necessity to expand the organization to include as many salaried workers as possible; through their programs, through the creation of new CAPs, and by concretizing their links with the unions.

Within the citizens' groups that had developed directly into CAPs, FRAP had a good basis for establishing contact within the community. However, this meant that FRAP generally inherited the weaknesses of these communities - their tendency toward short-term, defensive actions against specific problems, and their lack of an overall political analysis. In the areas where CAPs were created primarily for the election, contacts within the community were weak.

Up until the October '70 civic election, the dominant ideology in FRAP was reformist and did not make any real economic analysis of society. A pamphlet issued by FRAP in October '70, entitled Power to Salaried Workers, discussed a series of social problems such as housing, transpor-

tation, health care and so on, without attempting to explain the causes of these problems. It emphasized the fact that only a small number of workers are in decision-making positions, whether at work, in their communities or at City Hall. It led to the conclusion that workers' problems would be solved by electing more workers to positions of power.

FRAP at this time never went beyond attacking the secondary effects of capitalism, such as problems of consumption and the distribution of urban services within the context of the municipal elections. It was this political orientation which led away from an emphasis on workers' struggles in the workplace or even in the community, and helped shape the internal structure of FRAP. Decisions on major actions tended to be made from the top down, and experience gained in these actions was not adequately passed on from most militants to the base. This situation parallels developments taking place in the unions with whom FRAP was forming strong ties and where the idea of a workers' party, led by the union bureaucrats, was beginning to take shape.

The FLQ kidnapping crisis of October 1970 seriously weakened FRAP for the upcoming elections. The FLQ manifesto had described in clear and concrete language the oppression and exploitation of Québec's workers by capitalism and imperialism. While disagreeing with the FLQ's tactics, FRAP supported their general aims and the manifesto and condemned the " everyday violence of the capitalist system." Both the federal government and Montréal mayor, Jean Drapeau, used this as an excuse to try to destroy FRAP's credibility by accusing it of being no more than a front for the FLQ. Although there had been no possibility of a really big win for FRAP, the effect of this attack made sure that it did not win even one seat in the municipal government.

The Split in FRAP

After the election, FRAP began to fall apart. Those CAPs created primarily for the election no longer had any basis for existence and dissolved. Within the remaining CAPs, ideological splits became apparent. At FRAP's second congress in the spring of 1971, ideological conflicts continued to manifest themselves. The congress adopted pro-

positions presented by CAP St. Jacques designed to change FRAP's electoral, social democratic orientation; i.e. its tendency to favour large-scale, reformist struggles based on widespread propaganda, unrelated to the real strength of the movement and without any clear long-term strategy.

CAP St. Jacques' intention was to rebuild FRAP from the base in line with a Marxist analysis. The propositions:

1. presented social problems as the manifestations of capitalism;
2. broke down FRAP's base according to class (production workers, service workers, unemployed, etc.)
3. designated the owners of the means of production (i.e. the bourgeoisie) as the primary enemy - thus changing the priority for action from the community to the workplace;
4. emphasized the development of active militants and their actual implantation in the various milieus;
5. favoured different types of decentralized local actions rather than large actions unrelated to the strength of FRAP.

The fact that these propositions came from CAP St. Jacques was significant. CAP St. Jacques was the largest CAP in terms of active militants and popular support in the elections. Because of its longer experience in community organizations, it could see more clearly the limitations of such action and the necessity of beginning to build a more solid base among working people.

Mainly because of CAP St. Jacques' numerical superiority, their propositions were accepted by the congress. At the same time this did not reconcile the various positions within FRAP and the contradictions were becoming more divisive. CAP St. Jacques and CAP Maisonneuve (another CAP with relatively strong support in its neighbourhood), began to focus their attention on the ideological development of militants working at the base. This was done in the context of a greater stress on actually having people at work in the factories and other workplaces (called in French "implantation"), and through more contact with local citizens' organizations. At the same time they were beginning to work internally toward a better method of self-analysis and self-criticism.

The two CAPs were becoming less a part of FRAP and more a structure through which militants in different milieus could develop a political analysis based on what they were doing. In January, 1972, CAP Maisonneuve put out a document criticizing a fundamental FRAP working paper. In the working paper FRAP maintained that it was the structure providing unity and cohesion to workers and their struggles. However, it said this without assessing its actual strengths and limitations. Thus Maisonneuve felt that the paper expressed only in very vague terms how and on what basis unity should be built. Maisonneuve also thought that FRAP was assuming that there was unity of political orientation, without recognizing the real contradictions and divisions that exist within the working class (unionized vs. non-unionized, skilled vs. unskilled, men vs. women, etc.). Basically, the division between CAP St.

Jacques and Maisonneuve and the rest of FRAP was one of orientation - how do we build a socialist movement? FRAP saw itself as the workers' party, while CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve felt that the workers' political organization should develop more organically out of the struggle at the base

In March, 1972, at a debate on financial reorganization, CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve split with FRAP.

* * *

Since the split in FRAP, elements in CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve have developed criticisms of their handling of the whole affair.

At the Spring/71 congress, CAP St. Jacques' propositions were presented in a generally theoretical form and were not clearly enough related to the experience of FRAP's members. Before the congress, CAP St. Jacques had neglected to adequately discuss their propositions with sympathetic members of the other CAPs, thus failing to win much potential support.

After the congress, CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve failed to really develop an ideological struggle within FRAP around the new principles in an attempt to rebuild unity. As a result, the various CAPs continued in their own differing directions and the split of March/72 became virtually inevitable.

Reprinted here are statements from both FRAP and the two CAPs, St. Jacques and Maisonneuve, which appeared in Quebec-Presse in March, 1972, explaining their positions on the split!

The Split in FRAP:

For a Real Workers' Party

Québec-Presse reported, last Sunday, on the split within FRAP which took place March 2 ....

We are a group of workers, teachers and students who today, despite the two CAP's departure, remain in FRAP and want FRAP to continue.

For this reason, we want to explain FRAP's problems over the last few months and the possibilities for the future.

Marchand and Drapeau

First of all, after its creation in June 1970, why didn't FRAP develop, but instead decline quickly until it almost disappeared from the political scene? Was it because the workers in Montreal weren't "ripe", "ready" or "conscious" enough to do political work through their own organization? We don't think so.

FRAP, it must be remembered, was set up a few months before the October elections in Montreal...

As the first political organization of workers, it gave the initiatives of previous years (citizens' groups, etc.) a strength and scope which they didn't and couldn't have because of their isolation, limitations and lack of coordination.

And, most importantly, it greatly increased the possibility of workers entering politics— thus far

dominated by Drapeau and those he represents—under their own banner.

It was already an enormous task. Historically, the fact alone that workers can count even electorally on a party that represents their own interests is of prime importance. It was this which was on the agenda on the eve of the municipal elections.

FRAP: a Target

But the FLQ changed the course of events. And we know what happened. We remember the vicious attacks made on FRAP by Jean Drapeau and Jean Marchand, who charged it with being a wing of the FLQ, a party of bloodthirsty adventurers, etc.

It is important to explain why Drapeau, Marchand and company hit so hard. Attacks like this are not made against an ally. We believe that FRAP became a principal target because of the real and potential threat it represented as an organization of Montreal workers. Thus, in leaning hard on FRAP, the political representatives of private interests seriously harmed the first, still fragile attempt at the autonomous po-itical organization of workers.

As a whole, the October crisis resulted in the dismantling of FRAP, the isolation of the CAPs from each other for long weeks after the election, and the loss of a great number of their militants.

It was in the months following October '70 that the elements of FRAP's second crisis were born.

St. Jacques' Statement

Within the movement, members began to theorize on FRAP's so-called failure. They looked for reasons for the movement's present situation not primarily in the effects of the crisis and the government's attacks, but within FRAP itself.

For example: "FRAP failed because it was created from the top down and not from the base; FRAP has never been implanted in the base; FRAP was mainly made up of , if not controlled by, petit bourgeois elements; the CAPs dissolved after October because they were only formed for the electoral campaign; FRAP was an electoral party, etc. etc."

Based on these charges, among others, a statement of FRAP's failure was drawn up and a basic reorganization proposed. At the congress in March '71, CAP St-Jacques was the best prepared. A group of proposals made by the CAP, designed to rebuild FRAP as a movement implanted"at the base", were accepted by the congress. FRAP would give up "large-scale denunciations", eliminate its "bureaucratic structure", and emphasize the formation of militants.

But: implantation "at the base" was applied con-

cretely as if each CAP had to develop by itself, almost exclusively by its own means. Elimination of the "bureaucratic structure" was applied as if it meant the elimination of all political leadership within FRAP. In turn, the lack of leadership further increased the isolation and weakness of the CAPs in the months that followed. Finally, the abandoning of "large-scale denunciations" resulted in FRAP's operating almost in secret.

Theory instead of Action

Isolated more than ever, practically destroyed since October '70, bound only by a technical secretariat (the "elimination of the bureaucratic structure"...), most of the CAPs failed to build their strength. Operating alone, they were unable to lead any workers' struggles against the capitalist bosses and their political representatives; they sacrificed concrete action to theoretical development. Thus FRAP gradually disappeared from the political scene.

The March 2 split is a result of the feeling among some CAP militants that they have been working toward a dead end since the March '71 congress.

We are among those FRAP militants who refuse to go along with the "cellularization" of FRAP. We refuse to accept the sectarian character which some have been trying to give the movement, and we want to build a political organization of workers, not "cells which workers are not invited to join". These are the factors which led to the departures of the two CAPs, which at the present time are tending toward the formation of cells based on "limited" local struggles.

What is the situation today? FRAP is rebulding itself.

It is of course obvious to us that the fundamental answers to workers' problems and needs are not soley on the municipal level, and that the political organization of workers does not concern the workers of Montreal alone.

But we feel that the rebuilding of FRAP as a political organization in Montreal has important implications for the workers throughout Quebec.

We feel it is urgent that we, all the workers in Montreal, rebuild our political strength.

Today, the bosses and their political representatives are dividing us. FRAP can be the framework in which we will build our programme, solutions and unity democratically and progressively.

But for this framework to develop, FRAP must express the needs of workers: their immediate and long-term interests, their experiences in factories, offices, schools and neighbourhoods. It is the workers who must decide what struggles to undertake, which methods to use and what objectives to set themselves.

Drapeau shouldn't be allowed to relax any longer. We believe, as we did in June 1970, that the "executive committee of capital" in Montreal shouldn't rule any longer over a working class that is defenseless because it is unorganized.

Front d'Action Politique

The Split in FRAP:

A Political Organization Linked to Workers' Struggles

We are militant workers in two CAPs from working class neighbourhoods in Montreal: St-Jacques and Maisonneuve. Before becoming militants in those CAPs, we were active in citizens' committees.

For more than five years, we have led many struggles: on the health front, for a community centre, against the east-west autoroute, and against Drapeau in October 1970. We supported struggles at Daoust-Lalonde, United Laundry, Squibb, Rémi-Carrier, and elsewhere.

We have marched on picket lines; we've talked regularly with workers; we've spent evenings resolving a problem; we've put out leaflets, newspapers, etc.

This means that we are on the inside of the struggles of Québécois workers. At this stage in the class struggle in Quebec, as the economic situation worsens, we are, with other workers' groups, at the heart of the principal contradiction of the workers' movement. That is, on one hand, that the workers have to defend themselves more and more against the effects of capitalism (unemployment, low salaries, factory closings, etc.), while on the other hand, there is no unified political leadership capable of attacking and destroying capitalism and the dominant classes which are profiting from the present regime.

FRAP: a try

The creation of FRAP results from this contradiction. FRAP was born out of the experiences of the citizens' committees and out of a certain development inside the unions.

The October crisis was the factor which brought out FRAP's weaknesses, but was not the cause of the movement's decline....

There were two tendencies in FRAP until our withdrawal. One saw the development of FRAP resting on wide common struggles, which don't reflect the actual strength

of the movement. The other tendency, which we proposed, held that FRAP had to develop from the base, consolidate its gains and undertake more limited struggles according to our actual strength.

Faced with this problem, the two tendencies proposed different methods of assuring the development of FRAP and unity within the movement. We were proposing that meetings be held to determine our political objectives and to establish our priorities. These meetings rested on our practical political work, at the base of the movement.

The other tendency proposed a technical centralization of means and energies in FRAP. This was a technical answer to political problems. This experience showed us that unity cannot be created in the left by the establishment of structures or through technical solutions.

The question was resolved by a majority vote in the permanent council where St-Jacques and Maisonneuve are in the minority, although we are in the majority in the FRAP congress. We withdrew because unity is not created by multiplying majorities and minorities.

What will we do now?

We now consider ourselves as a cell which is working to build a political organization of workers. We don't take ourselves for the "party", and we don't consider any other group to be the political organization of the workers.

We consider the present stage as that of preparation for the building of the political organization of the workers. This stage is distinguished by four important points:

-the most complete understanding possible of the capitalist system, the Quebec situation and the workers' movement.

-the work of implantation at the base, where the workers are. Thus, in St-Jacques and Maisonneuve, we are working at implanting ourselves solidly in the work place (factories, offices, services, hospitals), in the neighbourhoods and in the schools.

-the work of information and political education. This work consists of educating workers to understand their real situation. We have done this work by linking it as far as possible with our political practice: we are thinking of the documents of Rémi-Carrier and Daoust-Lalonde workers which were distributed throughout the province: 6,000 copies. In addition, we are putting out 4,000 copies of a newspaper, "Le Travailleur" ["The Worker"] ,and 1,000 copies of a magazine "Mobilization".

-the establishment of links with other political groups. This task will certainly lead to conflicts, but these are necessary because unity must not be built in an

artificial way, and real solidarity must have a solid base.

A New Phase

Although it is unfortunate, this break marks a new phase in our development. Having developed from citizens' committees to political action committees within FRAP, with better handled and more offensive struggles, we now feel we are capable of clarifying the work that has to be done.

The break is necessary because unity at all cost, on artificial bases, must be rejected. We want to build a political organization at the base, not a party above the workers.....

It is our way of taking a real step in the struggle for the liberation of the workers and for the building of a socialist society in Quebec.

CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve

Marginal Groups

As elsewhere, there are a number of sectarian groups in Québec whose development is linked more closely to their affiliates outside Québec than to any organic relationship with the community - as in the case of community action groups or citizens' committees. (This is neither to oppose or support these groups, but just to point out an important difference.)

The two foremost such groups are the "Parti Communiste du Québec (Marxiste-Leniniste)" and the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière - Ligue des Jeunes Socialiste", the first "maoist" oriented and the Québec wing of the "CPC(ML)", the second affiliated to the Trotskyist "League for Socialist Action".

As elsewhere in Canada, the CPQ-ML sees itself as the vanguard party of the workers and bases all its actions on this role. It has little relationship with what is usually thought of as the left. Within the last two years CPQ-ML had a series of major splits, with several non-vanguard groups as a result.

The Trotskyists have also had several splits recently. However, as with the CPQ-ML, the main group continues to operate. It bases its actions on taking part in wider "mass movements" with a view to politicizing them. Thus it has continued as an active participant in the "Mouvement pour un Québec Français (practically all other left groups have left it) and , as in Canada, is active in the abortion repeal movement.

The revisionist Communist Party of Canada continues to exist but is largely irrelevant, despite some connections in the unions.

The Development of CAP St. Jacques and Maisonneuve

At the present time, the activity of CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve is directed toward developing organizations of workers controlled by workers and serving their needs. This is a progressive step toward the building of a socialist movement since many previous organizations had lacked contact with daily workers' struggles, both in the workplace and in the community.

The first step in building this contact saw militants from the CAPs getting jobs, primarily in production, with the goal of helping to organize groups in the plants ("implantation"). Many of the militants were workers radicalized by their experience in citizens'groups and their workplaces. Others,however, were from petty bourgeois intellectual backgrounds and had to face the difficulty of integrating into a work situation. All recognized the necessity of preferably working in large shops and realized that even beginning groups in their workplace would take a long time. Thus "implantation" was seen as a long-term process involving constant analysis and evaluation on the part of the militants involved.

St.Jacques and Maisonneuve recognized that there have been and continue to be militant workers' struggles in Québec, but these struggles generally centre on specific demands (salary, working conditions, unionization, etc.) and lack long-range political goals. Thus the purpose of "implantation" is to attempt to politicize existing workers' groups and generate new ones.

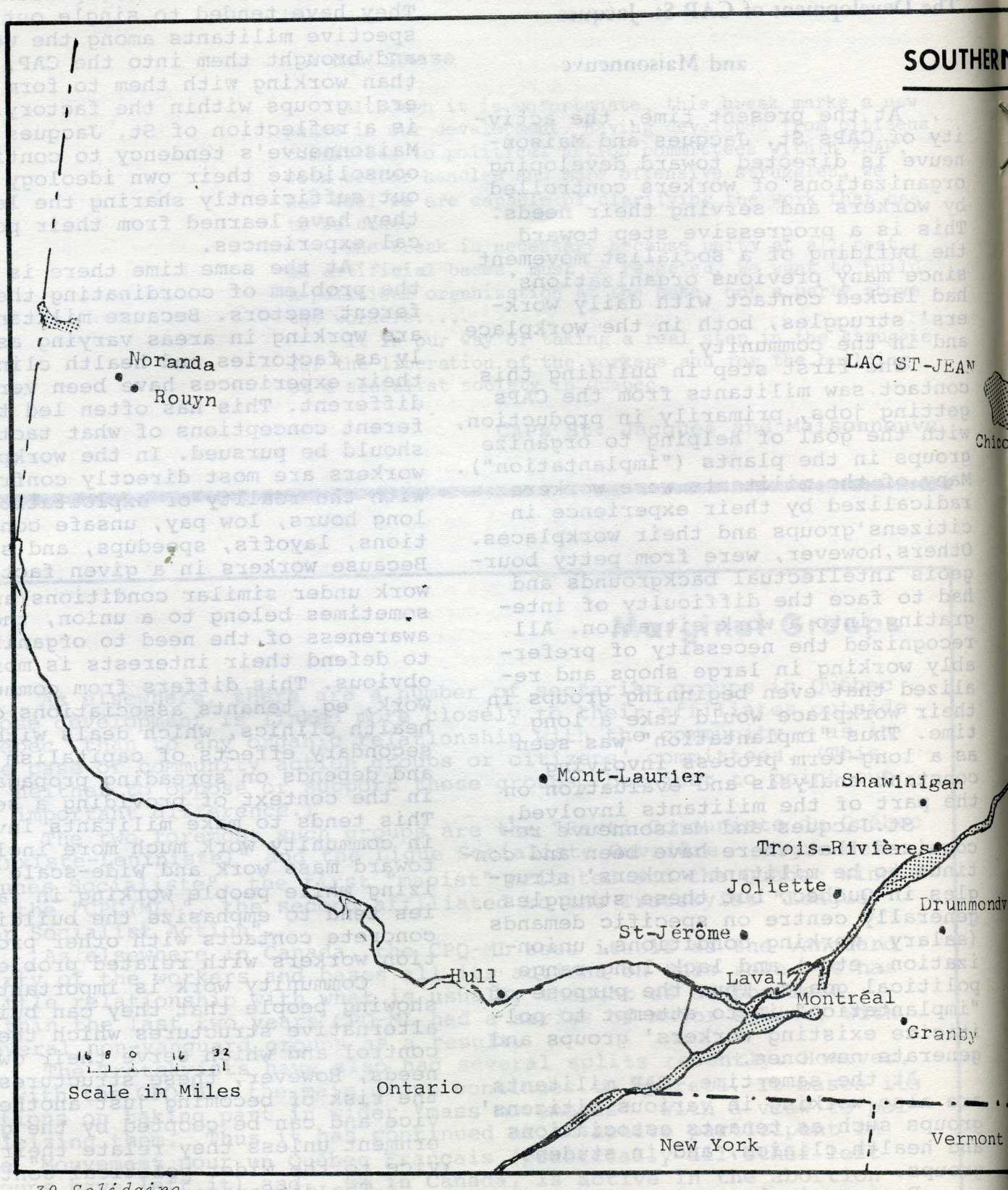
At the same time, CAP militants are also working in various citizens' groups such as tenants associations and health clinics, and in student groups.

Because implantation is only in its beginning stages, the CAPs have been faced with specific problems coming out of their inexperience. They have tended to single out prospective militants among the workers and brought them into the CAP, rather than working with them to form workers' groups within the factory. This is a reflection of St. Jacques and Maisonneuve's tendency to continually consolidate their own ideology without sufficiently sharing the lessons they have learned from their political experiences.

At the same time there is also the problem of coordinating the different sectors. Because militants are working in areas varying as widely as factories and health clinics, their experiences have been very different. This has often led to different conceptions of what tactics should be pursued. In the workplace, workers are most directly confronted with the reality of exploitation, ie. long hours, low pay, unsafe conditions, layoffs, speedups, and so on. Because workers in a given factory work under similar conditions and sometimes belong to a union, the awareness of the need to organize to defend their interests is more obvious. This differs from community work, eg. tenants associations or health clinics, which deals with the secondary effects of capitalism and and depends on spreading propaganda in the context of providing a service. This tends to make militants involved in community work much more inclined toward mass work and wide-scale organizing while people working in factories tend to emphasize the building of concrete contacts with other production workers with related problems.

Community work is important in showing people that they can build alternative structures which they control and which serve their own needs, However, these structures run the risk of becoming just another service and can be coopted by the government unless they relate their service to the wider political context.

The difference in orientation created because militants are working in various sectors should not be taken as a black and white split, but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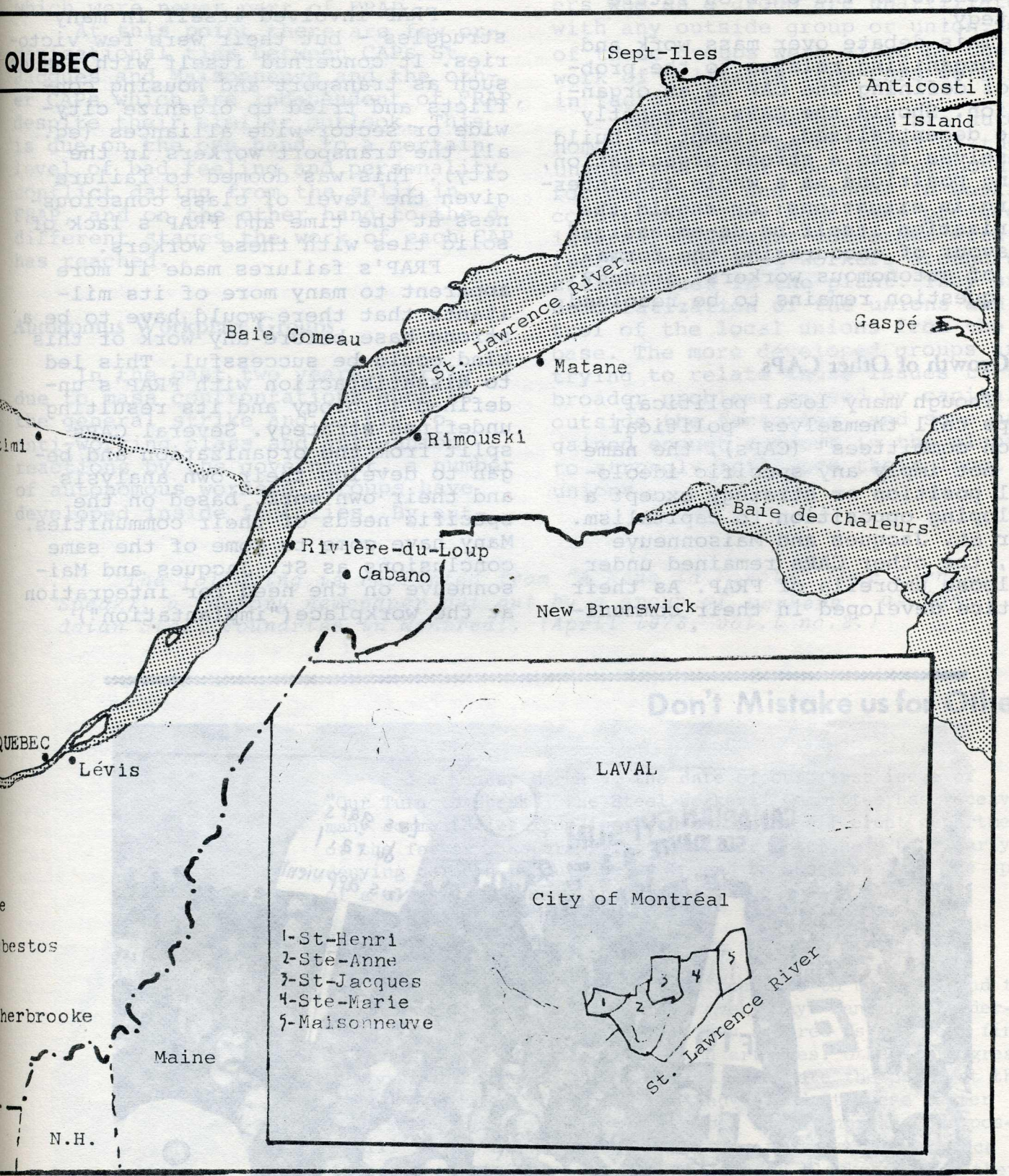
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Cabano
New Brunswick
QUEBEC
Lévis
LAVAL
City of Montréal
1-St-Henri
2-Ste-Anne
3-St-Jacques
4-Ste-Marie
5-Maisonneuve
St. Lawrence River
Maine
N.H.

forms part of the basis of much current debate in the CAPs on future strategy.

This debate over mass work and base organizing relates to the problem of defining the CAP as an organization. Should the CAPs, presently quite decentralized, attempt to build themselves into a strong organization, taking positions as a whole and intervening in situations; or should the organization itself be de-emphasized in favour of encouraging the formation of autonomous workers' groups? This question remains to be resolved.

The Growth of Other CAPs

Though many local political groups call themselves "political action committees" (CAPs), the name does not imply any specific ideological position or strategy except a developing opposition to capitalism. After St. Jacques and Maisonneuve left, the other CAPs remained under the loose umbrella of FRAP. As their practice developed in their communities, they began to be more critical of FRAP.

FRAP involved itself in many struggles - but their were few victories. It concerned itself with issues such as transport and housing conflicts and tried to organize city-wide or sector-wide alliances (eg. all the transport workers in the city). This was doomed to failure given the level of class consciousness at the time and FRAP's lack of solid ties with these workers.

FRAP's failures made it more apparent to many more of its militants that there would have to be a strong base before any work of this kind could be successful. This led to dissatisfaction with FRAP's undefined ideology and its resulting undefined strategy. Several CAPs split from the organization and began to develop their own analysis and their own work, based on the specific needs of their communities. Many have come to some of the same conclusions as St. Jacques and Maisonneuve on the need for integration at the workplace("implantation"),

Solidarity meeting for strikers at Canadian Gypsum

as have several newly formed CAPs which were never part of FRAP.

At this point there are few organizational ties between CAPs St. Jacques and Maisonneuve and the other CAPs which are independent of FRAP, despite their similar outlook. This is due on the one hand to a certain level of bad feeling and personality conflict dating from the split in FRAP, and on the other hand to the d different stages the work of each CAP has reached.

Autonomus Workplace Groups

In the past two years, partly due to mass confrontations such as the general strike and partly to anti-working class and anti-union reactions by the government, a number of autonomous workers' groups have developed inside factories. By autonomous we mean small groups of workers who as a group are unaffiliated with any outside group or union. Some of these groups were aided by the work of militants from CAPs working in factories.

Because these groups are autonomous they can be critical of the unions and offer concrete proposals for contracts and changes in working conditions. They sometimes produce an internal newspaper concerned with directly mobilizing workers around specific issues in the plant. They stress democratization of the unions and control of the local unions from the base. The more developed groups are trying to relate these issues to the broader problems caused by capitalism outside the factories, and some have gained enough support in the plants to strongly influence their local unions.

The following is reprinted from "A Nous la Parole" (Our Turn to Speak), a factory newspaper put out by a group of workers at Canadian Steel Foundries in Montreal. (April 1973, vol.1 no.2.)

Don't Mistake us for Others

Since Monday March 5, the date of our first issue of "Our Turn to Speak", the Steel Workers' Committee has received many commentaries from its readers in the different departments of the factory. We are going to make a point here of clearly denying certain rumours being spread by those who, in the spirit of a clique, play into the hands of the bosses.

Thanks to all those who support us.

The paper is one of the ways possible to unite us and to oppose the injustices done to us every day. Many have understood this and have told us so. They assured us of their financial aid and of collaboration on articles. Others, in greater and greater numbers, have begun to circulate the paper at the shop, make sure it's being read and defend it. These latter understand that to support the paper is to increase our possibilities to affirm our interests as workers, to denounce the arrogance of certain foremen and the blackmail that they try to hold over us.

Still false rumours.

It is up to all of us, in our departments, in the cafeteria or elsewhere to speak up. Why be afraid of and be influenced by those who think only of their personal ambition to the detriment of the well-being of all the guys in the factory. Why not demand proof from those who amuse themselves by spreading rumours that we were hired by another union to carry out raiding? Anyways we are not even in a legal period of recruitment for the unions...Aside from that, we are not working for any political party and we are auto-financed.

Make our rights respected.

We have rights which are written in our collective agreement. They assure us of a minimum of defence. The boss tries in every way to ignore our rights. One of the tasks that the Steel Workers' Committee has given itself is to see that the collective agreement is applied firmly, justly and without compromise. To do that, we need a more combatative and more democratic union. For example, why is there not more information about our new collective agreement? When are we going to know about group insurance? We are going to affirm these rights openly at general assemblies of the union, and with those who have the courage to make themselves respected. We also want to be able to freely question our union officers and we expect clear straightforward answers.

Not only to denounce, but to act.

Finally, it is clear that the Steel Workers' Committee is not going to limit itself to denouncing this or that injustice. More and more, with the growth of our strength and your support we will act in the departments and in the factory as a whole, to improve, without stopping, our conditions as workers. Be it with the welders, the crane-men, in the Sand System: the battle is on. The committee will keep you informed about these battles and will work to join these battles together, to develop our collective strength.

Conditions Outside Montréal

In discussing political and community-based groups outside Montréal, we are not dealing with agricultural movements, but with small town and small city industrial movements. (It should be remembered that all of Québec is industrialized, if in varying degrees; its industry being primarily extractive, processing, and light manufacturing.)

Small towns in outlying areas are usually dominated by one company which provides most of the employment. The economy of the entire town is dependent on the one company, which is invariably controlled by non-local interests, in many cases American. Decisions affecting the future of the company's plant are made without regard for the welfare of the town. There is an increasing tendency for big corporations to close down unprofitable operations in outlying regions. Therefore, groups, composed of most citizens, are generally organized around the question of the plant and its survival because closure means disaster not just for the plant workers, but also for the entire town and surrounding area.

There are also industrialized cities and industrial parks located not far from Montréal or around important ports and hydro-electric projects. They occupy a position between highly urbanized Montréal and the small one-company towns, and thus their community and citizens' groups exhibit characteristics of both these areas. Issues such as tenants' and welfare rights, recreation facilities, and so on, are more independent from the primary issue of survival than they are in the small towns. With more sectors of their economy developed, the larger towns and cities lack the homogeneity of a central issue that unites all classes and needs.

Political organizations develop a bit differently outside of Montréal. Explicit political groups tend to come more directly out of labour struggles rather than the struggles of citizens' groups. Also because such a large percentage of the people are unionized outside Montréal, citizens' and popular groups are, themselves, highly influenced by union issues.

It is important to realize that the Parti Québécois has been an important political force within unions and popular groups outside of Montréal. Before the general strike of May, 1972, the PQ was supported by substantial numbers of union bureaucrats and rank-and-file. Union leadership, being in well-paid "professional" positions, share the technocratic petty-bourgeois outlook of

the PQ. Rank-and-file union members, while not necessarily supporting all of the PQ programme, saw it, partly through the urging of their leaders, as a viable alternative to the Bourassa Liberal regime. With the general strike, however, many workers saw that the PQ could be just as anti-labour as the Liberal regime. The PQ anti-labour stance caused a backlash which stimulated the development of independent progressive political groups. This does not mean that all unionists and progressives left the PQ, as people still tried to influence the PQ convention of last April to more strongly represent workers' interests.

We have chosen two examples of political development outside of Montréal to give a more concrete picture of the forms of organization, kinds of struggle, developing ideology, and contradictions found in Québec. The first case is that of Mont Laurier, a one-company town. The second is that of Sept-Isles, which is the third largest port in Canada and has a variety of industry.

Mont Laurier

Mont Laurier is located in the Laurentian Mountains, 150 miles northwest of Montréal. The major industries of the area are pulp and paper, wood - and more recently, unemployment insurance and welfare. It is not heavily industrialized.

Mont Laurier has a long history of militant struggles involving solidarity among the CSN, FTQ and CEQ (teachers) unions. But if Mont Laurier workers show much solidarity among themselves, they seem isolated from workers in the rest of Québec. For example, during the general strike of May 1972, participation here was quite weak and limited.

The major industry in Mont Laurier is the Dupan plant, which produces wood paneling. It has a most interesting history. In 1963 Dupan was sold to the government agency, SOGEFOR. Under SOGEFOR it was so badly mismanaged and maintained that the roof caved in once and there were two explosions leading to a total of five deaths and eight injuries. Despite Bourassa's promise not to close down the plant, it was closed without warning in June, 1971. The government's lack of response - 8,000 tons of raw material plus delicate machinery lay rotting while the government refused to allow buyers to see the plant - finally led the townspeople to barricade the highway. The government called in the riot squad.

The workers summed up their feelings about the affair in a manifesto:

"Re-open Dupan"

....above all, what concerns the workers of the Common Front is the availability of work: we want work, and work in <u>our own</u> factories! That is why we demand the immediate reopening of the Dupan and Dubé (a sister plant) factories.

The employees have been out of work for three months already and we know it will take several weeks before the Dupan plant can be ready to operate. It is vital that measures are taken immediately to put the factory back into operation. Winter is approaching, and we refuse to suffer the misery of unemployment in winter.

In a region like ours, 40 or more unemployed is a tragedy. And 150 more is a catastrophe that will cause agony to the whole region.

How can the Bourassa government tolerate such a situation in a sector where they are directly responsible? It seems that their employment policy ("100,000 jobs"!) is nothing but false promises.

However, at a higher level, what seems more serious to us, is the government's abandoning of an agency whose goal was to give Quebec the means of taking its rightful place in the lumber industry. They are preparing to bury SOGEFOR; what did it die of? Malnutrition, criminal negligence, was it urged to suicide,or, more brutally, was it murdered? One thing is certain. With all the resources it is supposed to have, it is very strange that the government failed to support its child of the woods.

Did the government hold back in favour of private industry which did not want to see SOGEFOR grow? That seems evident, and symptomatic of the spirit that reigns in Quebec.

The employees of the Common Front of SOGEFOR are aware of the importance of the problem, not only for Mont Laurier, but for the future of the lumber industry in Quebec. The sabotage of SOGEFOR, intentional or not, is a definite backward step for Quebec in the search for its autonomy, especially in a sector so typically Québécois: forestry.

Nevertheless, the Common Front has decided to continue the struggle until the Dupan and Dubé plants are reopened. The Common Front will continue to inform the public about what is happening at SOGEFOR in Mont Laurier, so that they can follow more closely the waste of resources and the sabotage of a Quebec experience which might have been very worthwhile.

WE WILL WIN!
The Common Front of SOGEFOR,Sept. 1971

Reprinted from APLQ #30, pp.19-20.

Eventually an offer to buy the factory came from MacMillan-Blodell, a notoriously anti-labour company. In opposition to this offer, a coordinating committee of townspeople was formed to look into buying the plant. It consisted of the woodcutters' union, the union of SOGEFOR workers in the plant, Citizen's Committee of Mont Laurier, regional affiliates of the CSN, CEQ and the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs and various other popular associations. Their plan would be to sell shares to raise $400,000, half the money necessary to purchase the plant.

There is now a struggle between three tendencies over the financing of the remaining half of the required money. One group, consisting of members and supporters of the Parti Québécois, the mayor of Mont Laurier, the local Chamber of Commerce, and some government officials, wants to raise the balance of the money from Québec banks on the open market. Another group, made up of woodcutters and factory workers, wants to arrange cooperative financing, demanding that the workers control the factory. A third intermediary position, suggested by the provincial ministry of industry and commerce, was for financial involvement of the government which would "eventually" allow workers to "progressively retake" control of the plant.

What seems evident from the three positions is that even though the coordinating committee represents almost all elements of the town working together toward one objective, there are definite class contradictions within the group. The workers' position, while accepting the fact that they have to pay for the plant, is progressive in the sense that they want to control the plant themselves and thus insure that they will have some control over their survival. On the other hand,

the petty-bourgeois nationalists want the money and control to rest in Québécois hands, but not necessarily those of the workers.

Mont Laurier shows the level of workers' consciousness and militancy as well as the contradictions in their alliances with the local petty bourgeoisie and bourgeois nationalist forces (the PQ). The workers have learned that they cannot trust the government but must help themselves instead through their own organizations. Attempts have been made to do this through the formation of cooperatives, common fronts, etc. However, these organizations are dominated by bourgeois values and methods. Even if the workers succeed in buying and controlling the plant themselves, they will still have to operate within the bounds of the capitalist economy. This will mean quotas set from the outside, managers, and an "efficient" capitalist industry. In effect, a few of the financially ambitious workers would become small entrepreneurs (i.e. the administrators) and will have to recreate the organization of a capitalist industry in order to compete. The question of distribution of the returns is also not dealt with.

What happens to cooperatives has been shown time and time again in the development of the cooperative movement in Québec, which is the strongest in North America. Cooperatives are invariably controlled by the petty bourgeoisie. Many of the cooperatives have reached a level of being important capitalist enterprises in the Québec economy (and are just as alienating to work for).

Mont Laurier exemplifies some of the isolation and unfocused militancy of small towns in Québec. Issues affecting the town as a whole channel workers' needs and discontent into groups heavily influenced by other classes. The undeveloped class consciousness and the isolation from more political struggles in the industrialized centres accounts for much of this ideological confusion. As struggles develop with the worsening economic situation in these towns, class struggle within popular groups, like the Mont Laurier Dupan committee, will intensify.

Sept-Iles

Sept-Iles is an important port of about 35,000, situated 700 miles northeast of Montréal on the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. Its population doubled during the 1960's as the result of rapid development of hydro-electric projects and iron-ore resources nearby. About 70% of the town is unionized.

In late 1970, the United Workers Front (FTU) was formed of CSN, FTQ, CEQ and many non-unionized workers. The FTU's goal was to safeguard workers' interests by watching over the government. Their major project was to prevent government land speculation by having the government sell the land to a town committee which would, in turn, sell it cheaply to the workers. The FTU would oversee the building and selling of these homes and insure that workers' needs were being met.

Although the FTU began to develop contacts with political groups in Montréal, there was apparently no change in their orientation until the general strike in May, 1972.

During the general strike, Sept-Iles was the scene of some of the most militant action in Québec. The town and radio station were seized and held until the occupiers were forcibly evicted (see Solidaire III). As the result of the action, committees made up of small shopkeepers, the chamber of commerce and other businessmen, were formed in opposition to the workers. This in turn resulted in a reply from the Common Front, which recognized the existence of class struggle in Sept-Iles:

"We are fed up, Mr. Ryan"

...The mercenary forces of Sept-Iles have chosen one of the most loyal spokesmen of our traditional elite, which every day betrays the most legitimate aspirations of the workers.

The Common Front of Sept-Iles denounces the initiative of the do-gooders and the steps taken by the establishment to see that the editorialist of the Devoir [the Devoir is an intellectual left-liberal Montréal paper edited by Claude Ryan, a well-known and influencial analyst] comes here to preach peaceful co-existence between groups, class collaboration, obedience and slavery.

We are fed-up, Mr. Ryan, with respecting laws that crush the people in the name of an order defined by the rich.

In Québécois society today, you cannot play on both sides; you have to choose which side to fight on. We are warning the workers of Sept-Iles and Québec against the bewildered theologians of Québec's political and social life, against a representative of our traditional elite like Claude Ryan, propagandist of the established law and order, against such a poor defender of the social and national struggle of Québec, since he has not committed himself to one side or the other.

The struggles, real or underhanded, that it seems Mr. Ryan wants to lead against the Trudeaus and the Bourassas cannot mask his natural tendencies toward the status quo in Québec and his disdain for the working class which, itself, leads a struggle for worldwide liberation.

(APLQ # 66, 1-2)

Though there may be workers who recognize the need for struggle on a class basis (unlike Mont Laurier) there is no agreement on how to carry this out. At a regional convention of the teachers' union, a group of Sept-Iles teachers walked out, with complaints that the convention was not justly responding to their propositions concerning local action, etc:

Toward a New Orientation

During the course of intensive preparation, it became clearly apparent to the Sept-Iles delegation that action for the following year should be oriented toward socio-political objectives. The past several months of struggles have shown us, as well as many others,(whether they are the majority or not) that traditional unionism is no longer good enough. Not to engage in a fundemental reform of society is to leave the organization of our society in the hands of others (the rulers and exploiters) for their own profit. They in turn give us, in collective bargaining, only the crumbs from their table.

This socio-political action requires the decentralization of union activities. There are two reasons for this. First, because

it would be illogical, and even criminal, for the unions, in the name of human dignity, to claim more power for the workers and independence in opposition to the bosses and the state while at the same time keeping their members in a feudal or police-type of structure. Secondly, even though it is sometimes important to mobilize all forces for conflicts on the national level, it is no less important that the struggle try to achieve immediate results in each region. In Sept-Iles, these objectives are quite evident, since the enemy imposes his power with such offhandedness that he appears in hideous clarity. In opposition to this, the workers (70% of the population is unionized) form such a group that one can hope to obtain major results by mobilizing them. Therefore, the teachers of SEN [the teachers' federation in Sept-Iles] have bitter memories of provincial negotiations that have frozen their salaries since 1964, that have lost their cost-of-living and moving bonus, as well as a crowd of other acquired rights.

The delegates from Sept-Iles, therefore saw the obligation to strongly underline the importance of social action at the same time as stressing a redesign of the union structure to meet the new objectives. They did not go to the congress with the intention of electing or re-electing such and such a member, but with the intention of choosing from among all those at the congress, the persons most likely to act on the major positions of the congress. Perhaps a little idealistic and naive, but justifiable when one counts on others good faith. We came in good faith....

Our griefs in respect to the SEN also apply, with some slight differences, to the CEQ [Québec Teachers' Union] .

We blame it also for its rigid centralist structures, its lack of clarity about its objectives, and its election structure which degenerates to backstage manoeuvers and political deals.

Centralized structures, on the model of Sun Life insurance and other capitalist monsters; centralization of personnel, of money, of projects; it is necessary to leave much more to local initiatives.

Lack of clarity on objectives: the CEQ, for example, fought for urgent but secondary objectives; conditions of work,salaries; it exhausted itself by bargaining for a collective aggreement which included a multitude of clauses which, by their large number alone, transforms relations between teachers and bosses into a nightmare. With such a situation, neither of the two parties has enough free time to seriously work on such things as teaching....

(APLQ # 68, p.13)

Although the document points out many of the contradictions of the union movement--its defensive position, its bureaucracy and its role of integrating workers into capitalism--it also shows basic tendencies toward concentration on local issues and local control, to the detriment of solidarity among workers. In this way, it also fails to tie teachers into workers' struggles as a whole.

Development of a Political Action Committee

One of the most important tendencies in Sept-Iles now, which is quite similar to Québec City, St. Jérôme and Hull, is the recent development of a CAP (political action

We here show two reprints from the journal printed by the CAP, the first from issue #1 in October, 1972, and the second from issue #2 in March, 1973. There is quite an obvious difference between the two styles of writing, and the subject matter. October was election time, and that was what the issue aimed at. In March, however, the CAP had apparently decided that one of its tasks was to combat reformist unionism and to put unions into a broader Marxist context. We have very little idea of what went on in the CAP in this time period, how it was received, what sort of workers are in it,etc. However, we present these reprints as concrete evidence to the type of ideological struggle going on on one level in Sept-Iles. Following it is a reprint from a worker-oriented St-Jerôme paper that has been in existence for over a year. It indicates the kind of relations existing between the paper and its milieu.

The Majority

The majority, what does that mean?

Quite simply, it's us, the workers. Can we do something together here in Québec, in such a way that will truly be for the good of each of us in particular?

Certainly we can, and in several ways:

1) By having government representatives who are worthwhile. In other words, people who work for the good of each of us, and not for their personal prestige.

2) By forming a party that can really understand the workers and the situation of the workers' movement.

3) By changing the system we live in, because only a minority profits from it.

Yes, I agree, you will tell us, but why change, we are "living" and that is the main thing.

Have you ever wanted to know who governs Québec, and why?

There is the Liberal Party, who in the beginning of the '60s nationalized electricity and created the SGF [General Finance Corporation] which was supposed to make possible the development of Québec's transformation sector (medium industry and manufacturing) with the financial collaboration of the anglo-Canadian bourgeoisie). The failure of this "Quiet Revolution" showed the Liberals that the "collaboration" of the anglo-Canadian capitalists implied, on the one hand, the submission of the Québécois bourgeoisie to large capital and the federal [Canadian] state, and on the other hand, repression of every manifestation of autonomy and popular discontent.

With the loss of Levesque, Kierans, Gerin-Lajoie, and Lesage, the rest of the party unearthed the good old Duplessis methods. [Duplessis was Premier of Québec in the forties and fifties and his policy was based on selling out Québec's resources to the USA and repressing the working class.]

The Parti Québécois unites the people deceived by the failure of the "Quiet Revolution". Their project: recuperate the powers and the fiscal resources of Ottawa and reinforce the Québec state by giving it a more important role in the development of the financial and industrial sectors. In fact, the P.Q. does not advocate

solutions that will attack the problems of the Québécois people: foreign domination and exploitation of the workers....

Then there is us, the majority, the workers who cannot pretend to be really represented by one or the other of these political parties. Having no representatives in the government, we cannot hope to have policies that favour us.

Work with the unionized, Not with the unions

UNIONISM? OPINIONS EXPRESSED:

Unionism seems to have been put in doubt by most of the workers we've met. In the course of our 'kitchen meetings', the following opinions were brought forth:

"The union leaders grease their palms; they win more than they lose"

"When the Indians go to see the unions, they're told that it's the company that's refusing to give promotions to Indians. When they go see the company, they're told it's the unions that are preventing the promotions."

"At union meetings, there's almost never anyone there. The guys are really lazy; when somebody puts out for them, they don't want to know anything about it."

There is the general situation in the unions in Sept Iles, as described by mining company workers. Most of the people we met are either disillusioned, indifferent , or unsatisfied; and want to do something about it.

If one analyzes the situation in more depth, based on real facts, one can see the following points:

The unions are workers' organizations designed to lead the struggle on the economic level; for better working conditions, better salaries and so on. But they are not organizations that can lead the struggle on a political level. Two different tasks need two different tools. In May, the union federations went pretty much as far as you can go in the economic struggle.

THE BACKWARD ROLE OF UNIONISTS

Some unionists hold out; others are ready to sell out the workers to safeguard their positions. The point is that there is a difference between union members and unionists. The union members are productive workers. But the unionists are employed full-time to organize. They become bureaucrats and develop petty bourgeois attitudes. They no longer have a capitalist boss. They no longer live the class struggle from the workers' side. They have a good boss (the union) which defends the interests of workers. Their positions become very comfortable; promotions are possible. But the workers get fed-up and upset the comfort of the situation. It's the workers' initiative which makes the union federations, instruments on the economic level, move. It's up to the same workers to create an instrument to struggle on the political level.

BUSINESS UNIONISM

Thus, though the stakes have become political, unionism has remained business unionism, negotiating only immediate benefits. This comes from American influences and from the conditions of struggle within a monopolistic economy. Unionism limits itself to defensive economic struggles which profit union members but neglect the interests of workers as a whole. It would be false to say that all unionized workers accept this situation. On the contrary, there is a sharp difference between the reformist position of the union federations and the critical position of a growing number of union members. The split between the heads of the unions and their base is one of the consequences of business unionism....

CAN A BAD THING BE TURNED INTO A GOOD THING (MAO).

Thus the unions are reformist and non-revolutionary and as a result, it takes another kind of organization to lead the strg-struggle on a political level. But what should unionized workers do who are conscious of the necessity of a political struggle?...

Should workers get involved in the unions and try to turn them into really revolutionary organizations? In other words, should workers with a class consciousness try to become full-time union representatives?...Even though the union federations allocate funds for socio-political work, it is important to note that the funds are insufficient....Spending one day in a union office is enough to show you that no one in a key position can devote time ...to transforming his local into a really revolutionary organization. When there's no contract being negotiated, time is spent on grievances; this guy who hasn't got such and auch a form, that guy...etc.

SOMETHING MUST BE DONE ANYWAY

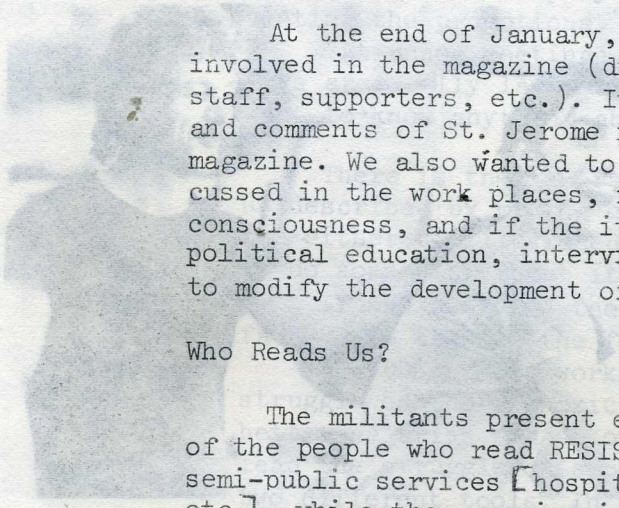
Is there another solution between doing nothing and wasting energy in trying to get into a key position? Some solution must be found because, as Lenin said, "To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary

leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats..." (Lenin, Left-wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder).

ACT ON THE UNIONIZED

The solution in our opinion is to work not with the union but with the unionized. As we said, it is the workers' initiative which will make the union federations move. This can happen on two levels . Firstly, by propaganda directed by conscious workers toward their fellow workers. Secondly, by long-term implantation among the mass of workers by groups like CAP Sept Iles. Work on both levels will sooner or later have an effect on the unions which then would stop attacking the effects of the wage-system to attack the wage-system itself, which is the cause of workers' problems....

CAP Sept-Iles



At the end of January, RESISTANCE held a meeting of everyone involved in the magazine (distribution in the unions, editorial staff, supporters, etc.). Its purpose was to hear the criticisms and comments of St. Jerome militants on the overall content of the magazine. We also wanted to know if the magazine was being discussed in the work places, if it served to develop a larger class consciousness, and if the items published (dossiers, texts for political education, interviews, and so on) had made it possible to modify the development of workers' struggles.

Who Reads Us?

The militants present emphasized the important fact that 65% of the people who read RESISTANCE are workers in the public and semi-public services [hospital and government workers, teachers, etc.], while the magazine is above all centred on the problems of production workers. Taking this into account, the militants hoped that some texts would be published dealing with the everyday problems of public service workers.

Naturally, as at all these meetings, the problem of the magazine's technical presentation was brought up. Certainly we are aware of the problems with our appearance (bad photos, a lack of cartoons, etc.), but our format and financial means limit us in that respect. We aren't MacLeans magazine or Chatelaine. And we don't want to be, because we'd be tied and gagged by the advertisers like the daily papers or the weekly "L'Echo du Nord" [a St. Jerome paper]. We are militants who believe that it's useful to have a magazine of political education and information about daily problems of the working class who live here.

RESISTANCE- a tool to be developed.

All the militants present were unanimous in saying that RESISTANCE should continue to develop in the work places, but in a more

dynamic way. It was stated that if we wished to reach more St. Jerome workers, questions would have to be raised about more than purely work problems (such as strikes, accidents at work, negotiations, etc.).

At the same time, some militants reproached us for having somewhat lessened our critical approach to events happening here; they felt that last year, RESISTANCE had developed clearer political and practical positions. Following these remarks, a discussion was begun about the positions we should take, as a group and on a wider base, towards the national question and the union movement in general; to see clearly if these two movements in which the working class finds itself are really the ones which defend consistantly the interests of the workers. Despite the limits of time, we thought it important to bring up these questions at the level of meetings between militants, since they are so important for the development of working class consciousness in St. Jerome. It was also suggested that RESISTANCE should be discussed more regularly through similar inter-militant meetings.

So, a meeting which passed too quickly, but which enabled the RESISTANCE group to reajust its positions and its understanding of the reality of St. Jerome. Furthermore, next month we will inform our readers of projects we will be emphasizing, aimed at increasing the political influence of RESISTANCE in St. Jerome.

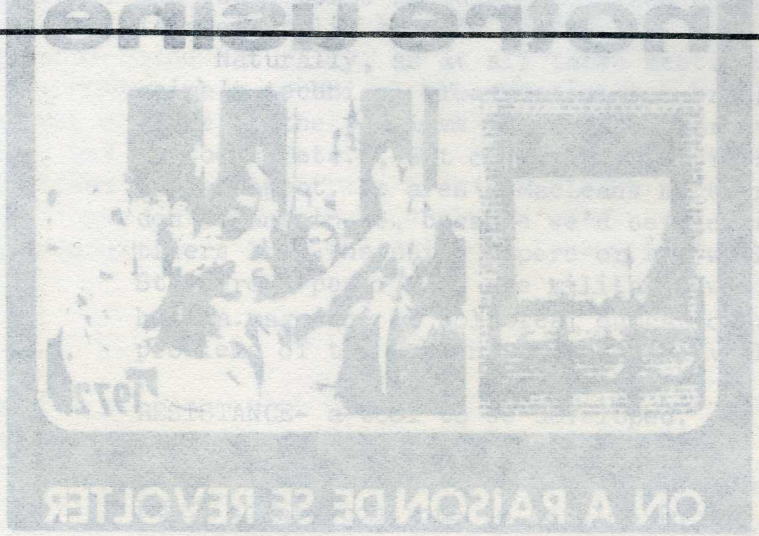
Cover of a dossier put out by the workers of Regent Knitting Mills while occupying their factory in St. Jerôme

Sept-Iles and Mont-Laurier show many of the characteristics of struggles going on outside Montréal. Mont-Laurier, being dependent for its survival on the Dupan plant, is very much the model of many small towns. The same defensive struggle against closings is occurring in Cabano, Cadillac, Temiscaming, etc. Within the movement to defend the town there exist conflicting class interests which are subordinated to the primary issue of economic survival. The merchants and Chamber of Commerce, as well as the workers, are dependent on the plant.The workers in these small towns are in different stages of development but the workers of Mont-Laurier indicate the level of militancy that can exist among workers in spite of a lack of their own strong autonomous organizations. As well, as the struggles in small areas develop, there will also develop more contact with the more advanced industrial centers. This will help break down the isolation and lack of ideology of places like Mont-Laurier.

Sept-Iles shows a more advanced stage of development of the workers' movement. It is less isolated than many other remote industrial areas because so many of its workers are from Montréal. Industrial cities, like Sept-Iles, follow more closely a development similar to that of Montréal, from citizens' committee-type organizations to political groups, except that outlying citizens' committees are much more tied into the union movement. Because these cities have many plants and secondary industries, we find the growth of regional and local common fronts that tie together workers'interests in different plants. These groups involve different levels of workers and union officials, as well as influences from the P.Q. However, the interests of workers, as opposed to those of the merchants and bankers, is more clearly defined than in small towns like Mont-Laurier.

Within the workers' movement in places like Sept-Iles there are different levels of political consciousness. For example, many workers took part in the general strike only because their unions were participating not because of any principled commitment. Some of the local papers and documents develop positions far to the left of the P.Q. but still see it as their party because often there is little else in terms of a political force.

There are different levels of struggle outside Montréal but there is a growing interchange of information and experience between citizens' groups and political groups across Québec. These seeds of political groups are crucial in giving direction to the high militancy and growing struggles continuously developing outside Montréal.



Conclusion

In past Solidaires we discussed two of the basic forces of opposition in Québec - the union movement and the Parti Québécois - and tried to present their limitations. This issue has talked about various political groupings that have developed over the last few years out of the many community-based groups that exist in Québec. In our opinion, the most significant tendency among these groups, both inside the Montréal area and in the rest of Québec, is aimed at the construction of an autonomous workers' movement - independent of both the unions and the PQ, and based on the organization of workers in the workplace and the community. This tendency is gradually developing towards a position that a truly socialist and independent Québec can only be created through a revolution led by the working class, that will destroy both capitalism and imperialist domination. But this position is only in its embryonic stages and is only one of those influencing the Québécois workers.

The influence of the union movement has become increasingly important due to the growth of militancy over the last few years. Although the unions have taken a step in the right direction by seeing the struggle of the workers in political terms and realizing that fighting on purely economic grounds usually gets them nowhere, they are unable to formulate a coherent strategy to bring about social change. They have attempted to transcend union divisions, as can be seen by the Common Front in the public sector, but these efforts have met with limited success. Inter-union rivalries continue, sometimes quite viciously (eg. in the construction industry).

Despite the growth of militancy, there are contradictions in the union structure itself that have prevented the unions from developing into organizations that can fight for real economic and political power for the working class. The split between union leaders and the rank and file is such that leaders, who are paid by the unions, no longer experience the direct oppression and exploitation of wage slavery. Their bosses are the unions, not companies. Thus they don't share the experiences of the workers they are negotiating for. The leadership has too much invested in the existence of unions as they are to become revolutionary.

The basic function of the unions is to fight for higher wages and better conditions within the capitalist structure. No matter how unwillingly, the unions serve to integrate the workers into the system, and to control conflict between classes. This is not to say that the unions in Québec have not recently provided a framework for a certain level of politicization and organization of workers. This is likely to continue and may be very important, especially in certain locals, in particular workplaces. But nonetheless, no matter how radical the unions may become, their structure and activity prevents them from being the framework for

revolutionary organization.

The "left" of the union bureaucracy, as can be seen in their close connections with FRAP, are looking for "socialism through negotiation". Their orientation seems to be one of getting a "better deal" for workers and changing the system from within. They tend to support the idea of a union-based electoral "workers' party". They want workers in office, higher wages, "workers' control", an independent Québec, citizens' participation in government, and so on. They are very unclear about the means of destroying capitalism, and of building socialism.

It is precisely this lack of direction of the unions that has led some unionists into a friendship with the Parti Québécois - if a somewhat uneasy one. Many union bureaucrats see the PQ as more democratic than the other parties, and therefore more responsive to the needs of the workers. They see the PQ as the most realistic choice of the opposition forces because it is the best organized and has the best chance of gaining power.

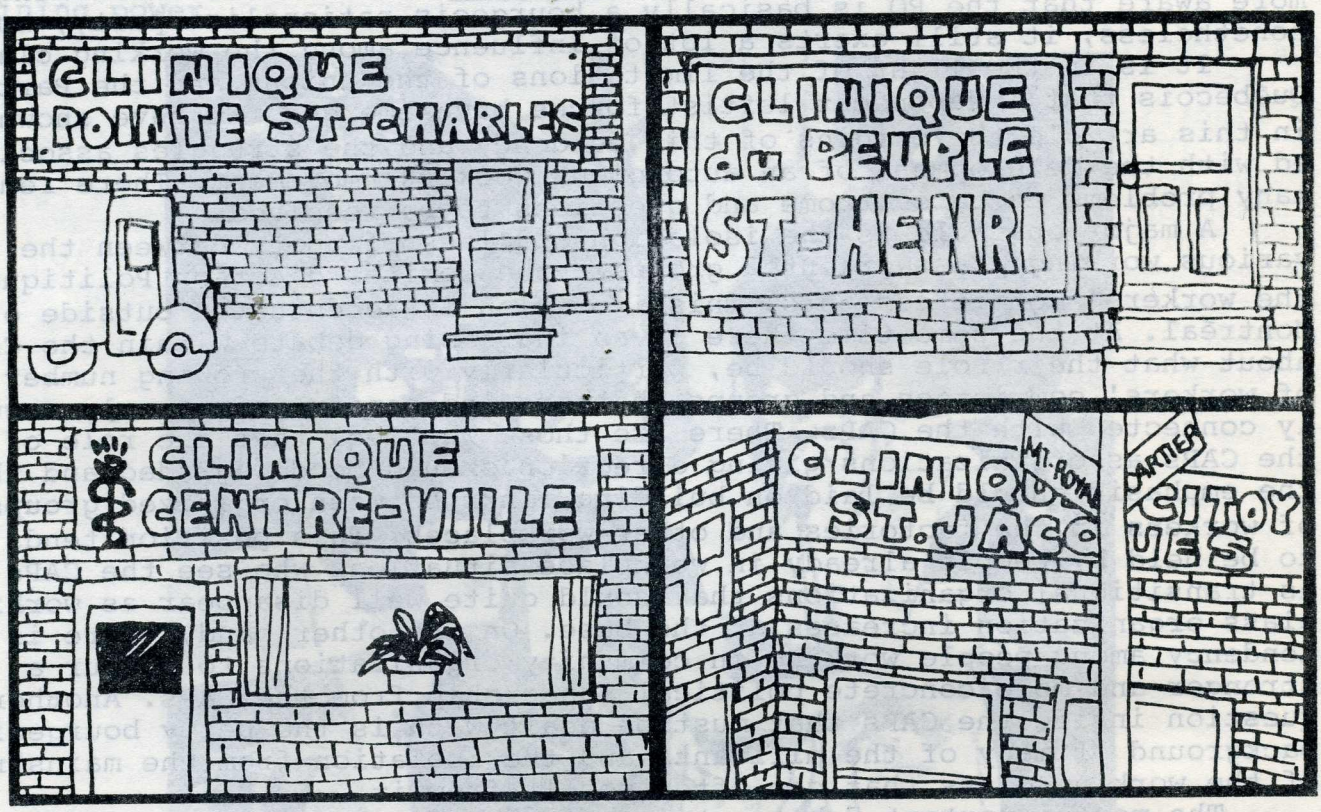
In reality, the PQ has not shown itself to be a friend of the workers in times of crisis, but rather has joined the other parties in condemning worker militancy, breaking strikes, and supporting anti-union legislation. This can be seen in the PQ's reactions to the LaPresse conflict and the May /72 General Strike (see Solidaire 3). At most, the PQ talks about "humanizing capitalism". It denies class struggle through the use of radical-sounding nationalist rhetoric. The image of being flexible, progressive, and democratic that they have created for themselves has attracted many progressive people. Many still remain, even after the PQ has begun to show its true nature. This is especially true outside Montréal, where there are fewer left alternatives.

The PQ is quite firmly controlled by the petty bourgeoisie, who desire a planned "humanized" capitalist Québec; independent of Canada. Continued attempts to influence the party in a left direction have failed. (See article in this issue, and Solidaire 4) Workers are becoming more aware that the PQ is basically a bourgeois nationalist party, but nonetheless, it still exerts a lot of influence among the working class.

It is in the light of the limitations of the unions and the Parti Québécois that independent leftist forces have emerged. We have shown in this article the origins of this tendency and the struggles associated with the development of an autonomous workers' movement. There remain many problems to be overcome and questions to be resolved.

A major obstacle is the isolation and lack of unity between the various working class oriented groups - the Comités d'Action Politiques, the workers' committees, etc. This isolation is accentuated outside of Montréal. At the same time there is an increasing debate within the CAPs about what their role should be, particularly with the growing number of workers' committees and groups that are independent of or only vaguely connected with the CAPs. There are those who feel that the role of the CAPs as organizations giving direction should be downgraded and that the emphasis should be laid on building links between organized groups of workers in the factories and other workplaces. This position tends to be held by people already in workplace situations who see the CAPs as transitional organizations that could quite well disappear as working class organization increases at the base. On the other hand, there is a tendency among people working in community organizations to favour a stronger and more concrete political leadership from the CAPs. Another question inside the CAPs that must be dealt with is the petty bourgeois background of many of the militants and the isolation from the mainstream of the working class that can often result from it.

The most important debate at present is over what direction the movement should take: how should an autonomous organization of the working class be built? There are some militants who feel that the priority should be the development of an ideological consensus between the various groups (eg. via a newspaper) as a prerequisite to the building of such an organization. Others say the priority is the continued organization and consolidation of workplace and other base-level groups, and that although wider level propaganda work is necessary it must be closely linked and coordinated with the primary task of organization at the base. This debate is only beginning and the two alternatives given are just approximations of peoples' varying positions, but the fact that this discussion has started shows the growing consciousness of the need for a revolutionary strategy and unity among the working class movement in Québec.


CLINIQUE
POINTE ST-CHARLES
CLINIQUE
du PEUPLE
ST-HENRI
CLINIQUE
CENTRE-VILLE
CLINIQUE
ST.JACQUES
MT-ROYAL
QUARTIER
CITOYEN

Repressive Tolerance :

Bills 65 and 10

Québec is one of the last corners in North America to adapt its state apparatus to the needs of advanced capitalist society. For years it languished in the middle ages with an abysmally low level of health, education and social security. When the Liberal regime of the early 60's undertook its reforms, a first major offensive was in education. It gave Québec a network of post-secondary institutions, free junior colleges and technical schools (the CEGEPs), and a new multi-campus university (see University of Québec article). In the field of health services the Liberals sponsored legislation providing free hospitalization ('61) and medicare ('70).

In the past year the government has adopted two bills - Bill 65 and Bill 10 - designed to reorganize and consolidate its social welfare programme. Bill 65 puts all medical services from hospitals to old age homes under government-controlled Community and Local Service Centres (CLSC). Bill 10 institutes a programme of government sponsored legal aid to help offset the unequal access to "justice" in the courts.

At first glance these reforms seem progressive. The Liberal Government claims that its social programme is motivated by the desire "to allow each Québecois to live and develop with freedom and human dignity insured". Given that the Bills will take control of the existing medical and legal clinics away from the communities they serve, it would seem that the government's motivation was not simply to meet the needs of the people.

On Realizing the Value of " Human Capital "

In the past social welfare had been left to itself in the anarchy of capitalist society. Before 1900 medical services for those who could not afford it (i.e. most people) were in the hands of the churches' "charity". In fact, when the state began to intervene the Church protested vigorously against infringements on their realm of charity. In the '20's with the industrialization of Québec, the government by necessity introduced programmes to control epidemics, inspect food packaging plants, etc.-- it acted here because these things threatened social and economic stability. The period up to 1960 has been called the "golden age" of liberal medicine. Doctors, in those parts of Québec where there were any, practiced for those who

could afford it. Meanwhile Québec was becoming an advanced industrialized society and clearly services had to be brought up to date. With the Quiet Revolution came hospital insurance and medicare: and now Bill 65.

The history of legal services in Québec is largely similar. Services of lawyers were from the start only readily available to those who could afford their fees. Charity was provided in the form of legal aid by the Québec and Montreal Bar Associations, but these programmes were quite limited. Cases would be handled by private lawyers without remuneration. Civil cases, which would form the bulk of redress for the working class in the courts (eg. finance, housing, labour accidents) would be handled by individuals who had little knowledge of these types of actions and who were largely isolated from the milieu and problems of the claimants.

The need for some type of legal aid programme was acute if the notion of "equality before the law" was to retain any credibility for the majority of the population. The importance of this "guaranteed right" as an ideological prop to the capitalist state was not lost on Justice Minister Jerome Choquette who, in an address to the Montreal Junior Bar Association in 1972, stressed: "The established inferiority of the economically weak in legal matters contradicts the principle of equality before the law". This "dilemma" becomes no doubt more disturbing to the government in a time when the capitalist system's very legitimacy is being repeatedly challenged in labour struggles and other political instabilities. Giving a hypothetical example of how the government's legal aid programme could help a tenant whose rights were being violated, Choquette concludes,"And when we prove to him our desire to vigorously defend his rights, will he not then rediscover his confidence in the law".

The same rationale as was used by Choquette was put forth by Claude Castonguay, Minister of Health and Welfare, to support Bill 65. Addressing the Montreal Board of Trade, he said "The application of a progressive social policy helps to resolve social tensions while assuring greater economic growth." In the Castonguay report, he stated:

> The expenditures contributing should be considered as productive in the same way as real capital investment. The facts go further. In highly-developed countries, long-term possibilities of increasing production are related directly to investments in human resources.

He then goes on to say:

> It is known that illness is the main cause of absenteeism in the working force. In Canada, statistics show that it results in the loss of at least five days a year per worker. In 1962, this average represented 27 million man-days lost to production, that is, a loss more serious than that lost by all the strikes that have taken place in Canada since 1947. Moreover, the longer life expectancy observed over a number of years, in addition to prolonging the worker's period of activity means that a considerable proportion of the present labor force, perhaps 10%, has survived up to now because of the decrease of the death rate since 1930.... For the year 1960 alone, this additional manpower probably has increased the national revenue of Canada by one to two billion dollars.

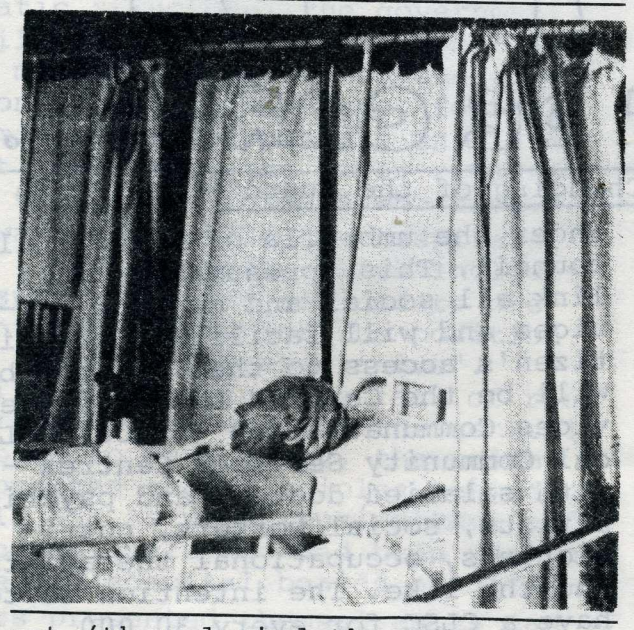
The Emergence of Popular Clinics

If the government has finally decided that something must be done to remove the chaos from health services, since the lack of such services means sick workers and

sick workers cost capitalism money, it is also moving because certain popular groups have already acted. And the government is not anxious for any more people to follow the lead of the "popular clinics".

In 1968, the newly-formed St. Jacques Citizens' Committee conducted a survey which showed the urgent need for medical services in the area. The neighbourhood, which stretches north from the port in the central east part of the city, is made up of workers and lots of welfare and unemployment insurance recipients. A recent City of Montréal survey showed that it had twice as many deaths from heart disease than Montréal as a whole.

Faced with the refusal of municipal and provincial authorities



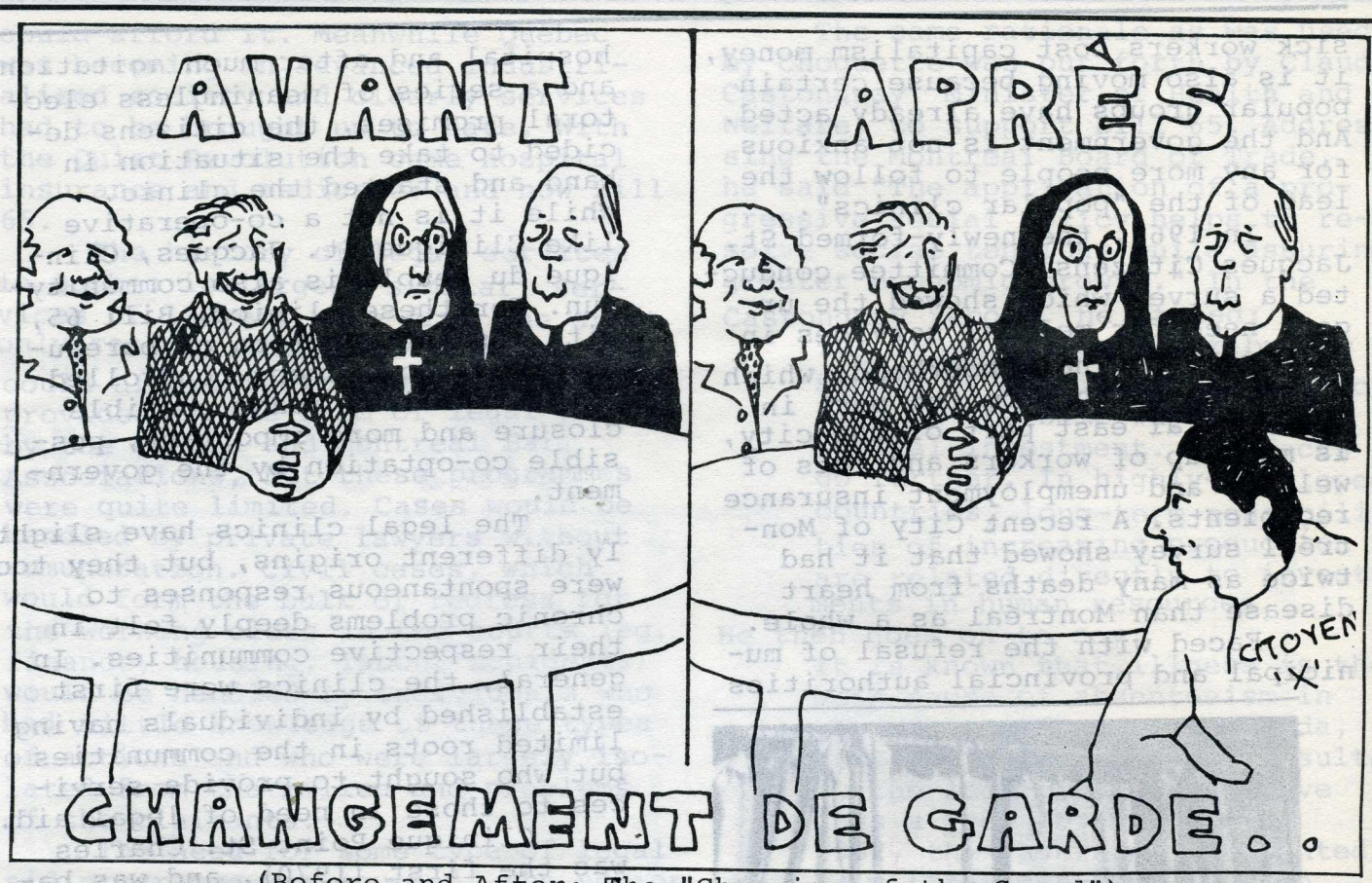
to act (they denied there was a health problem), the citizens set up their own co-operative clinic which now, four years later, has 3,000 members. Aside from offering general medicine, free medication, free eyeglasses and dental services, the clinic is controlled by the co-operators themselves through a series of committees. The cost to each family is $2 a month.

In St. Henri, in southwest Montréal, the Clinique du Peuple developed out of similar circumstances. The area badly needs a hospital and after much agitation and a series of meaningless electoral promises, the citizens decided to take the situation in hand and started the clinic. While it is not a co-operative like Clinique St. Jacques, Clinique du Peuple is also community-run. For these clinics, Bill 65, with its introduction of bureaucratized, government-controlled "hip" medicine, means possible closure and more important, possible co-optation by the government.

The legal clinics have slightly different origins, but they too were spontaneous responses to chronic problems deeply felt in their respective communities. In general, the clinics were first established by individuals having limited roots in the communities but who sought to provide services to those in need of legal aid.

Clinique Point St. Charles was the first (1970), and was basically started by law students (mainly from McGill University) and financed through two foundation grants. Clinique St. Louis developed when a community information centre (St. Louis Junction) found itself repeatedly being approached with legal problems that were going unanswered. Using the funds from a federal Opportunities for Youth grant, people from the Junction worked in collaboration with law students from McGill and Université de Montréal to set up a clinic to fill the void. Gradually, both St. Louis and Point St. Charles evolved toward community control, with administrative councils elected from the people served by the clinics. And with time and experience, the roots into the community and the principle of self-control were strengthened.

By August 1971, there were already clinics set up in Montréal (five), Québec City, Sherbrooke, and Hull. It was in this situation that the government decided to



(Before and After: The "Changing of the Guard")

act and began to draft legislation which would eventually become Bill 10.

Bills 65 and 10 were promoted by the government as progressive steps which would democratize medical care and legal aid. The bills, however, are only progressive in the sense that they increase somewhat the availability of these services. The important questions raised by the two bills are those of services for whom and controlled by whom.

Bill 65

Bill 65 divides Québec into twelve administrative regions and regroups hospitals, old-age homes, rehabilitation centres, foster home services, insane asylums,etc. under the umbrella of a regional council. This, presumably, will link all social and medical services and will facilitate the citizen's access to them. At the base will be the Centres Locaux de Services Communautaires (CLSCs) - Local Community Services Centres - with salaried doctors and psychiatrists, social workers, nutritionists, occupational therapists and the like. The intention is to have a CLSC for every 30,000 people.

Essentially, this means nothing new in terms of services; drugs are not provided; neither are glasses, nor dental services. The CLSC is nothing more than a big roof for the same old liberal-style "band-aid medicine" practiced for years.

Most important, the control of the regional and local units rests firmly in the hands of the government. As the monthly publication of the Ministry of Health

and Social Services says: "The administrative council of the CLSC carries out the social policies of Québec (i.e. the provincial government in Québec City) according to the objectives and priorities established by the Ministry."

On paper, of course, the structures conform to the latest concepts of liberal "social animation" and "citizens' power":the 12-person administrative council of the CLSC, for example, will have five elected representatives from the centre's patients and one elected from the non-professional staff; as well, of course, there will be representatives of the professional staff, the CLSC administration and two citizens appointed by the government.

Using this apparently democratic structure, the government still manages to retain control of medical services. In the elections, held in mid-June, for the administrative councils in different hospitals, the power remained in the hands of those who have always controlled the hospitals.

The CSN union which includes hospital workers decided to present candidates for the position of "patient representative". While criticizing the lack of room for union members and the general public to have a say, the union supported the principles behind Bill 65. As well, businessmen and professionals who had been part of the old hospital boards of directors presented themselves as candidates.

In all the Montréal hospitals, the union managed to win two seats. At Sacre Coeur Hospital, in north-end Cartierville, the union people lost out to a Bell Canada administrator and a drug company salesman. 160 of the 354 people who voted were nursing nuns. At the downtown Royal Victoria Hospital, where people who arrived one hour after the voting started (polling was to last four hours) were turned away and told the whole thing was over, the representatives of thousands of hospital and clinic patients will be Arnold Hart and W. Earle McLaughlin. Hart is the chairman of the Bank of Montreal; McLaughlin is the chairman and president of the Royal Bank of Canada.

Because there was no concerted effort to bring the public to vote and because the hospital administrations controlled the elections, the results were not surprising.

Struggle Against the Bill

Montréal got its first CLSC in January 1972, in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, a working-class area to the east of St. Jacques. About one year before that, a group from the area's citizens' committee got together to set up a clinic similar to the one in St. Jacques. By this time, the government had already accepted the concept of community clinics and, with an anxious eye to the situation in St. Jacques, the government offered a grant and administrators. Université de Montréal arranged for doctors. At first, the clinic retained its own board of control - made up from the community - but because it had opted to integrate into Bill 65, this had to change to conform with the law. Some of the citizens who had originally campaigned for the clinic became part of the CLSC's non-professional staff. When they continued to object to the disbanding of the citizens' board in favour of the prescribed administrative council, they were fired. Clearly, the clinic was no longer a community-based organism where some people were trying to look beyond band-aid medicine into the causes of sickness in capitalist society: bad work conditions, poor housing, no recreational facilities, etc. Instead, it had become part of a giant government bureaucracy where, for example, the fancy CLSC

phone system alone costs $I5,000 a year.

However, some popular clinics have taken another approach. General assemblies of both Clinique St. Jacques and Clinique du Peuple have voted overwhelmingly not to become CLSC's, and these two groups, along with others, have formed a " Common Front Against Bill 65 ". Although their collective strategy is not clear, their position is reflected in the pamphlet " La Santé du Peuple " (The People's Health) put out by Clinique St. Jacques to explain what the government is up to through Bill 65:

> When the State says that it wants to improve the social productivity of health through the reform of the health programme (medical insurance and Bill 65) and that, in Québécois society, the disparities in income will remain or even tend to grow, it is really saying that it wants to assure the growth and stability of the economic system - that is, to guarantee the bosses' profit at the expense of the worker.
>
> With Bill 65, the government introduced a new conception of medicine--so-called "social" and "preventative" medicine.
>
> It is clear that prevention is an illusion. It is impossible to " prevent " as long as the principal sources of diseases such as housing, nutrition, and working conditions are not attacked. By limiting care to treatment of diseases, only existing disease can be attacked not its sources.
>
> As for the so-called social medicine, it is evident that the only thing that the people can do is to try to stop liberal medicine which only profits the doctors at the expense of people's health.

St. Jacques and Clinique Centre-Ville have also put together an audio-visual show on the bill which they have been using as propaganda.

An obvious problem which faces those clinics which remain on their own is financing, and it is without a doubt the government's strongest bargaining point. St. Jacques is financed through the monthly fee, through the doctors' revenue from the compulsory government medicare scheme (the non-professional clinic workers receive the same salary as the two full-time doctors), and through a grant from a private charity which so far has come with no strings attached. Centre-Ville is on a Local Initiatives P Project and Opportunities for Youth money (the fear is that it will have to close down shortly). The Pointe St. Charles clinic has already been the object of considerable government financing, and although they have imposed militant conditions on any possible transformation into a CLSC, the fear is that given the choice of closure or integration, they will integrate.

Bill 10

Bill 10, as it was finally passed in July,1972 sets up a system of legal aid that differs substantially from the practice of the popular legal clinics. Under the government plan a means test is to be administered by civil servants which will make it more difficult for many working class families to get legal aid. As an example; a wage-earner of a family with two children will have to be earning less than $120 to qualify, as opposed to $150 in the existing "popular clinics".

In a real sense this is once again the ruling class tactic of creat-

ing divisions within the working class by offering services to some and denying it to others. The basis for collective action against common problems is thus made more difficult. In fact the very principle of group rights is not guaranteed by Bill 10, and the legal representation of popular groups and associations, key to any political work that could be undertaken by a clinic, is left hanging.

Unlike medical services, no regular government subsidies as under medicare have been made available to lawyers. Subsidization is now only available to those legal clinics and offices that become part of the legal aid system that Bill 10 sets up. But under Bill 10 the legal clinics must alter themselves not only in terms of whom they serve. Their fundamental structures must comply with the government programme - a highly centralized network that is dominated by the government and the Bar, leaving little power with the people. At the top of the system is the Lieutenant-Governor (i.e. the government). He in turn names a Provincial Commission which itself appoints officers for the 11 Regional Corporations into which Québec has been divided. These regional bodies hold a great deal of power in the actual functioning of the legal aid system. Of the 14 members on each board three are to be lawyers or law professors, and three are to be " residents of the region ".

Below the regional corporations are the offices of the legal aid lawyers and the legal aid clinics. The clinics must comply with the Bill and surrender their autonomy, yielding the power of decision-making to the regional level. Bureaucratic procedures are then to be institutionalized at the local level and be carried out by the appropriate personnel. It is difficult to conceive of a clinic in the government's system being rooted in a community and engaging in its struggles, nor is there any reason why the citizens should give their confidence to such a " service ".

The Bar's resistance to having lawyers on salary has been strong, but it is even more opposed to having them under citizen control. A compromise solution was arranged with the government in the final version of the Bill, allowing individuals the " freedom " to choose non-Legal Aid lawyers, at a considerably greater expense to the public. The institution of legal aid at the present time will also help relieve pressure, felt by both the Bar and the government, coming from dissatisfied law students who in the past year have vigorously protested the lack of employment openings available and the arbitrary Bar examinations designed to eliminate a good percentage of graduates. Legal Aid, when the programme is completed, it is to employ two hundred lawyers.

The nature of the government's legal aid system, if it is not obvious from the letter of the law, is clear from the spirit in which it is been carried out. A giant office of 58 lawyers recently was opened at Place Dupuis in central Montréal, which demonstrates the priorities of the government. Place Dupuis is a modern new office complex for which the government is paying an annual rent of $240,000. Another instructive example concerns the government's attempt to displace an already established " popular clinic ". When Clinique St. Louis began negotiations about incorporation the government " proposed " that they move to Villeray, a district quite remote from the area where the clinic had already been operating for over two years. The government did eventually relent from its position, but interferences like this are a recurring drain on the energies of a clinic.

The immediate effect of Bill 10 - when it was still only in its planning stages - was to check the growth of " popular clinics " and

introduce a good deal of confusion. Parties interested in setting up new clinics adopted a wait-and-see attitude while established clinics vacillated on how to respond. An association of legal clinics was formed in 1971 to submit a proposal to the government critical of the then proposed Bill 10. The association, however, was quite loosely constitued and beyond the prepared brief co-ordinated little action. Clinics Pointe St. Charles and St. Louis have since decided to incorporate. Among the other clinics only Clinique Centre-Sud (covering an area similar to Clinique St. Jacques) has taken a strong position against incorporation. Reprinted below are parts of a document prepared for a general assmbly held February 25, 1973:

What Lies Before Us?

Given that the objectives of the Clinic are:
* to provide legal aid and popular education;
* to see that control remains with the citizens of the community;

Given that Bill 10 does not allow this control;
Given that, by this law, the government provides those services that the Clinic was providing before its reorganization (e.g. divorce and separation, accidents, finance, etc.):

THE CITIZENS HAVE THREE ALTERNATIVES:

A - Give up the idea of citizen control and incorporate into the Government's system and provide services. Now, it is not certain that the Clinic would remain on Saint-André Street, because a Government bureau will be operating at Delormier and Ontario [nearby streets].

B - Hold to our objectives and provide the same services as the Government, without incorporating into its system. But then it will be necessary to find some way to find money.

C - Hold to our objectives and offer those services which will not be given by the Government. Examples: popular animation and education, the services of popular lawyers [avocats populaires].

PROPOSITIONS FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL:

The Administrative Council proposes the third alternative:

1 - That the Clinic provide different services, more specifically on problems of small claims, unemployment insurance, minimum wage and work accidents;
that it refer all other cases to Government offices;
that these services be furnished by popular lawyers from the Clinic;
that the work of the popular lawyers should be directed toward leading the citizens of the community to participate in the administration of the Clinic and in the resolution of their own problems.

2 - That the working principles of the Clinic be:
a)popular education and information, through the means of popular lawyers and a professional lawyer;
b)resolving of cases;
c)work in conjunction with the people of the community;
d)collaboration with the popular groups in the community.

3 - That, when the Clinic will have enough money, it will hire

a lawyer, who will not be the boss in the Clinic, but rather in the service of the popular lawyers and the people of the community. He will not take any cases except with the approval of the Administrative Council on the recommendation of the popular lawyers.

In short, the experiences of the legal clinics highlight the dangers of co-option. Clinique St. Louis, for example, has been dependent on funding from the Justice Department of the Québec government. In return for this support they have had to make several concessions (e.g. hiring a lawyer with over five years experience). Incorporation represents another small change - in fact making it easier to provide regular services. But, in the process of becoming a better service organization, political content is sterilized and political power is taken from the base and returned to a safe state bureaucracy.

Conclusion

Faced with a growing base-controlled popular movement, the government decided to enact Bills 65 and 10. The clinics had gone beyond simple dispensing of services to question the sources of illness and legal problems. They had begun to provide positive examples of alternatives to the existing system - the clinics were community-controlled and stressed reliance on para-professionals drawn from the community rather than professional staffs. The government decided to make a few concessions in terms of increased services in order to ultimately depoliticize a clinic " movement " which was beginning to challenge the capitalist system. By forcing clinics to choose between incorporation (which would assure financing) or independence, the government tried to isolate militants. There had always been two conflicting tendencies within the clinics: service dispensing versus political action. The government hopes to use this contradiction to co-opt the clinic " movement ".

To keep the image of community control, the government, in a widespread advertising campaign, has promoted its new administrative structures as democratic. In reality, they are designed to take control from the general assemblies of the clinics and give it to administrative councils dominated by the government and professionals. Thus, people will be confronted with the same bureaucratic structures that have always controlled medical and legal aid. Furthermore, government provided services don't come free and now the clinics will be financed out of taxes coming largely from the working class. In the existing Medicare plan, 63.6% of the money comes from taxes on incomes under $8,000 a year.

In this context the uncritical support of the unions for Bill 65 seems contradictory to their radical rhetoric. At best, the unions seem to be taken in by the government propaganda. At worse, it would appear that they are opportunistically out to carve a niche for themselves in the new power structure.

Bills 65 and 10 are not isolated elements in the government's programme. In taking the control out of the hands of the popular clinics the government is continuing its general policy of repression (e.g. Bill 51 increasing police power - Solidaire #4; Bill 89 - anti-strike legislation) in the face of mounting opposition.

next issue:

Women in Québec