

International News:

Class versus Class in Quebec

(The following article about the recent elections in Quebec is reprinted from *The Worker*, newspaper of the Canadian Party of Labour).

Levesque is in office, the capitalist class is in power, and the "nation-builders" are everywhere. It appears that the ruling circles intend to use the Quebec election as a springboard to establish a "greater Canada"—a trend which has been well under way for some time. Someone may yet get hurt.

The election of the P.Q. (Quebec Party) was no surprise. The polls predicted a victory for that party. The major papers from one end of the country to the other treated Levesque as a very tolerable alternative to the "crooked" and "arrogant" Bourassa. Levesque's strategy was to play the honest reformist while Bourassa seemed to be almost studiously inept, doing everything wrong from debating (incumbents always lose debates) to claiming separatism was the issue.

Now, however, the powerful are upset that the masses are NOT upset. In this year of the General Strike and economic recession, nationalism is being stirred and they want to keep the pot boiling.

The *Toronto Star*, the principal "mass line" paper of the Canadian ruling class, has begun a series of editorials to "educate" people about the dire threat to confederation. With its first front-page editorial in 25 years, the *Star* announced that we are "sleep-walking into a disaster" and called for a "save Canada" program to be implemented by a "save Canada Cabinet". Subsequent articles were to spell out an urgent plan to rescue the situation, but so far they've only added the shocking news that Canada's house is on fire!

Trudeau, Clark, and Broadbent are all getting into the Canada Savings plan. Levesque is to play the rabbit, but he'd better look out . . . they may eat him for real. Trudeau ruled out violence, but the *Star* did not. The last great "nation-builder" hanged Louis Riel to prove he was serious. The tone of the *Star* indicated that they would welcome the chance of a little muscle-flexing.

The General Strike of Oct. 14 showed English and French workers can combine powerfully with the greatest of ease—a disquieting sight to the capitalist class. And the Quebec election was won by the Party that made the greatest promises to the workers. The *Globe and Mail* called it the first vote for socialism in the history of Quebec. So the bosses are beating the drums of nationalism more loudly. It's "the destiny of Quebec" vs. "Save Canada". And all to save the capitalist class.

The story of Quebec of the past 10 years has not been the rise of the P.Q. The so-called "separatist" vote has remained virtually unchanged in recent years. The story of Quebec has been the rising

revolutionary consciousness of the workers. They have been in the vanguard of the North American working class.

Quebec workers have been in general strikes and mass demonstrations unparalleled on this continent. Several major labor leaders have been driven to call for

socialism. The P.Q. is the means by which the bosses seek to derail the workers' movement. Soon there will be tests where we will see if nationalism can slow down or stop proletarian militancy.

While using Levesque as a foil for Quebec workers, the Canadian ruling class will focus on the

"challenge" of separatism in order to promote Canadian nationalism.

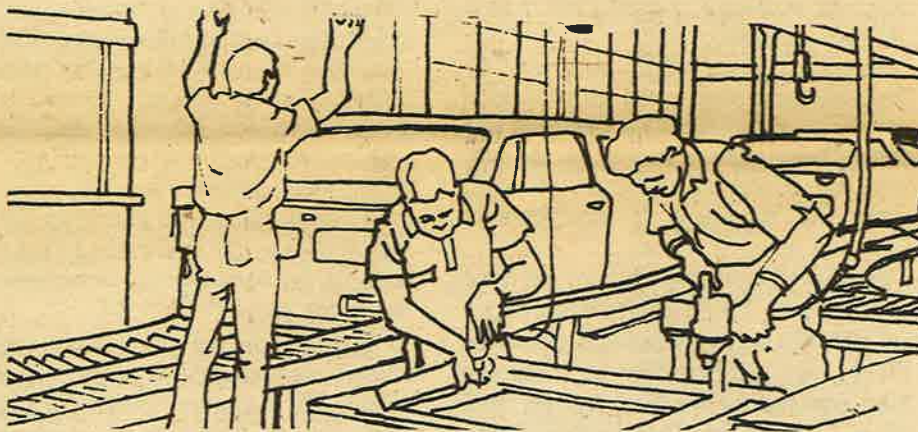
Lenin once remarked that within every "nation" there are in reality two nations, the capitalist class and the workers. The General Strike was the act of our nation, a nation that is well on its way to self-determination.

On the Labor Front:

No More Drudgery in Auto Plants?

No more drudgery on auto assembly lines? Speed-up is out, happiness is in? Has capitalism changed its spots? That appears to be what the bosses' media would have us believe about the Volvo "teamwork" experiment in constructing the Swedish car, as an apparent attempt to deal with the plight of auto assembly line workers.

A "qualified success" says an "independent" report prepared by Sweden's main employers' and trade union organizations, as revealed in the *London Financial Times* (11/23/76). Let's take a closer look at this "experiment" that tries to make the worker appear as the boss.



Volvo bosses admit the reason they sought a change in production methods was not such an altruistic motive on their part; it was basically to reduce the high absenteeism and turnover rates that marked auto employment and thereby reap higher profits. Volvo managers traced these problems to the fact that auto assembly workers were "bored" with their work, with the repetition of doing the same job over and over again, minute after minute, for 40 and 50 hours a week. In some of the favorite jargon used by the bosses these days, the workers were "alienated" from their work; thus, the high absenteeism, to get a respite from this drudgery.

The "answer" dreamed up by Volvo was to do away with the traditional assembly line and set up "group assembly" workshop areas where perhaps 20 workers could work as a "team" to produce a section of the car, deciding "themselves" who would do what and when, rather than being tied to a constantly-moving assembly line which governs the whole plant's work-force.

The results? Absenteeism while dropping slightly is still "high," says the report, due to "a general disenchantment with work" as such. Volvo's "figures still don't

balance." And production quotas are still set and must be met by the "teams" or else . . . ("The production system contains a regular framework which sets where and how the work is done and Volvo has an agreement with its unions on the quantity of work to be done at the plant." Fancy language to mask the fact that the boss is still boss).

What is the real problem, that capitalism is incapable of dealing with? Workers, auto or otherwise, are not alienated merely from their job; they are alienated from virtually every aspect of capitalist society. Workers are wage slaves who sell their labor power to the boss, adding value in production

their jobs.

Probably the main factor that makes most jobs bearable under capitalism is the socializing and camaraderie that exists, where possible, between workers during working hours. But what is needed is the social control by those workers of the work-place and of the government. Then not only the job but the whole society—culture, education, housing, medical care, etc.—will reflect the working class's collective discussion on what to do, with the power to enforce their collective will. There'll be no time for "alienation" because workers will be too busy figuring out how to use all the productive energies of their class to create a real flowering of society. That's the potential of Socialism—and when bosses' ideas are eliminated altogether, we'll have communism, when there's absolutely no chance for the profit motive (and the profiteers) to be resurrected any place in the world.

Under Socialism, if it's found necessary to use assembly lines, it would be under the most optimum conditions for workers, both physically and ideologically:

(1) The social surplus produced by workers would go to help their sisters and brothers all over the world, not Henry Ford.

(2) The basis will exist for the working class to decide where and how that social surplus will be used—for cultural centers attached to the factories; for hospitals; schools; or to help other revolutionaries fighting capitalists someplace else in the world, who, if not eliminated, would threaten workers' control where it already exists.

(3) There will be complete unity of the working class—racism, the special oppression of women, nationalism, and all other capitalist ideology and anti-working class action would be outlawed.

(4) There would be no worry about one's children or one's self dying in a bosses' war.

(5) There would be no worry about layoffs or joblessness; everyone would do useful work.

(6) There would be no worry about medical care for any family, from the cradle to the grave.

(7) Cultural and recreational activities and facilities could be adjacent to every work-place.

(8) Daycare facilities would be provided for all children whose parents work, convenient to the work-place.

(9) There would be no drugs, no street crime, etc., since there

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