The Historical and International Foundations of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada): Part 4

Socialist Equality Party (Canada)
11 November 2026

Delegates to the Socialist Equality Party's founding congress held in Montreal from August 22 to 24 unanimously adopted a comprehensive document outlining the party's Historical and International Foundations. *It is being published on the* World Socialist Web Site *in ten parts. Click here to access the first, second and third parts, respectively.*

The WSWS previously published a report on the congress, which marked a major milestone in the struggle to build the world party of socialist revolution, as well as the SEP Canada's Statement of Principles.

The founding of the Revolutionary Workers Party and the Stalinist suppression of the post-war upsurge of the masses

69. The Trotskyists were the only political tendency to oppose Canadian imperialism in World War II. The day after war was declared, SWL supporter Frank Watson became the first person to be arrested under the Defence of Canada Regulations after he delivered an anti-war speech at a street meeting in Toronto[54] While working in illegality and with part of the membership conscripted into the military, the Trotskyists tenaciously opposed the efforts of the Stalinists and social democrats to subordinate the growing mass movement for industrial unionism to corporatist labour-management committees and support for the imperialist war, conscription and bourgeois politics. As the war continued, the Canadian Trotskyists drew political strength and confidence from the radicalization of the working class, which found expression in a wave of strikes and a surge in support for the reformist CCF. But the reconstitution of an independent organization uniting Trotskyists across the country, which took place with the founding of the Revolutionary Workers Party in 1946, would have been impossible without a struggle against left social-democrats and centrist forces. This included political forces who were unwilling to mount a frontal assault on the CCF, because they had come to view the necessary tactical adaptation to state suppression as a political accommodation to left social-democracy and syndicalism. "[O]ur basic political strategy towards the CCF," declared one of the preparatory documents for the RWP's founding Congress, "does not vary in proportion to the growth or decline of the latter organization. Our position is determined by fundamental programmatic considerations. As a reformist party, the CCF—like all social democratic parties on a world scale—is an agency of the 'democratic' bourgeoisie within the camp of the proletariat. Its principal task is to save capitalism from the proletarian revolution. .. [Our] strategy can only be one of irreconcilable warfare against the CCF."[55] Answering those opposed to challenging the CCF for the leadership of the working class, Ross Dowson, a young worker who had emerged during the Second World War as the leader of the adherents of the Fourth International in Canada, explained that while revolutionists might have to conduct work within the politically hostile environment of social-democratic parties so as to free workers moving towards revolutionary politics from their influence, they "do not subscribe to the theory that the workers must necessarily go through the experiences of reformism before moving to the revolutionary party. We certainly never subscribed to the theory that *we* must put them through this experience by *our* building the reformist party. Reformism is a barrier to the revolutionary development of the working class."[56]

70. The upsurge of the class struggle in Canada was part of a global movement—one which placed the very survival of world capitalism in question. Imperialist war had left Europe in ruins. Across the continent the working class revolted against the fascist regimes and the capitalist elites that had collaborated with them. Mass anti-colonial movements were sweeping Asia, most notably in British India and China. The decisive role in politically suppressing the working class and rescuing capitalism was played by Stalinism, with the assistance of social democracy. In the imperialist centres of Western Europe, the mass Stalinist Communist Parties, on the Kremlin's instructions, entered bourgeois governments, disarmed resistance fighters, and suppressed any independent initiative of the working class. The task at hand, they forthrightly declared, was not to fight for socialism but to revive the national bourgeois-democratic states. In keeping with this perspective, the French Communist Party supported the French state's military campaign to reassert control over Indochina from the government benches. In Eastern Europe, which the great powers had agreed at the end-of-war Yalta and Potsdam conferences would henceforth be a "buffer zone" where Soviet influence would predominate, the Stalinists likewise participated in "national unity" governments. In the colonial countries, the Stalinists gave uncritical support to the national bourgeoisie, including by backing the communal partition of South Asia into an expressly Muslim Pakistan and a predominantly Hindu India.

71. The betrayals of Stalinism provided American imperialism, which as the result of the war was in a position of unprecedented dominance over all its principal imperialist rivals, the political conditions—i.e. breathing space—to marshal its vast economic resources to revive the European and world capitalist economy and create a framework for post-war economic expansion. Washington "reorganized the world" to ensure its own hegemony but also to avert social revolution. Under the monetary regime established in 1944 at Bretton Woods, the US dollar became the cornerstone of the world financial system. With the support of the other capitalist powers, it created the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, GATT, and other institutions to regulate economic relations between them so as to manage crises and avert a return to the ruinous protectionist policies of the 1930s that had shattered the world market and served as an

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antechamber to World War II.

72. It was only in 1948, after US imperialism launched the Cold War and sought with the Marshall Plan to challenge Soviet predominance in Eastern Europe that the Kremlin, for reasons of national defence, felt compelled to expropriate large capitalist holdings in the East European states and establish regimes on the Stalinist model. The nationalization of industry, transport and finance in the newly-proclaimed "People's democracies" of East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria was not carried out, as it had been in the Soviet Union, by the working class in revolutionary struggle, but by bureaucratic fiat from above. The Fourth International carefully analyzed these developments and refused to be rushed into defining these states as "workers' states" simply on account of the nationalization of much of the economy. The Trotskyist movement insisted that the key questions were the historical origins of these states and the social forces behind the transformation in property relations. Ultimately, it characterized them as "deformed workers' states," in recognition of the inherently progressive character of the expropriations and the necessity to defend them. But the stress was on "deformed"—that is on the historically unviable character of these states. Only through a working-class political revolution to purge the bureaucracy and establish independent democratic organizations of workers' power, as a component part of the development of world socialist revolution, could a path to socialism be opened.

Summing up its analysis of the transformations in Eastern Europe, the Fourth International's International Executive Committee wrote in April 1949, "An evaluation of Stalinism cannot be made on the basis of localized results of its policy but must proceed from the entirety of its action on a world scale. When we consider the state of decay which capitalism presents even today, four years after the end of the war, and when we consider the concrete situation of 1943–45, there can be no doubt that Stalinism, on a world scale, appeared as the decisive factor in preventing a sudden and simultaneous crash of the capitalist order in Europe and in Asia. In this sense, the 'successes' achieved by the bureaucracy in the buffer zone constitute, at most, the price which imperialism paid for services rendered on the world arena—a price which is moreover constantly called into question at the following stage."

The resolution went on to stress the impact of the Stalinist bureaucracy's police state-rule on the consciousness of the working class: "From the world point of view, the reforms realized by the Soviet bureaucracy … weigh incomparably less in the balance than the blows dealt … through its actions…against the consciousness of the world *proletariat,* which it demoralizes, disorients and paralyzes by all its politics."[57]

73. In China, in the wake of the world war, a peasant uprising under the leadership of the Stalinist Communist Party succeeded in 1949 in overthrowing the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang government in the third Chinese Revolution, bringing an end to a century of semi-colonial oppression. After the Stalinist betrayal of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, the Communist Party had shifted its class axis, focusing on building peasant-based "Red armies"—an orientation that became even more pronounced after Mao assumed the CCP leadership in 1935. Adhering to the two-stage theory of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, the CCP did everything to suppress independent action by the working class as the People's Liberation Army entered China's cities. Strikes were violently repressed. The CCP's organic hostility to the independent political mobilization of the proletariat found its highest expression in its ruthless crackdown on the Chinese Trotskyists. Because of the external pressure of US imperialism during the Korean War from 1950-53 and popular revolutionary ferment, especially within the working class, the Stalinist CCP was subsequently forced to go further than intended and stipulated by its Stalinist-Menshevik program of a national democratic revolution based on the "block of four classes." It expropriated the landlord class, nationalized the key branches of industry and expropriated capital holdings, creating a system of bureaucratic planning along the Stalinist model in the Soviet Union. Throughout the Mao regime was wedded to the nationalist program of "socialism in one country" and continued to ruthlessly repress all independent working-class activity and organization. Taking into account these contradictory developments, but above all placing emphasis on the Stalinist deformation of the Chinese Revolution, the Fourth International defined the Beijing regime as a deformed workers' state. After a series of disastrous, empirical zigzags, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, aimed at overcoming the backwardness of China's economy on a nationalist basis and containing popular discontent, Mao himself initiated a rapprochement with Washington in 1971 that led over the subsequent two decades to the full restoration of capitalism.

Stalinism and the restabilization of post-war Canadian capitalism

74. More than three decades after the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy in its ultimate betrayal dissolved the USSR and restored capitalism, forces within the pseudo-left and academia continue to defend the reactionary record of the Stalinist CPC. They do so on the grounds of its supposed positive contribution to militant working-class struggles, including the 1935 On-to-Ottawa Trek and the formation of the mass industrial unions. In reality, the Stalinist CPC played a decisive role in politically smothering the working class and restabilizing Canadian capitalism as it was convulsed by Depression and world war. It exploited the banner of the October Revolution to disorient the most courageous and class-conscious workers, imbuing them with nationalism and opportunism. Many became union bureaucrats at the beck and call of the CPC's cynical political maneuvers in the service of the Soviet bureaucracy and its Canadian capitalist allies, real and would-be. Others demoralized by Stalinism were repelled into the ranks of social-democracy, liberalism, or apathy. The CPC peddled slanders, historical falsifications and the most grotesque deformations of Marxist theory to justify every crime of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy. It celebrated the Moscow Trials and Trotsky's August 21, 1940 assassination in blood-curdling language.

75. In keeping with the national-defencist Popular Front political line it had promoted since 1935, the CPC welcomed Canada's entry into World War II six days after the eruption of war in Europe. However, on orders from the Stalin regime, the CPC shifted its position weeks later in line with the Stalin-Hitler Pact to denounce Canada's participation in "imperialist war." Its opposition however was not from the standpoint of socialist internationalism. No sooner did the Nazis launch their war of annihilation against the Soviet Union in June 1941, than the CPC emerged from the underground to become the most vociferous pro-war party. Leading the calls for "national unity" to win the war, it quickly became a de facto partner of the Mackenzie King Liberal government. Under conditions of a working-class upsurge to secure protection from price increases and union representation, the Stalinists became the foremost advocates and enforcers of the "no strike pledge." When a wave of militant worker struggles erupted despite their efforts, they worked to channel it into the newly promulgated collective bargaining framework under PC (Privy Council) Order 1003.

The Stalinists peddled the most reactionary pro-war chauvinism. They connived in the Canadian state's internment of the Japanese Canadians, with the Stalinist-led Fishermen's Union advocating for the confiscation of the boats of Japanese Canadians. Their paper, *Canadian Tribune* hailed US imperialism's dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki under the headline "USSR, Atom Bombs K.O. Jap Warlords."

76. As the end of World War Two approached and on the eve of a

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massive post-war, North America-wide strike wave in which the working class would make clear that it would never accept a return to the "Hungry Thirties," the Canadian Stalinists intensified their efforts to tie it to Canadian capital and the Canadian state. The Stalinists' watchwords were: "Labor-Management-Government Cooperation," "Make Labor a Partner in Government" and for a "Liberal-Labor coalition government." They formed an electoral alliance with the Liberals for the June 1945 federal election, denouncing the CCF as "ultra-left" and "adventurist" for refusing to join an anti-Tory "progressive bloc." Proponents of a post-war "National Front" between labour and capital led by the federal Liberal government, the Stalinists played a crucial role in entrenching the collective bargaining system that has been used to regulate and suppress the class struggle since the end of the Second World War.

The Stalinists were subsequently the targets of a vicious anti-communist campaign that was backed by the Canadian state and Washington, and used to push politics sharply to the right. The Cold War witch hunt was spearheaded by pro-CCF union officials and enforced by Liberal-aligned union bureaucrats who had previously worked closely with the "Reds." If the purge was so successful, it was in part because the Stalinists had alienated rank-and-file workers by their policing of the war "no-strike pledge" and long record of cynical maneuvers and betrayals.

77. The Stalinists' promotion of the most crass and reactionary forms of class collaboration was inextricably bound up with their championing of Canadian nationalism. Indeed, the Stalinists arguably contributed even more than did the social-democrats to fashioning, legitimizing and propagating the "left" Canadian nationalism that remains to this day a principal political-ideological pillar of bourgeois rule. The CPC emblazoned itself with the Maple Leaf figuratively and literally. This included agitating for a Canadian flag and the adoption of *O'Canada* as Canada's national anthem. Following the Kremlin's directives, the CPC cultivated the claim of a Canadian national-democratic tradition with contemporary progressive potential. This began in the 1920s with the aim of lessening British imperialist pressure on Soviet Russia, was developed with the forging of a "People's Alliance" against fascism with the democratic imperialist powers in the 1930s and during World War II, and continued with the call to distance Canada from US imperialism after 1945. With the onset of the Cold War, the Stalinists became even more stridently Canadian nationalist. In their 1952 draft program, *Canadian Independence and People's Democracy*, the Labor-Progressive Party (LPP), as the CPC was then known, asserted that Canadians had to wage "the greatest struggle of our history as a people" against "US domination" and "national betrayal." "We Canadians," it declared, "are called upon now to win our national independence from US domination, to establish the supremacy of Parliament and to regain sovereign Canadian control over our resources, industries, armed forces and foreign and domestic policies."[58] "To achieve these high patriotic aims," the LPP called for a "new political alignment, people's coalition around the national democratic tasks of Canadian independence, the supremacy of Parliament, peace and the vital interests of the people." This "people's coalition," sometimes dubbed in subsequent Stalinist programs as an "anti-monopoly coalition," should, the LPP stipulated, include "Canadians who believe in private enterprise" and "sections of the capitalists who are being ruined by the US trusts."[59]

78. It would be a mistake, however, to view the nationalist class-collaborationist politics of the CPC and their reactionary debilitating impact on the political development of the Canadian working class as arising simply from the diktats of the Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow. As the Workers League, forerunner of the SEP (US), explained in a 1978 document, "Like the medieval plagues that originated in the East but flourished in the unsanitary conditions of life in Western Europe, Stalinism quite naturally hooked itself into the milieu of the trade union bureaucracy and middle-class radicalism. Similarly, Stalinism found that the traditions of pragmatism and even populism provided a very hospitable climate."[60] The struggle against these traditions and the nationalist-opportunist legacy of Stalinism is a critical task of the SEP.

The emergence of Pabloite opportunism

79. Adapting to the post-war restabilization of capitalism, and the authority enjoyed by Stalinism among broad layers of workers and the petty bourgeoisie due to the Soviet Union's role in defeating Nazism, a virulently liquidationist current emerged within the Fourth International that sought to overthrow the Trotskyist program of working-class-led world socialist revolution. Beginning in 1949, Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel gave theoretical expression and leadership to this tendency. Moreover, they increasingly exploited their positions in the Fourth International's International Secretariat to impose their opportunist perspective on Trotskyist parties around the world through administrative fiat, including the arbitrary expulsion of entire sections. Pablo, and later Mandel, first challenged the Trotskyist characterization of the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism. Citing the Stalinist expropriations of large capitalist holdings in Eastern Europe as proof, the Pabloites claimed that the pressure of the masses and imperialist threats would compel the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and its satellite parties to take the road of revolution. This found apocalyptic expression in the Pabloite theory of "war-revolution," which, responding impressionistically to the Cold war division between the Stalinist regimes and US-led Western imperialism, projected that an impending third world war would result in a Stalinist-led world revolution and "centuries of deformed workers' states."

80. Although the Pabloites declaimed at length on the imminence of revolution, their perspective was in fact shot through with profound pessimism about the revolutionary role of the working class and the Fourth International's capacity to win to its banner the vanguard of the world proletariat. Its material basis lay in the rapidly growing petty bourgeoisie, which on the basis of capitalist restabilization saw a significant increase in its standard of living. Exemplifying his impressionistic method and abandonment of any revolutionary orientation to the working class, Pablo declared, "For our movement, objective social reality consists essentially of the capitalist regime and the Stalinist world."[61] For the Pabloites, the working class ceased to be the subject of history, the center of all Marxist theory and strategy. Instead, they looked for surrogates, for alien class forces, to serve as a substitute for the revolutionary action of the proletariat. The Pabloite attack on the Trotskyist movement's historic evaluation of Stalinism was quickly accompanied by the promotion of the supposed progressive potential of social democracy, the trade union bureaucracy, and in the colonial and former colonial countries the national bourgeoisie. In the name of "real integration into the mass movement wherever it expresses itself in each country," Pablo advocated what he called "entrism sui generis" (of a special type).[62] That is the liquidation of the sections of the Fourth International into whatever Stalinist, social-democratic and bourgeois nationalist parties happened to dominate the "mass movement" in each nation-state, with the aim of pushing them and their leaderships to the left. Along these lines, a March 1, 1950, letter from Pablo's International Secretariat urged the Revolutionary Workers Party to dissolve itself into the CCF, adding that entry should be "something of a long duration, starting from the present level of political consciousness in the CCF, which is most likely very low."[63]

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The liquidation of the Revolutionary Workers Party

81. The Canadian Trotskyists' ability to withstand the political pressures that arose from capitalist restabilization was undermined by their scant involvement and interest in the political-theoretical struggles within the Fourth International. Their focus was squarely fixed on tactical questions relating to their work in the trade unions—an environment in which, with the beginning of the post-war boom and the development of the Cold War witch-hunt, major shifts were taking place. Various "union militants" who had collaborated with the Trotskyists in opposing the Stalinists when they were enforcing the World War II no-strike pledge and other betrayals now swung sharply to the right and embedded themselves in the bureaucracy.

82. Applying the Pabloite injunction to integrate into the "real existing mass movement," the RWP voted at its Second Congress in July 1951 to dissolve and enter the social-democratic CCF. This was not just a re-evaluation of the tempo of development, it was a shift in class axis and orientation. Whereas five years earlier, Dowson had insisted that there was no inevitable reformist stage in the development of the working class and that the task of revolutionists was to indefatigably oppose—not promote—reformism and a supposed reformist "stepping stone" to revolutionary politics, the RWP now asserted: "The CCF under the next upsurge will embrace the class. The class will go there and nowhere else. There it will undergo the experience of reformism—and there, given the perspectives of world and Canadian capitalism, will move forward to the revolutionary solution of its problems."[64] Dowson initially suggested that the RWP need not be entirely dissolved. But others, basing their arguments explicitly on the documents emanating from the Pablo-Mandel led International Secretariat, convinced Dowson and the party as a whole that nothing less than the complete disbanding of the RWP and wholesale liquidation into the CCF would do. These documents included the "Theses on Orientation and Perspectives" adopted by the Third Congress of the Fourth International in April 1951. It read in part: "In countries where the reformist parties by far outdistance all other working class formations and are the polar force for the great majority of the proletariat (England, Belgium, Australia) our movement should attempt to integrate itself in these organizations, to organize and develop a conscious left wing in their ranks."[65] That is, they should not mount a struggle to win workers trapped within these organizations to Trotskyism, but rather assist the development of a broad left social-democratic current comprised of left-talking union bureaucrats and other reformists and centrists.

83. Forced to acknowledge that there was a danger of the party succumbing to liquidationism, the RWP Congress agreed that the entry needed to be politically prepared and carefully worked through. This stipulation was soon junked. Eager to conciliate with the CCF "left," the British Columbia wing of the party negotiated its entry outside the control of the party leadership, and, to give it effect, publicly announced that the RWP had been dissolved. The remainder of the party then had to negotiate its own terms of entry—and the CCF took full advantage, insisting that it give up its paper. In April 1952, nine months after its second congress, the RWP issued a terse three-paragraph statement announcing its demise. Dowson was angered by the BC wing's actions, but this did not become a cause for any serious discussion as to where the movement was going. That there was no genuine disagreement is underscored by a letter Dowson wrote the BC group. "We have taken the stand in the East that we are not going to fight and we are going to avoid getting involved in fights over programmatic issues," wrote Dowson. "Generally speaking, we don't want to get involved in anything that brings us into conflict with anyone–left, right or center. We want to work, to prove ourselves by going and getting members, to be builders of the CCF. At most, we would only take stands on the simplest type of class issue, on day-to-day problems when lines are clear, to be defenders of the CCF as a class party against elements that have pro-liberal tendencies."[66]

84. Even as they liquidated into the CCF, the Dowson group conceded that it was a right-wing social-democratic party. But they claimed that due to the increasing affiliation of trade unions, particularly those aligned with the CIO-affiliated Canadian Congress of Labor, it had been transformed into a "Labor Party" and that this turn to "labour political action" constituted an historic step forward for the working class. In fact the alliance between the trade unions and the social-democrats was consolidated through the assistance that the latter gave the union bureaucracy in implementing the Cold War witch-hunt of Communist Party members and other socialist-minded workers. As for "labour political action," it was the extension of the politics of trade unionism to the parliamentary arena—the fight for reforms within the framework of Canadian capitalism and its state. That is, the antipode of the independent class politics fought for by the Trotskyist movement.

The Open Letter and the founding of the ICFI

85. The Open Letter written by James P. Cannon and issued by the US SWP National Committee in November 1953 proved decisive in rallying orthodox Trotskyist opposition to the Pabloite revisionists. It trenchantly demonstrated that Pabloism was an international opportunist tendency that had repudiated the basic tenets of the revolutionary socialist program and was determined to "disrupt, split and break up" the historically assembled cadres of Trotskyism and liquidate the Fourth International. "The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep," it declared, "that no compromise is possible either organizationally or politically. The Pablo faction has demonstrated that it will not permit democratic decisions truly reflecting majority opinion to be reached. They demand complete submission to their criminal policy. They are determined to drive all orthodox Trotskyists out of the Fourth International or to muzzle and handcuff them… The time has come for the orthodox Trotskyist majority of the Fourth International to assert their will against Pablo's usurpation of authority."[67]

86. The founding document of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the Open Letter concisely restated the programmatic foundations of the Trotskyist movement:

"1. The death agony of the capitalist system threatens the destruction of civilization through worsening depressions, world wars and barbaric manifestations like fascism. The development of atomic weapons today underlines the danger in the gravest possible way.

"2. The descent into the abyss can be avoided only by replacing capitalism with the planned economy of socialism on a world scale and thus resuming the spiral of progress opened up by capitalism in its early days.

"3. This can be accomplished only under the leadership of the working class as the only truly revolutionary class in society. But the working class itself faces a crisis of leadership although the world relationship of social forces was never so favorable as today for the workers to take the road to power.

"4. To organize itself for carrying out this world-historic aim the working class in each country must construct a revolutionary socialist party in the pattern developed by Lenin; that is, a combat party capable of dialectically combining democracy and centralism—democracy in arriving at decisions, centralism in carrying them out; a leadership controlled by the ranks, ranks able to carry forward under fire in disciplined fashion.

"5. The main obstacle to this is Stalinism, which attracts workers through exploiting the prestige of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia,

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only later, as it betrays their confidence, to hurl them either into the arms of the Social Democracy, into apathy, or back into illusions in capitalism. The penalty for these betrayals is paid by the working people in the form of consolidation of fascist or monarchist forces, and new outbreaks of wars fostered and prepared by capitalism. From its inception, the Fourth International set as one of its major tasks the revolutionary overthrow of Stalinism inside and outside the USSR.

"6. The need for flexible tactics facing many sections of the Fourth International, and parties or groups sympathetic to its program, makes it all the more imperative that they know how to fight imperialism and all of its petty-bourgeois agencies (such as nationalist formations or trade-union bureaucracies) without capitulation to Stalinism; and, conversely, know how to fight Stalinism (which in the final analysis is a petty-bourgeois agency of imperialism) without capitulating to imperialism."[68]

87. The majority of the Canadian Trotskyists rallied to the IC. This was above all due to the leadership and guidance that the SWP provided in defeating a pro-Pablo faction within the Canadian section. This faction was aggressively promoted by the Pablo-led International Executive Committee (IEC) using dictatorial methods and political subterfuge. After a majority of the National Committee proclaimed its support for the Open Letter in January 1953, the IEC issued a "ukase" that removed Dowson as party national secretary and suspended him and the leader of the pro-IC forces in British Columbia from party membership.[69] With Pablo's blessing and encouragement, his Canadian supporters forged a bloc with a group of renegades who had split from the party in the spring of 1953 so as to ingratiate themselves with the CCF leadership and dubbed themselves the Committee for the Socialist Regroupment of Canada. Together they campaigned to "Junk the Old Trotskyism," which they denounced as rooted in "mummified dogma" and "Stalinophobia."[70]

The Canadian leadership made no real independent contribution to the political struggle that accompanied the 1953-54 split. Dowson himself initially expressed shock at the Open Letter, although the SWP had for months been embroiled in a struggle against Pablo's American supporters. He and the Canadian section's Political Committee initially opposed the Open Letter on organizational grounds, while declaring "neutrality on the political issues at dispute" pending further information.[71] Pablo immediately trumpeted this as proof of the SWP's "isolation" within the Fourth International and supposed break with socialist internationalism.

88. In April 1954, just days before an emergency national convention that was to give the definitive judgment on the Canadian party's attitude to the split in the Fourth International, the pro-Pablo minority walked out of the party and fused with the Committee for Socialist Regroupment renegades. The Paris-based Pabloite leadership immediately endorsed the new grouping as their "Canadian section." Taking its liquidationist politics to their logical conclusion, this group soon collapsed, with its small membership scattered by the political winds, but not before assisting the CCF leadership in fingering IC supporters in its ranks for expulsion.

"The Canadian experience," wrote Dowson in an April 9, 1954 report providing an initial account of the split in the Canadian section, "confirms to the hilt the charge that Pabloism is attempting to liquidate the Fourth International, to wreck and disperse the cadres of international Trotskyism."[72]

The banned SWL mounted a vigorous months-long defence campaign to rally working-class support to win Wilson's release and prevent his deportation to Britain, while simultaneously striving to develop a broader movement in defence of all left-wing and working-class elements targeted under the War Measures Act. Wilson's release was ultimately secured in the spring of 1940 after he had spent eight months in detention.

"Perspectives for the Canadian Section," *Internal Bulletin: Canadian Section of the Fourth International*, vol. 1, no. 1, Mar. 1946.

Ross Dowson, A contribution to the Discussion, Internal Bulletin, Canadian section of the Fourth International, Vol.1, No. 2, https://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/CCF-NDP/RWP-CCF-1946.htm

As cited in David North, *The Heritage We Defend: A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International* (Detroit: Labour Publications, 1988) 158.

Canadian Independence and People's Democracy: Program Adopted by the National Committee of the Labor-Progressive Party, February 1952 (Toronto: Labor-Progressive Party, 1952) 5.

Canadian Independence and People's Democracy, 5 and 15.

Workers League, "The World Economic Crisis and the Death Agony of US Imperialism," (New York: Labor Publications, 1978), 26.

As cited in David North, *The Heritage We Defend: A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International* (Detroit: Labour Publications, 1988) 185.

As cited in North, *The Heritage We Defend*, 193.

As cited in Robert J. Alexander, *International Trotskyism (1929-1985): A Documented Analysis of the Movement* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991) 148.

Revolutionary Workers Party, "The CCF: Our Tasks and Perspectives," 1952.

Resolution of the Third Congress of the Fourth International, "Orientation and Perspectives," *Fourth International*, vol. 12, no. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1951, 188.

Ross Dowson, February 1952 letter to Vancouver party leaders.

"The Open Letter of the Socialist Workers Party, November 16, 1953," in: *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1 (London: New Park, 1974) 312-13.

"The Open Letter," 299-300.

The IEC's diktat targeting the leaders of the pro-IC majority was resisted and rejected as part of the Canadian section's developing struggle against Pabloite liquidationism. When it was put to a vote on the Political Committee, even Pablo's supporters abstained, while declaring their support for the action in principle. They did so because they recognized that their support for such an obvious attempt to muzzle the majority and sabotage the party's work would have completely discredited them before the membership, thereby further weakening their position.

Committee for the Socialist Regroupment of Canada, "Letter to the Party Membership," January 25, 1954, Macdonald-Spector Collection, Library and Archives Canada.

See "Statement of Three Canadian Leaders" in *Struggle in Fourth International: International Committee Documents 1951-1954*, vol. 3 (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974) 182. Citation from Ross Dowson, "Pabloite Minority Split in Canada," in the aforementioned volume, 192.

Ross Dowson, "Pabloite Minority Split in Canada," in *Struggle in Fourth International: International Committee Documents 1951-1954, vol. 3* (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974) 192.

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[58] *Canadian Independence and People's Democracy: Program Adopted by the National Committee of the Labor-Progressive Party, February 1952* (Toronto: Labor-Progressive Party, 1952) 5.

[59] *Canadian Independence and People's Democracy*, 5 and 15.

[60] Workers League, "The World Economic Crisis and the Death Agony of US Imperialism," (New York: Labor Publications, 1978), 26.

[61] As cited in David North, *The Heritage We Defend: A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International* (Detroit: Labour Publications, 1988) 185.

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[63] As cited in Robert J. Alexander, *International Trotskyism (1929-1985): A Documented Analysis of the Movement* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991) 148.

[64] Revolutionary Workers Party, "The CCF: Our Tasks and Perspectives," 1952.

[65] Resolution of the Third Congress of the Fourth International, "Orientation and Perspectives," *Fourth International*, vol. 12, no. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1951, 188.

[66] Ross Dowson, February 1952 letter to Vancouver party leaders.

[67] "The Open Letter of the Socialist Workers Party, November 16, 1953," in: *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1 (London: New Park, 1974) 312-13.

[68] "The Open Letter," 299-300.

[69] The IEC's diktat targeting the leaders of the pro-IC majority was resisted and rejected as part of the Canadian section's developing struggle against Pabloite liquidationism. When it was put to a vote on the Political Committee, even Pablo's supporters abstained, while declaring their support for the action in principle. They did so because they recognized that their support for such an obvious attempt to muzzle the majority and sabotage the party's work would have completely discredited them before the membership, thereby further weakening their position.

[70] Committee for the Socialist Regroupment of Canada, "Letter to the Party Membership," January 25, 1954, Macdonald-Spector Collection, Library and Archives Canada.

[71] See "Statement of Three Canadian Leaders" in *Struggle in Fourth International: International Committee Documents 1951-1954*, vol. 3 (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974) 182. Citation from Ross Dowson, "Pabloite Minority Split in Canada," in the aforementioned volume, 192.

[72] Ross Dowson, "Pabloite Minority Split in Canada," in *Struggle in Fourth International: International Committee Documents 1951-1954, vol. 3* (New York: National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party, 1974) 192.



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