Politics in the New Quebec

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POLITICS IN THE NEW QUEBEC

With up-to-the-minute information on how the Parti québécois functions within Quebec's political framework, here is a thorough examination of Quebec's political system and the forces that shape and sustain it. A foremost expert on the subject brings his informed perspective to the present and immediate past to clarify the structures and processes of Quebec politics. He includes appropriate sketches of the historical, social, and economic contexts. There are chapters on Quebec nationalism, the Quebec state, its economy, social classes (especially the new middle class), the political right, the Liberals, the Parti québécois, labour, the strongly entrenched extra-Parliamentary left, municipal politics (Montreal) and, finally, current conflicts and concerns – especially the complex question of Quebec's and Canada's relationships with each other.

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Among the various reactions the publication of this book may invite, one is certain. It will bring relief to a score of my friends and colleagues. They are finally spared from any further appeals for assistance of the kind they have become accustomed to receiving from me these past eight months.

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Henry Milner
Montreal
December 1977
INTRODUCTION

Quebec Politics keeps forcing its attentions upon us. This is nothing new; it goes back at least as far as 1837. But until not too long ago the pattern was one of an explosion of one kind or another, followed by many years of quiet.

These days, the explosions seem continuous. First it was FLQ terrorism, then constitutional confrontations, then battles over language, then trade union struggles, then independentist political campaigns, then more trade union militancy, more language problems... Finally, in November 1976, Quebeccers elected a Parti Québécois government committed to independence for Quebec. And that didn't quieten matters by any means: no sooner was the new government installed than it launched the latest phase of the battle over the French language. Now that this controversy has (temporarily) subsided, Quebeccers are getting ready for the great independence debate in preparation for the referendum scheduled for 1979. What next?

For these last ten years, Quebec has forced its attention upon the author of this book who has been, in his own small way, a participant in some of the activities, and, more generally, an observer on the political scene. In 1973, Sheilagh Hodgins, Milner and this writer looked at Quebec's social history in *The Decolonization of Quebec*. \(^1\) In its overall approach, this book takes off where *Decolonization* left off, only now the subject is Quebec politics. And a great deal has happened in Quebec in the intervening five years.

In addition, Decolonization was written by sympathetic observers who were, for all practical purseres, outside of the developments described therein. This is not quite the case here. Direct personal involvement in Quebec politics, however limited, is an undeniable aspect of the experience underlying the present work. Through that experience the writer has come to take positions on certain concrete political questions, and these positions cannot but emerge, especially in the later chapters of this book where the subject matter most closely parallels that

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experience. But how can that be? Are we not all objective students of politics? Isn't this, after all, a work of social or political science?

The answer to that question is yes and no. This is indeed a work of social science; but there is no such thing as objective or "value-free" social science. This is not to say that social analysis cannot be scientific. Quite the contrary. We have at our disposal standards of measurement and means for verifying and testing hypotheses so as to separate genuine social analysis from fantasy, distortion, and propaganda. One should not confuse scientific methods with objectivity. These methods determine neither what the analyst chooses to study, the analytical framework he or she will use, the relationship of the researcher to the individuals or groups being investigated, nor, finally, the use to which the results are put.

Because social science in general and political science in particular concern the lived-in world of man, a world we know to be divided into opposing classes and characterized by exploitation and sometimes by struggle, it cannot be "objective". As long as the underlying causes of class conflict exist, a social science that claims to be value-free is either mistaken or trivial. Meaningful social and political analysis enters the experiential world and takes sides. The only real distinction is whether the process is a conscious one or not. For us, the point of acquiring and disseminating meaningful knowledge about the world, as Marx put it so succinctly, is not merely to interpret the world – but to change it.

Ultimately, all social science must come down on one side or the other as a consequence of the analytical perspective or position it chooses to adopt. From the mainstream or "establishment" position, social reality is taken as presented; it is explained, and hence justified, in terms of the status quo and thereby in the interests of those who benefit from that status quo. From the opposing or critical position one looks at the world not from the point of view of groups fundamentally satisfied with the status quo (and social scientists today in North America generally occupy a comparatively privileged position), but as it could be, voicing the anger and aspirations of the oppressed and exploited. The latter finds injustice and contradiction where the former sees a properly ordered universe. The critical observer looks upon the given situation not as something acceptable if at times a little regrettable, but with an intolerance for injustice and a deeper sense of hope. Critical analysis begins explaining a given social "problem" or political question in terms of the structure of interests served by the particular configuration of events and relations. Ultimately, it seeks to cast the analytical findings as instruments available to those exploited under the prevailing conditions in their struggles to change them.

Mainstream social science always appears objective because it is based upon the very assumptions built into the everyday lives of people in the existing system. Because critical work must challenge these assumptions, it is easily dismissed as biased or propagandistic. In fact, critical analysis per se is neither less nor more
scientific than mainstream social science. There are no objective scientific criteria to determine from what perspective we are to view reality. Unlike mainstream social science – which assumes that what is is what should be and places the burden of proof upon those who feel otherwise – critical analysis looks at what is in terms of what can be and places the burden of proof on those who seek to justify existing conditions. The scientific validity of analyses from either perspective depends on the extent to which the explanations offered correspond to the facts as they are uncovered.

Critical analysis is clearly something that does not come naturally, especially to analysts trained in North American educational institutions. Simply to aspire to oppose establishment approaches is an insufficient basis for critical analysis. A clear break with the dominant mode of thought is required, and this is possible only through an alternate analytical framework. For us, it is in Marxism and the socialist critique of contemporary capitalist society – a critique that is by no means complete – that the germ of the framework required for our time and place is to be found.

A few centuries ago, liberalism, as expressed by the French *philosophes*, by Locke, by Jefferson, and others, had in it the seeds of a world view based on individual freedom that challenged the prevailing world order – an order based on land ownership and family and religious title. But that critique has long since worn thin. Liberal individualist ideas now primarily serve to legitimate the new contemporary corporate capitalist world order. And the individual right most carefully defended is the right to exploit.

Nor can we return to a "Platonic" conception for our inspiration, with its classical ideal of an organic community made up of different orders of humanity each playing their carefully laid out part and contributing to the perfection of the whole. Whatever its aesthetic appeal, this view has also been co-opted into the corporate dream, in the form of the organization man and the "smooth" society. Like liberalism it fails to provide a basis for a genuine critical analysis.

In mainstream political science, a modern marriage of the liberal and the organic, i.e., pluralism, has been envisioned.¹ To the pluralists, society is composed of competing groups operating within a broad consensus. The consensus results from the continued maintenance of societal equilibrium through the regulation of group activities and the settling of group differences. And the agent of such compromise is the "neutral" state apparatus, the government. A few years ago, pluralist society was envisaged by many established social scientists as history's answer to the ultimate questions – the basis for a modern utopia that lay at the "end of ideology." The widespread unrest that rocked these Western "utopias"

¹ See, for example, Robert Paul Wolfe, *The Poverty of Liberalism* (Boston : Beacon, 1968), pp. 121-161.
including Quebec – in the 1960's and early 1970's, put to rest the notion that oppression was coming to an end. In what (according to pluralist theory) should have been the most consensual of Western societies, the established political, economic, and cultural forms were challenged. And though this challenge has now subsided as a public force, the underlying weaknesses and problems have intensified and have become even more widely recognized.

The pluralist ideal, now severely tarnished, has not yet been replaced in contemporary political science: no more suitable theoretical basis for justifying the system in its own terms has yet emerged. Though it is no longer fashionable to speak of an end of ideology, the assumptions and preoccupations remain much the same. North American social science generally serves to legitimate and perpetuate the status quo. We are trained to see social reality in terms of itself, to seek reform only from within. But what if the system cannot be reformed from within? Only by stepping outside the pluralist liberal-organic assumptions of mainstream social science can we escape the logic of the system and provide analysis and insight capable of serving to challenge existing power. This is true in general; it is also true in relation to the question of Quebec.

This is why we must turn elsewhere for the required theoretical basis for a critical perspective. We have suggested that within the Western tradition Marxism provides the necessary alternative, attempting as it does to see the world dynamically – through the eyes of that class of people whose material conditions are such as to make them both exploited as well as potentially capable of overcoming that exploitation through concerted action. By stressing the material conditions of human existence and explaining their evolution over history, and by elaborating the socialist project for the ending of exploitation and the transformation of the existing order, Marxism escapes the categories of mainstream social thought.

The Marxism stripped of its critical edge that is today used to justify the ossification and bureaucratization of certain nominally "socialist" countries is unworthy and essentially irrelevant. Socialists must be on guard against those who would turn Marxism into a mechanistic dogma from which to defend a given ruling class or pseudo revolutionary group claiming to constitute a vanguard of a predetermined revolutionary upheaval. There is no inevitability in history: hopes for fundamental change are realized only when and because the mass of the people seize the possibilities inherent in a particular historical situation.

For our purposes, then, critical analysis within a Marxist theoretical perspective serves as a basis for explaining not only "how" but "why." It places us within the process of history and helps us to understand events and perhaps even anticipate them. And should we, as Marxism presupposes, choose to participate in that historical process through concrete action, it constitutes the framework for our
"praxis," the process by which theory and practice are constantly tested against each other.

Critical political science breaks down disciplinary barriers and suggests the end of political science as we know it. The increasing compartmentalization of mainstream social science is itself both evidence and consequence of its limitations. The maintenance of disciplinary frontiers effectively limits the possibility of genuinely critical social research and analysis. By its very definition, the study of politics from a Marxist perspective transcends such boundaries. And this book too thus contributes to the end of political science. Economics, sociology, and history are other academic disciplines directly touched upon by this work; and, hopefully, it will be of use to those studying Quebec within one or another of these specializations.

Nevertheless, the primary focus of this book is Quebec politics. Historical and economic facts are considered as a means to this end. But to say this is merely to raise again the central theoretical question – only in a more concrete manner – for politics must itself be understood from within a critical perspective. Indeed, talk of a Quebec politics takes on a specific and subversive meaning as well. This becomes evident when our work is contrasted with the usual approach taken.

The standard political science text dealing with the politics of a given community starts out as a rule by assuming (as legitimate) the legally-sanctioned national status quo. When (infrequently) taught as a separate subject, Quebec politics is presented as concerning the particulars of one province or subunit within the Canadian nation-state or, to use the current jargon, the Canadian political system. There is no need to justify Quebec's subordinate status or the denial of its nationhood; that is built into the analytical perspective and thus (unconsciously) assumed and placed beyond question. Of course these days Quebec nationalism is by no means ignored; it is treated as constituting a serious problem of instability for the Canadian political system. In this specific case we see how mainstream Canadian political science simply reflects the conventional wisdom of the status quo. The problem of instability in the political system is merely academic jargon for the "threat to national unity," constantly evoked by established political figures.

This theoretical bias has concrete effects. First of all, it makes work in Quebec politics – like that in provincial politics generally – quite unattractive to students of political science. It is both incredible and yet perfectly understandable (and, incidentally, a motivating factor behind the writing of this book) that practically no systematic analytical works or even conventional textbooks on Quebec politics are to be found either in French or in English. This situation is particularly shocking when set against the growing number of important sociological, economic, and

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1 This is suggested by the title of a recent anthology edited by Alan Wolfe and Marvin Surkin, An End to Political Science (New York: Basic Books, 1971).
historical works. Second, and more generally, the built-in, status-quo orientation of
the discipline has served to distort the reality it has portrayed. A dynamic
collectivity is trapped in the static language of mainstream social science.

Another way of seeing this distinction is in terms of the (explicit or implicit)
definition of politics with which one operates. The standard definition refers to
politics as having to do with authoritative decision-making. Built into such a
definition is the implicit identification of the unit of analysis on the basis of the
authority of existing nation-states, that is, within the framework of the status quo.

This need not be the case if one adopts a different conception of politics. We
too are concerned with decisions, that is choices among alternatives, but we start
with the decisions taken by citizens as citizens. Citizenship is here conceived not
as a legal concept but a social one: to be a citizen is to identify as a member of a
collectivity or community. To take decisions as a citizen means to make choices,
or attempt to, in the name of the collectivity, and in the public (political) arena that
is created and maintained by the historical social existence of the collectivity.
What makes decisions, and the actions around them, political is not their legal
authority but the fact that the action is taken (or attempted) in the public arena and
in the name of the collectivity. Because so much of this public activity has to do
with the selection and actions of "legally constituted" governments, politics, for us
as for other observers, has a lot to do with governments – but the relationship is an
empirical one, not an a priori one.

Hence we begin to talk about politics only by situating the collectivity through
the actions and consciousness of its people. For Quebec, as for all communities
whose history is one of colonization in one form or another, the very act of
definition thus becomes subversive of existing authority. Let there be no doubt
about it: the collectivity in question is a real national community. To put it simply,
the study of Quebec politics is no other than the study of the politics of the Quebec
nation. A nation in this context is understood, as Stanley Ryerson noted, as a
"community of people linked by a common cultural linguistic historical experience
of living and working together, whether or not in possession of their state".

The nation of Quebec has a clear territorial basis dating back to the early
settlements on the shores of the St. Lawrence. The great majority of the members
of this community live within the confines of the region roughly corresponding to
the provincial boundaries and they make up the great majority therein. To those
who would object that French Canada exists outside of Quebec as well, "coast to
cost," let us note that however convincing this may be in principle – and it is less
and less so in Quebec – it is being empirically disproven. In most parts of

1 See Milner and Milner, op.cit. See also Chapter One, below.
2 Stanley Ryerson, "Quebec : Concepts of Class and Nation," in G. Teeple, (ed.), Capitalism and
the National Question in Canada (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 212.
(English) Canada there is little of the vibrant infrastructure of a national community among those of French Canadian origin. Less than half of them today speak French at home, and the percentage varies directly with age, going down to one third in the youngest category. \(^1\) Hence, the proportion of French Canadians living in Quebec has been steadily rising and may be expected to continue to do so. Demographer Jacques Henripin has predicted that by the year 2000, 92 to 95 per cent of all French Canadians will live in Quebec. \(^2\) We shall thus regard the territory and population of the province of Quebec as being that of the nation of Quebec. The total population of Quebec at last count in June 1976 numbered 6,243,000 of which approximately 80 per cent were of French mother tongue, 12 per cent of English, and 7 per cent of other mother tongues.

Empirical studies repeatedly find confirmation of Quebec's national reality in the popular consciousness concluding, for example, that Quebecers demonstrate "more positive affect toward the provincial than the federal government", \(^3\) or that, when asked their own nationality, "English students call themselves Canadians, while the French students prefer to set themselves apart as 'French Canadians' ". \(^4\) Those uncertain as to whether there is a shared national identification among Quebecois need only immerse themselves for a short period in Quebec society to find out. They would have seen, for example, how the victory of the independentist Parti Québécois in November 1976 brought this underlying reality to the surface. It evoked an unmistakable national pride of accomplishment among the Quebecois – including many among the 59 per cent who voted for other parties and remained fearful of independence. Even for them, despite what they saw as probable negative practical consequences, the victory of the PQ constituted a victory for the Quebecois. It had resolutely asserted Quebec's collective reality. As the staunchly pro-federalist Quebec writer and publisher of Montreal's La Presse, Roger Lemelin, put it: "Many people had tears in their eyes and could not tell why". \(^5\)

While the above point affirms Quebec's right to self-determination (the right of the nation to decide upon its own future), it is not in itself an argument for independence. Nevertheless it does place the burden of argument, if anywhere, on

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those who wish to retain the status quo rather than those who wish to change it. Such an approach flies in the face of the traditional, almost universal, negative attitude of (English) Canadians – the irritated "what does Quebec want anyway?" stance. Fortunately, it appears that November 15, 1976 has done a great deal finally to shake this attitude.

The discussion begun here is continued in Chapter One where we outline the evolution of national consciousness in Quebec from its earliest days. We shall show that the expression of Quebec nationalism – its "we" (or rather nous) feeling, while taking various forms throughout the course of Quebec's development, was a constant and irreducible factor.

Starting out this way brings us back to our analytical perspective. How can a work claiming to be Marxist use the concept of the nation as a starting point? Why have we concentrated on the Quebec nation in this discussion? Have we not already stated that it is classes, groups of people in a particular relationship with the system of production of a society, that are the determining actors in the historical process? Let us consider these questions. Social classes do in fact constitute the primary causal agents throughout the richness of history. We shall see in Chapter One that all the various forms of national expression that have emerged in Quebec have a specific class configuration, and that attempting to conceive of them outside this class configuration is to fall into an idealist trap – to assume that ideas enter our world in and of themselves, divorced from the real conditions of human existence. To say this, however, is not to condone the opposite fallacy. We have already cautioned against the reduction of Marxist analysis into a sterile determinism. In this instance, such a fallacy takes the form of simply reducing the expression of national aspirations to ideologies manipulated entirely and at will by certain classes.  

Social classes give to the expression of nationalism its specific content, but they do not fabricate it out of nothing. Quebec's national reality is understood as an added dimension beyond that of class, in principle separate and distinct and yet in practice deeply interwoven. Most political struggles in Quebec have taken a national guise, not simply because it served the interests of a particular class (which it did) but because these class interests were set within the objective reality of colonization. As Ryerson noted,

While it is inseparable, historically, from class-structure and modes of production, the nation-community is more than just an 'aspect' of any one of them. This is so, because the nation-community embodies an identity, linguistic and cultural, that is not simply an 'effect' of class, however closely its evolution may be interwoven with the shifting patterns of class relations

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1 This, to some extent, is the position of Gilles Bourque and Nicole Laurin-Frenette, "Social Classes and Nationalist Ideologies in Quebec 1760-1970," in Teeple, op.cit. See also Alex McLeod, "Nationalism and Social Class: The Unresolved Dilemma of the Quebec Left", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 8, no. 4, especially p. 8.
and struggles. National differences both antedate and postdate the era of the capitalist mode of production.... Maxime Rodinson argues that class and nation are inseparably operative: Both factors exist concurrently, and their respective potency has to be evaluated for each period, each zone, in the light of the concrete conditions.  

To shelve the national question as irrelevant is, as Fernand Dumont points out, to fall victim to the kind of logic voiced in a speech in 1969 by J. B. Porteous, outgoing president of the Montreal Board of Trade that "we cannot consider the spread of language, religion and culture until Quebec's economic survival has been assured". 2 Dumont's response, though characteristic idealistic, gets at the underlying germ of truth. "It is a little as though you told someone you would like to see working harder that in order to do so he must forget, for the moment, the very reason why he is working: his love for his wife and children, his faith, his highest motives for living. Would he work any harder? The same is true of communities". 3

The discussion of the nation and nationalism is a prelude to the deeper theoretical treatment of class and state in Chapters Two to Four. But this theoretical discussion would in turn be abstract and removed from Quebec's historical development were it not informed of the national dimension. In Chapter Two, which outlines the general economic and class structure of Quebec, special attention is given to the national-linguistic element within it.

Chapter Three provides an analytical and descriptive introduction to the state in Quebec and, as such, develops a major conceptual theme of this work. The Quebec state will be shown to have become the chief instrument of Quebec nationalism, and, at the same time, to have emerged as the central arena for contestations between classes. As such, it is the key contemporary link between the Quebec nation and the politically relevant social classes.

Chapter Four links state and class – and therefore, indirectly, nation as well – by examining the resulting contradictions in the role the state must play in contemporary Quebec, and, in particular, the pivotal place of one stratum in it: the "state middle class." Our understanding of the nature of the state middle class and its relationship to the complex dynamic of class/nation/state explored in these early chapters, enables us to proceed logically and directly from the wider theoretical treatment therein to the more straightforward and factual discussion of political parties and groups that follows.

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1 Ryerson, op.cit., pp. 224-225.
3 Ibid.
Chapters Five to Seven portray Quebec's political parties. Employing our insight into the relationship between Quebec politics and social classes, particularly the state middle class, we seek to explain the rise of the PQ and the social bases of its major factions (Chapter Seven), and the crisis situation the Liberals encountered in office from 1970 to 1976 (Chapter Six). In Chapter Five we investigate the apparent persistence of right-wing phenomena on the Quebec political spectrum.

Chapters Eight to Ten focus on political activities outside the boundaries of the provincial political parties. In particular, we look at the trade unions' contribution (Chapter Eight), and the part played by new parties on the urban political scene in Montreal, notably the Montreal Citizens' Movement (Chapter Ten). Chapter Nine provides a rather brief account of the main participants and events among the many and varied activities that have characterized extraparliamentary politics on the Quebec left.

The author's own political experience, as mentioned earlier, comes out most clearly in the discussion in Chapters Eight to Ten, and no doubt the tone and language will reflect this. One consequence of this, which the reader might take into consideration, is the possible over-emphasis on Montreal, the author's place of residence, as the scene of political action.

The concluding chapter looks at future prospects for Quebec and possible implications for the rest of Canada. Specifically, we shall take up certain immediate and topical questions (among them language, the referendum, the role of the trade unions, constitutional reform and political strategy) by casting upon them the light of conclusions reached in the earlier chapters. If our analysis is substantially correct, then, apart from making some sense out of the present and the recent past, it should provide us with an orientation toward the future.

But, as the truism goes, the only thing that is constant is change. And this is surely true for Quebec insofar as specific points are concerned. No doubt the several-month interval between the writing of this book and its appearance in print will see certain of the facts cited to have been superseded by events. This is inevitable. Nevertheless, if our analysis is correct, then the thrust of the work as a whole should stand well beyond the immediate present. Ultimately, the validity of our framework and analysis will be subjected to the most "objective" of all evaluations: the test of time and experience.
CHAPTER 1: 
THE EVOLUTION OF 
NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In 1942, in the midst of one of Quebec’s periodic national crises, André Laurendeau wrote as follows:

The conscription crisis underlined once again the fact that Canadians are two nations. The evidence was made unmistakably clear at the time of the Riel affair, then again over certain school problems, then in 1917 at the time of the first conscription. It is only when two nations confront each other with intense feeling that one can measure to what degree they really exist. To think that these clashes could have been created by politicians is a superficial way of explaining them.

Politicians use feelings and passions, they do not invent them.... In my opinion, the French-Canadian attitude can best be seen in the context of the phenomenon we now call "decolonization".  

This book begins on just such an understanding, for with Laurendeau we recognize that Quebec is a nation but that its history is one of nationhood denied – the history of a colony. Periodic crisis is thus the rule; its occurrence natural, not exceptional.

Quebec's colonization is of initial concern here not because it is the determining factor in the unfolding of events; nor because we assume it to be the real basis of societal conflict. Indeed, the material conditions surrounding production and their transformation are understood throughout as the foremost determinant of historical developments and, specifically, of social conflicts –

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between those served by the prevailing material conditions and those exploited under them.

Yet, in Quebec, even the very configuration of the economic structure includes a fundamental linguistic and national component understandable only in the light of its colonial reality. Moreover, the ideas that surrounded and served to justify the various campaigns and struggles of each period almost invariably took on the linguistic and cultural forms of a national, anti-colonial struggle. This chapter begins with a brief description of the main stages of Quebec's development, highlighting the particular forms of the national struggle in each period and their consequences. (The reader who encounters names, references, and themes which are insufficiently identified herein is asked to be patient: later chapters will take these up in detail.)

Of course, to emphasize language and culture is to focus on the political and intellectual figures who articulate and disseminate ideas. And the largest section of this chapter addresses the relationship between the expression of national consciousness through Quebec history and the position and role of the intellectuals. We shall see that educated Quebecois traditionally gave voice to the particular form of national consciousness in each era very much in terms of their own class interests. To say this is not to reduce Quebec's national consciousness to the self-interest of a small group; for, as Laurendeau noted, such consciousness may be manipulated and exploited but it cannot be invented. It does, however, signal the importance we shall place upon the role of the intellectuals (widely defined) in the evolution of political conflict.

**Historical Foundations**

New France was one of the earliest permanent settlements of Europeans in the new world. The French, like the British, Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish of the seventeenth century, had their own schemes for empire and booty. The Canayens, as the French settlers soon came to be called, must bear some of the historical burden of the exploitation and hardship inflicted upon the native peoples of the Americas by the European settlers and conquerors.

Though colonials in relation to France, the new settlers could not help being exploiters in the new world (though on the whole the French record with the natives of North America is better than the English). Perhaps most remarkable about the very early years, given the hostility of the physical and human surroundings and the neglect of the French government, is that New France survived at all.

But survive it did. New France slowly grew consolidating its position, though one could hardly say that it prospered. Nevertheless, something distinctive was
developing, a society that was French in language and Catholic in religion, yet otherwise clearly different from the France of that epoch. European observers seldom failed to comment upon the very distinct lifestyle that developed among the 90,000 or so inhabitants (by 1760) in their row settlements and parishes situated along the rivers of the new world.

Despite the fact that they held formal title to the land, the *seigneurs*, given that their numbers included absentee French nobles, ordinary settlers, and religious communities, did not resemble the French aristocracy or any other kind of ruling class. And, as a rule, the French regime sat quite lightly on the *habitants*. It monopolized the fur trade and other mercantilist economic activities, thus for the most part, limiting the economic and cultural activities of the *habitants* to subsistence farming and the small world of the row settlement and parish. The people were cut off both from France and from the rapidly growing English colonies to the south.

The French colonial administration was far more interested in the fur trade of the *coureurs de bois* than in the lives of the populace. It was the Church under Bishop Laval that had fostered the settlement of New France and was to be from then on most concerned with the *habitants*. Order and stability were much more the accomplishment of the Church, and it was the ecclesiastical hierarchy set up by Laval in the latter part of the seventeenth century that linked each settlement with the political and administrative rulers. Through this system stability and cultural identity were achieved, but at least partly at the cost of economic growth and (by emerging Western standards) social progress.

Sufficient evidence confirms the existence of a small and relatively insignificant commercial class in the latter part of this period, just before the British conquest. Though clearly tied to France through colonial grants of privilege, this incipient indigenous class of townspeople (bourgeoisie) was apparently coming to identify itself with New France. Though it brought with it some of the liberal, rationalist, and deist ideas then circulating among intellectuals in France, it never posed any challenge to the monolithic culture of the row settlements, a challenge which would surely have had to come from this class, if it was to come at all.

One may readily construct a scenario of how it might have been had this class been able to remain and flourish as in other European-based societies: sooner or later political or economic events would have precipitated a revolution (either violent or peaceful) in which the rising bourgeoisie threw off the political yoke of the colonial rulers and the cultural yoke of the clerical authorities. But it was not to be. The British conquerors soon brought in English-speaking traders and merchants to take over; and this group, entirely cut off from the indigenous culture through the total absence of linguistic and cultural attachments, soon carved a place for itself in Montreal. The Canayens became, as never before, an
almost exclusively rural people; Montreal and Quebec became predominantly English towns.

The legal supremacy of Protestantism and the English language was never achieved. The British administrators, hearing revolutionary rumblings to the south, passed the Quebec Act in 1774 giving legal recognition to the language and culture of the conquered – though, with the privileges it guaranteed to the Church and the seigneurs, the Act also served to enshrine in law a feudal and theocratic absolutism. The success of the American colonists' revolt contributed to these developments. "Loyalists" in the thousands migrated to the British Colonies in the north, to Ontario and the Atlantic colonies; and some also to Quebec – to the Eastern Townships, to the Gaspé Peninsula, and to Montreal. The presence of a well-entrenched English Protestant minority in Montreal was thus assured. The leading members of this minority became the core of a unified financial, transportation, and staples cartel that then proceeded to dominate economic development in British North America.

Individuals from this group soon led the demand for "responsible government", seeking more autonomy from the colonial administration which they felt was often too "soft" on French-speaking Catholics. Ironically, the limited powers they helped win in 1791 and afterwards for a constituent assembly rebounded to the advantage of the legislative representatives of the Canayen (or Quebecois) majority who sought national self-determination. When finally stymied in the assembly, many reformers and their supporters took to the battlefield. Yet the hastily organized force of small-town professionals, craftsmen, and farmers was no match for British troops and their merchant and clerical supporters. The defeat of the 1837 rebellion, as we shall see below, manifested the equivocal nationalism of Quebec's intellectual elite.

Having eliminated the most threatening elements in the indigenous population, the old colonial administration rapidly declined in importance. Correspondingly, the Montreal-based financial oligarchy increased its political and economic power with the support of the most conservative elements among the Quebecois, notably in the Church, and, after the rebellion, among established "native son" politicians like Georges Étienne Cartier. Political power, it should be understood, was essentially subsidiary to economic power – and overtly so – at this time. And economic power lay with a prospering predominantly Anglo-Protestant bourgeoisie usually indifferent, sometimes hostile, to the culture, traditions, and aspirations of Quebec. Confederation was engineered by elites to serve their economic interests; for the mass of Quebecois, it effectively constituted only another remote political event.

On the whole, the words of Alexis de Tocqueville in 1831 well summed up the situation: "It is easy to see that the French are a conquered people. For the most part the wealthy classes belong to the English race.... The commercial enterprises
are virtually all in their hands. They are truly the ruling class of Canada". 1 And, apart from the priesthood with its forbidding austerity, the ambitious, educated Quebecois could aspire only to the traditional professions of medicine and law and the attendant seat in the front pew of the local church. If business was open to him at all it was contingent on his being prepared to adopt the language and customs of the English. Then there was that particular "industry" to which so many aspired: "... politics. Devotees of politics make up almost the entire intellectual resources of the French race in Canada". 2 Politics provided an avenue to success that was closed in business, not only through elected office, but also through favours, jobs, licences, inside information, and the like. Hence, the close association between political advancement and personal gain that characterized Quebec politics – a system often described in one word, patronage.

A consequence of the low regard for politics in Quebec was that for the Quebecois the state was not and could not easily be an instrument of collective aspirations. The whole parliamentary set-up, which was regarded essentially as a colonial import to begin with (though to be used warily by ambitious individuals for their own individual purposes), was looked upon by the majority with a distrust characteristic of their attitude toward politics in general. The opposition which met all proposals for public ownership, even state-run education, often took the bizarre but understandable form of efforts to insulate major institutions from petty, corrupt, and in fact "private" interests. Ralph Heintzman quotes a political commentator of the late nineteenth century.

In principle, the ideal would be for the State to own, to operate, and to maintain the railways, telegraphs, telephones, canals, highways, bridges, and even the manufacture and sale of liquors, in short everything which touches the national interest, just like the post office and customs.... In theory it's perfect, but in practice, we have to renounce such hopes. Especially in a country like ours, where the political system is based for the most part upon patronage. Political patronage is the most terrible enemy of the management of large-scale enterprises by the State. It insinuates itself everywhere, frustrates the efforts of administrators, upsets them, and brings everything to nought because of the variety of interests which it brings into play. With political customs like ours, the success of public ownership becomes highly problematic, if not impossible. 3

On several occasions popular discontent did spill over directly into Quebec politics, but the new political organizations which resulted proved unable to confront social and economic problems with solutions that called upon the state.

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2 Ibid., p. 72.
While national-social protest arose periodically between 1880 and 1920, at different points opposing the execution of Louis Riel, the abolition of French Catholic schooling in Manitoba and Ontario, and conscription in World War I, it tended to be spontaneous and sporadic. The depression-spawned *Action libérale nationale* (ALN) in the 1930s and the *Bloc populaire* in the 1940s were perhaps the first significant political protest movements since 1837. Both (especially the former) contained strong progressive currents, most notable in their attacks upon the interests which dominated the economy and exploited the people. Yet when it came to reforms, the intellectuals who led these movements could turn only to such limited proposals as the encouragement of co-operatives and the recolonization of the land.

The *Bloc populaire's raison d'être* was its opposition to conscription during World War I, echoing and fostering a sentiment that had been equally widespread during World War I. The anti-conscription sentiment was not so much an intellectual position on a specific issue as a manifestation of the deep-seated sense of defeat within Quebec society. André Laurendeau, perhaps the finest of the intellectual leaders of the time, remembered:

At the Collège de France in 1937 I heard André Siegfried describe the period of the first conscription crisis in these terms: Taking their cue from their Liberal leaders, local politicians did not hesitate to say that French Canadians should at all costs avoid getting themselves killed in Europe so they could remain and flourish in Canada where it was their mission to preserve the future of the race. Never doubt for a minute the power of this argument. It was an instinct for local survival, a narrow but powerful instinct, which determined this attitude. Whereupon Siegfried raised the question of whether Canada was really one nation....

The remarkably high birth rate, abetted by the prevalence of the agrarian mythology and the consolidation of clerical authority, helped sustain this conquered people for two centuries. Historians have noted a significant *increase* in the birth rate after the British Conquest – an indication both of the Canayens' de-urbanization at this point and the cultivation of their "instinct for local survival". It is only with the contemporary era that a fundamental change in Quebec's self-perception and therefore in the content of Quebec nationalism begins to take place, and it is no coincidence that at that point the birth rate plummets drastically in a matter of years.

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1 Stratford, pp. 9-10.
The Intellectuals and Quebec Nationalism

Nationalism is characteristic of the Québécois throughout their history – if by nationalism we mean a strong and distinct sense of nationality. If we wish to give it a particular content beyond this "we" feeling, then clearly we must look to the intellectuals, the teachers, historians, and writers, many of whom were men of the cloth for much of this period, and to the politicians, public figures, and journalists they influenced. It has already been suggested that the intellectuals have been an especially notable element in the particular path of Quebec's development: their social position might be usefully envisioned as lying on the crucial point of intersection between the two central axes of political confrontation: nation and class.

Léon Dion has illustrated this point in a recent work.¹ Dion argues that a distinct form of Conservative Nationalism dominated Quebec in the period from the beginning of the nineteenth century through to 1960. It was, however, contested by a second form – Liberal Nationalism – in the years 1830-1845 and again beginning around 1950. In the former case, the contest was short-lived: the defeat of the rebellion and the ascendancy of the ultramontane Catholicism of Archbishop Bourget just afterwards practically eradicated all traces of liberalism.

Dion rightly understands Conservative Nationalism to be dominant in Quebec thought until the 1950s. With Conservative Nationalism, he associates such figures as Henri Bourassa and Lionel Groulx as well as a host of their disciples writing in such publications as Le Devoir and L’Action nationale. Its highly conservative social philosophy is usually termed corporatist, idealizing a God-centred static universe in which all orders, classes, races, sexes, etc., were there to play their determined and unequal parts. Such corporatism went hand in hand with a staunch Quebec nationalism. Quebec society and culture was to be preserved and defended as a bastion of corporatist traditionalism.

Nevertheless, as Dion notes, Conservative Nationalism never directly challenged the Canadian state and the prevailing economic order. Instead, at election rallies and amidst the periodic crises over conscription and French Catholic schools in other provinces, the leaders would deliver great emotional sermons evoking the national sentiment of the people; but it usually ended there. And while they insisted on teaching the peasants and workers of Quebec only in the national language, religion and traditions, they themselves sufficiently learned the ways of the dominant English-speaking Protestant group both to ensure the perpetuation of the status quo and to secure positions for themselves and their

¹ Léon Dion, Nationalismes et politique au Québec (Montreal: HMH/Hurtubise, 1975).
children as company lawyers, senators, judges, or in patronage-paved government jobs.

An insight into the expression of Conservative Nationalism and its limitations is provided by Dion's breakdown of its exponents into three distinct classes. At the top were the high clergy, federal ministers and MP's and a few elite businessmen and scientifically oriented managers and professionals who, although espousing the official conservative nationalist credo on the appropriate public occasions, were able to subordinate it to a more practical daily acceptance of the cultural forms of the Anglophone institutions in and around which they operated. Second were the middle or local elites, the priests, teachers, doctors, notaries, and local merchants who, within the limits of their class interests, promoted and enforced the credo, communicating it to the third group, the "faithful" in an appropriately rudimentary fashion. A vivid portrayal along similar lines is provided by Falardeau:

The French Canadian elite... has evolved in relation to two poles. The political pole: foreign and English, the cultural pole: local and French. On one side, the political leaders and their followers, the deputies, from Lafontaine to Honoré Mercier, Wilfrid Laurier, Henri Bourassa and Ernest Lapointe. On the other, the heads of the local 'little republics': the doctor, notary and town lawyer. Between these two constellations the intellectuals of all varieties: writers, essayists, journalists and functionaries from Garneau and Antoine Gérin-Lajoie to Arthur Buies and Jules Fournier. Between these three groupings of politicians, professionals and intellectuals there was constant osmosis. The latter oscillated between the first two groups while the members of these two passed easily from one to the other. The social background is all the same. Rural origin, studies at a classical college or seminary, entry into conservative (political) or professional life.¹

The political implications of the class nature of Conservative Nationalist expressions are drawn by Pinard in explaining the dynamics of support for the Union nationale and other Conservative Nationalist organizations.

It is our hypothesis that these organizations were not first the mirrors of the social and political values of French-Canadian lower classes, but the mirrors of the monolithic conservative and nationalist culture of the elites. What has characterized the Quebec political scene is the failure... to develop leftist organizations.... The lower classes often supported conservative... parties but

only because they were not presented with strong alternatives more consonant with their interests and sentiments. 1

Or, to put it more generally, the genuine national consciousness of the Quebec masses was channelled and compressed into the conservative and, rhetorical nationalism of the intellectual elites because of the particular role and interplay of the members of this group in the social structure of a colonized society.

Quebec's colonial history, by inhibiting the development of possible contesting groups such as an indigenous bourgeoisie, had given an effective monopoly in cultural expression to the Church and other elite groups linked to it. This was not necessarily always evident as its customary forms were built into the very structure of Quebec society. However, when the existing structure appeared threatened, as in the period between 1837 and 1867 and in the economic uncertainty of the depression in this century, direct action to defend the credo could be generated. The Index, excommunications, "padlock laws", and, most important, the creation of a whole network of deeply embedded agencies of social control, were the means. Most prominent here were the Jesuits, who were permitted entry to British North America only in 1848, and yet by the beginning of this century had developed the most sophisticated features of a social control network. Youth groups, nationalist groups, charitable organizations, parish retreats, tracts, magazines, even Church-based trade unions, all repeated the same message. The essence of this message might, in short, have sounded a little like this:

Defend our culture and our institutions from a foreign hostile world. First the family: the father commands, the mother obeys with dignity, the children submit with respect; but it is the mother that makes and defends the family household. Hers is the fundamental duty. She must protect herself from contaminating contacts: non-Catholic city dwellers, the cinema, fashion, cabarets, liquor and all the temptations brought on by luxury. Safety lies in a life that is simple, frugal, hard-working, debt free, and obedient. The strength of the family insures the strength of the homeland – la patrie; that which threatens the family threatens the homeland, for the latter is nought but an enlarged family. And just as the family is based on inequality with each submitting to his prescribed role, so the nation is also unequal with each class submitting to its prescribed position; and supreme moral authority lies with the Church through the divine voice from Rome. 2

The Tremblay report, commissioned by Premier Duplessis in 1953 to report on Quebec's constitutional position, provides us with a sophisticated political

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1 M. Pinard, "Working Class Politics : An Interpretation of the Quebec Case", Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, Vol. 7 ; no. 2 (1970).
statement of the credo. The meaning of the constitution was seen as clear and unequivocal: the federal government was created for "general, military, administrative and technical services but there was reserved to the provinces all... that concerned social, civil, family, school and municipal organizations; everything which touched the human side most nearly and which influenced the Canadian citizen's manner of living".¹ As far as Quebec was concerned, the commissioners pointed to a highly distinctive "human side" emanating directly from the Church which "supplied French Canada with its thought, its way of life and the majority of its social institutions."²

Yet, by the time these words were published, Quebec society had undergone a process of industrialization fostered by the English-speaking commercial elite. Conservative Nationalists whose corporatism made them morally unsympathetic to the economic liberalism on which the transformation was based, found themselves nonetheless having to defend it as a fundamental prop of the political and social order. Capitalist economic practice was often unsavory yet necessary; the Quebec worker was to submit, but he was not to adopt its outlook as his own. "Speak English," said Bishop Laflèche," but speak it badly".

One consequence of this rather shabby marriage of convenience was that Conservative Nationalism became linked in the minds of Quebecers with the tenets of laissez-faire capitalism or economic liberalism. Nationalist politicians like Maurice Duplessis were the brokers in this marital arrangement, and he and his regime came to represent the seemingly inherent link between social conservatism and economic liberalism. While the Quebecois accepted the social and economic teachings of Conservative Nationalism – they were offered no other choice – evidence suggests it was more often a case of a resigned or non-interiorized³ form of acceptance. In the long run, however, the defence of capitalism by Conservative Nationalists, however, could only undermine the integrity of their total position.

Ironically, the exact opposite pattern transpired in a more recent period. When the moral and social aspects of Conservative Nationalism subsequently came under fire as new ideas found their way to Quebec after World War II, the attack necessarily also focused on aspects of economic liberalism. As the exponents of Conservative Nationalism were being discredited, so too, in part, was laissez-faire capitalism. Mainly for this reason, Dion points out, the second major form in which Quebec nationalism was expressed, Liberal Nationalism, was relatively weak and short-lived. Those free enterprise tenets that define liberalism of the

² Ibid., p. 13.
³ How else to explain the ease with which Quebecois women, the watchdogs of the family and the faith, accepted birth control and similar innovations beginning in the late 1950's? See, G. Caldwell, "La Baisse de la fécondité à Québec à la lumière de la sociologie québécoise," Recherches sociographiques, Vol. 17, no. 1 (1976).
English-language world were never well rooted in Quebec. Hence when Liberal Nationalists found themselves in power in Quebec in 1960, their liberalism took a more attenuated form in which the welfare state and its apparatus was more a basic component than a series of necessary evils forced upon free enterprise, as was still maintained by many English-speaking liberals. And the state in question was the Quebec state with its own nationalist claims and momentum – so that once in power, Jean Lesage emerged overnight as a new Quebec nationalist leader. On the whole, Dion finds little more in Quebec Liberal Nationalism than a point of transition from Conservative Nationalism to a subsequent and more fundamental conception.

The weakness of Liberal Nationalism in mid-nineteenth century Quebec has already been noted. In Western societies generally, Liberal Nationalism is best known as a specific nineteenth century phenomenon. It was the ideology of emerging national commercial classes that mobilized to oppose imperial monarchies and repressive theocracies, seeking to free the nation from domination by foreign empires, and to release the individual and his economic enterprise from political and religious repression. Quebec's mid-nineteenth century Liberal Nationalists, the Reformers, Patriotes, and Rouges, expressed elements of such an ideology. Their failure to implant these ideas in Quebec sprung mainly from the fact that, lacking the vital foundation of a rising and self-confident commercial bourgeoisie, the movement had to rely for leadership on intellectuals from the liberal professions. This is shown by and helps account for both the failure of the 1837 rebellion and the ease with which many of its leaders accommodated themselves to the subsequent clerical and conservative regime:

The insurrection was born among the elites and rapidly spread among the masses where it found vast support. But, instead of assuming the need for social and economic change, the liberal professionals generally and often unconsciously stood against any profound change, basing their efforts on the preservation of old institutions raised to the rank of national values. ... A majority of authentic liberals did succeed in awakening a class-consciousness and anti-feudal and anti-clerical ideology in a fraction of the mass. But, on the whole, the professional circles managed to channel the discontent onto a particular ethnic group [the English, thus] preventing the development of class consciousness among the masses and assuring the survival of the old regime." \[1\]

While there were unmistakable liberal elements in the ALN and Bloc populaire of the 1930s and 1940s, on balance Conservative Nationalism predominated. Liberal Nationalism reemerged really only after World War II, led by figures such

as Senator T. D. Bouchard; Dominican Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, head of the Social Sciences Faculty at Laval University; a new generation of Catholic Union leaders, often, like Jean Marchand, trained by Lévesque; Georges E. Lapalme, then leader of the provincial Liberal Party; and the editors of the review Cite libre, notably Pierre E. Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier.

Liberal Nationalists of the 1950s constituted a mainly futile intellectual opposition to the ancien regime under Duplessis. Their assertions were generally more liberal than nationalist – after all, their sworn enemy had the monopoly on Quebec nationalism at that time. Its underlying nationalist character became manifest when Liberal Nationalism won political power in 1960 and increasingly began to speak of Maîtres chez nous, and the like. But once in power the new Liberal Nationalism showed little positive content: rattrapage (catching up) had sufficed as a basis for opposition to Conservative Nationalism but in power it left only an ideological vacuum. Quebec must catch up to, and hence imitate, the more advanced Western societies, but how and then what? In retrospect, Liberal Nationalism exercised hegemony for a brief period – no sooner in place than on its way to being superseded. Nonetheless this period, known as the "Quiet Revolution," is vital. For however unintentionally, the Liberal Nationalists transformed the political relationship between Quebec nationalism and the Quebec state.

Ultimately, Liberal Nationalism fell short in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of some of the same weaknesses that lay behind the failure of its earlier variant in the nineteenth century. In its first few years, the Quiet Revolution seemed to benefit all classes, including the now American/English-Canadian bourgeoisie which sought the modernization of the economic and social infrastructure to be accomplished through the newly created and expanded institutions of the Quebec state. However, this situation could not last. We shall have occasion to see later how, as Liberal Nationalism seemed to become oriented more toward Quebec Nationalism than economic liberalism, idealizing the achievement of the collective aspirations of the people through the Quebec state institutions, it distanced itself from the direct interests of the corporate bourgeoisie and lost that class' active support. A colonial bourgeoisie cannot long sustain the development of nationalist sentiment. Inevitably, the famous Liberal équipe of the Quiet Revolution was split asunder.

The great mid-1960s pilgrimage to Ottawa of Liberal Nationalism's leading wise men, Pierre Trudeau, Jean Marchand, and Gérard Pelletier, and their subsequent grand projects such as "Bilingualism and Biculturalism", "French power in Ottawa," and the suppression of the FLQ (and practically everyone else) in October 1970, can be similarly understood. They perceived that the Liberal Nationalism they knew and sought to defend could be salvaged through Ottawa far more easily than through Quebec. Canada could claim an indigenous (though to a great extent comprador), bourgeoisie and a compliant state apparatus which through centuries of practice had become used to co-operating closely with it.
They gambled that with the appropriate incentives the newly educated classes of Quebec, the modern variant of the intellectuals who had always previously defined nationalism, could be won over to a new pan-Canadian bicultural nationalism. They hoped that whereas Henri Bourassa had failed in a parallel project sixty years earlier, English Canadians were now ready to welcome the participation of the Quebecois with open arms.

Even with some initial success, this venture could not avoid ultimate failure. For one thing, English Canada has been less than enthusiastic; but more important, Quebec nationalism itself would not stand still. Given Quebec's cultural and economic history, in a rapidly modernizing era Liberal Nationalism only sets the stage for a more extreme form of nationalism to emerge. This new variant, Left Nationalism, seeks political separation or independence and economic social democracy or socialism. It has drawn the support of much of contemporary Quebec's emerging educated population. Trudeau may have attracted a fair number of them to Ottawa in body, but fewer came in spirit.

This most recent variant on Quebec nationalism is essentially a phenomenon of the last two decades. One may date its beginning with the founding in 1960 of the earliest important "separatist" party, the Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN), and the first publication of the magazine Parti pris. It will be argued that a precipitating cause for the emergence of Left Nationalism was the altered relationship of nation to state. Ironically, the new nation/state relationship received the blessings of the Liberal Nationalists during the heady honeymoon period of 1961 to 1964. Only afterwards, when its long-term implications began to emerge, did they come to regard it with increasing horror.

General trends parallel this change. The coming of a new era is indicated in the ongoing decline and replacement of traditional institutions. Surveys reveal, for example, that Quebecois high school and college students, though clearly nationalistic in contemporary terms, are quite ignorant and uninterested in the Quebec of the past, a far cry from the traditional emphasis on je me souviens.¹ Church attendance in Quebec has declined even more suddenly and dramatically than elsewhere in Canada,² as has the birth-rate—from 37.6 per thousand in 1921 (to Canada's 29.3), to 13.8 in 1972 (to 15.9 for Canada).³ These facts obviously point first to the industrialization, urbanization, and consequent secularization of Quebec society—the political evidence of which is best seen in the decline of parties of the Right.

² André Bernard, La politique au Canada et au Québec (Montréal : Les Presses de l'Univesité du Québec, 1976), p. 82.
There is another more profound element involved which explains the comparative suddenness of the decline of the old ways given that urbanization has been taking place gradually over a hundred years. The collective interests and preservation of the nation, traditionally the sacred responsibility of religion and family, were effectively given over to the Quebec state at this point; the securing of the nation's destiny was, for better or for worse, now confided here.

One traditional symbol of Quebec nationalism that has regained importance in recent years is the French language. In the early 1960s the RIN had already adopted French unilingualism as a primary plank in its platform. Then in 1968 the Union nationale government passed the ill-fated Bill 63 in an attempt to quell a linguistic conflict in the Montreal suburb of St.-Leonard by guaranteeing English-language education to anyone who wanted it. Instead, it provoked a mass outcry. Then came the Liberal party's 1974 to 1976 debacle over Bill 22 which attempted to limit the use of English in schools and elsewhere, satisfying neither side. Finally, the Parti québécois government's Charter of the French Language was introduced in May and passed in August 1977 to establish French once and for all as Quebec's official language. The declining birth rate and the continued predominance of English as the language of business had created a situation in which the continuing assimilation of new immigrants and a few Franco-Québécois into the English language community seemed to threaten the long-term survival of the nation. As preserver of the nation, the state was compelled to take action.

Prior to the present era, French Canadians in Quebec had become largely diffident toward "outsiders", seeking to safeguard their institutions by discouraging the assimilation of immigrants. This is no longer the case; harsh demographic reality and continued federal control over immigration have loomed large. Since the Quiet Revolution a far more positive nationalism has evolved, one which does not fear the "contaminating" influence of the outside world. Rather, the assertion of the national destiny is sought collectively, and increasingly welcomes the participation of others. Such an attitude may be perceived reflected in the intent of the new language policy. It would seem from the government's public statements in the White Paper that accompanied the Charter that, though the instrument is an old one, language is now to play an integral part in newly emerging Quebec nationalism. The French language will serve to express not a narrow French-Canadian tradition but a new Quebecois culture, blending the heritage of all inhabitants – whatever their mother tongue.

A new Left Nationalism has arisen and taken firm root especially in those Quebec institutions of a syndical, academic, popular, or bureaucratic character created or much transformed during and since the Quiet Revolution. Since 1969, politically, this nationalism has been articulated first and foremost by the Parti québécois which in November 1976 formed the government of Quebec. And, Trudeau's federalist project notwithstanding, it is the educated Quebecois, trained
during this period to make these various institutions work, who have emerged as the leading force behind the new nationalism.

Dion's discussion of the final "socialist and/or social democratic" form of Quebec nationalism is not as clear because, unlike his portrayal of Conservative Nationalism, no real attempt at class breakdown is attempted. This is elementary if one wants to understand the factors underlying contemporary Quebec politics. One must look at the structural basis for Left Nationalism, first in the economic structure of Quebec, second in the development of the Quebec state, and, finally, in the crucial link between these two in Quebec's class structure.

One general point in conclusion: nationalism, insofar as it becomes a specific ideology with concrete social consequences, is an intellectual construct, the product of the work of those who "produce the ideas" of a society – its intellectuals. This was the case, and it remains so. The men and women of ideas, the teachers, traditional professionals, clerics, and writers, filled a vacuum at the top of the indigenous social structure due to the absence of a national bourgeoisie. The profound ambivalence of their role accounts for the ultimate weakness of nationalism throughout Quebec history. Now, however, certain transformations appear to have altered the historical relationship of intellectuals to the class structure and with it the content and political consequences of their nationalism. These transformations are the key to further understanding the present political situation.
CHAPTER II:
ECONOMY AND
SOCIAL CLASS

The Development of the Quebec Economy

The economic history of Quebec parallels its evolution as a nation. The British conquest in 1760 put an end to the possibility of an indigenous commercial class emerging to transform the economy from within. Virtually every Quebecois followed either a rural agricultural way of life or a subsidiary small town (petit bourgeois) occupation such as craftsman or shopkeeper. Quebec's elite was drawn traditionally from the liberal professions, law and medicine, and the Church. By the early 1800s, an Anglo-Canadian commercial elite was well entrenched in Montreal and elsewhere, and concentrated in banking and transportation. Initially, its members' economic interests were focused on the financing, transport, and export of staples (first furs and soon mainly lumber) to England. The shipbuilding industry and the building of canals were also important as they complemented the group's interests.

By around 1850, the growth of new industrial technologies had so clearly altered conditions that the businessmen and bankers who made up the commercial elite could no longer rely on the export of staples for their profits. Thus they sought to create a domestic market. Yet the British colonial relationship had engendered among this elite the habits and institutions conducive to merchant capital. On the one hand, they saw the need for the industrialization of Canada; on the other, they were seldom disposed to do it themselves. True to their orientation toward transportation and transport equipment, they built railroads (and orchestrated the creation of the "Dominion" of Canada to pay for them) so as to be able to move settlers and goods from the Atlantic to the Pacific.
The long recession of 1870 to 1890 meant more concentrated attention on the domestic market and led John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of the new dominion, to adopt the "national policy". The national policy consisted of land settlement, especially in the West; enormous state investments in transportation, most notably in the Canadian Pacific Railway; and, most important, high tariffs which encouraged direct investment in Canadian manufacturing on the part of American industrialists who had by this time developed a remarkable manufacturing capacity.

The Americans as well as some British, English Canadians, and a handful of French Canadians who invested in manufacturing in Quebec in the period from 1890 to World War I did so almost entirely (except for transportation-related railroad yards and shipbuilding) in industries termed light manufacturing: clothing, footwear, tobacco, textiles, and furniture. They also financed agriculture-based industries, such as flour milling, and butter and cheese making. Quebec's attractiveness for such investment lay primarily in its cheap labour due to the numbers of French-Canadian men from large farm-based families. The drying up of good arable land and increased agricultural productivity drove a great many young Quebeckers to the industrial towns and cities. (Incidentally, not all found work, and, especially in the difficult 1870s, 1880s and 1930s, many migrated to northern New England.)

Ontario, in contrast, concentrated its growth in the heavy industry sector, making full use of its slightly larger population, more profitable agricultural base, and its greater proximity to the westwardly shifting North American market, to the head offices of American corporations, and to Appalachian coal and Northern Ontario iron ore. Moreover, one cannot rule out that the appeal of an Anglo-Protestant society to Anglo-Canadian bankers and American industrialists was an added stimulus.

By the turn of the century the foundations of the basic structure had been laid; the economic development of Quebec was in the hands of what effectively amounted to a partnership formed by predominantly foreign (and increasingly American) industrialists who were financed and serviced by English-Canadian bankers, transporters, and merchants. Quebec's underdevelopment in comparison to Ontario's which, unlike other provinces or regions, is roughly equivalent to Quebec in territory, resources and population, should be regarded within the framework of the colonial pattern of economic development – one imposed upon the people by an essentially external dominant class.

In the next forty years and especially beginning in the late 1930s, Quebec, though not gaining ground, was able to more or less hold her own. This is a period of rapid growth most notable in resource development industries oriented toward a foreign rather than a domestic market. Quebec's ample raw materials in lumber, asbestos, and certain minerals have been a factor here, but the major source of her
appeal was the vast supply of hydroelectric power. The dominant industries in this category manufacture products in pulp and paper and non-ferrous metals, in particular aluminum.

Resource-based industries are capital intensive rather than labour intensive; for large investments they yield high profits but comparatively few jobs – or rather they create much secondary manufacturing employment, for example in automobile production. These industries are mainly found in the U.S. or Ontario. The asbestos industry furnishes a particularly blatant example:

Asbestos production was controlled by eight U.S.-based companies, the largest being the Canadian Johns-Manville. Quebec derived 6,000 jobs from the mining of asbestos but only 1,225 at the manufacturing level. In the U.S., on the other hand, 22,000 manufacturing jobs and 2,000 research jobs resulted from the processing of asbestos. Johns-Manville, for example, had only one manufacturing plant in Quebec, employing about 425 workers, but had 46 plants in the U.S. It is estimated that only 2% of Quebec asbestos was transformed into finished products by local firms. The net result was that, in 1971, Canada, the world's largest asbestos producer, bought $14.5 million worth of finished asbestos products from external sources but sold only $5.7 million worth. ¹

Furthermore, provincial and federal government policies, which literally gave away resources to entice these companies, combined with the spending priorities of the Anglo-Canadian financial elite, guaranteed that the great bulk of this investment was placed in the hands of the huge corporations (today called multinationals) owned predominantly by Americans, English Canadians, or a combination of the two. Not surprisingly, the relative position of French Canadians in the Quebec economy actually declined during this period.

The economic pattern was permanently established. Today, as in the past, Quebec workers earn less and are unemployed more often than workers in Ontario, they pay higher taxes, suffer a higher infant mortality rate, have more polluted cities and waterways, and generally receive poorer services. To take unemployment as an example, in Quebec the rate in 1975 was 9.5 percent; for Ontario it was 6 percent and for Canada as a whole 7.2 percent. The average rates of unemployment between 1957 and 1976 were: Quebec 7.4 percent, Ontario 4.3 percent, Canada 5.6 percent. ²

The 1960s and 1970s in fact marked a certain weakening of the relative position of the Quebec economy, attributed to slower population growth, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which benefits Ontario and the North Central U.S. at the expense of Quebec and the East coast, and certain government policies such as the Canada-U.S. auto pact. The most important effect, and to some extent the cause, of this relative decline has been Montreal's loss of financial advantage to other North American cities, especially Toronto. Although Montreal continues to command the economy of Quebec, it has been replaced by Toronto as Canada's major economic focus.

In the late 1950s, Toronto gradually came to prominence in the Canadian financial and industrial market and since then has increasingly attracted the investment, as well as the head offices, of the large Anglo-Canadian/American corporations. Peter Newman quotes Paul Desmarais, the leading French-Canadian entrepreneur: "There has certainly been a move away from Montreal. Toronto is now the power centre... without doubt the country's financial centre. In Montreal you still have two of the big banks headquartered here, but their presence in Toronto is very real, especially with their two new huge buildings. All the financing in the mining industry has been done traditionally in Toronto". Newman adds a reference to the quiet shifts of key head office personnel – by the Molson family, Texaco Canada, IAC and Royal Trust, among others. 1

As with the underdevelopment of Quebec in the earlier period, only part of the explanation can be traced to the pattern of economic colonization; geographical and demographical factors decidedly figure in these decisions as well. Nevertheless, the decline of Montreal as the financial metropolis of Canada has a great deal to do with the social reality of the new Quebec—a reaction by English-speaking business to the fact that a more determined form of nationalism has been rearing its head during this period among the mainstream political parties and in the streets among a working population no longer prepared to be little more than cheap labour. But Quebec remained just another province in Canada with very little practical political clout over the Anglo-American corporations. The Quebec state's attempts at reversing the trend by encouraging economic growth could do little to change the situation, even for example, with the new Quebec "crown corporations". Quebec governments did try:

In a full page advertisement in the Financial Post in 1961, for example, the Quebec government described the investment climate of the province to potential investors: 'A richly endowed province, Quebec provides power, labour and raw materials, in abundance... Its people are noted for their ready adaptability to technological advances... Soundness of its government is a guarantee of freedom of enterprise, harmonious social conditions, equal

opportunities for all'. A March 1971 ad in the *Institutional Investor*, entitled 'Here We Talk Profits,' explained to investors how Quebec was 'incredibly rich in natural resources and enjoyed an abundance of vital hydro-electric power', and how it 'offered unique profit opportunities for the investor'.

There can be no question that the corporate decision-makers welcomed interest of this kind on the part of the Quebec government. In Quebec, as elsewhere, the attitudes of business leaders toward the state had altered in keeping with their increasing reliance on it with the change from competitive to monopolistic capitalism. Pierre Fournier found that over eighty-five percent of the members of the Quebec business establishment he surveyed believed that government's economic function should be to create conditions favourable to the growth of the private sector. But they objected strongly to the rising tide of nationalism in Quebec. He also found, not unexpectedly, that one hundred percent of the business leaders he surveyed (one third of whom were francophones) opposed Quebec independence. (He also suggests that negative feeling is stronger among executives in Canadian firms than those in American-controlled ones).

A clear and orchestrated pattern of attempts to discredit the new thrust of Quebec nationalism is evident, beginning in October 1967. Behind it lay the English-speaking owning class, especially directors of English-Canadian corporations. A similar pattern may be noted in the specific case of language. Bill 63, enacted in 1968 by the *Union nationale* government to guarantee English-language education to all who wanted it, though opposed by practically every other sector of Quebec society, was found to be supported by one hundred percent of the anglophone and seventy-eight percent of the francophone business leaders surveyed. Their practically universal attitude came out clearly in the remarks of Montreal Board of Trade president, J. B. Porteous.

The views of the heads of corporations in Quebec are not surprising given the history of Quebec and its by now well-known pattern of economic control. Here are a few illustrative statistics: French Canadians in 1951 occupied 6.7 percent and in 1971 8.4 percent of the positions on the board of directors of the major corporations in Canada, and these included an overly large proportion of lawyers and ex-politicians. According to Peter Newman (see p. 18, above), there were in 1975 eleven French Canadians among the top one hundred and seventy-five members of the Canadian business establishment. Robert Presthus found that of

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2 Ibid., p. 165.
3 Ibid., p. 165.
4 Ibid., p. 131.
5 Ibid., pp. 132-137.
6 Ibid., p. 117.
12,741 names listed in the 1971 *Directory of Directors* of 2,400 companies in Canada, only 9.5 percent were French-Canadian. Generally, in private industry in Quebec, the fact remains that as salary level goes up, the proportion of francophones goes down.

In the early 1960s, Quebec manufacturing corporations controlled by French Canadians, who constitute 80 percent of the population, produced 15.4 percent of manufacturing output; the remaining 85 percent was divided roughly equally between foreign (mainly American) and English-Canadian corporations. The small productive output of French-Canadian firms is derived almost entirely from the light manufacturing sector, especially food, leather, and wood, and is intended almost exclusively for the domestic market. French-Canadian firms were found to export only 5.58 percent of the total of Quebec exports to other provinces and 2.27 percent of those to other countries. More recent estimates suggest that the French-Canadian firms' share has increased slightly to around 18 percent, and there are indications that more French Canadians are being added to the boards of non-French-Canadian corporations. Nevertheless, the fundamental situation remains unchanged: U.S. and English-Canadian-owned corporations control the Quebec economy where it counts – in finance and heavy industry. Representatives of business groups meeting with representatives of the *Parti québécois* government to discuss language and other policies are well known to have subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, reminded them in words to the effect that: "You may have won an election, but remember, we have the real power".

A few Franco-Quebecers have been able to find a place for themselves in the Quebec economic hierarchy but only within the rules and framework of the English-speaking establishment. Newman points out that Paul Desmarais, chairman of Power Corporation and perhaps the only real francophone near the top of the Canadian corporate establishment, though based in Montreal, is "something of an outsider – a man who was born and raised in Ontario, who established and enlarged his impressive credit sources entirely through sympathetic support from the large WASP financial institutions... (who) now spends most of his time and energy away from the city trying to break into Toronto". More generally, a comprehensive 1977 study of 1,211 enterprises in Quebec found that among the leading executives of American-owned firms in Quebec, forty-one percent were

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5. A. Sales, "Les industriels au Québec et leur rôle dans le développement économique", Groupe de recherche sur les élites industrielles au Québec, Université de Montréal, janvier 1976.
born in the U.S., twenty-six percent in Quebec, twenty percent elsewhere in Canada and twelve percent in Europe. ¹

French-Canadian corporate directors generally do not form a separate group with its own self-defined interest within the economic establishment. Rather, they fall in behind the Anglo-Canadian/American bourgeoisie and define themselves fundamentally with that group. A partial exception is in the state and co-operative sector of the economy which merits separate though brief consideration. But, on the whole, Alex McLeod is correct when he states that:

There is little evidence to suggest that there is at present a French-Canadian group, or social stratum, which wields any amount of effective economic power on a scale comparable to that of the Anglo-Canadian or American business interests. Mention of the names of Desmarais or Simard, or talk of the 'accumulation of capital' are not enough in themselves to establish the existence of such a 'class'. Traditionally Quebec's native elites have been confined to holding the reins of political power and this situation has changed in degree rather than in substance since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution. ²

The most recent statistics confirm such a conclusion. Another part of the above-noted study investigated the relationship between size of enterprise and presence of French Canadians. Table II-1, which summarizes these findings, speaks for itself.

¹ A. Sales "La question linguistique et les directions d'entreprises", Le Devoir, 28 avril, 1977, p. 17.
² A. McLeod, "Nationalism and Social Class : the Unresolved Dilemma of the Quebec Left". Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 11-12.
Fournier agrees that the primary aim of provincial government policy has been to create conditions favourable to the growth of the private sector thus catering to the stated and unstated needs of the business establishment. As far as the establishment of state-owned corporations is concerned, he proposes a second motivating factor, the desire to create an indigenous French-Canadian bourgeoisie. He cites former Union nationale and Liberal financial adviser and now Parti québécois Minister of Finance, Jacques Parizeau: "In Quebec the state must intervene.... If we had twenty-five Bombardier Corporations and major banks the situation might be different. We don't have giant institutions and hence we have to create them". ¹

Hydro-Québec of course symbolizes the most significant practical expression of this project. Fournier notes that at the end of 1967, 297 of 365 senior professionals and administrators at Hydro-Québec were French Canadians as compared to 1962, just before nationalization, when only twelve percent of the industry's engineers were French Canadians. ² The use of the state to stimulate the growth of the small French-Canadian bourgeoisie is understandable and has been noted elsewhere. In his study of the corporate elite, Clement noted:

A major avenue of mobility for French Canadians into the economic elite has been through connections with the state. Of the French in the current elite, there are three Senators, an additional three from the political elite, including two former federal elite members and Jean Lesage, a former Premier, and three from the bureaucratic elite. Between them, they account for 14 percent

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² Ibid., p. 6.
of all the French in the economic elite. In addition, seven have close relatives who are in the state elite and 19, not included in any of the categories listed thus far, sit on key government boards or organizations such as crown corporations. Altogether this includes 54 percent of all the French in the elite. This suggests that the French have been successful in using the state as a means for access to the economic elite and that they have strong relations with the state after gaining access.  

Commenting on similar statistics, especially the predominance of lawyers among French-Canadian members of the corporate elite, André Raynauld concludes:

The relative importance of lawyers and of the political factor in the French Canadian group, within the English-Canadian group, which leads us to believe that the French-Canadians who sit on the boards of large English companies act mainly as liaison officers between these companies on the one hand, and the government of Quebec, the workers (through their unions), and the consumers, on the other hand.  

*Hydro-Québec* and the *Caisse de dépôt et de placement du Québec* created by the Lesage government in 1965 to administer and invest government pension funds were set up both to provide services to the private sector and to open up high level economic positions for French Canadians. Observers agree that the former succeeded on both counts, while the latter has turned out to be at best a partial success.  

Quebec's state-owned steel producer, SIDBEC and the *Société Générale de Financement* (SGF), the Quebec government's investment corporation, were given clear mandates – in the first case directly and in the second indirectly – to develop French-Canadian enterprise. SIDBEC was slow to get off the ground and has not yet lived up to its promises, while the SGF's major investments, notably the Simard family's Marine Industries, have consistently brought financial difficulties to the company. The remaining crown corporations, notes Fournier, did little or nothing to foster indigenous enterprise, instead merely providing services for the multi-nationals. Among these are SOQUEM (mining) and SOQUIP (petroleum). Posgate and McRoberts conclude: "The only clearly successful measure to strengthen the French-Canadian presence in Quebec's economy during the Quiet Revolution remained *Hydro-Québec*." But one *Hydro-Québec* does not an independent bourgeoisie make, though it does provide an avenue for career advancement by certain individuals. Roland Giroux, a former *Hydro-Québec* president and adviser to Premier Bourassa, is now on the board of Power Corporation.

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Another important element in Quebec's economy is the cooperative sector. A substantial share of Quebec's agricultural production is contributed by farm cooperatives, the largest of which is the Granby Co-op which specializes in milk products, especially cheese. Co-operatives of lesser importance are also to be found in food distribution, fishing, lumbering, and housing construction. Nevertheless, the co-operative sector's importance rests primarily on the credit unions. *Les Caisses populaires Desjardins*, the largest credit union in the world, cannot be left out of any discussion of the Quebec economy. Founded in 1902, its branches hold the savings of two thirds of the Quebecois, and in the last few years, the *Desjardins* federation has been growing faster in Quebec than any bank. Nevertheless, its 6.2 billion dollars in total assets still leaves it well behind the big five in Canadian banking, with just over one quarter the assets of the largest, the Royal, and under one half the assets of the smallest, the Toronto-Dominion.

Although undoubtedly influential, especially at the local and regional levels, the *Caisses Pop's* decentralized and relatively democratic structure (which places significant power in the hands of the branch directors who are elected by an assembly of all branch members or clients) inhibit it from playing the concerted economic role one would expect of an enterprise of this size. In consequence, unlike the banks, the *Caisses Pop's* closest links are to the small industries, stores, and services of the francophone petite and moyenne bourgeoisie rather than to big business. With the election of the *Parti Québécois*, the influence of the co-operatives is likely to increase given the stress placed upon this form of economic organization in the PQ program and the special attention paid to *les Caisses Pop* by the new government. For example, the guest list for the May 1977 economic summit of labour, business, and government at La Malbaie included a sizeable number of delegates from the co-operative sector.

Whether such incidents constitute any kind of significant departure will depend on the ability and willingness of the PQ to unexpectedly live up to the more fundamental proposals in its social and economic program. For now, we may conclude that the creation and growth of state and co-operative enterprises, though not without consequence, has not fundamentally altered the structure and composition of the economic establishment in Quebec. In fact, Quebec after the Quiet Revolution is very little closer to having its own indigenous bourgeoisie. Yet there is an important difference: today, its creation is no longer the necessary instrument of national socio-economic transition. As we shall see, changes brought about in this period, especially in state participation in social services and education, have given rise to a radical economic and political restructuring of Quebec society and to the growth of working class-based syndical and political organizations committed to concrete achievement.
The Class Structure of Quebec

The class structure of Quebec can be initially defined as the configuration and composition of the major population groupings determined by their relation to the production system. Based on our understanding of the particularities of capitalist society in Quebec, we go on to ask: what is it that people do in that society, and above all, what is their place in the process of production? The key question centres on the use of the surplus product of a society, that is, what remains after the needs of the active producers have been met through wages or other means? A society is divided into classes when the production of surplus is separated from its appropriation and disposal.

Capitalist relations of production define a specific form of class society in which one class owns the means of production and thereby controls the work process and another sells its labour power to it. The purpose of production is profit, or, more generally, the accumulation of capital. While a given mode of production thus divides the population into two decisive classes, there is nevertheless a certain fluidity at the boundaries of these classes. The complexity of the system of social organization necessitates interaction within each class structure but with distinct tasks outside the process of production. In addition, a specific society at a given point in time will usually develop secondary modes of production, and therefore additional class fragments.

These distinctions enable us to discern the existence of three class formations: the two decisive classes, the owning class or bourgeoisie and the working class; and one or more intermediate or middle classes. Each may for certain purposes be subdivided into two strata; so that we shall speak of a grande and a moyenne bourgeoisie; a "new" and "old" middle class (or petite bourgeoisie); and an organized and unorganized working class. In each case, by breaking the economy down into sectors, one is also able to scrutinize the national-linguistic composition of the class in the light of national consciousness and economic development.

It is evident that under capitalism – a system based on the appropriation of surplus through the ownership of enterprises – a description of the economic structure of Quebec is at once a description of the composition of the dominant economic class, namely the bourgeoisie. Controlling Quebec's revenue-producing economic institutions, the bourgeoisie is able to direct the flow of economic investment as well as the utilization of labour and resources. To simplify matters, the bourgeoisie is identified simply as the owners of revenue-producing institutions employing more than negligible quantities of hired labour.
Table II-1, above, provided an initial picture of the proportion of French-Canadian ownership in manufacturing on the basis of number of employees. In it we saw that French-Canadian ownership rises as the number of employees declines, though it never attains even fifty percent at any level. This same tendency is revealed in comparing ownership patterns in the various economic sectors. The approximations below sum up the findings of the various studies cited in this chapter, especially those of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (in Volume III of its report) and a certain amount of impressionistic evidence. Table II-2, at the end of the chapter, illustrates these and other facts.

**Sector I**  
Mining, pulp and paper, and heavy manufacturing: In this relatively underdeveloped sector of the Quebec economy well-known multinational American firms predominate, especially in the very high technology areas. English-Canadian controlled multi-nationals like Alcan, Domtar, and Noranda Mining play a secondary but still significant role.

**Sector 2**  
Finance, transportation, and communications: Large English-Canadian owned corporations such as the banks and Canadian Pacific predominate here, though American multi-nationals are well entrenched except where, as in banking, their participation is restricted by law. French-Canadian participation is to be found but is virtually limited to a few state and cooperative institutions, notably Hydro-Québec and the Caisses populaires, which though large within Quebec, are small in comparison to the American and Canadian-based multi-nationals.

**Sector 3**  
Light manufacturing and wholesale trade: Medium and small operations in textiles, leather goods, clothing, paper products, furniture, food products, beverages, and tobacco owned by English-Canadian, neo-Quebecois (immigrants or their recent descendants to Quebec from neither English-speaking nor French-speaking countries of origin) and French-Canadian businessmen are most common. Large U.S. or Canadian corporations also figure in this overdeveloped sector.

**Sector 4**  
Retail trade and services: While a certain number of American-based multi-nationals are represented here, for example among the hotel chains and car rental agencies, most of this likewise overdeveloped sector in the Quebec economy is in the hands of medium-sized, English-Canadian (including neo-Quebecois who have adopted the English language) and, in a few cases, French-Canadian merchandising and service chains.
Sector 5  Farming, fishing, and wood-cutting: There is little enterprise in this sector large enough to be qualified as bourgeois except that of the French-Canadian agricultural production co-operatives. (Sector 5, as well as 4, figures more prominently in our portrayal of the petite bourgeoisie.)

There is a major gradation within the size, structure, and scope of the typical corporations operating in each sector. Sectors 1 and 2 are dominated by the economic institutions of the grande bourgeoisie, the huge multi-national institutions. Since Chapters Three and Four explore the impact of the multi-nationals in detail in the context of the evolution of monopoly capitalism, it is enough at this juncture to note that the enterprises of the grande bourgeoisie tend to possess the economic power to sufficiently control prices and economic conditions and are therefore relatively immune to the vagaries of a competitive market, while those smaller firms controlled by the moyenne bourgeoisie do not. These latter are effectively compelled to operate within the conditions of the market in which they compete with little or no ability to affect it. While both of these groups are strata within one class in their relationship to the means of production, in the context of the specific workings of monopoly capitalism it is the grande bourgeoisie that effectively counts. Like the rest of us, the moyenne bourgeoisie tends to operate within economic structures and conditions determined and manipulated by the grande bourgeoisie. Hence sectors 3, 4, and 5, where the moyenne bourgeoisie predominates, are characterized by greater competitiveness and economic uncertainty.

A large, though not dominant, proportion of economic activity in retail trade and services lies not in the hands of the moyenne bourgeoisie, but in what we term the petite bourgeoisie or the traditional middle class. Typical here are the small independent stores, restaurants, barber shops, and craft shops operated by resident French-Canadian or English-Canadian (usually neo-Quebecois) families, normally employing only themselves. Independent professionals such as physicians, notaries, dentists, are also included among the providers of services in this class, as are independent or freelance salesmen, writers, and the like. What distinguishes this class is that in principle it both owns and operates its means of production. In addition, given only a highly limited presence of large scale operations in the several agricultural production co-operatives, the leading grouping in the last of the economic sectors, namely farming, fishing, and wood-cutting, is clearly a petit bourgeois one, the independent commodity producers. Moreover, Quebec, for all its peasant past, does not have very much good farm land. It has become increasingly commonplace for farmers to supplement their incomes through related primary activities, such as fishing and wood-cutting. In fact, many nowadays earn most of their cash income away from the farm. Thus, while it would not be true to state that, as elsewhere, Quebec's independent farmers are gradually entering the working class by becoming farm workers in large "agribusiness" concerns, proletarianization is nonetheless taking place. As Quebec
farmers become more dependent on the income from wood-cutting and fishing, their labour is increasingly at the disposal of the fish processors, sawmill operators, etc.

Generally, the traditional middle class is in decline in Western society; storekeepers, restauranteurs, and independent tradespeople are losing out to chains; professionals are coming to work in large private or public bureaucracies; salesmen are becoming salaried. Leo Johnson has graphically demonstrated this trend for Canada in a useful article \(^1\) and there is no reason to believe Quebec to be an exception. On the other hand, a new group with certain similarities to the old petite bourgeoisie has significantly entered the picture and merits inspection. To do so we must add a sixth economic sector, that of non-revenue producing government services in education, social affairs, and administration generally. This may be termed the state sector. It is worth noting to begin with that over twenty percent of the working population is directly employed in non-revenue producing public, and parapublic services. No possible analysis of class in Quebec can ignore the place of this group.

The petite bourgeoisie was identified as that class that uses its own capital as well as its own labour. If we treat educational accreditation and professional or technical expertise as a form of capital, we can justify classifying professionals and semi-professionals working as such in intermediate positions in public and private institutions as members of a new petite bourgeoisie or a new middle class. The secondary nature of the petite bourgeoisie in the ultimate process of societal change makes it effectively immaterial here whether the new and old middle class are viewed as constituting one class or two. What matters are the particular characteristics of each. For clarity and consistency, we shall from now on refer to the petite bourgeoisie (rather than old middle class), and the new middle class.

From the standpoint of an analysis of these two strata, economic activity breaks down into three branches: the monopolistic, the competitive, and the public. The third of these, the public, includes both non-productive state activities in education and social services as well as the limited number of productive state institutions, such as *Hydro-Québec*, in finance, transportation, and communication (sector 2). The monopolistic and competitive branches are formed by combining, in the former case, those economic sectors dominated by the grande bourgeoisie, namely mining and heavy manufacturing and finance, transportation and communication; and in the latter case, those sectors where the moyenne bourgeoisie is more significant, namely light manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, services, and farming and fishing. Table II-2 graphically portrays this categorization. The petite bourgeoisie operates in the competitive branch, while the new middle class divides between the monopolistic and public.

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\(^1\) Leo Johnson, "The Development of Classes in Canada in the 20th Century", in G. Teeple (ed.), *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).
The new middle class poses a particularly difficult structural problem for contemporary Quebec. This is because its francophone members are by and large employed in the different state institutions, and its anglophone members in the monopolistic corporate branch. The explanation for this fact lies in the economic colonization of Quebec; its political consequences are manifest in the contradictions that have intensified with the enlargement and transformation of the Quebec state. In addition, statistics from the early 1970s provided by the Gendron Commission on the French language demonstrate the inequality built into this situation. For example, it was found that among French-speaking employees in Quebec institutions, "professionals and administrators" comprise 22.6 percent of the total; among English speaking, the figure is 36.1 percent; while among "others" it is 26.5 percent. If we add office employees and salesmen, some of whom are surely included in the new middle class, the French-speaking total goes up to 45.9 percent; the English to 65 percent and the "other" to 42.3 percent.

The working class may be defined as those who do not own their means of production and are required to sell their capacity to work in the marketplace. This includes potential workers such as most students, the unemployed, etc. The presence of trade unions is a key factor here directly or indirectly relating, as it does, to the likely size, working conditions, and level of technology of the plant or office; and the skill, organizational strength and possible political (or class) consciousness of the workers in question. (Industries where most workers are unionized shall be termed "organized". Non-working workers, that is the unemployed, students, etc., are termed "state clients".)

In general, monopolistic industries employ unionized francophone workers. This is true especially in the comparatively weak mining and heavy manufacturing sector. It is not true in sector 2, where the proportion of English-speaking workers is larger and the banks, insurance companies, and trust companies continue successfully to resist unionization. In the competitive industries we find mainly non-unionized workers of francophone and neo-Quebecois ("other") background. Finally, public institutions employ mainly francophone workers with the special exception of the neo-Quebecois wage earners working in English-language social service and educational institutions.

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### TABLE II-2

Economic sector, social class, and national and ethnic configuration: an overview.

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<td></td>
<td>F.C. (mainly through state enterprises)</td>
<td>F.C. (French Canadian)</td>
<td>N.Q.</td>
<td>Moyenne Bourgeoisie</td>
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<td>Fetie Bourgeoisie</td>
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<td>New Middle Class</td>
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<td>Working Class (organized)</td>
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<td>State clients (unorganized)</td>
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<td>F.C., N.Q. (Potential state clients)</td>
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<td>F.C., [N.C.]</td>
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Indicates secondary importance
TABLE II-3

Percentage and Number of French-Speaking, English-Speaking and Third Group Workers, by Type of Work, in January, 1971.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>French-Speaking</th>
<th>English-Speaking</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written + oral</td>
<td>29.2% (531,000)</td>
<td>50.7% (175,000)</td>
<td>26.0% (46,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>11.0% (201,000)</td>
<td>18.7% (64,000)</td>
<td>11.4% (20,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>8.5% (155,000)</td>
<td>8.0% (28,000)</td>
<td>7.4% (13,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual and written</td>
<td>4.4% (80,000)</td>
<td>3.6% (12,000)</td>
<td>3.5% (6,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual and oral</td>
<td>9.9% (178,000)</td>
<td>5.3% (18,000)</td>
<td>8.7% (15,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>37.0% (675,000)</td>
<td>13.7% (47,000)</td>
<td>43.0% (76,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% (1,820,000)</td>
<td>100.0% (344,000)</td>
<td>100.0% (177,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A problem of classification occurs here: for example, is a public school teacher a member of the new middle class or the working class? And why is there such a high level of unionization among public sector workers (and new middle class public employees) which is both a relatively recent phenomenon and one that is in some respects unique to Quebec? The fact that these two strata are disproportionately francophone is obviously important.

But this kind of speculation is premature. Having described the main classes in Quebec, we can now survey the specific facts. Table II-2 provides a graphic illustration of the economic and class structure of Quebec.

The economic data collected and presented here may have seemed dry and abstract. Nevertheless, such data is a central constituent of an understanding of something that is anything but dry and abstract, namely contemporary Quebec politics. The national and class dimensions form the axes of the Quebec political landscape. One final illustration of their connection and relevance is provided in Table II-3 adopted from the report of the Gendron Commission which speaks quite loudly and plainly for itself. No more graphic picture could be drawn which so neatly sums up the harsh facts relating to social class and linguistic/national origin in Quebec.
CHAPTER III:
THE QUEBEC STATE

In the 1960s, the transformation of Quebec nationalism from negative and apolitical to positive and political was related most immediately to changes in the role of the Quebec state. Such changes were subsequently also found to be an important element in the present evolution of Quebec's class structure. At this point, we come to consider the Quebec state itself and, in so doing, approach the central subject matter of traditional studies of politics, namely government. However, the notion of the state herein is both wider than and conceptually different from that of mainstream political science. This difference can be clarified first by analysing the changes in the state that have generally accompanied recent fundamental modifications in Western economic and social organization, and secondly by developing a conceptualization of the state within these global developments and applying it to the contemporary administrative and political structure of Quebec. The pertinent question is whether such a structure is relatively stable or whether there are built-in contradictions likely to cause continued instability.

Monopoly Capitalism and the State

It is often said nowadays that we are in the throes of a new and different stage of societal evolution. Various academic prophets have welcomed us to the "technological" or "post modern" or "technotronic" or "post industrial" society. ¹ Though their specific descriptions are seldom terribly instructive, these various observers have helped bring about a general awareness that a fundamental change has in fact occurred in Western society. For us, the change is best understood as

basically an economic one, with significant social, political, and cultural consequences. The transition is from a system of "market" to "monopoly" capitalism which Western capitalist societies have undergone in the period roughly since World War II. This transition is understood to comprise the following characteristics:

1. An enormously enlarged productive capacity;
2. A significant increase in the size of the productive units, the corporations;
3. A noticeable shift among these corporations from being national to international in scope;
4. The domination by these huge multi-national corporations (MNCs) of major industries which, combined, form the monopoly sector of Western economies;
5. The replacement of market instability in this monopoly sector by corporate planning through:
   a) the manipulation of consumer demand through advertising rather than price competition;
   b) increased dependence on a highly sophisticated technology and a mobile, relatively skilled work force;
   c) integration of corporate decision-making through inter-corporate ownership and interlocking directorships.

Most fundamentally, this transition presupposes and hence entails a far more decisive and complex role for the state in relation to social and economic planning. Among its specific domestic tasks are:

1. The politically structured guidance of capital into sectors neglected by the market through subsidies, regulation, and fiscal and taxation policy;
2. The improvement of the material infrastructure in transportation, communication, urban and regional planning, housing;
3. The improvement of the non-material infrastructure: promotion of science, R and D, granting of patents;
4. Increasing the productivity of labour through universal education, vocational training, manpower retraining;

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1 John Kenneth Galbraith intelligently sets out this development. See his The Modern Industrial State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971).
2 This classification is a modification of one proposed by Jurgen Habermas in "What does a Crisis Mean Today, or Legitimation Problems in Late Capitalism", Social Research, 40 (Winter 1973), pp. 646-647.
3 "The increasingly significant role of the state in reproduction of agents is related to the concentration of capital in the monopolistic stage of capitalist development, whereby the ensuing rationalization of production and mobility of capital sets in train the demand for a labour force which is itself characterized by its mobility or transferability. The state, in centralizing and formalizing processes of reproduction, such as education, creates a labour force less tied to local and particularistic cultures; sharing in a common (yet hierarchically
5. Unproductive state consumption, e.g., in military spending.

Given this expanding role of the state, it is useful to adopt the terminology of James O'Connor, to see a capitalist economy divided into three sectors: monopoly, competitive, and state. (The persistence of a competitive sector subject to traditional market forces is not accidental—it is a necessary, though subsidiary element of monopoly capitalism.) If the state is defined broadly, then, in general terms, the labour force turns out to divide equally with one third in each sector. Chapter Four investigates the contradictions in such an arrangement and the possible resulting fiscal and/or political crisis. First, however, we must define the meaning of state and its interpretation in contemporary Quebec.

**What is the State?**

Mainstream political science has little use for this concept these days. When mentioned at all it is normally defined as the set of institutions holding the "monopoly of legitimate force". Traditional Marxism, too, has tended to dismiss this term with Marx's famous descriptive statement that "the executive of the state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".

The obviously more complex function and organization of governments under monopoly capitalism has brought renewed attention among Marxist scholars upon the state. All now agree that Marx's formulation provides simply a starting point. However, two major schools of thought have appeared on how to go from there. One stream follows Ralph Miliband in accepting elements of the popular view of the state holding the monopoly of legitimate force (under capitalism) and thus being legally constituted: "The state is a complex of institutions including government, but also including the bureaucracy (embodied in the civil service as well as in public corporations, central banks, regulatory commissions, etc.), the military and judiciary, representative assemblies, and what Miliband calls the sub-central levels of government, that is provincial executives, legislatures and  

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bureaucracies, and municipal governmental institutions.... It does not include political parties, the privately owned media.... ¹

This definition provided by Leo Panitch, though wider and therefore superior to that common to political science, is nonetheless restrictive in important respects since it more or less accepts the legal limits in existence for placing institutions within or outside the boundaries of the state. If these institutions are legally instruments of government, then they fit; if not, whatever their specific function, they are eliminated. Political parties, for example, are deliberately excluded because they lack this legal status.

An opposing definition provided by Poulantzas and based on the theories of Althusser is much broader because it proceeds along functional lines. It analyses just what constitutes the "common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" under prevailing conditions and defines the state as the sum total of the institutions that carry them out:

The system of the State is composed of several apparatuses or institutions of which certain have principally a repressive role, in the strong sense, and others a principally ideological role. The former constitute the repressive apparatus of the State... (Government, army, police, tribunals, and administration). The latter constitute the ideological apparatuses of the State, such as the Church, the political parties, the unions (with the exception of course, of the revolutionary party or trade union organizations), the schools, the mass media (newspapers, radio, television), and, from a certain point of view, the family. This is so whether they are public or private. ²

From the functional viewpoint, the legal status of institutions as public or private is immaterial. They are considered as falling within the state if they share in its function which is to "maintain the cohesion of a social system and reproduce the conditions of production of a social system by maintaining class domination". ³ Obviously, a great many more than mere governmental institutions are included under such a definition.

Both definitions create problems. The first is too restrictive: there are many other institutions in contemporary Western society that are formally "private" but in fact closely linked to and dependent upon government through grants, licences,

³ Ibid. p. 246.
certification, tax exemptions, etc. And this link exists, we suggest, precisely because they carry out state functions and thus cannot be left entirely autonomous. Panitch, for one, though defining the state in legal terms, in fact employs a functional description of state activities adopting O'Connor's useful schema which sets out two key state functions: legitimation and accumulation. What these terms mean is fairly straightforward. Legitimation has to do with "socialization" or "ideology" – the many ways in which people are induced to accept the status quo as legitimate. Accumulation refers to the whole series of activities in which public institutions directly or indirectly aid corporations to function, that is to accumulate capital. Panitch also includes a third function, coercion, the most traditional of state functions which, through the maintenance of police, courts, jails, and armies, deals with those for whom legitimation has failed. These three functions quite nicely correspond to the Poulantzas' formulation of maintaining cohesion, reproducing the conditions of production, and maintaining class domination.

It is difficult to see how one can reconcile a functional description of state activities with a legal definition of the state. Private institutions certainly carry out these three functions, just as do public ones, especially the legitimation function. The nurse in both the public and private hospital, the teacher in public and private school, the bureaucrat in a reformist trade union and his counterpart in the Ministry of Labour; the broadcaster with the CBC and with CTV, the social worker employed by the state and the one working for a private agency, the city policemen and the "rent-a-cop" – all serve the state.

Yet the reticence to adopt a functional definition of the state is quite understandable, for it appears to lead to an almost inapplicable definition. If the state can "from a certain point of view" include even the family, then is the definition not so all-encompassing and unchanging as to be useless? Our own conceptualization aims at a compromise or rather a point of convergence between the two definitions. First of all the legal institutions of the state—that is the government and public sector generally—are the central nervous system of the state in carrying out its functions. We can next presume that other nominally private institutions, to the extent that they carry out state functions, will be linked to the co-ordinating governmental/public institutions in determinable structural ways which do not necessarily follow along the legal lines of public institutions. For example, Althusser lists the following "ideological state apparatuses (ISA's)", that is, institutions carrying out the legitimating function:

The religious ISA (the system of different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different political
parties), the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.) the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.).

The question of whether these are in fact state institutions as Althusser assumes must be answered 'yes and no'. They may be initially conceived of as potential state institutions. Only an empirical study of the actual links of each to government and public sector would reveal the extent to which the potential is realized. For example, we would wish to know the amount of government subsidization of churches, private schools, political parties, voluntary associations, and the arts. We would wish to know the extent of government regulation of trade unions, broadcasting, and professional organizations. Only in this way is it possible to speak concretely of an expanding role of the state.

In this conceptualization, the state is a continuum with the central co-ordinating structures at one pole and other institutions carrying out state functions at various points along the continuum. Their distance from the pole depends upon the magnitude of their concrete links to the governmental structures and legal apparatus. If the sum total of societal institutions was envisaged on a plane, the state could be portrayed as a series of concentric circles with the most pivotal state institutions at the core and those with the most tenuous links in a grey zone on the periphery. The existence of this grey zone means that no entirely precise and determinate application is possible. Nevertheless, such a definition does overcome the obstacles of the previous formulations and serves its purpose in the analysis of the Quebec state.

One final theoretical question still remains. How can we justify any functional definition of the state? How can we prove that the state, in Poulantzas' words, "maintains cohesion ... by maintaining class domination"? The question demands a more lengthy discussion than is possible here, but an outline of our position follows.

While we clearly reject any notion of the state being above classes as a kind of neutral and distant arbiter among competing social forces, neither do we accept the equally unfounded notion of the state as the direct instrument of a consciously organized ruling class. For one thing, the different elements that make up the dominant class often differ on non-fundamental but still important immediate political questions. For example, the grande bourgeoisie in the modern monopoly sector and the moyenne bourgeoisie in the traditional competitive sector will likely be opposed on matters relating to social welfare legislation, recognition of labour unions, new technology research and development, tariffs, and energy policy. Therefore, if it is to fulfill its functions under monopoly capitalism, the state must be allowed a wide area of relative autonomy.

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Of course, the bourgeoisie is by no means merely a spectator in the working out of class interests in the political process. William Domhoff usefully lists four processes of its involvement and demonstrates how they work, citing the specific experience of the United States. These are:

1. The special-interest process, which has to do with the various means utilized by wealthy individuals, specific corporations, and specific sectors of the economy to satisfy their narrow, short-run needs;
2. The policy-planning process, which has to do with the development and implementation of general policies that are important to the interests of the ruling class as a whole;
3. The candidate-selection process, which has to do with the ways in which members of the ruling class ensure that they have "access" to the politicians who are elected to office;
4. The ideology process, which has to do with the formation, dissemination, and enforcement of attitudes and assumptions which permit the continued existence of policies and politicians favourable to the wealth, income, status, and privileges of members of the ruling class.  

In addition, those who own the means of production have what amounts to a veto power over governmental action. This power is unrelated to any concerted actions on the part of this class, but exists instead in the simple fact that under capitalism the government must maintain a certain level of "business confidence". It must inhibit uncertainty  

because, as individuals controlling specific corporations, members of the bourgeoisie would hold back or divert investment and thus collectively (though not conspiratorially) threaten to bring economic depression. Only when there is a potentially mobilized working class to which it can point, can a government win over the confidence of business leaders to policies not directly linked to maximum profit, since such policies are actually in the interests of the bourgeoisie, as "worse" might befall them otherwise.

In this way, there is a structural connection between the bourgeoisie and the state which derives not from some mystical theory but from a very practical reality. The economic powers-that-be do not need to mobilize politically to defend their interests before government; other classes do. This being the case, little of importance is ever learned about the state through talk of politicians "selling out", or being "bought out".

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The Transformation of the Quebec State

Transformation from competitive to monopoly capitalism comes gradually to Canada, the Canadian state having early on developed the structures of state participation in capital accumulation. Panitch argues that since the earliest days, "Canada was never a laissez-faire state". The federal state:

has provided a favourable fiscal and monetary climate for economic growth via private enterprise. It has underwritten the private risks of production at public expense through grants, subsidies, fast write-off depreciation allowances, etc. (Confederation itself was produced by the desire to facilitate capital accumulation by guaranteeing loans from London to build the railways.) It has played a crucial role, via control of land policy and immigration policy, in creating a capitalist labour market, and especially in recent decades in absorbing the social cost of production of capitalist enterprise, through sanitation services, medicare, unemployment insurance, educational facilities. And it has directly provided the technical infrastructure for capitalist development when this was too risky or costly for private capital to undertake itself. State ownership of railroads and public utilities and state construction and operation of airports and highways were never undertaken as ends in themselves with the aim of managing or controlling the economy, but always with a view of facilitating further capital accumulation in the private sphere to the end of economic growth". 

After World War II, the economic transition to monopoly capitalism accelerated requiring the expansion of these state activities and, more important, their co-ordination and rationalization. During the immediate postwar period, Ottawa responded to centralization in economic, social, and fiscal policy by implementing recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission on Dominion Provincial relations and of its own 1945 White Paper on Employment and Income. However, the national reality of Canada, as reflected especially in Quebec's refusal to go along in the 1950s, severely restricted the application of this policy. Constitutional authority in most cases lay with the province – if she chose to use it. The Duplessis administration in Quebec usually did not; but it was even more determined to prevent its use by Ottawa. This was spelled out plainly in the mid-fifties when Quebec published the Tremblay Report, its answer to Rowell-Sirois.

Constitutional realities being what they were, the rapid postwar growth in the state brought on by the transition to monopoly capitalism, (as reflected in the fact that while total direct state employment at all levels in Canada was 334,840 in 1951, by 1974 it had risen to 1,186,067), has taken place mainly at the provincial and the provincially regulated municipal levels. This has been especially true since

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1 Panitch, op. cit., p. 14 (emphasis included).
1960 and the defeat of Duplessis' *Union nationale* government in Quebec. In 1961, the federal government directly employed 231,136 workers while the provinces employed 200,343, (and the municipalities 181,521). In 1974, the figures were 349,340 for the federal government, 449,825 for the provinces, (and 386,226 for municipalities). ¹

The historical experience of Quebec puts into perspective the particular developments accompanying the transformation of the state in Quebec and explains why the view of the state has traditionally been a negative one. Throughout most of its history, the Quebec state apparatus never took on a positive identification with the nation. The Quebec nation came into existence before the emergence of industrial capitalism, and long before the possibility of self-government began to present itself in the middle of the nineteenth century. The opportunities to participate in Canadian statehood and to elect representatives to a provincial government with limited powers were not at all enthusiastically embraced in Quebec. For the most part, political participation, apart from the avenue it provided to jobs, careers, and contracts, was seen negatively – viewed as a distasteful necessity for defending the nation from external, particularly cultural, challenges. As economic decisions lay elsewhere, among the English-speaking owning class, the tasks of the nation were primarily cultural and social. These lay in the domain of the traditional Church-based Quebecois institutions left to them after the British conquest and the defeat of the rebellion. The job of the state apparatus was, when called upon now and then, to defend these cultural institutions from encroachment. This was true of the Quebecois' view of both their relation to the federal government and of the "proper" role of the provincial government. It also partly accounts for the success of such seemingly different politicians as Duplessis and St. Laurent.

Of course, the Quebec government did its part toward fostering capital accumulation when called upon by members of the business class. The most famous example was probably the Duplessis government's 1948 concession to the American-owned Iron Ore Co. of the rights to the iron of Ungava. Such acts transferring natural resources were seen not as political but as private transactions conducted in English by gentlemen, of no interest to any but those directly concerned. Aside from such private concessions, public interventions by the Quebec government into the economy were few and far between even in comparison, say, to Ontario. Economic development was frequently postulated as a political goal, but the state was excluded from almost any shareholding – let alone directing-role. ² In 1896, the Quebec government directly employed between 200 and 700 persons. ³

For a long time, French Canada had a uniquely capitalist economy. Though the provincial government had its jurisdiction over services recognized in the 1867 constitution, its role was limited to voting and administering laws, to watching over certain sectors of economic life like insurance companies and to advising certain branches of economic activity like agriculture and colonization. It helped more than intervened in the administration and use of resources. One of the earliest forms of direct intervention seems to have been the Liquor Commission founded in 1921.... There was also the creation of a fund for accidents on the job in 1932.... In 1950, the Montreal Transportation Commission was created. ¹

Aside from Hydro-Québec, that great symbol of the Quiet Revolution, contemporary Quebec's achievements in this area have been minimal, compared to the federal state's "pioneering" accomplishments in accumulation related activities. In the area of health, education, welfare, information, and entertainment of individuals, however, which is more usually associated with the function of legitimation, the story is quite different. Just as Canada was ahead of Western European states in fostering accumulation, it was notably lagging in the area of legitimation, especially in social welfare and education". ²

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Quebec state was not entirely absent from the social policy arena. However, its presence was limited, reluctant, and usually negative. Where unavoidable, the state had become involved in programs to protect individuals in such areas as liquor sales, water, and public hygiene. In related economic activities, the concentration was on the patronage-oriented building of highways and bridges, the encouragement of agriculture, and the colonization of the land. Thus, a door was wide open for the new Quebec state institutions of the Quiet Revolution. It was not a question of co-ordinating, and in some cases shifting to the provincial level, activities already proceeding through the federal government. It was rather a question of making the Quebec state something no state had been to Quebecers before – the instrument of their apparent individual and collective needs. Already in the 1945 to 1950 period, there was a shift in Quebec government spending priorities from natural resources to health and education, but much of the latter was simply transferred to private bodies such as the Church-based school and hospital boards. The 1960s saw a still remarkable increase in overall spending by the Quebec state, as well as the government take-over of the health and education sector. Quebec government revenues from all sources including state expenses and services went from $758 million in 1961 to

$4,674 million in 1972. Per capita Quebec state expenditure went from $160 to $760.  

During this period, expenditures in education went from $179 million to $1,376 million and in social affairs from $204 million to $1,775 million. In 1961, education accounted for 24.2 percent and social affairs for 26.8 percent of provincial spending. In 1971, the figures were 28.3 percent and 39.4 percent.

Between 1961 and 1970 provincial government expenditures quadrupled, while federal government expenditures in Quebec just doubled, with the result that in 1970 the provincial government was spending roughly four billion dollars compared to the federal government's three billion dollars in Quebec.

The total government budget (including provincial and federal state-owned enterprises, school boards, municipalities, hospitals, etc.) tripled in revenues and expenditures from 1961 to 1970, while the Quebec GNP only doubled in the same period. This means that while the entire public sector accounted for one third of all expenditures and 30 percent of all revenues in 1961, these figures rose to 43.4 percent for revenues and 45.9 percent for expenditures in 1970. The Quebec government itself in 1975 directly paid out 15 percent of the total amount of salaries received in Quebec. Quebec government revenues at this point accounted for 11.1 percent of Quebec's GNP as compared to 9.5 percent in 1965 and 6.1 percent in 1958.

The expansion of the federal government's role under monopoly capitalism took place over a longer period and quite imperceptibly. In Quebec, since the transition came later, it was also more rapid than elsewhere in Canada or in the West in general. And the fact that the people of Quebec, unlike those of other provinces, constitute a nation is even more important. In a very few years, Quebec developed not only the administrative and technical structure of a modern state but also much of its cultural apparatus in education, the mass media, and the arts. The sum total of all these changes transforming the Quebec state apparatus from a secondary national institution to a primary one resulted in what observers term the Quiet Revolution. Nowhere else in Canada did the emergence of the state to embrace monopoly capitalism snowball into such a revolutionary social phenomenon. In Quebec, everyone knows about the Quiet Revolution; everyone

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2. Ibid.
3. These figures are based on those compiled by Kemal Wassef of the CNTU research department in 1971. See B. R. Lemoine, "The Growth of the Quebec State", in Roussopoulos, (ed.), *op.cit.*
knows that with it Quebec society crossed over from one historical reality to another.

The New State Institutions

The primacy of the Quebec state as a national institution brought about through the Quiet Revolution is apparent on several levels. There is the new official terminology. For example, Quebec has a National Assembly rather than a Provincial Legislature; its Prime Minister (Premier) delivers an Inaugural Address replacing the Lieutenant Governor's Speech from the Throne. In official titles, the word "national" abounds while "provincial" is becoming rather scarce.

The second level is the inner circle or core of state institutions and activities, namely government, administration, and the public sector. A concise survey of these institutions follows, stressing those features unique to Quebec. Below we shall explore more fundamental changes not to be found at this level but rather in the periphery or grey zone of state activities, in many cases only indirectly linked to government and administration. It is outside the "public" sphere – in the trade unions, the media, the arts, the political parties, the citizens' or "popular" groups—that much of the real transformation of the state and Quebec society takes place. This transformation must, however, be understood in more complex and subtle terms than merely as increases in expenditure or numbers of employees. It entails, for example, profound modifications in class composition and relations.

Little distinguishes Quebec's parliamentary institutions from those in Ottawa or the other provinces save the new terminology and, related to it, the stripping away of much of the traditional pageantry and ceremony. A detailed description of the basic elements of Quebec's parliamentary system is set out in a recent text by André Bernard. ¹ In spite of new terminology, the National Assembly operates along the usual parliamentary lines—private bills, fifteen standing committees (commissions), three readings, etc. One unique feature is Quebec's use of parliamentary commissions as sounding boards for public reaction to controversial legislation, such as the Charter of the French Language, by holding public hearings before such legislation is debated in the Assembly. The Legislative Council, the old upper house, was at long last abolished in 1970. The National Assembly now constitutes a single chamber with 110 members each elected in single member constituencies.

Quebec's electoral legislation is also quite unique and, where it resembles that of other provinces and the federal government, it was they who followed Quebec's

¹ André Bernard, La politique, au Canada et au Québec (Montréal : Presses de l'université du Québec, 1976).
lead. For example, Quebec, in the mid-sixties, was the first to bring in statutory reimbursement of campaign expenses for bona fide candidates and guaranteed financial support to recognized political parties. In addition, legislation is presently under consideration which would decidedly tighten up the electoral process. This legislation limits political contribution to individuals, increases state subsidies to political parties, and generally provides for greater state regulation of Quebec party activities. Furthermore, in principle the PQ government remains committed to significant changes to the entire parliamentary set-up, such as the institution of a form of proportional representation in the electoral system and the use of plebiscites and referenda.

As far as the legal and judicial apparatus is concerned, the institution of the civil as opposed to common-law tradition in non-criminal matters makes the Quebec system distinctive. At all but the highest levels, it separates the Civil Courts – the Provincial Court (including its small claims' division) and the Superior Court – from the Criminal Courts – Municipal, Sessions of the Peace, Superior Court criminal side, and Social Welfare Court. The highest court for both civil and criminal cases is the Quebec Court of Appeal. As with the other provinces, two federal courts, the Supreme Court of Canada and the Federal Court, complete the hierarchical picture.

Formal executive authority lies with the Crown and its Quebec representative, the Lieutenant-Governor. Real executive power is in the hands of the executive council – the cabinet, a body now consisting of twenty-five members (as opposed to seven in 1868) appointed by the Prime Minister (Premier) who is the leader of the party that forms the government. In 1975, there were twenty-one departments: Cultural Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs, Municipal Affairs, Social Affairs, Agriculture, Communication, Education, Environment, Finance, Public Service, Immigration, Industry and Commerce, Financial Institutions, Companies and Cooperatives, Justice, Revenue, Natural Resources, Lands and Forests, Tourism, Fish and Game, Labour, and Public Works.

When he came to power at the end of 1976, René Lévesque distributed departmental responsibilities in several new combinations among the various ministers and also established a new Ministry of Energy. The most significant innovation was the appointment of four planning ministers in Cultural Development, Social Development, Economic Development, and Regional Development, as well as a minister responsible for the reform of parliamentary structures, to co-ordinate policy and plan program priorities. Several key existing departments are themselves creatures of the 1960s and 1970s: Natural Resources (1961), Cultural Affairs (1967), Immigration (1970), and Environment (1974).

The expansion of administrative activity is more marked outside the formal departments as the staggering increase in the number of para-state boards, committees, and the like, attests. A 1973 study lists sixty-six councils such as the
Superior Council of Education; seven tribunals, such as those in the Department of Labour; ten regulatory bodies, such as the Minimum Wage Commission; twenty-six financial control bodies, such as SOQUEM or SOQUIP; twenty-two controlling bodies of a non-financial type, such as the Consumer Protection Bureau, and seven central service dispensing bodies such as the Régie now (Office) de la langue française.\(^1\) Major social measures of the 1960s were Hospital Insurance (1961), the Quebec Pension Plan (1965), Social Assistance (1969), and Medicare (1970). \(^2\)

Apart from its rapid growth during this period, the Quebec state experienced powerful trends toward both decentralization and centralization. Decentralization came as an unintended result of the mushrooming of state institutions and services, as well as in specific reforms in response to the fact that these services existed. Many of the newly created boards were regional in their mandates; furthermore, government departments set up regional and local offices in great numbers. Municipalities became more active, spending more money and hiring many new workers.

Partly to counterbalance this decentralization trend, important centralizing institutions were created. Quebec followed the U.S. example of adopting PPBS (the Planning, Programming, and Budgetary System) to streamline its fiscal procedures at the end of the 1960s. A hundred and fifty specific programs were identified among the various administrative activities. These were grouped into fifty sectors based on common objectives. The sectors in turn were split into fifteen "domains" with shared general goals, and these finally broken down into four major "missions": administrative, economic, cultural and educational, and social. The point of this exercise was to justify planning and budgeting on the basis of specific, general objectives and co-ordinate this process within the entire administrative process. (As elsewhere, the overall effect of PPBS was less than expected).

A further example of centralization during this period is the creation in 1961 of the Quebec Treasury Board to co-ordinate expenditures in the cabinet, and soon afterwards the Treasury Board Secretariat, in effect creating a department of financial co-ordination and management. The establishment of an Executive Council (Cabinet) Secretariat in 1968 is another example. In 1961, the Economic Orientation Council (COEQ) * was established which in 1969 became the Planning

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\(^2\) Gow, op. cit., p. 393.

* This acronym, obviously, does not correspond to the first letters of Economic Orientation Council. Instead, it corresponds to those of the official French title and is known as such in Quebec. This is the practice that shall be followed throughout except in those instances, such as CNTU, where the acronym formed from the English title is sufficiently well known.
and Development Office (OPDQ). To counterbalance the trend toward the
decentralization of activities to the municipalities, Quebec governments of the late
1960s and early 1970s rather haphazardly set up metropolitan governments in the
Montreal, Quebec, and Hull regions, and also attempted to rationalize certain
municipal services through indirect provincial government control, for example in
the formation of the Public Security Council to administer the police in the
Montreal urban community.

The Civil Service

Changes in the organization of the Quebec civil service are relevant here as well. It
was only in 1944 that a civil service commission was instituted to centralize and
standardize recruiting and it was not until 1959 that it grew sufficiently strong to
ensure that merit was the basis of recruitment and promotion. In 1960, early Quiet
Revolution reforms initiated by Paul Sauvé and completed by Jean Lesage,
brought further rationalization in civil service job classification. Though it did not
end patronage as proclaimed, it did go far toward job security for civil servants.
Newly elected governments can shift the personnel in very few positions outside
the immediate political entourage of the ministers.

In general, there is little to distinguish Quebec's administrative apparatus and
structure. An organizational chart of departments with their allied commissions or
bureaus takes the form of the standard bureaucratic pyramid: a "line" organization
extending from one of the two assistant deputy ministers through to the personnel
of the regional bureaus that serve its clientele, and a staff organization under the
other providing accounting, personnel, supply, documentation, legal counsel, etc.

There are, however, certain aspects of the Quebec civil service which are not
revealed in a flow-chart diagram but turn out to be especially significant. First, the
public sector bureaucracy is almost entirely francophone Quebecois. Second, in
1965, in one of the most far-reaching decisions of the Quiet Revolution, civil
servants, including those in the professional categories, were permitted to join
trade unions – and they did. Third is the remarkable spread of various forms of
public consultation. Boards elected by the population or selected by interested
organizations are continuously consulted and often directly participate in the
process of public administration. This is particularly the case in such departments
as Cultural Affairs, Education, Social Affairs, Agriculture, Industry and
Commerce, Financial Institutions, Justice, and in the OPDQ and other regional
development bodies.

1 Annuaire du Québec, 1974, op. cit., p. 133.
Finally, and at least partly in response to the increasing bureaucratization and syndicalization of middle level public servants, governments of the 1960s brought "technocrats" or "super-bureaucrats", into the highest positions in some government departments, state enterprises, and other public agencies. These technocrats played key roles as unofficial government advisors while at the same time acting as high-level administrators. (Some, like Banque provincial president Michel Bélanger and former Deputy Finance Minister Pierre Goyette, as well as Marcel Faribault in an earlier period, have gone on to high level positions in private industry; or, in a few important cases, such as that of Jacques Parizeau and Claude Morin, entered the Cabinet.) The original intent in bringing in the technocrats clearly included the establishment of a new political link between the government and Quebec's administrative institutions. However, the effect, especially in the latter days of the Liberal regime of Robert Bourassa, was sometimes the opposite of the intent. While the underlying class context of technocratic/bureaucratic tensions is yet to be discussed and is required for any full explanation, an example of the problems that resulted would nonetheless be illustrative.

In 1976, the Quebec Government Professionals' Union (CNTU) insisted that a clause be added to their collective agreement then under negotiation to the effect that: "No disciplinary measure can be laid down on an employee who refuses to sign a technical document or stand up for an employer's politic" (sic). In explaining their case, the union cited the example of "Operation Dignity" in the lower St. Lawrence, in which popular resistance was organized against a Liberal government decision "to close villages, regroup lands and rationalize wood-cutting in Lower St. Lawrence. Against their own beliefs, professionals have been forced to tell the local population it would be more advantageous for them to shut down their co-operative pulp mills, to let CIP have the wood-cutting monopoly and live on 'welfare', at Matane," Hence the union's conclusion:

Unintentionally, professionals have been forced to struggle against the population in order to realize a governmental scheme which, the majority of them could not approve, in all conscience. If professionals win their case during the present negotiations, the conscience cases where, in the professional's mind, the population's interest opposes a governmental scheme, will not happen again. 1

A few months earlier, federal Treasury Board president, Jean Chrétien, issued a public statement on the relative merits of the federal and Quebec bureaucracies. Chrétien was quoted in a Treasury Board release as saying, among other things, that Quebecers had more faith in federal civil servants than their provincial counterparts. And he went on:

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1 Intercommunication Bulletin Number 10, Common Front, Public Sector, September 1975. (The grammatical errors in the quotation are, unfortunately, in the text itself).
I think that one of the factors, which we cannot see at the provincial level, at least in Quebec, is that Ottawa civil servants have a better sense of what is the state. They work for the state. ... This is probably the cause for the fact that the administration in Ottawa is better than the one to which I've just referred. ¹

The response of Jacques Doré, president of the Quebec Government Professionals' Union, in a letter addressed to the minister and published in *La Presse* on August 12, 1975, reveals the kinds of weaknesses in the link between the technocrats and Quebec civil servants to be found at the top of the state structure created in the Quiet Revolution. It also helps to explain the attitude expressed in the union's position. Here are several excerpts in translation:

It is perhaps true that provincial civil servants *appear* to lack what you call the "sense of the state"... However...

It must be said that almost unanimously the civil servants have concluded that the work asked of them and on which they often laboured for months has found its way to the bottom of drawers to be forgotten.

They have also concluded that the normal form of organization and work in their ministries have been short-circuited by the "special occasional staffers hired by the ministers'... cabinets".

They have also concluded that Quebec government programs have usually been tied to the man who conceived them and not integrated into the structures...

They have also concluded that the government has a weakness for "contractual" firms that generally repeat the work already done in the ministries...

They have concluded that the Quebec state apparatus was being lost in "tight controlitis" to such a point that many suggest that 50 percent of civil servants are there just for surveillance over the other 50 percent.

Doré concluded the latter rather presumptuously: "When one comes to understand all this, one has the right to ask who lacks the 'sense of the state', the civil servants or the government"? When the union representing new middle class government employees takes upon itself to question whether a regime acts in the best interests of the state, then the problem is not simply administrative. Here is a glimpse of a political and structural crisis within the very workings of the state, which must be understood at levels other than that of formal structures. A theoretical analysis of the state in general and the Quebec state in particular this time must consider the contradictions in class composition and functioning, and the crises potentially resulting from them. While the question legitimately falls within the subject matter of this chapter, our understanding of its importance at the present juncture merits it a separate consideration.

¹ "Chrétien est bien fier de son monde", *La Presse*, August 12, 1975, p. F1. (Author's translation.)
CHAPTER IV:
THE CRISIS OF THE STATE
AND THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

This chapter seeks to link Quebec's national, economic (class), and political (state) development within one concrete analytical framework from which explanations will be drawn to be applied to, and tested against, the events and experience recounted in later chapters. The presentation of such an argument requires a moderately high level of abstraction. The reader is forewarned and also assured that the development of such an argument here will in fact permit a far more concrete approach in the chapters to follow.

The Capitalist State in Crisis

The new role and responsibilities of the state under monopoly capitalism obviously place additional pressures upon it. What is in question is the capacity of the state as we know it in general, and that of the Quebec state in particular, to cope with these pressures and successfully carry out its tasks. This is the most fundamental question raised by the O'Connor analysis which, in summary, states:

Multinational corporations, though employing only one-third of the nation's work force, produce two-thirds of its goods and services. They earn the highest profits, show the highest productivity, and have the most capital available for investment in new products and plants. Controlling the lion's share of investment capital, they have the predominant voice in determining what kinds of jobs are available and where they are located...

The rise of the giant corporations is accompanied by the decline of competitive industries, which are taken over or forced out by the greater productivity and marketing capacity of the better-financed corporations. Plants "run away" to low-
wage areas or foreign countries... creating occupation patterns that confine growing numbers of workers to low-wage, unstable employment...

The corporate sector has squeezed small business through its greater productivity and consequent ability to pay higher wages; yet it has employed a declining portion of the nation's work force. As a result, the public sector has been forced to take up the slack, providing jobs where the private sector will not, providing assistance and welfare where no jobs are available, and supplying the services needed by the unemployed and the 'working poor' in the low-wage competitive sector...

However, while government seems to be taking the initiative, acting (at times) affirmatively, it is in fact working within the very tight constraints set by the giant corporations which control the revenues it will receive, the interest rate at which it must borrow, the employment it must provide and the general level of economic activity within which it will operate.

The government's fiscal crisis is a direct consequence of these economic forces: government revenues decline as employment in the high-wage, high-profit corporate sector declines (relatively) and incomes and profits in the small business sector are reduced still further.

At the same time, government expenditures rise, as more and more pressures are imposed on it, both to meet the needs of the corporate sector and to take care of those people and small business which corporate action has squeezed out of economic life...

As workers are driven from decaying small towns into the cities, or into the sprawling suburbs, the public sector must provide more roads, more recreation facilities, more mass transit, medical facilities, child care, and urban renewal...

The declining quality of life leads to growing demands on government, especially from city-dwellers, for social services, better public service jobs, and so on. To keep social peace, government at all levels has acceded to these demands with the result that taxes have risen to pay these growing social costs while the costs have risen even faster. This creates a simultaneous fiscal crisis at all levels of government. ¹

O'Connor cites as manifestations of this fiscal crisis examples of taxpayers' refusal to pay for these increased social costs, and goes on to discuss resulting strikes by previously passive public service workers themselves helping to pay these costs through high inflation. On the whole, O'Connor's analysis is quite

useful, for example, in clarifying the link between Quebec's recurring trouble with public service unions in the early 1970s and the high inflation of the time.

Beyond the specifics of a serious fiscal crisis looms a more general malady, one that O'Connor terms the crisis of legitimacy, which sees the weakening of the capacity of the state to "create the conditions of social harmony". One important elaboration of this idea is found in the work of Jurgen Habermas. A crisis, notes Habermas, occurs when an individual or a society perceives a loss of ability to act freely, or develops a sense of being trapped by uncontrollable forces. Habermas argues that when the state acts as it must to assume burdens generated by advanced monopoly capitalism, it violates key structural principles of liberal or market capitalism. The state's orbit widens too quickly, overrunning the fundamental value bases which traditionally underpin its legitimacy:

The state cannot simply take over the cultural system; in fact, the expansion of areas for state planning creates problems for things that are culturally taken for granted. "Meaning" is an increasingly scarce resource. Which is why those expectations that are governed by concrete and identifiable needs – i.e., that can be checked by their success – keep mounting in the civil population. The rising level of aspirations is proportionate to the growing need for legitimation. The resource of "value", siphoned off by the tax office, has to make up for the scanty resource of "meaning". Missing legitimations have to be replaced by social rewards such as money, time, and security. A crisis of legitimation arises as soon as the demands for these rewards mount more rapidly than the available mass of values, or if expectations come about that are different and cannot be satisfied by those categories of rewards conforming with the present system.

The accelerative thrust of an aggressively modernizing state attempting to absorb the cultural activities of traditionally basic legitimacy-creating and legitimacy-sustaining institutions debases the real value of that which it absorbs. When family, church, parish, and country school no longer provide essential social cement in the form of unchallenged dissemination of tradition, then the state's absorptive capacity alone is available to fill the cracks and fissures of cultural disintegration. Either the state serves higher purposes which must at least appear to arise outside itself, or else it serves man's baser needs and wants – those most readily expressed by demands for material goods or, most directly, coin of the realm. So long as the state can deliver, all is well. But when a state actively presides over the demise of institutions which satisfy the spirit, it unleashes appetites for things of the flesh. Its inability to deliver increasingly becomes more difficult to clothe in the rhetoric of public interest and common sacrifice. Through this process, the state becomes the focus for all things social and cultural as well as

2 Habermas, *op.cit.*, p. 659.
economic. Even the loss of an important athletic contest – to take an extreme but not rare case – reflects squarely on the government: where are the training facilities, the subsidies, etc.? In effect, public pressure never really lets up; by fits and starts it intensifies.

Faced with conditions of fiscal crisis, the monopoly capitalist state cannot be expected over the long haul to deliver the goods. Consequently, a crisis of legitimacy appears inevitable. Additional factors revolving around the national question are at work in Quebec as well. To go from a general understanding of the crisis to the particulars of the Quebec case, a fruitful way to proceed is to outline the different models of legitimation potentially available to a capitalist society, and consider their applicability in Quebec given what we know of Quebec's present nation/class configuration.

To begin with, legitimation is imperative because coercion does not constitute an alternative readily available to the monopoly capitalist state. In fact, recourse to coercion signifies the failure of legitimation in a given instance, and its continued widespread use, we suggest, is unsuitable for monopoly capitalism. Fascism cannot resolve the crisis of legitimation because it ultimately relies on coercion as a regular means of maintaining order and cohesion. This is because implicit in capitalist economic relations is the ideology of "economic freedom," the voluntarily-entered-into labour contract.

Political reality must not give the lie in any direct and long-term sense to marketplace mythology. Even the most oppressive regimes, as they advance along the economic road toward monopoly capitalism, at least begin to pay lip service to the promise of democracy "when the people are ready". (It is for this reason, incidentally, that the coercive potential of Quebec state institutions is not separately explored but rather comes up in later discussions of certain events as barometric manifestations of the crisis of legitimacy, for example in the repressive legislation brought in by the *Union nationale* between 1967 and 1969 and by the Liberals, from 1972 to 1976.)

While varying national cultural traditions ensure that legitimation processes take different specific configurations in all societies, certain regularities are nevertheless discernible. It is possible to postulate two basic models of legitimation in Western capitalist societies today and, by breaking one of these down into its two variants, derive three separate types.

1. The European model: ^1^ The existence of social classes is publicly recognized and both manifested and moderated through the party system

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^1^ It should be clear that by terming the model "European" we are not referring to each and every Western European state. There are of course exceptions, such as Belgium, for example, which could best be termed consociational.
as well as the actions and public declarations of trade unions and employers' associations. Limited bargaining takes place between the classes through these organizations, resulting in the winning of intermittent, "welfare state" gains for the working class but also its co-optation through "social compacts", economic planning boards, and the like.

2. The North American model: The existence of classes and the class role of the state is first obfuscated and then sublimated through the selective articulation, diffusion, and incorporation of national or particular "interests" by and through the various state institutions. The two major variants are:

A. Liberal Nationalism: The gradual development and consolidation of an essentially direct but unchallenged link between private property, the corporations, national consciousness and state allegiance – as in the U.S.

B. Liberal Consociationalism: The mystification of the monopoly capitalist economic structure and the ultimately subordinate role of the state through the decentralization of administrative powers and the shared hegemony over the national political arena by elite groups expressing and accommodating "interests" in the form of regional, ethnic or religious demands and grievances – as in Canada.¹

The above models are extremely sketchy, but should serve the necessary analytical purpose. It is important first to note that inherent in each of these systems of legitimation are certain real or potential contradictions. In the European context, manifestations of class contradictions are often quite direct: class conflicts break out in sometimes serious disputes (for example, in France in 1968). They are then temporarily resolved (usually through the election of social democratic regimes) just to begin anew again. Essentially, what is legitimized is a negotiated compromise which is then "sold" on the basis of the material gains it appears to have won for the working class. In this system, those most directly engaged in the state's work of legitimation frequently hold political office through democratic or labour governments and are thus assured of a solid position within the social hierarchy. From this position they not only "sell" capitalist class relations in general but do so concretely on the basis of the particular settlements and accommodations they themselves have negotiated and arbitrated.

Habermas' characterization is particularly accurate when applied to instances of this European type. Moreover, his more general assertions serve to support a

¹ See Garth Stevenson, "Federalism and the Political Economy of the Canadian State", in Panitch (ed.), op.cit.
conclusion that seems warranted by current trends: namely, that the European model is becoming more prevalent and represents the achievement of sophisticated maturity in the system of legitimation under monopoly capitalism. From this perspective, the persistence of a North American variant in a given society, say Quebec, represents an exceptional case, and an exploration of its causes and consequences should help clarify the extent and specific form of the expected crisis surrounding the role of the state.

In the North American model, class divisions are stopped short of general cultural legitimacy. The task is to obscure a good part of the reality of these divisions behind other culturally valid symbols, such as race, and sustain them through the required mythology. Since classes are seldom acknowledged to exist, few negotiated compromises are required; social democracy does not usually even attain the status of a necessary evil. Legitimation takes the form less of class compromise than of preserving a particular mythology. In the Liberal Nationalist U.S., the key myths are "Americanism", expressed as upward mobility via the free enterprise system (which everyone, including workers on wages, apparently has a stake in), and its political arm, the free world. The opponents of the status quo are thus not only economically unorthodox but politically untrustworthy, even treasonous. Simply put, "socialism is un-American". The objective contradictions of course still exist, however much they may be sublimated in the popular consciousness. Indeed, one may argue that the inevitable contradictions and resultant tensions are manifested in the United States today, for example in the exploitative decay of the natural environment, the general alienation which characterizes urban life, the inadequacy of even minimal state welfare services, recurrent outbreaks of senseless violence, and continuing racism.

On the whole, there appears to be something unique in U.S. popular culture which suggests that the combination of historical factors accounting for its peculiar form of "legitimacy through boosterism" are unlikely to be found elsewhere. Very briefly, this key factor derives from the absence of an aristocracy and the operation of a strong "tame-the-wilderness", frontier ideology at the point at which the nation-state came into existence. This cultural link created between the laissez-faire individualism that characterized the predominantly petit bourgeois, continentally-imperialist society of the early U.S. and the "manifest destiny" identity of the nation-state, has been sustained through certain compatible elements that came later, such as the development of consumerism.

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The consociational variant, of which Canada is the prime example, also exploits founding myths, although the subtle balance between opposing pressures requires a much more low-keyed culture of legitimation. In Canada, individuals are integrated not into the society as a whole but as functionally localist and loyalist constituents of national, religious, racial, or linguistic subunits. The society is a unity of two founding nations, three linguistic communities, four religious groups, five regions, and so on. The state structures do not serve class interests, but rather represent and integrate the constituent groups through parliamentary chambers, political parties, and constitutional arrangements. Because integration and representation are ultimately in contradiction, they must be carefully balanced. Too much integration might in fact bring the exploited classes together on a broad basis. Too much representation risks deadlock and the consequent breakdown of the political system. Hence, a diplomatic raid-course is always sought. Particular interests are voiced – but never too loudly; they are then satisfied – but only to the extent of encouraging their renewed assertion in a similar manner a short time later. Politics is almost inevitably dull, short-sighted and characterized by petty public squabbling and secret backroom dealing among regional bosses. National political figures seldom emerge as leaders of the nation in any real sense; ordinary citizens are usually "turned off" by politics. And of course, in the case of Canada vis-à-vis first Britain and now the U.S., such a society falls easy prey to foreign cultural and economic domination.

Quebec, of course, has always been the pivot of Canadian consociationalism, the minimal constitutional guarantees of its national survival have been seized upon by provincial empire builders from sea to sea throughout Canadian history. After 1837, the intellectual leaders of Quebec – the priests, lawyers, teachers, writers, and politicians – became model consociationalists. They were extremely effective at evoking the rhetoric of national consciousness but diluting its content and restraining its implementation in collective action.

Liberal nationalism as in the U.S. could never take root in Quebec. The traditional elites were at best lukewarm in their attitude toward the materialism and individualism that free enterprise stood for. When their Conservative Nationalism, on which consociational legitimation mainly rested, came to be replaced by Liberal Nationalism at the end of the 1950s, this new and relatively weak ideology was from the beginning far more sympathetic to welfare statist principles than is conceivable in the U.S. On the other hand, legitimation through consociationalism is feasible only if the national particularisms are kept in balance. Under the ancien régime prior to this time, Quebec's elite, by carving out comfortable niches in it, effectively had come to terms with the imposed status quo. The nationalism it taught and expressed did not threaten the legitimacy of the Canadian state. Now, however, Quebec nationalism took a political form, becoming inseparably linked to the Quebec state. Not only did Quebec change in consequence, but all the old consociational patterns and postulates, the very basis of legitimacy in Canada,
began to be called into question. Such is the origin of the "Quebec problem" and the legacy of the Quiet Revolution.

**Legitimation and the New Quebec State**

Quebec's traditional elites, in serving to legitimate English-Canadian superiority in class relations under the *ancien régime*, maintained a governmental apparatus that was intentionally weak and passive, largely limited to exercising traditional coercive functions. Not surprisingly, few concrete links can be discerned between the legitimating institutions (which were primarily linked to the Church) and those of the government. With few exceptions, the legitimating role of the early Quebec state apparatus was inconsequential.

Beginning in the 1960s the situation drastically changed. The institutions at both the core and periphery of the Quebec state began to train and employ an increasing share of the legitimating groups in Quebec society. The growth of the state bureaucracy, the establishment of new social welfare institutions, the rapid creation of state regulatory bodies, agencies, commissions, etc., multiplied the number of positions in public institutions available to educated francophones. The creation of the Ministry of Education, the CEGEPs (junior colleges), and the University of Quebec, the incorporation into public institutions of the whole range of medical and social services, educational, recreational and other related activities formerly in the domain of private or religious agencies, the funding of private schooling, the support of social and scientific research and development, the wide-range funding of artistic and cultural productions of various kinds, as well as the creation of advisory boards or elected commissions to supervise many of these new institutions, all added up to a vast interpenetration of the governmental apparatus into the societal legitimating institutions.

As a consequence, an essential new stratum has been emerging in contemporary Quebec society, educated and employed by the new state institutions – a group which we shall call the state middle class and which constitutes a particular (and large) fraction of the new middle class. More specifically, this state middle class consists essentially of individuals employed as new middle class professionals, semi-professionals, intellectuals, experts, and specialists in institutions carrying out the functions of the monopoly capitalist state, especially legitimation, and directly or indirectly but distinctly linked to the governmental apparatus. The types of occupations whose practitioners substantially qualify for inclusion would likely include teachers, professors, psychologists, technicians, journalists, planners, economists, broadcasters, nurses, physiotherapists and other health semi-professionals, social workers, social animators, community organizers, trade union officials, professional athletes, artists, entertainers, scientists, as well
as members of the "older" professions (medicine, law, engineering, etc.) employed directly or indirectly in the public sector. They are linked either by direct employment in government or by the fact that they participate in central legitimating institutions indirectly tied to government.

This indirect relation may arise from methods of funding, as with the arts, private schools, and entertainment; or through regulation and certification, for example, of trade unions, professional organizations, broadcasting, and the working press. In this last case, the institution plays a crucial legitimating role. It is linked to the state through (substantial) income from government advertising, and dependent on government for an increasing part of its product, that is "news". (In addition, the younger journalists, typically educated in the new post-secondary state institutions, also commonly adhere to the same trade union federations as state employees.)

There is an element of subtlety to these linkages that makes any attempted statistical portrayal inadequate. For example, a study by the Quebec Teacher's Central of the communications media in the St.-Jerome region north of Montreal found, in the cases of the weekly *l'Écho du nord* and radio station CKJL, that the process of unionization of the journalists significantly affected their perception and the conduct of their jobs – as working conditions were improved, so was the quality of information disseminated. The journalists felt more secure and so were able to participate more freely in local, political, and social issues, such as supporting the strikers at Regent Knitting, identifying their own struggle to unionize with that of the workers there. Many similar instances have been reported.

To take a somewhat different example of the subtle links between the governmental apparatus and the state middle class, let us consider one of the community-based social service institutions which sprang up around the early 1970s. These are the CLSCs (*Centres locaux de services communautaires*). In

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* While an exact figure giving the size of the state middle class is inconceivable, a general estimate might go as follows. The Quebec civil service listed 47,601 employees in 1975 of which 9,494 were termed professionals. Approximately 5,000 more of Quebec's civil servants would probably also qualify as new middle class. Of the two and a half million employed Quebeccers, the best estimate would place at least 800,000 in core or peripheral state institutions. If the same percentage as found in the Quebec civil service is used to estimate the proportion of the new middle class employees therein, then we may place their number at around 200,000 to 250,000. As a proportion of the population, the state middle class is likely to be quite a bit smaller than the up to one-tenth of the labour force it comprises, since its members are younger, more urban (and hence likely to have smaller families), and more likely to have both spouses working in state middle class jobs. Including dependents, then, an approximate guess of the size of this stratum would be 300,000 to 350,000 men, women, and children.


mid-1977, there were seventy-two in the province, of which thirty-six were in the Montreal area – with more on the way. The CLSC's function is to provide basic medical and related services in the given region or community. The majority of members on the CLSC's board are citizens in the community. The primary purpose of the board is to ensure that the health and social service professionals and semiprofessionals and lay administrators hired integrate the activities of the CLSC with the expressed needs of the residents in the area. In the metropolitan area CLSCs the staff is almost inevitably unionized, very likely to be under thirty-five, and educated at the post-secondary level in Quebec in the 1960s or 1970s. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of the professional staff is employed as community organizers, social animators, and the like. The job of these "popular" professionals in effect amounts to attempting to animate or organize the local community to bring an awareness of the services of the CLSC and foster participation in its activities and structures. One might describe such organizing as a particular form of legitimation – selling the new state institutions to the people.

Having situated the state middle class, we can turn to the characteristics shared by members of this key legitimating group in contemporary Quebec. The state middle class is predominantly French-speaking, young, educated, unionized, and employed in the public sector. Each of these characteristics is important in the wider context of the transformation of Quebec. Five major points come to mind as relevant here and bear summarizing even at the risk of some repetition.

First of all, there has been an almost overwhelming tendency for educated francophone Quebecois to enter the public or parapublic sector and for anglophones, for obvious reasons, to continue to enter the private sector. For example, "an analysis of graduates from the Université de Montréal showed that over the period 1965-1969, only 22.5 percent... had taken their first job in the private sector and that 12.7 percent remained there.... Virtually all other graduates were in the public sector". Recent estimates place at less than one percent the proportion of Anglophones in the middle and upper levels of Quebec civil service.

The existence of appropriate job openings in the almost entirely French language public sector, combined with growing emphasis on the English language as a means of national oppression, also had a secondary and little-known effect. The French-Canadian educated classes of earlier days for good reasons almost invariably spoke fluent English. Most of the graduates of the 1960s and 1970s have found it neither necessary nor desirable to acquire this capacity. In sum, the Quiet Revolution brings with it further linguistic segmentation and an additional dimension to the division between the state and the corporate sector.

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2 Posgate and McRoberts, op.cit., p. 133. Complaints uttered in September 1977 by the dean of the University of Montreal's prestigious business school, the HEC, noted this still to be the case.
Secondly, the comparatively late but rapid growth of the Quebec state could not but have its effect. It meant that the process began in the context of global economic problems associated with the state's fiscal crisis; that problems of efficiency, planning, and co-ordination, inevitably arose; and that it took place more in the public eye.

The third factor concerns the educational experience of the state middle class. As Jacques Lazure noted, Quebec students have disproportionately concentrated in history and the social sciences "to arm themselves intellectually for the accomplishment of the political and social revolution and to acquire the type of knowledge which would permit them to enter into the very heart of Quebec society while harmonizing their action with its beat"! Not coincidentally, just these disciplines have come under significant Marxist and other radical influence generally and even more so in Quebec during this period. In addition, Quebec as elsewhere was subject to the widespread educational ferment experienced throughout the Western world in the 1960s. Student radicalism was a common phenomenon in Quebec, first in student organizations, notably the province-wide students' association of the time, UGEO, in student publications such as Le Quartier Latin a widely read student magazine originating out of the University of Montreal; and in various actions, for example, the CEGEP general strike in 1968. Undoubtedly, it would have been difficult indeed for a university or CEGEP student preparing for a state middle class position during this period not to have been influenced and affected by political currents that were both nationalist and socialist.

Fourthly, the widespread unionization of public sector workers both blue collar and clerical staff, and semi-professional and professional employees has had significant consequences. One indication (and result) of the importance of the public sector in the trade union movement in Quebec is the fact that far more women are unionized there than elsewhere in Canada. In 1972, thirty percent of all unionized workers in Quebec were women, while for Canada as a whole, women made up twenty-three percent. Women, as we know, hold a very large proportion of state middle class jobs as teachers, nurses, and social workers, etc.

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2 For example as early as 1963 "the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Laval remarked that the author most frequently quoted with approval at a colloquium on the social sciences, and whose name was scarcely known or mentioned in the past, had been Marx." Marcel Rioux, quoted by Norman Penner, The Canadian Left (Scarborough : Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 229.
4 Calculated from figures in the Annuaire du Québec, 1974, op. cit.
Public sector unionization was a major development of the Quiet Revolution. The Lesage government's decision to permit its civil servants to unionize was warmly welcomed by the unions, especially the CNTU which benefited most. Moreover, it significantly affected the composition of the movement. Most state middle class groupings, among them teachers, nurses, government service professionals, and journalists, are unionized, mainly in the CNTU. Moreover, individuals from state middle class backgrounds rise through union ranks with comparative rapidity. Their facility with the often abstract theoretical language of policy discussions and with the often complex and sometimes mystifying structures of democratic and decentralized organizations helps to explain the importance of the state middle class in the Quebec trade union movement.

The effect of state middle class unionization is two-sided. The very character of the state middle class is affected through its close and continued co-operation in syndical organizations and "common fronts" with more traditional workers. Conversely, the trade union movement is obviously affected by the importance of this stratum within it.

Related to this is the fifth and final point noted here, which is termed "popular participation". For several reasons state middle class members have been very much oriented toward popular participation. Just as their educational background prepares them for active involvement in trade unions, so it prepares them for participation in popular (or people's) groups, as well as the wide range of consultative councils and advisory boards. This stratum emerged most noticeably in the middle and late 1960s, the days of "Québécois dans les rues" when popular participation was at its height. Also, many of the new semi-professionals in applied social science occupations were, in effect, trained and certified in fields bordering on popular participation as social animators, community organizers, health consultants, educational advisors, etc. They were to be hired by the new post-Quiet Revolution institutions, such as the CLSCs, the CEGEPs and the CSSs (social service centres), to practise their professions. In the CLSCs, for example, individuals with state middle class backgrounds typically play a major role in the staff (and its union local), on the board, and even among the clientele, through local popular groups and organizations. In this way, the participation-oriented nature of a state middle class graduate's training and credentials not only facilitates finding and carrying out his or her new job, but also in participating in advisory committees, trade unions, and most recently in the participatory structures of the Parti québécois as well as other similar groupings. And, of course, skills and personal contacts acquired in one such setting are transferable to others.

The place of the state middle class in contemporary Quebec corresponds to its preponderantly anti-capitalist, independentist, and "participationist" social views. The general lack of sympathy for capitalism or private enterprise is accounted for by its unionization, public sector orientation, and educational background. There is very little to link members of this group to private enterprise. Very few have any
experience in profit-oriented enterprises of any kind. Their knowledge of capitalism is commonly based on college courses and discussions in trade unions, popular groups, and the information media. Much of this content serves to confirm the linguistically exacerbated antipathy of state sector workers toward private enterprise. But let us be clear that such antipathy is not a class' revulsion against its own exploitation. Such exploitation is beyond their direct experience. The anti-capitalism of the state middle class, whatever its rhetoric, does not itself constitute a revolutionary class-consciousness. (To avoid any possible misinterpretation, it should be added that this attitude is nonetheless even more distinct from the quasi-feudal anti-capitalism of an earlier era. This stratum is sophisticated, modern, and urbanized. It has little knowledge and even less interest in Quebec's traditional beliefs. To see this, one need only contrast this group's general support for issues relating to women's liberation, such as day care and legalized abortion, with earlier attitudes on the part of the intellectual elite toward motherhood and the family.)

Secondly, and not unexpectedly, this is the stratum which articulates positive nationalism. Since the Lesage period, it has understood its interests to be tied up with the expansion of the Quebec state, and since the late 1960s, it has increasingly assumed that for such expansion to continue, Quebec must win independence for itself as a modern secular state. By now, in fact, many see the goal of independence as self-evident, and in no sense extreme. Equally unsurprising is the fact that state middle class nationalism embraces the language question. Indeed, the certification of teachers and the various social service workers, on which are based their claim to middle class status, is directly tied to their ability to manipulate symbols in the French language and culture. Given that, the great majority is unable to use English effectively, their almost total commitment to a French Quebec is perfectly understandable.

Finally, popular participation, decentralization, democratization of decision-making institutions, the building of co-operatives, and the like are widely shared programmatic goals. Together they constitute the third component of state middle class ideology. This commitment to participationism corresponds to their practical experience and training in making core and peripheral state institutions work.

To sum up in a few words: the state middle class believes in an independent French Quebec with a dominant but nevertheless highly decentralized and democratic state sector. In a myriad of forms, this vague but nonetheless deeply inscribed vision of Quebec's future is articulated and disseminated in the major legitimating institutions of Quebec society.

How does all this fit with the crisis of the state as described in the opening pages of this chapter? First of all, it should now be clear why legitimation along consociational lines is very much a thing of the past. The new state middle class intellectuals won't buy it, and, in their legitimating roles as teachers, journalists, artists, social workers, and experts, they cannot sell it. No longer will national
sentiment serve to depoliticize popular aspirations. The attempt by the federal Liberal government to recruit Quebec state middle class intellectuals to Ottawa to a newly bilingual federal civil service thus constitutes an attempt to recreate consociationalism on a different footing. The reasons for the limited success of this strategy, apart from the rather poor track record in Quebec of Air Canada and other federal institutions in welcoming francophones, should be readily apparent.

With the decline of consociationalism, legitimation must and does increasingly take on the European or social democratic form, with the PQ emerging as the Quebec instrument of class negotiation. The transition has not been an easy one, as we shall see through analysis of the provincial Liberals and their decline; and it would be difficult to predict what further concrete changes are in store.

Both Habermas' and O'Connor's formulations cast additional light of a more general nature upon the "crisis" that has beset Quebec society and politics. Habermas draws our attention to the pivotal fact that the takeover of private legitimating activities by the state has placed government in a constantly glaring spotlight. If things are not right socially, economically, culturally, God's will won't serve to take the blame. Government is held responsible and it must respond.

O'Connor describes the strain of increasing pressure on government to deliver more and more costly services to be paid for somehow with the decreasing fiscal resources available. The pressures on the Quebec state are greater if anything, given the added national dimension, for example in the need to provide middleclass employment for its French-speaking college graduates. One measure of Quebec's "fiscal crisis" emerges in a complaint recently voiced by Pierre Desmarais, president of the Conseil du Patronat (Employers' Council). Desmarais noted that between 1965 and 1974, of days lost due to strikes, thirty-two percent were in the public sector which employed only twenty percent of Quebec's workers, and that striking public sector workers comprised a whopping fifty percent of all those who participated in strikes during this period.  

This is not the place to go into detail about the continuing confrontation between the government as employer and the trade unions representing many of its workers, both working and new middle class, but our later discussion will show just how these conflicts figure in the serious crisis in which Quebec is enmeshed, and the importance of the state middle class in exacerbating its seriousness.

We have already drawn attention to the problems of the government with its unionized civil service professionals. The great public service "common front" struggles of 1972 and 1976 are illustrative and will be examined in more detail below. As this was written, it was impossible, for one thing, to follow Montreal

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1 Quoted in Le Devoir, December 11, 1976.
newspapers without finding repeated events which confirm the argument presented here. For example: The *Montreal Star* of April 30, 1977 tells of ten doctors paid by the government and hired by the CNTU affiliated smelting workers' union to examine the workers at the Quebec Iron and Titanium Corporation smelter near Sorel. The headline read: "Doctors give Marx along with checkups", and no one, it appears, has contradicted this charge made by the company. Or, in *La Presse* of May 11, 1977, a long front-page story on Raymond Richard, head of the union representing the Quebec police, was entitled: "Police will not be the arm of the government". Consider finally the story on the 30,000 files kept by the secret intelligence service of the Quebec government (CAD) and divulged by Premier Lévesque in December 1976: "The persons on file occupy what we call strategic positions in the society, such as teachers, union leaders and... journalists", the premier added. Little more need be said here to show that crisis in Quebec has a great deal to do with the role of the state middle class.

Having said all this, we are still open to the accusation of having in fact attempted no empirical verification for our assertions. How do we know that the great majority of members of the state middle class actually have the attitudes described? The answer is that, while there are always exceptions, contemporary Quebec simply abounds with evidence. There has been a mass of data gathered in the many surveys of attitudes toward independence and related issues over the years which provide whatever empirical confirmation may be required to confirm our assertions. To take just one recent and highly publicized survey, that commissioned by the *Toronto Star* in May 1977, we read:

The separatist emerges as a younger, somewhat better educated person who is more likely to be single and live in an urban, rather than rural area. Also, although more likely of French background, he is more likely to be able to speak English with little or no difficulty than other French Quebec residents. In terms of income, the separatist is not that different from other Quebec residents, although he is less likely to own property at the present time. He is more likely to belong to a union and be employed by the government. He is a strong supporter of the Parti Québécois.

"Extreme" separatists constituted twenty-eight percent of the total population. Their statistical profile was found to compare as follows with the characteristics of the entire population of Quebec. (The weighting of each is derived by subtracting the percentage of the population in each category from the percentage of extreme separatists in it.) One could hardly portray the state middle class in better statistical terms.

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Property owners, -11%; city residents, 7%; male, 4%; 18-30 in age, 22%; single, 8%; union household, 17%; government employed, 10%; high school education or less, -11%.

Finally, what can be concluded concerning the place of the state middle class or the entire new middle class in Quebec's class structure from our analysis? Is it, in fact, like the petite bourgeoisie, substantially outside of and sheltered from the economic forces that shape the lives of the working class? The answer, it would appear, is no and yes. In any long-term sense, the new middle class cannot remain separate. It must gradually split, with its highest technocratic strata being absorbed by the bourgeoisie to become managers and managerially-oriented professionals in industry (in Antonio Gramsci's terms these are the "organic intellectuals" of the ruling class), and the majority, consisting of teachers, nurses, and others, in occupations placing them in a clearly subservient position vis-à-vis their superiors, coming nearer to the working class. Educational attainment alone cannot be the basis of a class's existence indefinitely. These differences even now are reflected in certain political conflicts and, ultimately, will come to prevail as the fundamental class antagonisms grow and solidify.

In the short term, however, the existence of the state middle class is a reality and its political impact must be considered independently from that of the working class. The institutional reforms that began with the Quiet Revolution sustain the continued middle class status of many new semi-professionals. In the words of Marcel Fournier:

A close analysis of the development of the liberal professions and of different occupations in Quebec would allow us to discern this specific function of the state such that the setting up of numerous scientific disciplines (civil and mining engineering, agricultural and biological sciences, social and behavioral sciences etc.) is closely dependent on the elaboration of governmental policies and the opening of posts in the public service. As far as the educational (Parent Report) and health (Castonguay Report) reforms go... by opening new posts (widening of scientific education, social and human science education in universities and colleges, introduction of psychological services, community nursing and social animation in the CLSC's, creation of research teams in the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs, etc.), the middle class is assured a means of reproducing itself while being furnishes with the (educational, etc.) means to convert or divide their careers etc....

The recent development of adult education may perhaps be analyzed in the same way. For example, the creation of certificates in student life animation or professional information... permits teachers to leave their positions as

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public school teachers, which is now relatively less well-paid and prestigious than before, to become 'education professionals.' Similarly, the new certificates in community nursing assure nurses who likely command a higher social capital (social origin, social connections, etc.) the possibility to escape from the (relative) proletarianization of their occupation and acquire a higher salary and especially improved working conditions (schedule, working relations, autonomy) in the CLSC.  

As long as national decolonization through the Quebec state, the final project of the Quiet Revolution, remains the top item on the political agenda, then the state middle class – that stratum which plays a key linking role in relation to legitimation – will continue to have a political impact far beyond its objective contribution. As such, it will continue to be at the focal point of the crises which surround the contemporary Quebec state. And as such, it provides us with a key component in the analytical framework for a description of the parties and groups active in Quebec politics. Each will be viewed in the context of changing power relations among social classes, with the emphasis on the role of the state middle class. There is surely good reason to expect that the relation between this stratum and other politically relevant groupings, as well as its internal composition and divisions, underlie significant elements in the contest among the political parties and other forces on the political scene in contemporary Quebec.

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CHAPTER V:
THE RIGHT IN QUEBEC POLITICS

These next three chapters concern Quebec's political parties. We should ideally at this point consider the Parti québécois, the prime political instrument of the state middle class. But the PQ is the most recent party on Quebec's political scene. Its formation takes place in the context of a party system formed through the evolution of Quebec's traditional political parties – and these are the subject of the next two chapters.

While it is common to view political parties as key instruments of socio-political change, the accuracy of such a perception is confined to the contemporary period in Quebec. The traditional party system was quite different:

Such is the picture of provincial political parties in Quebec as they operated as late as ten to fifteen years ago. Tied to a type of society and political culture where inter-personal relations, intense but shallow socialization, and poverty of information and technical expertise prevailed, they could hardly propose and implement electoral, intermediate or governmental activities that would be revolutionary in relation to this societal situation and culture. Political parties rarely originated economic, social or cultural transformations: rather they decided on their extension in the wider society.\(^1\)

FIGURE V-1

The Evolution of Quebec Political Parties, 1840-1974
In Figure V-1, we provide a schema of the evolution of Quebec's political parties. In this chapter, we are concerned with the left hand columns which trace the development of the right wing or conservative parties in Quebec since the earliest days. There is also a variety of extraparliamentary movements on the right that came into existence sporadically such as the (Nazi) *Parti national social Chrétien* or the Order of Jacques Cartier. The cultural impact of such groups has already been discussed. Most were ephemeral, frequently clandestine organizations; their political impact ultimately dependent on their ability to influence existing political parties. At the present moment, there is no evidence to suggest that extreme right groups play any significant role whatsoever in Quebec politics. There may of course be secret societies out there, but speculation along those lines serves little purpose.

It is not at all difficult to identify the political Right in Quebec politics than anywhere else. The Right has continuously upheld authority – cultural, political, and economic – in the face of all popular challenge. It has reinforced the interests of the classes benefiting directly from the status quo even when, at times, it has appeared to voice mass discontent aimed at those interests. In fact, Figure V-1 somewhat distorts reality by placing the Liberals in the centre of the spectrum. Only after losing power in 1936 do the Liberals move toward the centre and, ever so slightly past it, into the left of the spectrum. In fact, except for the small and short-lived workers' parties that managed to elect a handful of members in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it can be argued that all Quebec parties were conservative parties during this period.

The basic question to be asked is: what are the social bases of support for the Right at the present stage in the evolution of Quebec politics, and, consequently, to what extent does it remain a significant force? Given the maturation of social classes in Quebec, it would appear likely that the base for such a political grouping is thinning, and, unless other social forces emerge, we should expect the continued decline of this political entity. A good place to start our testing of this hypothesis is with the origins of conservative politics in Quebec.

Nineteenth-century post-Confederation politics in Quebec was dominated by a loose conservative grouping known as *Les Bleus* under the leadership of Georges Etienne Cartier. Cartier had been a *patriote* before 1837 but did not participate in the revolt. In the 1850s he joined forces with the leading Ontario Tory, John A. Macdonald and, with the support of the most traditional elements in Quebec, which were aligned with the Church (that was itself in the throes of ultramontane reaction), took Quebec into Confederation and established the Conservative party

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1 Herbert F. Quinn, *The Union Nationale* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 82.
of Quebec which retained the popular label Les Bleus. Until the 1890s, Les Bleus dominated Quebec politics federally and provincially combining support in the more traditional of Quebec communities, (the most faithful being the region around Bishop Laflèche's headquarters in Trois-Rivières), with the votes of English-speaking urban and Eastern Townships' constituencies. There was no organizational distinction whatever between provincial and federal parties at this time. They were one and the same, and leading political figures easily moved from one to the other. Partisan politics followed a parallel path at both levels.

The Conservative party of Quebec, until then the arbiter of provincial and federal Quebec politics, entered a period of steep decline after the death of Cartier, unable to identify with Quebec by the Ottawa Tories' hanging of Louis Riel and the abolition of the French Catholic schools by a Conservative government in Manitoba. Saddled with federal leaders Sir Robert Borden and Arthur Meighen, who had led the way in forcing conscription upon an unwilling Quebec during World War I, the Conservatives soon ceased to be a significant factor in Quebec politics altogether, able to win only English Montreal and a handful of faithful constituencies. Even the advent of the depression, the triumph of the federal Conservatives under R. B. Bennett in 1930, and the leadership of the flamboyant Camilien Houde failed to bring the Tories to power in Quebec in 1931. Upon Houde's resignation in 1933, a relatively unknown lawyer from Trois-Rivières, Maurice Duplessis, was chosen leader. Duplessis immediately began negotiations with a Liberal reform group known as the Action libérale nationale (ALN) and led by Paul Gouin, son of a former Liberal premier. A merger was agreed upon and, in 1934, the Union nationale was born. This event marked the disappearance of the Quebec Conservatives from the provincial scene, as the new party retained no formal links to any other political organization.

Now free of the taint of Anglo-Protestantism, Duplessis was able to put the Liberals on the defensive by attacking the Taschereau government's well-known record of scandal and corruption. Although Taschereau was successful in (barely) winning the 1935 election, Duplessis' constant and effective attacks in the Assembly soon provoked his resignation and forced the new leader, Adélard Godbout, to call an election. Not only did Duplessis lead the UN to easy victory in the subsequent election in 1936, he also broke the agreement whereby Paul Gouin was to select the majority of members of the cabinet. Gouin immediately resigned. Duplessis then proceeded to rid himself of the remaining members of the ALN in his coalition and institute a traditional conservative regime at the base of which was a disciplined party organization loyal to himself – Le Chef. While Duplessis soon outdid his Liberal predecessors in manipulating elections, dispensing patronage, and controlling information, he was far more careful, at least up until the last few years of his regime, to maintain an image of economic integrity that conformed with traditional standards.
It was the anti-capitalist and anti-materialist spirit of the ALN that originally won mass support for the UN as a social protest movement. Duplessis did not forget this fact. Although his staunchly conservative and pro-capitalist outlook inhibited any possible inclination toward instituting the reforms in the ALN's Programme de restauration sociale, he never allowed the UN's public image to run counter to this spirit. Hence, compared to his Liberal predecessors, he maintained a far greater public distance from the English-speaking financiers, whose interests he dedicatedly served. One example of just how well these interests were served is that while Quebec collected royalties of only one cent per ton on North Shore iron ore, Newfoundland received thirty-three cents for the same ore from the same American companies. Both sides, apparently, were quite satisfied with this kind of arrangement.

The Duplessis years were marked by close and personal ties between senior executives and Premier Maurice Duplessis. It seemed that all contacts of significance were exclusively at the top level. The two former senior executives who were interviewed, for example, always dealt directly with Duplessis. One claimed to have had a close friendship with Duplessis whom he described as very cooperative and 'helpful to business'. The other thought Duplessis was a good businessman who knew how to encourage industry. Similarly, according to an executive of the company, R. E. Powell, former president of Aluminum Company of Canada, was on very close terms with Duplessis: Powell would send cigars to Duplessis and they would go fishing together.... Apparently Duplessis made a habit of blasting the aluminum companies or other companies one day and calling up the president the next morning to tell him not to worry about it, that he had only sought to pacify a faction explaining that the needs of the situation required him to criticize or threaten business but that he would never follow up on it.

The only area where Duplessis actually lived up to some of the promises of the Programme de restauration sociale is in agriculture and colonization. His government made money available at low interest to farmers and supported schools, hospitals, and roads in rural communities – always seeing to it that contracts and jobs went to loyal Bleus, thus ensuring for the Union nationale the consolidation of the necessary rural popular base.

The excesses of the Duplessis regime are well-known: from the infamous padlock law of the first term of office – which enabled the government to close all premises suspected of being used by "communists", to the repressive labour legislation of the postwar period – which, among other things, decertified unions for "tolerating communists" or having (even in the past) called for illegal strikes.

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1 Ibid.
2 P. Fournier, The Quebec Establishment, op. cit., p. 82.
3 Quinn, op. cit., pp. 91-95.
Little attention need be given to them here. The same is true of the great symbolic struggle against the regime, the Asbestos Strike of 1949.  

Of direct interest is the basis of UN Support. In 1935-1936, the UN constituted a protest movement in the face of intolerable conditions during the depression and a seemingly uncaring and fat government; and, not surprisingly, it received wide support from the urban and rural lower strata in Quebec. More surprising is the fact that the UN retained much of this support from 1944 through 1960 when it was not a protest movement at all but rather an established conservative government. (One point worth noting is the shift in the vote in English Montreal. Beginning in 1936, the English-speaking districts, which had loyally supported the hapless Conservatives, chose to stay in the political wilderness by electing Liberals rather than fall into the hands of the Union nationale.)

A well-known element of the appeal of the Union nationale was its anti-Ottawa posture. This theme was the focus of its narrow 1944 victory and its landslide in 1948. The second well-known element of the Union nationale regime was its development of the fine art of patronage. These two elements blended together quite nicely in the theme of the 1948 campaign which went: "Duplessis gives to his province, the Liberals give to strangers".  

Another factor that cannot be neglected is the maldistribution of seats in the Quebec assembly and the advantage it provided to the Union nationale. In 1944, for example, the UN won a majority of the seats with almost four percent less of the popular vote than the Liberals – a phenomenon that was to be repeated in 1966. Only once in this period did the UN win over 50 percent of the vote. This was in 1948, when 51 percent of the vote gave it 92 out of 100 seats. This pattern contrasts sharply with the earlier period of Liberal dominance from 1896 to 1936, during which time the Liberals averaged over 60 percent, with an astounding high of 85.2 percent in 1919. Yet it was the Liberals and not the UN who engineered Quebec's electoral system built into which was the serious overrepresentation of rural seats.

The 1956 election is a good example of how maldistribution came to haunt the Liberals. The Liberals received 44 percent of the votes but only 22 percent of the seats; the average population of districts won by the Liberals was 37,000, while UN districts averaged only 23,000. In 1962, the disparity was even greater, with the average Liberal constituency, at 33,700, almost twice the size of that of the UN (which averaged 18,000 voters).  

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1 See Milner and Milner, op. cit., pp. 151-163.
tenor of government policies all were premised on and served to enhance the importance of the rural vote as the key to political power in Quebec.

To command the rural vote is to command the province. And in the rural vote, it is necessary to command the votes of the 12% of electors who periodically shift their vote from one party to the other. It is in relation to this opportunistic rural bloc that the parties must define their politics... [and it] explains why a party if it wishes to stay in power must be guided by the policies of its predecessor. Hence, it is not surprising that nothing so much resembles a ministerial party as another ministerial party: they must each define their politics in relation to this bloc of electors (which is... responsible for the politics of 'gravel' and asphalt that honours the province of Quebec.)

Vincent Lemieux demonstrates that if we break down the Liberal vote from 1939 to 1966 by regions, it turns out to be clearly greater than that of the UN only in metropolitan Montreal and the outlying recently industrialized areas in the north west and Côte Nord. Of the remaining eight regions only the Gaspé shows any marked Liberal sympathies.

From 1944 to 1956 the Liberals had greater success against the Union Nationale in urban rather than in rural constituencies. This was less clear in 1960, although the Liberals won in twenty-nine of the forty-eight constituencies where city-dwellers constituted more than 60 per cent of the population, and in only twenty-two of the forty-seven constituencies where city-dwellers constituted less than 60 per cent of the population, In 1962, however, the Liberals won in thirty-seven of the forty-eight most urban constituencies, and in only twenty-six of the forty-seven least urban. In 1966, the Union Nationale won in only one-third of the thirty-nine constituencies that were more than 80 percent urban; on the other hand, they won in forty-two of the sixty-nine other constituencies, or in two thirds.

It is seldom remembered nowadays that the Liberal breakthrough of 1960 was made possible because the party succeeded in winning several crucial rural ridings from the UN. In view of their failure to seriously redistribute when in power, the Liberals' defeat at the hands of the Union nationale in 1966 can be partly attributed to the loss of some of these same rural districts. Although the Quiet Revolution brings important electoral changes, there appears to be good reason to conclude that the "ministerial" or patronage based system of rural dominated party politics was not in fact fully superseded until 1970.

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1 Hamelin et al., op. cit., pp. 188-189. (Author's translation.)
The two principal factors of electoral politics in Quebec during the entire span of the *ancien régime* were the assortment of practices (including the over-representation of the rural vote) labelled ministerial party politics, and the political application of "negative" nationalism. The latter was accomplished by fostering an association between the party in power and the Quebec people, not as a positive instrument of their collective interests but as a shield against the corrosive external influences the other party is implied to represent. The Liberals easily mastered the latter technique against the "anti-French, anti-Catholic" Tories. Because of this, the Liberals, although expert at the practices of ministerial politics, did not have to place nearly as great a reliance on them except at the end, in the 1930s, when Alexandre Taschereau fought back against the mounting challenge to his rule with increasingly cynical political and electoral manipulation.

Duplessis could not as easily smear his Liberal opponents as "anti-Quebec", faced as he was with the fact that Liberals continued to speak as the acknowledged voice of Quebec in Ottawa, represented by such important national figures as Ernest Lapointe and Louis St. Laurent. His anti-Ottawa posturing worked to complement the basis of UN political success which was a carefully refined system of ministerial politics based on patronage and maldistribution. Nor was there any attempt to camouflage this activity. For these *Bleus*, patronage was a matter of public benevolence and hence even pride. Lemieux and Hudon provide this excerpt from a letter published in 1956 in the party newspaper, *Le Temps*, and addressed to the local president of the Catholic Farmers' Union:

'It will no doubt please you to receive the enclosed cheque for $8000.00 as a special disbursement for certain courses at the Neo-Porter School in Sherbrooke'.

– Cordial Greetings, M. Duplessis. \(^1\)

They point out that the pages of *Le Temps* were full of such letters; and that the government plainly sought to acquaint readers with its generosity.

Quinn notes at some length how the patronage system supplied not only votes but also the money used to attract those votes. Once again taking a page out of Taschereau's book, the *Union nationale* instituted an even wider system bringing kickbacks to its coffers from government construction contracts, equipment purchase arrangements, etc. Liquor licences carried with them unwritten bills to be paid to the UN by the proprietor of the tavern, restaurant, grocery store, or hotel in question in an amount proportional to the revenues of the establishment. In addition, it is widely accepted that the large English-speaking corporations benefiting from Quebec's natural resources on such generous terms usually let the

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government party know of their gratitude in tangible ways. With all these funds, the UN was able to conduct highly visible campaigns in the newspapers and radio, through distribution of pamphlets, donations to local groups, gifts to individuals, and free entertainment, as well as mount a whole army of scrutineers, "telegraphers," drivers, and goons on election day. Quinn estimates UN expenditures in 1956 to have been three to four million dollars, at least six times what the Liberals spent.  

The use of patronage to underwrite massive election spending helps to explain a phenomenon which has puzzled observers of Quebec politics for a long time. Why was the Union nationale able to win consistently strong support from the urban working class? Its strength in the rural areas is easy to understand. Not only did its policies tend to benefit rural interests, but the ministerial style of appealing directly and openly to individual material interests blended in closely with the traditional rural political culture. The more blatant election tactics resorted to in the cities were one factor. According to Quinn, the UN's use of fraudulent electoral practices reached its highest point in the 1956 campaign, three years after it had enacted Bill 34. This bill shamelessly struck several safeguards from the enumeration and balloting process, such as the requirement that enumerators work in pairs. Irregularities during the election included the addition and subtraction of many names from the voters’ lists, the use of enumerators to spread UN propaganda, the impersonation of voters, the buying of votes, and the stuffing of ballot boxes. As a final touch, Bill 34 shifted the jurisdiction for all appeals of election results from the federally-appointed Superior Court to Duplessis-appointed magistrates ensuring that few defeated opposition candidates bothered to appeal the outcome. In this instance, the party was again only following the example of Taschereau who, after the 1931 election, had passed the Dillon Act which simply removed cases of fraudulent electoral practice from the jurisdiction of the courts.

Yet even the most sophisticated electoral manipulation can only artificially bolster popular support. It cannot create a base that is not there. And the figures indicate that the Union nationale retained a solid French-speaking, urban working class base. For example, when the Montreal area is divided into predominantly French-speaking and predominantly English-speaking districts, the UN popular vote percentages for the 1948, 1952, and 1956 elections for the ten districts comprising the former are 56.26, 49.31, and 51.33 – in 1948 above, and in 1952 and 1956 only slightly below the provincial total. (By way of contrast, percentage figures for the six ridings that are classified as predominantly English were 26.60, 23.99, and 23.68).  

A poll conducted in 1960 found that two thirds of skilled and

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1 See Quinn, op. cit., pp. 141-143.
2 Ibid., p. 99.
unskilled workers supported the *Union nationale.* ¹ Hence the "Paradox that in a highly industrialized and urbanized province like Quebec, with a steadily growing working class and a militant trade union movement, a party of unrestricted 'free enterprise' openly collaborating with foreign industrialists and partial to the farming interests, was able to obtain the support of a majority of the voters in most French-speaking urban areas, including a large number of districts which were predominantly working class". ² Quinn's explanation for this "paradox" might be termed as the classical view:

The explanation for this rather perplexing aspect of Quebec politics lies in the fact that the Union Nationale under Duplessis, in spite of its economic policies, was not just another conservative party. It was also a nationalist party, and as such was to emerge during the 1940s as the uncompromising champion of the French-Canadian point of view on several issues of crucial importance to the people of Quebec so that the whole question of economic policy tended to be pushed into the background until the late 1950s. ³

Pinard challenges this interpretation as it assumes the Quebec worker to vote for the Right because he places national or ethnic values ahead of class interests. The facts, he argues, do not support such a claim: "In short, as in the case of Social Credit... the National Union recruits its weakest support among members of the middle class who are conscious of their ties to this class, and its strongest support among workers who maintain a working-class consciousness.... Only an educated minority... turned toward [the UN]... on the basis of nationalist motivations" ⁴ But why did the workers stay with the UN? Why was it not unmasked during its long reign? Pinard's answer is that the image of the party was sufficiently "populist", especially in its distribution of patronage, and the intellectuals so monopolized and distorted the cultural reality in which the working class defined its interests that workers supported an objectively right-wing party simply because they felt that it best defended their interests.

The answer, it would appear, lies somewhere in between the two interpretations. However futile, in the end economic protest has consistently been linked to national aspirations. ALN leaders such as Chalout, Grégoire, and Hamel, who made up the left-wing of the UN before Duplessis dispatched them, had nothing but scorn for an economic system that exploited French-Canadians or as workers. Hamel, for example, vociferously denounced the electric power

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⁴ Pinard, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-103.
trusts, as being controlled by "strangers" who "threatened workers' homes ...." For him as well as the workers who supported him, national and economic exploitation were linked. No doubt, the workers of the period in question would respond to Pinard by simply denying his distinction between ethnic and class-consciousness. Founded on such an initial impetus, the UN was able to win sufficient urban working class support to consolidate its rural base by keeping alive the perceived link between class and national oppression through negative nationalism. All that was required to cement the arrangement was a liberal dose of patronage and electoral fraud.

When Duplessis died in 1959, the UN leadership lost no time in selecting Paul Sauvé, Minister of Youth and Social Welfare and the most popular member of Duplessis' cabinet, to succeed him. Had Sauvé lived to remain in office beyond the three months he did, Liberal ambitions would no doubt have been frustrated even longer. During his brief term, Sauvé had impressed upon observers that the new era of change – later to be called the Quiet Revolution – was about to begin. Upon his death, Sauvé was replaced by J. Antonio Barrette, the gentlemanly but unglamorous long-time Minister of Labour, probably as a caretaker choice negotiated within the inner circle of the party as a compromise between leading contenders Daniel Johnson and Yves Prévost.

Barrette's personal style and public record meant that he could not project the sense of imminent change associated with his immediate predecessor; nor could he simply return to the tried and true methods of Le Chef. He was hampered by constant Liberal attacks on government scandals that found support even among certain members of the clergy; also by the fact that Ottawa was no longer a useful target since the Conservatives were now in power thanks, in part, to the active, public support given to Diefenbaker by the UN in 1957. These factors, combined with his own reluctance to resort to the electoral tactics of 1956 (which did not endear him to chief party organizers), finally brought defeat to the UN in 1960.

The Liberals were able not only to retain, but also to expand their popular support in their traditional strongholds in and around Montreal; and second, and much more significant, the party was able to break new ground and capture a large number of seats in the frontier regions of the province, regions where the clergy were particularly influential, farming conditions were poor, economic unrest was widespread, trade unions were militant, nationalistic sentiments were very strong, and where the disappearance of parties of protest, such as the Bloc Populaire and the Union des Électeurs, had left behind pockets of discontent in certain districts. Thus, although there were many factors responsible for the Liberal victory of 1960, including the sudden death of Duplessis, the most important one was the ability of Mr. Lesage to

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1 Quinn, op. cit., p. 71.
carry to a successful conclusion the strategy of Mr. Lapalme of uniting behind
the Liberal party 'toutes les forces de l'opposition'.

Though defeated a second time by Lesage in 1962 in the "great debate" battle
over the nationalization of hydro-electricity, the Union nationale, to the surprise of
all observers, was returned to power in 1966. A main factor was the electoral
system. The UN won fifty-five seats to the Liberals' fifty-one, even though it
received only forty-one percent of the vote compared to the Liberals' forty-seven
percent. It was a combination of strength in the sparsely populated rural districts,
Daniel Johnson's unexpected attractiveness as a leader, and the fact that many
Liberal voters either voted RIN or stayed at home that cost the Liberals the
election. The RIN, the first important independentist party, won almost six percent
of the vote; the turnout was a mere seventy-one percent, the lowest in any Quebec
election since 1927. Furthermore, evidence gathered by Lemieux suggests a direct
relationship between unemployment, turnout, and the Liberal vote, at least since
1956. The three variables apparently rose and fell together. It would seem that the
relatively full employment in 1966 kept at home those five or six percent who, on
other occasions when their economic position was threatened, came out to vote
Liberal. (Turnout at elections in Quebec has generally been quite high, with
percentages averaging in the high seventies. Since 1960, a clear pattern of higher
turnout in provincial than in federal elections may be discerned. In 1970, an
amazing eighty-five percent of eligible voters went to the polls; the Liberals,
surely not coincidentally, won easily.

The electoral misfortunes of the UN since 1966 indicate that its victory of that
year was exceptional and only temporarily halted the decline of the party that
began in 1960. In a way that was reminiscent of the Liberal victory in 1939, which
had seemed to mark a return to Liberal dominance after only five years of Union
nationale rule, but in fact was merely a brief intermission in the UN rise to power,
the Liberal's defeat in 1966 after five years in power meant not the resurgence of
the UN, but a mere stalling of the political engine that had brought on the Quiet
Revolution. A similar pattern, incidentally, may be seen in the career of the two
major long-time mayors of Montreal: Camilien Houde was defeated after an initial
victory only to come back; the same is true of Jean Drapeau who was defeated in
1957 after one term, was reelected in 1960, and is still in office.

The Union nationale under Johnson and, after his death in 1968, J. J. Bertrand,
did not dismantle the apparatus of the Quiet Revolution; neither did it restore the
ministerial system of politics to its former magnitude. Johnson did prove to be a
master in the old art of anti-Ottawa posturing, going so far as to threaten to take
Quebec out of Confederation himself in the midst of certain jurisdictional disputes
that arose, especially over cultural relations with French-speaking countries.

1 Ibid., p. 186.
Bertrand was less successful at the "foreign policy" game, and his leadership suffered from the fact that the UN administration never made any real mark on "domestic" politics. A telling example of this came out in a complaint by Dr. Robert Lussier, Minister of Municipal Affairs. In 1969, after three years in office, he received a letter sent by the Union nationale party organization inviting the minister to address their fund-raising dinner. The letter was addressed to Pierre Laporte – his Liberal predecessor.  

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the party was soon racked with division and Bertrand's leadership directly challenged. The source of the challenge was the more nationalistic wing of the party led by Education Minister Jean-Guy Cardinal. In addition, the party retained much of its traditional organizational machinery based simply on patronage and ministerial politics. Unable to alter traditional patterns of local operation, the party at the constituency level became bogged down, a situation in which, as one observer noted, "higher status, high income, charisma are considered 'dangerous'. The deputy should be 'one of the gang' who has long served the party's district organization".  

This kind of attitude could only serve the party poorly in the era of the new technocratic politics. In the election of 1970, Bertrand suffered the fate of Barrette – only more humiliatingly. The UN won only seventeen of the 108 seats with twenty percent of the votes cast. Though it became the official opposition, it actually won fewer votes than the newly-arrived Parti Québécois.

The 1970 election effectively wiped out the Union nationale in the cities of Quebec, especially Montreal, where the PQ emerged as the only serious alternative to the Liberals. In 1970, the PQ had not yet penetrated very deeply into the outlying and rural areas of the province, but even here the UN lost ground not only to the Liberals but to a new force on the political Right – the Créditistes, who won twelve seats with thirteen percent of the vote. The Ralliement créditiste as we know it was established in 1957 as a political party contesting federal elections. It first ventured into provincial politics through indirect affiliation with the conservative independentist Ralliement nationale in 1966, and in October 1969 decided to enter provincial politics directly. However, the Social Credit phenomenon in Quebec goes back to the 1930s as "a prototype of a right wing political protest movement", influenced by the economic teachings of Social Credit's British founder, Major Douglas, combined with a fundamentalist brand of Catholicism. Since the days of its founders Louis Even, J. E. Grégoire (formerly of the ALN), and Gilberte Côté-Mercier, the movement was beset by divisions and

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disputes over such questions as the relation of religion and politics, the legitimacy of contesting elections, the relation of their movement to the federal Social Credit party, etc. These differences inhibited the growth of Social Credit's political arm, first known as the *Union des électeurs* (*Bérets blancs*) in the 1940s and then as the *Ralliement*. The only respite in its continuous saga of petty squabbling and political irrelevancy occurred in the early 1960s when party leader Réal Caouette was in his prime and able to win sufficient federal seats in Quebec to necessitate minority government and impose the party's presence on Ottawa.

The provincial experience was even more pathetic. Faced with an upcoming election at the end of April, a leadership convention for the new provincial party was called for March 1970. There, Caouette tried to convince the delegates to select an old-time Créditiste-baiter for the Liberals, Yvon Dupuis, who had not long before been forced to resign from federal politics after having been linked to a race-track betting scandal. The delegates instead selected a young, faithful *Créditiste*, Camille Samson. Caouette's intervention obviously did little for Samson's credibility as provincial leader. Nevertheless, Caouette did assist in the campaign and the provincial *Créditiste* showing was a respectable one, winning in exactly those regions where the federal party was strong, the Eastern Townships, the Abitibi (Northwest), and the area to the south of Quebec City. But it made no inroads whatever beyond these limits.

The expected process of disintegration began in 1972. Samson resigned because of serious opposition in the caucus and then forced interim leader Armand Bois to call a new leadership convention in early 1973. This time Yvon Dupuis was elected over Bois, Samson, and Fabien Roy in a contest he was bitterly accused of rigging. Samson was appointed Parliamentary Leader; Bois was expelled from the party. When Premier Robert Bourassa called an election in 1973 as a "test of federalism versus separatism", the *Créditiste* (as well as UN) candidates were decimated. Only Samson and Roy were elected for the *Créditistes* who won six percent of the vote. Samson blamed Dupuis for the defeat; Dupuis expelled Samson. Samson and Roy called their own party convention, which elected the former Leader and the latter President. Dupuis took his few remaining supporters to found the Presidential Party, which soon disappeared (supposedly) into the *Union nationale*. Samson then expelled Roy and in turn welcomed Bois back into the party. Roy in turn joined with dissident Liberal Jerome Choquette to form the Popular National Party (PNP).

Samson's *Créditistes* won just under five percent of the vote in the 1976 elections which followed and only their leader succeeded in winning his seat. The PNP won just under one percent and elected only Fabien Roy. The PNP went practically unnoticed during the campaign; the *Créditistes* attracted some notice but mainly by the increasingly strident and paranoid style of their campaign in
which Samson spotted communists and atheists everywhere, especially, of course, in the PQ.¹ Some of the Créditiste vote, it seems, went to the PQ in 1976; most of it however, went to a revitalized Union nationale. Since the election, Fabien Roy has been working closely with the UN, and the PNP has disappeared.

Union nationale fortunes went way down in this period only to revive somewhat. Bertrand resigned after the 1970 defeat to be replaced by Gabriel Loubier. Loubier tried to give the party a face-lift to make it attractive to the new generation of Quebec voters. A brain trust of academics was brought in to write a new and somewhat more progressive program and the name was changed to Unité-Québec to rid the party of its association with Duplessis. The measure did not, however, go over well with party members and supporters, and, after less than a year, the old name was restored.

The UN was routed in the Liberal landslide of 1973. It won four percent of the vote and elected no one. The Liberals had in fact succeeded in polarizing the election over the independence issue and the UN, with its "two nations" position, was left in the middle. In 1974, Loubier resigned; Maurice Bellemare was appointed interim leader and soon succeeded in winning a seat in the National Assembly in a by-election. In March 1976, Bellemare was replaced at a leadership convention which selected Rodrigue Biron, a recent convert to the UN, whose only political base lay in the semi-clandestine Knights of Columbus of which he was president. Biron apparently won the support of former Créditistes in the party and was able to defeat his mainly equally obscure opponents in a free-spending campaign. Biron's first major act as party leader was to torpedo a planned merger with Choquette's PNP because he feared being overshadowed by the better known former Minister of Justice and of Education.²

Although Biron publicly predicted a UN victory, privately the Unionistes were well satisfied with the 1976 election results which gave them eleven seats. The party had entered the election campaign with no organization whatever in most districts; most candidates were simply named by the party leader with no attempt at holding a nominating convention and had to build up their own organizations from scratch. The UN did receive some help from the Quebec federal Conservatives, but this group was itself in no position to furnish much assistance.

Does the fifteen percent of the vote collected by the UN on November 15 therefore mark the resurgence of this party and the political Right in Quebec? It likely does not. The combined Créditiste, UN and PNP vote totalled only twenty percent of the electorate, which in itself is somewhat limited. In addition, we must subtract from this twenty percent much of the substantial vote amassed by the UN in the non-francophone districts of the Montreal region. UN candidates there

² Ibid., pp. 59-64.
amassed twenty-five times the number of votes the party had collected in 1973. Usually running a strong second to the Liberals and even winning a seat in the most English of districts, Pointe-Claire. It is only because Biron was able to entirely disassociate the UN from the old right-wing nationalism in the eyes of many English-speaking Quebecers that he was able to gain such support in districts that had for so long spurned his party. At the same time he managed to win back some of the traditional rural Bleu vote, especially in the Eastern part of the province on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, by running two campaigns simultaneously. One, in English, presented the UN as a fresh new team dedicated to Canadian unity and to cleaning up "Bourassa's mess" (especially over language and Bill 22, which had antagonized a great many non-francophones). The other, in French, outside the cities, projected the Biron forces as worthy, energetic heirs to the Bleu tradition. This strategy was a conscious one:

At the headquarters on Berri Street in Montreal, Mr. Biron personally ordered the receptionist to answer to all questions asked in French that French would be the official language of Quebec under a UN government; but that English speakers be told that there will be two official languages.

Elements combined under such conditions constitute a highly unstable compound. As long as the Liberals remain effectively leaderless, Biron appears likely to retain his support but, we suggest, once the Liberals find the rudder again, as they are likely to do after their leadership convention scheduled for April 1978, they should be able to win back their natural support in the mainly middle class English-speaking population, and the UN will likely have to fall back on the ten to fifteen percent that make up the base of the traditionalist vote. There is of course the possibility that Biron could supplant the Liberals by transforming the UN into a new force, turning it into a Quebec equivalent of the Ontario Tories, a modern, sophisticated, urban "blue machine". However, before such a transformation could take place, the Liberals would in fact have to commit political suicide which is not inconceivable but, given the strength of the Liberal tradition in Quebec, seems rather improbable.

In any case, the political Right as it stands would seem to play a minor role in Quebec politics. Right wing parties may hold the balance of power in a close contest between the Liberals and the PQ. Specific conditions leading to popular protest and the unusual oratorical or other abilities of a right wing leader might breathe new life into this group, as happened with the Socreds under Caouette from 1962 to 1965, or with the UN under Daniel Johnson. The Right may also be able to successfully mobilize around certain issues of intense concern to its adherents just as it did in the June 1977 Montreal Island School Board elections when candidates supporting the retention of confessionality swept the Catholic

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2 Dupont, op. cit., p. 66. (Author's translation.)
boards, aided by a turnout of less than twenty percent. Yet even here, a significant proportion of the vote came from neo-Quebecois groupings, especially the Italians and English Catholics, who are hardly prime candidates for recruitment to the wider aspects of traditional right wing Quebec nationalism.

In the long run, the weakness of the political Right in Quebec has to do with the global phenomenon of urbanization and modernization and the resultant decline of the petite bourgeoisie. It is this class that has historically formed the active base of the right wing parties, especially the *Union nationale*. While the UN and the *Créditistes* have at times attracted significant working class support, it is our contention that such support was usually of a passive and protest-oriented nature and, in any case, has been much eroded in the present day.

One additional element has served to weaken the petit bourgeois base of the political Right. This is the fact that in the cities, especially Montreal, the large neo-Quebecois population makes up a significant part of the petite bourgeoisie among the small storekeepers, barbers, shoe repairmen, and the like. Because of the lack of urban petit bourgeois positions to replace the disappearing rural ones, the French-Canadian petite bourgeoisie declines even faster – its potential members finding their way to new middle class positions and especially the state middle class. The typical neo-Quebecois petit bourgeois Montreal shopkeeper is dedicatedly Liberal at the federal level and, though he might vote for a Biron out of protest, he feels only antipathy for the nationalist posturing of traditional right wing Quebec politics.

A detailed study of a mixed urban-rural francophone constituency in the late sixties and early seventies found that the membership of the UN and its organizational leadership continued to come predominantly from the declining rural sector of the district.¹ Another study brought to light that middle class support for the UN varied inversely with size of population: the larger the community, the less its middle class supported the party.² In addition, self-employed small businessmen, that declining breed among French Canadians, among all middle class groupings was the one most sympathetic to the UN.³ In fact, it appears to have been a rejection by a significant proportion of this group, perhaps due to the revelations of government corruption in the Quebec natural gas scandal that cost the UN the 1960 election.⁴

In conclusion, the decline of the political Right ultimately paralleled and reflected the decline of the petite bourgeoisie and its gradual replacement by the urban, educated new middle class who saw their aspirations expressed in the Quiet

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¹ Benjamin, *op. cit.*
³ Ibid., p. 92-93.
⁴ Ibid. p. 93.
Revolution by the transformed Liberal party under Lesage, Lapalme and Lévesque. Initially, that's where they turned.
CHAPTER VI:  
THE QUEBEC LIBERALS

The Liberal party is the oldest political party presently active in Quebec. The Liberal party of Quebec (PLQ) traces its ancestry back to the early 1800s, to an informal grouping of French-speaking members of the Assembly of Lower Canada known first as the Parti canadien and then the Parti patriote. After the rebellion and the Union of the Canadas, French-Canadian deputies from Quebec (Canada East) calling themselves Réformistes joined first with more progressive elements from Ontario under Baldwin and, for a period after 1857, with more conservative elements under Macdonald. The coalition thus formed was known first as the Liberal Conservatives and, after Confederation, simply as the Conservatives.

An opposition grouping known as the Liberals was constituted when the scandals which shook the Conservatives in the 1870s drove the more liberal of Quebec Tory supporters out of the coalition and closer both to the Rouge minority of Quebec deputies which had opposed Confederation, and to Macdonald's "Grit" opponents from Ontario. In 1878, the secret ballot was adopted and subsequently the loose ad hoc associations were replaced by two structured political party organizations. In 1887, Wilfrid Laurier, an eminently respectable French Canadian, took over as leader of the Liberal party. His personal reputation and a few well-chosen public statements soon served to render the Liberals as respectable as their leader by disassociating them from their remaining Rouge connections.

By 1896, the two old parties had reached maturity. By the same year, Liberal domination had set in. A Conservative stronghold provincially and federally until the late 1880s – except for a brief scandal-racked period in the mid 1870s – Quebec became a Liberal stronghold. The Liberals capitalized on the Conservatives' apparent inability to defend French-Canadian Catholics outside Quebec, symbolized by the execution of Louis Riel in 1885. In 1886, a majority of Liberals, together with members of the short-lived Parti national under Honoré
Mercier, took power in Quebec. The Conservatives won the election of 1892 but it was their last. Unbroken Liberal rule came to Quebec from 1897 to 1936, spanning the careers of two of Quebec's long-time premiers, Lomer Gouin, 1905-1920, and Alexandre Taschereau, 1920-1936.

We have already noted the ministerial orientation and limited scope of the Quebec government in those days. The structure of the party complemented the political functions of its leaders; it was effectively an election machine, a group of people in each district linked to the deputy, through personal ties or patronage. This system worked best in rural districts where everyone knew everyone and hand-outs went a lot further. It is interesting to note in this regard that the party in power, the Liberals to 1936 and the Union nationale after 1944, concentrated its seats in rural Quebec while its major opposition came from the cities.  

Premier Taschereau's cynical electoral manipulation, as well as the rather obvious unconcern of his regime in the face of the misery brought on by the depression – as demonstrated by the undisguised chumminess of many ministers with English-speaking financiers and industrialists – finally brought the downfall of the Liberal dynasty in 1936. The Liberals were nevertheless soon returned to power under Adélard Godbout, due partly to the intervention of the federal Liberal government in the 1939 Quebec election with the message that only a Liberal administration in Quebec could guarantee that there would be no conscription. Measured by previous standards, the Godbout administration stands out as honest and progressive. Its reforms included the nationalization of Montreal Light, Heat and Power, compulsory education with free textbooks, the full enfranchisement of women, and the appointment of a civil service commission.

But these reforms went comparatively unnoticed with the outbreak of the conscription crisis. The 1944 election saw a major revival of nationalist feeling and the entry of a new party dedicated to stopping conscription, the Bloc populaire. The Bloc's internal divisions and poor organization, reminiscent of the ALN from which several of its leaders had come, limited it to fifteen percent of the vote and four seats. However, its effect on the outcome appears to have been greater. By making the "national survival" theme central to the campaign and by attracting progressive young intellectuals like André Laurendeau, who might otherwise have joined with the Liberals, it helped the UN win its bare majority. Duplessis capitalized on the nationalist sentiment by accusing Godbout of selling out to Ottawa both in authorizing a constitutional amendment enabling the federal government to institute unemployment insurance in 1940, and in entering into federal-provincial tax-sharing agreements in 1942.

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The Quebec Liberals of the postwar era, like the federal Conservatives, found themselves in the political wilderness, losing four consecutive elections to Duplessis’ increasingly arrogant regime. The frustration of irrelevance and impotence when social change was so evidently necessary characterizes the Liberals of this era. In fact, the main currents of change in Quebec during the 1950s were not political but rather intellectual. An intellectual opposition was forming, and it was developing a coherent critique of the regime and the traditional social structure it served to defend. ¹ While its critique of the *ancien régime* drew the attention of only a relatively small segment of the population until after Duplessis’ death in 1959, behind the scenes important changes corresponding to the new ideas were taking place, even within the Liberal party. The unheralded architect of these changes in the party was Georges Lapalme who replaced Godbout to head the Liberals from 1950 to 1958.

Lapalme initiated a series of reforms that saw the Liberals gradually transformed from a traditional cadre, or notables’ party like the UN, into a modern political organization with annual party conventions and its own concrete, comprehensive program. Lapalme convened the first annual Quebec Liberal Federation convention in 1955 and from then on slowly drew to the party the intellectuals who were to be the main standard-bearers for the Liberal governments of the sixties. The serious defeat the party suffered in 1956 set the process back, but lively debates over the party's stand increasingly took place in and around its think-tank style policy committee set up by Lapalme for the party's intellectuals. The pages of its weekly newspaper *La Réforme*, which augmented its circulation from 5,000 to 45,000 during the late fifties, reflected this lively debate. ²

Lapalme never recovered from the 1956 setback and resigned soon afterwards to be replaced by a junior federal Cabinet Minister, Jean Lesage. Under his leadership, as everyone knows, the Liberals defeated the *Union nationale* in the 1960 election. Rather less widely known than the result of that election, is the fact the Liberals ran on the first comprehensive platform ever presented in a Quebec election. The 1960 program, which set the course for the reforms that followed, had been drafted by Lapalme and Paul Gérin-Lajoie. The program played an important part in attracting several well-known Quebecers to the Liberal cause. The most famous of these was television broadcaster and commentator René Lévesque, who became Minister of Natural Resources. Two years later, it was Lapalme's support of the idea that proved decisive in winning over Lesage and the cabinet to Lévesque's proposal to nationalize electricity production. ³ Along with Paul Gérin-Lajoie's reform of Quebec's educational system, the takeover of the

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¹ See Milner and Milner, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-165.
privately-owned electric utilities by Hydro-Quebec is the major accomplishment of the Quiet Revolution.

Changes such as these were promised in the 1960 election platform. Among other things, the program called for a new labour code to encourage rather than discourage unionization, hospital insurance, free and universal education, the establishment of an economic planning council, and the creation of a ministry of cultural affairs. Still, the 1960 campaign retained much of the flavour of earlier elections. Like the 1936 campaign which had first brought the UN to power, the Liberals mounted a slashing attack on the corruption of the incumbent administration. Former journalists such as Lévesque and especially Pierre Laporte, who had made a career of exposing dubious UN practices, proved particularly effective spokesmen on this issue.

René Lévesque was also a leading figure in an important structural change in the Liberal party in Quebec. In response to growing nationalist sentiment and in defiance of every party tradition, the provincial Liberals severed their connection with the federal party and in 1964 reconstituted themselves as the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) entirely independent of the national organization.

The key reforms of the Quiet Revolution should include the reform of the educational system, particularly the creation of a ministry of education as the core of a new state educational bureaucracy, the nationalization of electricity production, the easing of restrictions to unionization especially in the public sector and, in general, the rapid extension of the state apparatus into a wide range of social services formerly left in the hands of the Church and associated institutions. There was, of course, nothing even remotely revolutionary about such reforms as they were the standard fare of Liberals in government all over the Western world. But they seemed revolutionary because of the political context in which they were proclaimed and implemented. The very sense of imminent change and innovation that swept Quebec in this period was perhaps even more important than any concrete accomplishment, as it released long-repressed popular energies. Before, one had assumed the future to resemble the past. Now it was sure to be different; change at all levels and in every aspect of existence was the expected norm. Summing up what the "Bi and Bi" Commissioners learned in their interviews, André Laurendeau wrote in the preliminary report of the commission:

According to many French-speaking people who spoke to us, the principal institutions in the country are frustrating their desire to live their lives fully as French Canadians. This situation... was not new... but... they could no longer allow it to continue....

Why, suddenly, when apparently nothing has occurred to upset the traditional order of things, have more and more people decided that they can now 'no longer tolerate' the same 'shackles' which are nonetheless a century old? Could it be, as was suggested at a private meeting in Montreal, that 'among a
people who had been walking somewhat bent over, two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand individuals had suddenly decided to pull themselves erect? ... It appeared to us that dissatisfaction was being most often expressed among representatives of the young, well-educated elite groups of technicians, engineers and executives. But they are not merely young; they belong more or less fully to the 'new world' of a technology and management and are ready to take a leading part in it.  

The atmosphere of Quebec's cultural life changed dramatically. Censorship, which had been absurdly severe, almost disappeared entirely. Quebec began to produce a relevant, consciously Quebecois art and music of its own. Speaking French became a matter of pride. Since everything now seemed legitimate, journalists and commentators found themselves in the extraordinary position of being able to describe the world as they saw it. La Presse, Montreal's staid family newspaper, became, under Gérard Pelletier, a vibrant voice of the new Quebec. The slogan of the provincial Liberals, Maitres chez-nous, took on a wide symbolic meaning which for a time seemed to unite all classes of Quebeckers. It spoke of a common liberation from the weight of the past, a sharing of an increasingly rich cultural life, and a collective exploration and assessment of all future possibilities to achieve the realization of those which best served the needs of the entire nation. In short, everything seemed possible.

The unexpected defeat of the Liberals at the hands of Daniel Johnson and the UN in 1966 symbolized what many had already begun to realize: the great outburst of optimism was premature in the face of the limitations that existed. Furthermore, significant groups of Quebeckers remained to be convinced of the value of those reforms that had been initiated. The decline of the Church's influence in the schools, the relaxation of censorship, even the slowing down of patronage had provoked a reaction against the Liberals among many traditionally-oriented voters. In fact, certain of the reforms rebounded against the government. For example, "the reorganization of secondary schooling in large districts made necessary the busing of students and, occasionally, the children had to make such long trips that they could not return home for lunch. Some parents viewed this situation as a direct threat to familial and local unity". Nor did the tangible economic benefits of the period flow evenly to all groups. As Lemieux noted:

Aggregate resources have certainly increased in Quebec society, but the pattern of distribution has resulted in income disparities that are often greater than at the beginning of the 1960s.... The gap in absolute terms between the average income of the liberal professions and that of the other occupational

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categories widened from 1960 to 1968. On the other hand, the situation of provincial employees, teachers, and professors improved substantially in relative terms. This is true also of the institutional employees, even though their average income is still well below the provincial average. The relative situation of salesmen and business employees hardly changed at all, while three categories of occupations clearly regressed: owners of businesses, who, however, still remained above the average; farmers... and pensioners.... Farmers were the only group that experienced a decrease in average income in real terms.... Teachers and professors, employees of institutions and provincial employees... are clearly the four categories of occupations that have profited most from the Quiet Revolution, while the owners of businesses, farmers and pensioners have suffered from it. ¹

The effects as well as the content of government policies and programs are evidence of the fact that the Lesage Liberals constituted the first modern urban-oriented administration in Quebec's history. In 1962, fifty-nine percent of elected Liberal deputies came from urban areas, twenty-nine percent of them from Montreal and Quebec City; ² conversely, rural areas remained discernibly more favourable to the National Union. ³ Educational background significantly affected the vote as well. A poll conducted in 1962 found the Liberals to be supported by forty-six percent of those with up to four years of education, fifty-two percent of those with five to eight years, fifty-eight percent of those with nine to twelve years and, finally, seventy-two percent for those with thirteen or more years. ⁴ Liberal support also correlated positively with income and with middle class occupational status:

The data show that on the eve of the 1960 election, 41 per cent of professional people and managers preferred the Liberals to the Union Nationale, compared to 34 per cent of the skilled workers. Just before the 1962 election, 58 per cent of the voters were satisfied with the Liberal government. The proportion was 76 per cent among professional people and highly specialized technicians, 67 per cent among office workers and salesmen, and 65 per cent among salaried executives. This is in contrast to only 43 per cent of the labourers and domestics, 49 per cent of skilled workers, and 51 per cent of small proprietors and small businessmen. Again in 1966, according to a poll that found 57 per cent of the electorate intending to vote for the Liberal party, 75 per cent of the white-collar workers who expressed their preference intended to vote for the Liberals, compared to only 50 per cent of the labourers. ⁵

¹ Ibid., pp. 111-112.
² Posgate and McRoberts, op. cit., p. 110.
³ Pinard, op. cit., p. 103.
⁵ Ibid., pp. 274-275.
In essence, the Liberal Party of the early and mid-sixties won the loyalty of an increasingly urban, upwardly mobile middle class which brought it political victory in 1960 and 1962 and lent support to the reforms of the Quiet Revolution. Most important in this process are the changes in the composition and role of the middle class. It is a central hypothesis of this book that the political reforms and cultural transformations of the time set in motion a process leading to the replacement of the traditional petite bourgeoisie by the new middle class as the intellectually and politically dominant stratum within the Quebec collectivity. The reformed, expanded colleges and universities trained this class and, along with other governmental and peripheral state institutions, they employed the great majority of its members.

The Liberals could not consolidate this gain. The educational and work experience of this state middle class predisposes it toward independentism and social democracy. Even before 1966, an important segment within the state middle class dismissed the Liberals as an irrevocably federalist "old" party and established the RIN, the presence of which helped bring about the Liberal defeat in 1966. However, it was only after this defeat that significant new middle class elements split from the Liberals. It is not the defeat itself that caused the Liberal split – the UN, though it formed the government, was unable to carve out a place as a dominant political force in its own right. Rather, once the Liberal party found itself no longer in power, the limitations imposed upon its ability to manoeuvre by the class composition of its support (which in fact lay behind its electoral defeat) became apparent.

In power, the Liberal regime had been engaged in nation-building, satisfying the aspirations of the newly educated middle class with its quasi-nationalist "Maitres chez-nous" posture and its enlargement of the state infrastructure. At the same time it was serving the anglophone grande bourgeoisie that controlled investment and generally benefited from reforms in the fields of transportation, education, communication, and economic planning. The Lesage administration's last two years were characterized by internal bickering as well as increasing discouragement and frustration as it confronted heightened labour unrest, dragging out negotiations with Ottawa over family allowances and other problems. Knowledgeable observers began to see that though the coalition behind the Quiet Revolution remained outwardly intact, much of the impetus was gone.

The conversion of René Lévesque to the "associate state" thesis and the repudiation of this quasi-separatist position by the PLQ is the first major public manifestation of the split. Lévesque and his supporters left the party, taking with them a number of new middle class former Liberals who could not go along with their party's repudiation of the hopes of the Quiet Revolution as was obvious in the newly discovered resolutely federalist position its leaders were taking against Premier Johnson. The founding of the Parti québécois in 1968 under Lévesque undoubtedly served to attract more support. Yet the Liberal establishment was not
quite ready to abandon the ground the party had staked out for itself in the Quiet Revolution – or so the 1969 leadership convention victory of Robert Bourassa, a little known urban technocrat who had earlier been close to Lévesque, seemed to indicate.

Nevertheless, under Bourassa the Liberals disassociated themselves even more from the goals and aspirations of the Quiet Revolution. Although it employed a highly sophisticated electoral technology, the Liberal campaign of 1970 was in fact a traditional "bread and butter" one in which Bourassa's promise of 100,000 jobs featured prominently. The disarray of the UN guaranteed the success of the campaign, but surely some of those who had rallied to the goal of *Maîtres chez-nous* could hardly identify with such a narrow-horizon economic approach. The October crisis was even more significant in this respect. Many could never forgive what they plainly saw as Quebec's pitiable capitulation before the forces of the federal state. "The October crisis of 1970 in effect confirmed the divorce between the nationalist movement in Quebec and the Liberal party and, despite the fact that he made French the official language of Quebec in 1974, Robert Bourassa was incapable of reconciling the Quebec nationalists because the crisis had caused a serious trauma for them". Bourassa's lavish use of slick advertising techniques to ridicule the independence project during the 1973 campaign was only the final straw.

The Liberals' inconsistent attitude toward patronage hurt their reputation as well. They had for so long attacked such practices that revelations of patronage by the Liberals exposed them as not only dishonest but also hypocritical, a trait which did not endear the party to potential new middle class supporters. There is no doubt that the Liberals engaged in patronage and other practices of ministerial politics throughout their time in office, though on a reduced scale and to the obvious discomfort of certain new middle class party members, among them René Lévesque. Others have described the Liberals' attitude less flatteringly:

Therefore, a good number of the politicians [interviewed] were of the opinion that the Union Nationale conducted 'petty patronage' while the Liberals conducted 'big patronage'.... To illustrate this judgement, some suggested that Liberal patronage was 'for the rich,' others held that for the Unionistes it was more 'democratic'.... One informant... specified that Liberal Party... 'big patronage' is given over to professionals, while the Union Nationale, a 'petty bourgeois' and 'rural' party, is more oriented toward... local patronage where the deputies always have a word to say over who will benefit.... The great portion of politicians we met

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felt that Liberal Party patronage is more sophisticated, 'more hidden,'... the Union Nationale is 'more open.'

The Liberals found themselves under increasing pressure to return to the old ministerial forms when they regained power in 1970. With seventy-three seats scattered in all regions – and even more so after 1973 when 102 party candidates were elected – they were encumbered with a large number of representatives of ministerially-oriented interests right within their own caucus. But the entire political context had changed: the Liberals found themselves in power as expected in 1970, but turned out to be ill-equipped to operate successfully under the new rules of the game that they themselves had helped to write. For one thing, a realignment had taken place in Quebec politics, first in the cities and gradually all through Quebec.

The period from 1966 to at least 1970 was one of transition and uncertainty. While this was captured most dramatically by events in the streets, such as the series of "Québec français" demonstrations, the campaign to free Pierre Vallières, Charles Gagnon, and other political prisoners, and of course the October 1970 events, the change in political party alignment and support is more telling. The UN collapsed, the PQ emerged onto the scene, and the provincial Créditistes first rose and then fell dramatically. When the dust settled in the early 1970s, the pattern of Quebec politics had been fundamentally altered. The apparent grand coalition of the Quiet Revolution between the corporate elite and the state bureaucracy had been fractured.

The Liberal party was able to replace its lost state middle class elements by drawing upon many former Union nationale supporters from the petite bourgeoisie while further strengthening its anglo-immigrant base. During the early seventies, these elements added up to a powerful Liberal electoral constituency, and this electoral strength concealed its profound political weakness. Opposing the Liberals, the Parti québécois continued to gather the support of state middle class groups which had formed an important part of the active base of support for the Quiet Revolution. These consisted of intellectuals, younger, more progressive professionals, students, and many trade union officials and militants, as well as a growing working class vote.

The Bourassa Liberals' resolute federalism and repudiation of vague nationalistic goals for the "100,000 jobs" approach of the 1970 campaign and the "profitable federalism" position in 1973 both signified and symbolized the end of the Quiet Revolution. But the new regime could not alienate the forces of positive nationalism, however much it seemed to suit it electorally, without serious long-term costs. In practically discarding the collective national aspects of the Quiet

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1 V. Lemieux and R. Hudon, op. cit., p. 275. (Author's translation.)
Revolution, the Quebec Liberal party of the 1970s pleased its corporate backers and probably gained votes in the short term, but ultimately it weakened its link to the legitimacy required to steer the nation-building state. The Parti québécois, on the other hand, arose as a natural result of the consequent political vacuum and laid claim to the ideological bases of nation-building, thereby progressively winning the allegiance of the state middle class. It was, after all, this stratum that the nation-building state of the Quiet Revolution had virtually created and which in turn created it, both in its day-to-day acts and in the national-sociopolitical hopes that it nourished.

The weakness of the Liberal regime is confirmed by the scandals and confrontations that plagued it. The main cause of this weakness lay, not in the alleged incompetence of its leadership, but in the social composition of its support. With its strength evaporating in the most dynamic sectors of Quebec society – the state middle class and the young urban working class – the party had to rely instead on the more traditional petite bourgeoisie and the guaranteed, though increasingly grudging, electoral support of non-francophone Québécois who, however alienated from it on other grounds, could be counted on to vote Liberal on election day in order to hold back the separatist tide. To be sure, the party could not help but increasingly reflect the priorities, concerns, and attitudes of its newly-found supporters.

Moreover, the Liberal regime worked very closely with the financial and industrial bourgeoisie from which it received strong financial support. This is of course no new development but it is nonetheless true that the drying up of corporate financing for the UN contributed to that party's humiliating defeat in 1970. There are clear indications that former UN business backers turned to the Liberals in 1969 and 1970, dismayed by Bertrand's apparent inability to maintain order in Quebec and in the UN in the face of both increasing societal tensions and internal party dissension over the Cardinal faction's flirtation with independentism.

There is good reason to suspect that Quebec's financiers and industrialists were pleased with Robert Bourassa's succession to the Liberal leadership in 1969. The lavish campaign shrewdly organized by Paul Desrochers, by which this unknown overcame his two well-known rivals, was estimated by one of them, Pierre Laporte, to have cost one million dollars. The other, Claude Wagner, accused Bourassa of paying the transportation and accommodation costs of sympathetic delegates. Furthermore:

According to Gilles Racine, Bourassa's funds allowed him to do the following: rent 60 large bill boards along all major access routes to Quebec City where the convention was taking place; rent television time on Channel 4, Quebec City's private French television network, for the evening preceding the vote; rent 1,000 hotel rooms for his organization, and delegates, according to Wagner; mail out 70,000 cards to Liberal militants expressing
interest in the way they viewed the problems of the day; nominate 28 regional and 108 constituency representatives; sponsor 110 pro-Bourassa hostesses on the convention floor, including beauticians and hairdressers; and hold a $25,000 party for his supporters at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal.  

Business support continued to flow to Bourassa in the 1970 election. As Lemieux concludes: "The occupationally defined classes most favourable to the Liberal party come from business circles (large and medium-sized enterprises)". Once elected, the Bourassa government was, by all reports, easily accessible to corporate executives and representatives of employers' associations. According to one such report:

The interviews with the senior executives revealed a more substantial degree of satisfaction vis-à-vis the government... Executives of Northern Electric, CIL, Aluminum Company of Canada. Royal Trust, Montreal Trust, and the Bank of Montreal, among others, were particularly pleased with the effectiveness of their contacts with the government of Premier Bourassa. The president of a chemical firm put it this way: 'Our relations with the present (Bourassa Liberal) government are working well. People of our own kind are much more numerous in government, and this makes it easier to deal with the government'. One of the senior executives of a trust company claimed: 'The Quebec government sees our point most of the time' and that 'our relations with them are not tainted with nationalism or bilingualism'.

But it was not just business that sought contacts with government.... According to the director of a trust company, 'Cabinet ministers often come to see us to ask how things are going'.... This was confirmed by an executive of a bank: 'A lot of cabinet ministers come to Montreal and have a quiet dinner with us.' The president of a cement company was more blunt: 'Ministers often seek our advice. They want to know what to do'.... Most of the meetings... were kept secret because the government preferred confidentiality. Said one bank president: 'Ministers prefer not to have it known they are meeting with executives of our bank.'  

But bankers seldom ring doorbells on election day. Their contributions explain the party's ability to finance its slick advertising campaigns and to hire campaign workers, but provide no real answer to the question of who constituted the new core of Liberal activists in 1970 and 1973. The question applies only to francophone districts, for there was no shortage of Liberal volunteers in the anglophone and neo-Quebecois districts. It also applies less in rural districts where the ministerial system and petite bourgeoisie continue to remain fairly well entrenched. In French-speaking urban Quebec, it would appear that the Liberal

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2 V. Lemieux, *Le Quotient politique vrai*, p. 42. (Author's translation.)
core consisted increasingly of those who depended on party and government sources for funds – contractors, developers, some lawyers and other professionals, and so on. Under these conditions, the Liberals' surest electoral strategy was to present an expensive and carefully packaged media campaign which incessantly hammered home the "risks" of independence with the PQ.

In post-Quiet Revolution Quebec such a strategy could only rebound against the party. Furthermore, not only did the regime in this way throw off the nationalist mantle of the Quiet Revolution but it also, despite medicare and Premier Bourassa's intermittent self-portrait as a "social democrat", came to lose its veneer of social progressivism. The 1960 platform had quoted Georges-Émile Lapalme: "To be a Liberal is to support social justice". Few Liberals however could claim the statement to be still true in the face of rapidly growing petit bourgeois influence in the party. Party conventions were increasingly dominated by small businessmen, real estate and insurance agents, lawyers, notaries, salesmen, and the like, as policy resolution decisions showed. For example, delegates to its April 1976 congress strongly defeated a resolution in favour of free university education, rejected public day-care, called on the government to plug up leaks of secret documents to journalists, and came out against no-fault automobile insurance.

Except for a small group of technocrats, including Claude Castonguay and some of the experts he recruited while Minister of Social Affairs such as his successor Claude Forget, the link between the Liberals of the 1970s and the social groups most directly involved with the Quiet Revolution was effectively severed. More and more, the state middle class came to view the Bourassa Liberals as traitors rather than heirs to the promise of the Quiet Revolution and to look instead to the PQ. In turn, the Liberals increasingly regarded the members of the state middle class, especially those who worked for the government, as themselves potential or actual traitors to the regime. Even with 102 of 110 seats in the Assembly, such a situation, given the vital legitimating role of the state middle class under monopoly capitalism, results in a shaky regime, and helps one understand the perennial problems that beset the Bourassa government, as well as its eventual downfall.

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1 For example, the following (sic) is from an interview with Robert Bourassa in The Gazette, February 16, 1976, p. 9:
Q: The Parti Québécois has accused you of working out a package deal in which you trade repatriation of the constitution for federal help in paying for the Olympic deficit.
A: That's ridiculous. As Mao Tse-tung said, politics is war without blood and the PQ will fight with anything it can.
Q: That's the first time we've heard the premier of Quebec quote Mao Tse-tung, is this an indication of the direction in which we are heading?
A: Well, we are all social democrats, aren't we?

If loyalty is defined as following the instructions of one's superior, then the regime had good reason to doubt the loyalty of the state middle class. Certainly much of the conflict between the regime and the unions representing its employees, including those in new middle class positions, was the simple expression of economic discontent related to the global fiscal crisis. Nevertheless, there is an additional element at work here. In Chapter Three, we drew attention to the insistence of the union representing government-employed professionals upon a "freedom of conscience" clause in their contract. Other evidence of "disloyalty" and efforts to counter it are not lacking. One indication of the former was the continual leaks of information by bureaucrats apparently prepared to risk job security in order to embarrass the government. An example of this is contained in a February 1976 letter sent by the Quebec Ministry of Education to provincial coordinators of committees of teachers in the various disciplines taught in Quebec CEGEPs:

A number of you use the title of co-ordinator on correspondence paper to give the impression that you are taking your political stands as an employee of the Department of Education. You will agree with me, I am sure, that such practices are entirely unacceptable on the part of persons who work directly for the state.... I am certain that this simple reminder will suffice to end these practices which do a disservice to the credibility of all coordinators.  

From the point of view of the regime, the PQ was not a "loyal opposition", but a contaminating political force to be defeated not only at the polls but in the hearts and minds of Quebecers and rooted out of the state. Hence the stress on the loyalty of prospective state middle class bureaucrats, especially in politically sensitive posts. One solution was to hire well-known Liberals (recommended by deputies and party organizers) or, failing that, individuals known not to be Péquistes (PQ sympathizers). These latter were most easily found among supporters of other political parties. Where no assuredly loyal recruits could be found, the practice appears to have been to screen the new applicants thoroughly and to deprive the selected candidate of all politically sensitive material during a trial period of up to a year. The union of public service professionals complained loudly of such practices, accusing the government of holding a political inquiry before according tenure to one public official in the department of Industry and Commerce, and quoting Liberal party Chief Whip Louis P. Lacroix as having admitted that "all appointments are political".  

There were also indications that sensitive posts in the regime among top bureaucrats and in the Premier's office were gradually cleared.

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1 The provincial coordinators are teachers released from part of their teaching duties to preside over curriculum development in their fields.
2 Letter from Léonce Baupré, Directeur du service des programmes, Ministère de l'Éducation, Gouvernement du Québec ; February 13, 1976 ; référence no. 03-01-04. (Author's translation.)
3 Jacques Doré, President, Quebec Government Professionals' Union, open letter to Jean Chrétien, published in La Presse, August 12, 1975.
of progressive figures who had served since the Quiet Revolution and were filled by conservatives, some of them brought back from the Duplessis days, and unsympathetic to the aspirations of the Quiet Revolution.\(^1\) Of course, the regime's evident paranoia which characterized the hunt for Péquistes in the civil service\(^2\) makes it hard to measure just how clear was the case to which it was reacting. The studies and polls cited in the following chapter reveal enough empirical evidence to suggest a trahison des clercs to the PQ was in fact materializing elsewhere than merely in the minds of Liberal ministers. The "euphoria [that] seized the public service"\(^3\) upon PQ victory in November 1976 is surely an added indication of this.

This general state of affairs was apparent even within the higher echelons of the Quebec bureaucracy. For example, Premier Bourassa's chief adviser, Paul Desrochers, told the Cliche commission into the construction industry (in his unofficial but obviously central role as a key corporate representative in the government) of the frustrations encountered when dealing with the bureaucracy. He cited one instance concerning a senior official in the Quebec Department of Industry and Commerce who told an important potential American investor: "Quebec does not need your investments sir". Certain Quebec officials, it is clear, saw themselves as loyal to Quebec but not therefore necessarily obedient to the dictates of the Liberal government when the two appeared in conflict. Furthermore, the Cliche commission revealed that some civil servants could be depended on to carry out their assigned tasks only when effectively bribed to do so, and that Desrochers and other high officials, unable or unwilling to change this situation, tolerated it. The commissioners found that the government failed even to attempt to enforce many laws relating to the construction industry at least partly because it could not depend on the public servants to carry them out. An analogous problem existed in the difficulties encountered by the government in efforts to bring juries to convict political-social offenders.

It is instructive to consider the many damaging government scandals uncovered by Quebec journalists during this period in the above context. (Journalists, it should be remembered, are understood as generally belonging to Quebec's state middle class with its less than wholehearted commitment to promoting Canadian unity and especially the Liberal brand of such unity. Quebec Liberals in the federal cabinet have made a regular practice of charging separatist bias in Radio-Canada [French language CBC]. While unable to prove any of the charges with relation to the content of Radio-Canada programming, they remain adamant [and probably accurate] that separatists at Radio-Canada, as the Montreal Star quoted from Prime

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\(^1\) Greta Chambers "The Senior Mandarinate is not like the Rest of Us", The Gazette, May 1, 1975, p. 7. See also "Bourassa Keeps Lid on in Quebec", The Montreal Star, October 9, 1976, p. A8.


\(^3\) Ibid.
Minister Trudeau's speech to Parliament on February 25, 1977, comprise "the overwhelming majority".) The most common charges levelled were of preferential use of state grants, funds, appointments, and contracts. These included:

1. The existence of lists of lawyers, notaries, engineers, and architects designated as Liberal supporters who were the only ones to be handed state assignments and contracts. (In fact, Paul Desrochers was found to be a major shareholder in the company owning a Montreal office building, a large part of which was rented by the government);

2. The awarding of contracts for lotteries' distribution, construction, building maintenance, government advertising, business forms, and "importation of liquors" to firms with close Liberal connections;

3. A Liberal party intimacy with underworld figures and the tie-in of these figures with highly dubious election practices;

4. The hiring of public servants on political (Liberal) criteria, including parallel hiring at the James Bay power development site;

5. The rigging of open-line programs by using civil servants to phone in anonymously and defend the government; and

6. Corruption on the part of a Liberal MNA who was forced to resign because, while a deputy, he was also serving as crown prosecutor.

Of course, traditional patronage accounts for some of these practices, but there is more. Each provides an illustration of the general undercurrent. In many cases, the regime was compelled to use just such methods to ensure that its directives were carried out and its messages communicated to the population. Many of these practices, in fact, constituted payoffs to secure the behavioural loyalty of the people involved, a loyalty sometimes otherwise impossible to obtain. Adherence to the Quebec Liberal Party was thus often more than the favour deserving a reward it

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4 Bernard, op. cit., p. 74.
6 Leeke, op. cit.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
constituted under the traditional patronage system. It was an indication of support for the system, support which came at a price the regime sometimes had to be willing to pay.

Beneath a surface of apparent electoral strength, the Liberal regime is revealed to have been weak indeed. Beset by a state middle class it distrusted, by scandals and intensified public criticism, and by an increasingly militant working class especially in the public sector, it reacted continually with repressive legislation almost at the first sign of strike action. The effect was frequently the opposite of the intent. The civil disobedience which such precipitous action must and did evoke further weakened governmental legitimacy. Even the bourgeoisie grew nervous at the failure of the regime to maintain the stability without which monopoly capitalism cannot function. A poll in early 1976, for example, found less than ten percent satisfaction with the Liberal regime among members of the powerful Conseil du patronat (Employers' Council).

The clearest evidence of this state of events lay in the confrontations between the Quebec state and the common front of unions representing its public and para-public employees, which precipitated strike action first in 1972 and again in 1976. The issue was increasingly a test of strength between the regime and the trade unions, but the polarization did not have the intended effect of lining up public support for the regime; instead, it helped to discredit it even further. Anglophones in particular came to view the regime as a bunch of bunglers and incompetents. Ridicule was compounded by hostility on the part of many non-francophones over the government's handling of the language question in enacting and implementing Bill 22.

Underestimating the extent to which his leadership had been discredited, Robert Bourassa called an early election for November 15, 1976. To seal the fate of the Liberals needed nothing more than for sufficient numbers of neo-Québécois and anglophones to desert them over language and vote Union nationale, and for the Parti québécois to downplay the independence question by guaranteeing that it would be decided separately in a referendum (thereby undermining Bourassa's anti-independence scare campaign). Polls showed them losing ground to the PQ, not only among the young, educated, new middle class francophones in Montreal and the industrial regions, but in fact among all francophone groups in every part of Quebec. Election results brought the Parti québécois to office with seventy candidates elected. The Liberals won only twenty-seven seats, losing an astounding sixty-two including that of Robert Bourassa, who immediately resigned as leader of the party.

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1 "En six ans, 45 lois dont 15 visent des conflits de travail", Le Jour, April 29, 1976, pp. 18-23.
Effectively the November 15 vote signified that Quebecers had replaced a regime revealed to be an illegitimate successor to the Quiet Revolution with its true heir. But, as already noted, the Liberals are unlikely to leave the scene. Modernization normally entails a sophisticated bourgeois-oriented, nominally liberal party as a fixture in the political set-up. The PLQ is far and away the most likely candidate for this role. Its electoral fortunes against the PQ in the immediate future are another matter. A new leader will certainly help but the task will be a hard one. Being in opposition to the PQ under present conditions is not simply opposing a party in power but, in a real sense, opposing the embodiment of the national identity and the collective will.
CHAPTER VII
THE PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS

The Parti québécois currently occupies the Left in the spectrum of Quebec parliamentary politics, holding roughly the same ground as the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the West and in Ontario. But basic to any understanding of the PQ's evolution and recent success, as well as its singular commitment to Quebec independence, is the fact that more than anything else the Parti québécois is the political instrument of the state middle class. (The NDP, because of its historical association with English-Canadian inspired moves toward centralization in Ottawa, could never project itself in this manner. Consequently, it never became a factor in Quebec politics, winning less than one percent in the three provincial elections it entered in 1965, 1970, and 1976; it can be safely ignored in any discussion of the parliamentary Left in Quebec politics.)

This chapter is about the Parti québécois, as a political movement and organization and only indirectly about the PQ as government. While there is obviously a reciprocal relationship between the two – with government affecting party and vice versa – a government in our system must, however unwillingly, incorporate elements in the population which have no place in the party as such. It is correct and indeed necessary to see the assumption of power as constituting a fundamental aspect of the PQ's present make up; but it is both absurd and mistaken to automatically characterize the party by the legislative choices of the Lévesque government.

The historical origins of the PQ are fairly well known and only need summarizing here. On September 10, 1960, a group of about thirty, among them Marcel Chaput, a federal employee who had lost his job due to his separatist views, and André D'Allemagne, a college professor, met in a Laurentian resort near Montreal and founded the Rassemblement pour l'indépendence nationale, with D'Allemagne as its first president. Chaput, after serving briefly as second president, left at the end of 1962, unhappy with the pro-Quiet Revolution orientation of the RIN, and founded the short-lived right-wing nationalist Parti
républicain. In May 1964, Pierre Bourgault, leader of the RIN's then radical wing, was elected president, a post he held right up to the party's dissolution in 1968. His election was one of the sparks of a second split which saw the September 1964 founding of the conservative Regroupement national led by Dr. René Jutras. When a group of Quebec Social Crediters joined this latter organization in February 1966, it changed its name to the Ralliement national (RN). The RIN and RN entered the provincial elections of June 1966, winning the support of 200,000 voters, or 8.8 percent of the electorate – 5.6 percent for the RIN, and 3.2 percent for the RN. After the election, former Créditiste MP Gilles Grégoire was chosen president of the RN which he remained until its dissolution in 1968. Judging by the results of the 1966 election and the kind of membership it drew, the RN attracted and represented the same strata, even the same people, as the Créditistes. Its limited strength lay in outlying areas of the province, among the semi-rural lower and middle classes sympathetic to its traditional nationalist orientation.

The RIN was very different. Its program was modern and progressive, especially in its approach to political independence, noting that "the enterprise of liberation which the RIN undertakes cannot stop at political independence. Everyone admits today that politics and economics are intimately tied.... The people of Quebec will find themselves in a very bad position if they do not possess a very powerful lever for pursuing their aims: the state". ¹ A study of RIN candidates in 1966 found that fifty-six percent worked in new professional or semi-professional occupations, and that almost all were young and lived in urban areas, concluding that the RIN reflected Quebec's future rather than its past. ²

In late 1967, the last of the indépendantiste groups was born as a result of a deep split inside the provincial Liberal party, precipitated by the publication by former cabinet minister René Lévesque of a manifesto favouring sovereignty for Quebec within a common market association with Canada. Unable to gain a hearing for their position at the October 1967 Liberal convention, Lévesque and his supporters left the party and founded the Mouvement souveraineté-association. The MSA immediately entered into merger negotiations with the RN, which went smoothly, and with the RIN, which did not.

The MSA and RIN disagreed on several programmatic issues, notably English schooling rights for the minority which Lévesque adamantly defended, but the main problem was Lévesque's distaste for the demagogic, "grass roots" image of the RIN embodied in Pierre Bourgault, not to mention the outspoken leader of the RIN left-wing, vice president Andrée Ferretti. Lévesque wanted Bourgault kept out of any leadership position, and was in no hurry whatsoever to merge with the RIN, even after a special March 1968 RIN congress gave the green light to negotiations.

² Robert Boily cited in ibid., p. 31.
with the RN and MSA. (It also, incidentally, led to the resignation of Ferretti and her entourage who went on to found the Front de libération populaire (FLP), one of the earlier arrivals on Quebec's extra-parliamentary left.

Nevertheless, it was soon clear that the MSA was on the way up when, only a few months after its founding, it passed the RIN in total membership. There was good reason to believe that, one way or another, the great majority of RIN supporters were determined to join forces with the MSA. In mid-October 1968, a founding congress of the combined MSA and RN was held and René Lévesque was chosen president of the new Parti québécois. It was left only for the RIN to call a special convention in late October where, on the advice of Bourgault and D'Allemagne, the delegates voted overwhelmingly to dissolve the party. Its 14,000 members soon found their way into the PQ.

It took just over eight years for the newly formed Parti québécois to gain power in Quebec. If we are correct in labelling the PQ a vehicle of the state middle class, we should be able to observe its influence on the party's development during those years, by observing its structure, composition and membership, the evolution of its program and strategy, and finally, briefly, the impact of its taking power.

The democratic structure of the party is the pride and sometimes the bane of the PQ. At its founding congress, the PQ adopted an organizational model which, according to one observer, was based on that of the Communist league of Yugoslavia. More evident is the close parallel with syndical organizational structures, especially that of the CNTU. The formula was originally opposed by Lévesque and other former Liberals whose preference was for a decentralized version of the structure of the Liberal party. For them, party members, in the final analysis, were there to go from door to door while a small and knowledgeable cadre was to be left to make the real decisions. The Lévesque group relented when it became clear that the new formula had the support of the bulk of the delegates, and the new structure, based on the "participationist" principle of maximizing the power of the ordinary member within the party, was adopted. The only obvious exception to this principle lay in the creation of a political committee, appointed by the party executive for advice on policy planning and political strategy. This anomaly was erased a year later at the second congress of the PQ which abolished the committee, endorsing the position of those members who had attacked it as an elitist "phantom cabinet".

The structure of the party is set out in statutes adopted and amended at party congresses and its main elements may be summarized briefly. At the base (or peak) is the district assembly of all members. The assembly elects a council of six, chooses delegates for regional assemblies and party congresses, and votes upon

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resolutions to send to these bodies. The district councils are responsible for setting up six committees, three related to program and three related to party services such as finances and publicity. There are twenty regions, territorially defined, where delegates from the districts included in each meet and, among other things, elect regional councils which in turn set up committees with mandates corresponding to those of the district level committees.

Party congresses, which were held yearly up to 1974 and are now biennial, are supreme within the party. Only they can change the party constitution and adopt major programmatic positions. The congress also elects the party executive which is composed of fifteen members, including a president, vice-president, treasurer, and program adviser. No more than five of the fifteen (the president and four at-large members) may be deputies in the National Assembly.

It is not the executive but the national council of the party that is supreme between congresses. The national council is composed of the presidents of the 110 district associations, the fifteen members of the executive and twenty-one regional presidents. The council chooses the heads of the six party committees on program and services who, along with the deputies and defeated candidates, participate as non-voting members. Although not in itself a mass organization, the national council bears close watching, for it is the key party instrument available to represent the rank and file on a regular basis especially when, as now, the party is in power. In fact, its presence has been a thorn in the side of the more conservative elements of the party until recently concentrated in the executive and now centered in the cabinet.

In a recent, highly useful book on the Parti québécois, Vera Murray finds that fundamental to the evolution of the PQ has been the continued presence of two major groupings, the first of these she calls the "technocrats" and the second the "participationists". While no precise definition of these terms is possible, they serve nonetheless to draw attention to an important distinction. The technocrats are cautious, middle-class oriented, respectful of parliamentary traditions and bureaucratic structures, and more interested in using the Quebec state to make capitalism work smoothly and equitably than in challenging or transforming it. Smaller in number of active members, this faction is well represented at the highest levels of the party and government.

The participationists seek to use the PQ to serve the needs of the working people of Quebec by emphasizing the part to be played by the rank and file in the party's structures, which complements their vision of a democratized and decentralized administrative system as well as their leftist social policies – many of which have found their way into the party program. Interestingly, neither of these

groups can be termed ultra-nationalist because for neither is independence itself a self-justifying, emotionally-based goal. (The minority for whom this is the case are especially well represented among former RINistes in PQ ranks.) For the technocrats, independence is the sine qua non of a well-functioning (technocratic) Quebec; for the participationist, it is the necessary basis of a wider social and economic transformation. An interesting result of this has been that neither group appears willing to trust the other with the independence project, each afraid that the other is prepared to sacrifice it to its own ulterior goals.

The technocrats originated with the dissidents who left the Liberals with Lévesque in 1967 to found the Mouvement souveraineté-association. The participationists, on the other hand, were never and could never have been Liberals, coming to the PQ from different milieus – the trade unions, popular groups, student activism, and, in some cases, the RIN.

When founded in 1968, the PQ leaned toward the participationists only in its structure; its program was almost uniformly technocratic, essentially as inherited from the reform Liberals in the MSA. Practically all programmatic innovations since, over a period of years during which the party's objective political status changed from that of "extremists" to "loyal opposition" to "Her Majesty's Government," constitute partially successful attempts by the participationists to alter the program in line with their conceptions. Latouche notes:

At the time of its first electoral test, the party fully accepted the general rules of the North American economic structure. As stated in the 1970 economic manifesto, 'there can be no healthy capitalism in a sick economy... [our] objective is to fully understand the evolution of contemporary capitalism, so as to ensure the prosperity of a majority of Quebecois.' Obviously, such statements do not, to say the least, reveal a strong socialist inclination, but since 1970, the party's program has moved considerably to the left, so that by now it closely resembles the program put forward by the French left-wing coalition of Socialists and Communists.¹

Latouche's assessment is not wrong, but it must be delicately interpreted to reflect a rather complex series of developments. There can be no doubt that the participationist wing of the party has made serious inroads. Beginning with the publication of the 1972 manifesto Quand nous serons vraiment chez nous, the participationists' social vision increasingly finds its way into the party program, especially the clauses concerning labour relations, health, housing, education, and consumer protection. Yet, as Murray points out, the social democratic and decentralist goals therein jar noticeably with the technocrat-inspired "businesslike" and social engineering perspective that comes through in other sections of the

program, notably the chapter entitled "Economic Policies for a Sovereign Quebec". This latter perspective has also tended to predominate in the party's electoral strategy.

The Left's input into the program has generally been limited by the technocratic spirit which guided its initial drafting. In the context of this original concept, participationist additions and amendments including the call for workers' self-management in enterprises, the ending of urban land speculation through the nationalization of urban land, the outlawing of scabs, the abolition of timber concessions, the nationalization of finance companies, and the placing of doctors on salary, seem slightly out of place. Far-reaching as these proposals are, their indirect attack on capitalism and centralization is overshadowed by the economic sections' straightforward endorsement of a renewed capitalism under Quebec state regulation.

The radicalism of much of the rank and file has also been constrained by the party's electoralism. Party organizers led by current Environment Minister, Marcel Léger, have regularly channelled much of the energy at the base into electoral activities and fund raising. As the party drew closer to power, the leadership's edict to remain respectable usually succeeded in holding in line those who wished to push the party further to the left. This seems to be the pattern emerging after the 1976 election; only now the call is to remain respectable so as not to prejudice the outcome of the referendum. Thus, though promises of imminent projects abound, the above-cited policies, with one or two exceptions, have yet to be implemented.

It is our contention that, despite the fact that growing rural support for the PQ in 1976 brought certain more conservative elements into the party, participationist sentiment in the PQ remains majoritarian and probably growing among active members and in all major party bodies save the cabinet and party executive, but presumably including the caucus. Nevertheless, the participationists have, on balance, been unable to translate their numbers into a corresponding measure of power in the party. To understand and begin to explain this failure, one must explore the class composition of the PQ, especially the role of the state middle class in the party, and particularly in its participationist wing.

Several commentators remarked on the make-up of the approximately one thousand delegates to the PQ's 1969 congress. For example, forty percent had university degrees while another twenty percent had completed CEGEP or classical college. Both the La Presse and Le Devoir reporters described the typical delegate as a thirty-year-old teacher or semi-professional male from Montreal. The combined figures allow us to conclude that at least sixty-one percent of the delegates came from the new middle class (including students). This percentage

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1 See L. Bellevance, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49.
has remained more or less constant through subsequent congresses. For example, the typical delegate at the 1973 congress was described as "thirty-five-year old, male, married... he attended university or at least college and earns more than $8,000.00 annually. Teacher, professional, or white collar worker, he joined the party before 1970 but is at his first congress".  

Of the PQ candidates in the 1970 and 1973 elections, fifty-three percent were found to have new middle class backgrounds. This author's study of the biographies of the candidates in the 1976 election confirms this trend. Of the 110 candidates, up to sixty fit our criteria for membership in the state middle class. The largest group among them are teachers, followed by semi-professional employees of governments, school boards, CLSCs, co-operatives and trade unions, then journalists, and so on down the line. Approximately twenty of the candidates have been clearly affiliated with trade unions, while at least ten, including four cabinet ministers, were previously active in student organizations.

In addition, those remaining candidates coming from the liberal professions or petite bourgeoisie typically show certain characteristics more commonly associated with the state middle class than with their own group. We find, for example, union or legal aid lawyers, CLSC doctors, economists who have served as advisors to unions and co-operatives, farmers active in the farmers' union (MPA), and university-educated businessmen. The cabinet draws disproportionately on just such individuals; the typical cabinet minister is a university economics or law professor who has also served as an adviser to government or to peripheral state institutions, and is ten to fifteen years older than the typical long-time party militant. Yet even in the cabinet one cannot find more than two or three with any real experience or contacts in private industry. This fact helps explain the paltry personal fortunes of the ministers which became a matter of public record when, in response to Lévesque edict, they publicly revealed their assets in early February 1977.

As far as electoral support for the PQ is concerned, a similar pattern emerges. Pinard and Hamilton in 1973 found that:

The Parti Québécois gains majority support from the professionals and semi-professionals. But from the other middle-class groups, management and top administration, lesser administration, office employees, and small business,

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1 D. Latouche and E. Cloutier quoted in *ibid.* p. 88 (Author's translation.)
2 Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
3 Compiled from *Biographies des candidats, Élection 76, Parti Québécois.*
that party gains only a minority and the Liberals gain the majority. There is, in other words, a very sharp division within the middle class between the professionals on the one hand, the managerial and the clerical and sales group on the other. In terms of support for the Parti Québécois, the percentages are: professionals and semi-professionals, 58 per cent; managers and owners, 23 per cent; clerical and sales personnel, 38 per cent. This compares with the working-class figure of 38 per cent.

It would also be a mistake to see this as a contrast of the "technocrats" vs. the non-technocrats. If that term refers to specialists in industrial and administrative techniques, it must be noted that many of the professionals would not be properly labelled as technocrats and many managers and administrators would be properly labelled with that term. The largest single group in the professional category would be teachers, in primary and secondary schools and in universities. Many of them would not be specialists in advanced techniques. Many would be "generalists" rather than specialists.¹

Another indication of the same pattern is their finding that among francophones, support varied inversely with age and directly with education; that is, that the core group of PQ supporters consisted of the young educated Québécois. In a later article, the authors amplified their analysis of this relationship:

The P.Q. did better among those whose financial situation was not good in Montreal, but the reverse was generally the case, outside of Montreal. In the latter case, the economically deprived were less likely than the non-deprived to turn to the P.Q.; they turned instead to other opposition parties, while in Montreal they did just the reverse. In a previous article, it was shown that education and P.Q. support were not related in Montreal (with age controlled), while they were positively related, at least among the young, in the rest of the province. We now find part of the reason for this: the economically deprived, who were disproportionately found among the less educated, by turning P.Q. only in Montreal tended to erase a positive education-party relationship which we might have otherwise found even in that area.²

Finally, a 1970 study found that compared to all other voters PQ supporters were more politically knowledgeable and far more likely to participate in political activities.³

To complete our portrait of the party we selected one individual whose brief biographical statement serves as an example of the active new middle class element in the PQ. Our choice is the MNA (deputy) for the semi-rural riding of Laviolette:

Born in Montreal in 1941, he took his primary schooling in Grand-Mère and collegiate studies at the Shawinigan seminary. He received his B.A. in 1962 and continued in education at Laval University. Afterwards, he taught at the secondary I level at Chambly Regional.... In 1964, he returned to the Mauricie region and taught in the local regional for several years.

M.____ was first a member of the executive of the teachers union in the Mauricie afterwards becoming its president for 5 years. He is the union representative of the teachers association of Mauricie, first working part-time and, for the past two years, on a full-time basis. M.____ is very well known in the region due to his intense involvement with recreational organizations in Grand-Mère. He was president of the committee for the installation of the Normandie CLSC..., and was involved with the campaign for the defense of the Laflèche Hospital Center in Grand-Mère against the attempt to make it into a convalescent home.

He was a member of the RIN, then MSA and then the P.Q. since its founding.... He is married and father of three children. 1

The best way to understand the Parti Québécois therefore is to understand the state middle class. It is our hypothesis that in general the more clearly state middle class he or she is in social background, the more likely the active PQ member is to identify with its participationist wing. Since neither wing has anything resembling a formal structure but is rather made up of numerous individuals who share a similar perspective on the program and organization of the party, it is of course impossible to be precise on this point or test it in any other than an impressionistic manner. And, of course, a certain number will stand out as exceptions. Even to place well-known party figures into one or the other camp is not necessarily an easy task. For example, party leader René Lévesque is surely a prime candidate for inclusion in the technocratic camp, and indeed, he does qualify. But even he has a maverick streak in him that makes him somewhat unpredictable, and gives the impression that, although he has no sympathy whatever with the participationists on strategic grounds, he nonetheless feels some emotional kinship with their wider moral and social objectives. Camille Laurin, by any reckoning the number two man in the party, presents an even more difficult case. The former party vice-

1 *Biographies des... op. cit.,* p. 54. (Author's translation.)
president, present Minister of Cultural Development, and architect of the Charter of the French Language has the confidence of both wings and has often served in a peacemaker capacity.

All this aside, the statistical breakdown of party activists' answers to questions such as these five would be nevertheless quite revealing:

1. Are they educated in the social sciences and humanities, as opposed to more traditional areas of expertise such as engineering and law?

2. Did they undergo their college/university education in the reformed educational system and new cultural climate both brought in by the Quiet Revolution?

3. Are they members of trade unions that include (or participated in "common fronts" with other unions composed of) traditional working class elements?

4. Are they public or para-public employees?

5. Do they work in intellectual or creative (ideological) production; for example as teachers, broadcasters, artists, social animators etc?

6. Do they reside in the Montreal or another industrially and culturally active region?

One could support the view that the more an individual's profile corresponds to the characteristics identified by positive answers to these questions, which in turn correspond to the attributes of the state middle class, the more he or she is likely to have supported the participationist line in the PQ.

A brief account of some of the major controversies in the party throws additional light on the differences between the two tendencies and their relative strengths. We have already noted the success of the participationists in eliminating the political committee in 1969. In 1971, participationists led by André Larocque challenged the party to live up to its constitution by allowing its representative structures the latitude necessary to function in the spirit in which they were set up. Larocque put up only a token campaign against Lévesque for the presidency, but organizational changes did follow. Most important, the national council was transformed from a rubber stamp for the executive to a decisive party body.

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1 See André Larocque, Défis au Parti québécois (Montréal, Éditions du Jour, 1971).
Elections to executive posts have also elicited significant rivalry between the factions. In the early period, the leadership proved unsuccessful in its campaign to prevent Pierre Bourgault from winning a seat on the executive. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the executive has regularly been dominated by conservatives closer to the technocrats than their opponents, with the possible exceptions of the 1973-1974 term and the most recent one beginning in May 1977. An effort by the executive to weaken its opponents by attempting first to lessen the power of the regions and then to consolidate the four regions on Montreal island into one were defeated – the first, by the delegates to the 1974 congress, and the second at a 1975 meeting of the national council.

One focus of the divergent positions was differences that arose between the caucus and the executive from 1970 to 1973 and, perhaps less so, from 1973 to 1976. In its first electoral test in 1970, the PQ succeeded in electing only seven MNAs of whom six were from the eastern half of Montreal island, known in the PQ as the Montreal centre region, where the participationists are particularly strong. In 1973, although the party went up from twenty-four to thirty percent in the popular vote, the disappearance of the parties of the Right meant that electoral success was limited to only six ridings, four of them in the Montreal centre region. It did, however, manage to attain the status of official opposition with all the attendant privileges and subsidies. And so the participationists were well represented in the National Assembly during this time. With Lévesque, Jacques Parizeau, and other leading members of the party establishment failing to win a seat, participationist MNAs such as Robert Burns and Claude Charron became important party spokesmen often opposing the majority of the executive. Burns and Charron, for example, went so far as to publicly question Lévesque’s leadership after the defeat suffered in the 1973 election.

Apart from the questions over the rights of the English to their own system of schools and the need for a referendum to precede any decision on independence, both of which had the support of the technocrats and gradually gained the support of most other péquistes, the main areas of disagreement concerned the extent to which the PQ should support trade union demands and demonstrations. In general, the PQ has, as it claims, been biased in favour of workers who make up its "privileged clientele". For example, the cabinet refused to be interviewed on Montreal station CKVL when that station's workers were out on strike early in 1977. Furthermore, over the years the party has publicly and officially supported workers at United Aircraft, Cabano sawmill, Regent Knitting, Canadian Gypsum, and Sorel Foundries, to name a few of the better known labour disputes. Nevertheless, Lévesque and his supporters have always been fearful of being linked in the public mind with any trade union activity that appeared potentially violent or revolutionary.

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1 Murray, op.cit., p. 208.
The march in support of the striking workers at La Presse on October 29, 1971 brought this issue to the fore. The PQ originally supported the three trade union centrals in the march but a joint executive-caucus decision withdrew the party's support when a violent confrontation emerged as a distinct possibility. Nevertheless, important Péquistes elements led by Robert Burns publicly condemned the decision and participated in the march. A similar though less heated confrontation occurred in January 1976, when the national council condemned Law 253 which had been passed by the Liberal government limiting the right to strike in the hospitals. This vote was taken against the advice of the leadership and in effect reversed the position of the caucus which had supported the law after amending it.

In effect, the PQ, though only intermittently endorsed officially by the trade unions, has always received strong support among active union members and officials. Three of the most prominent, Jean Gérin-Lajoie, head of the steelworkers (QFL), Guy Chevrette, former vice-president of the Quebec Teachers' corporation and Michel Bourdon, head of the CNTU's construction federation, are long-time Péquistes. Polls taken at trade union conventions confirm this finding. For example, a poll of 66 percent of the 849 delegates at the QFL convention in October 1973 found 83 percent to be PQ supporters. (This total goes to 85 percent, if we include only the large majority of francophone delegates.) Other interesting findings that confirm our PQ/state middle class hypothesis were that: 1. 95 percent of delegates from the public sector supported the PQ as compared to 77 percent from the private sector; 2. 90 percent of delegates aged under 35 as opposed to 69 percent of those over 35 supported the PQ; and 3. the authors suspected that union officials and staff members were over-represented both in the poll and among Péquistes supporters. ¹

Nevertheless, the PQ has never seriously contemplated a "labour party" structure which would give direct representation in PQ bodies to trade unions that chose to affiliate as has been argued, for example, by long-time union activist Émile Boudreau. Instead, the pattern is one of close semi-official links between the unions and participationist groupings in which the party itself is not officially involved. For example, Péquistes from the Montreal region participated in the city's 1977 May Day march under the banner of the PQ Montréal centre.

Just prior to the 1976 election, a controversy arose within the party that once again brought to the surface differences between its two wings. This concerned the demise of the independentist daily, Le Jour. Founded in February 1974, Le Jour was formally independent of the party but was nevertheless to a great extent dependent on it and its members for financial support. Its publisher and board

¹ "Le profil des délégués". Québec Presse, November 1973, p. 11.
chairman were two leading Péquistes, Yves Michaud and Jacques Parizeau. In its last year of operation, the paper had come increasingly under the control of the journalists and its "line" more and more critical of the PQ. Its final financial crisis in June 1976 precipitated a statement by the PQ executive calling on Le Jour to change its tune if it wished to retain party support. The executive position was in turn publicly challenged by opposition forces within the party led by Burns and Charron who were far more sympathetic to the journalists' views than to those of the paper's directors. The outcome was that PQ financial support was quietly withdrawn. The effect of this decision was to guarantee Le Jour's editorial autonomy at the cost of its continued existence as a daily paper. While the contenders on neither side of this dispute could claim victory nor be particularly gratified by Le Jour's subsequent shut-down, most would agree on the basis of hindsight that there was really no other choice.

On the whole, it is evident that the participationists have seldom attempted, and never succeeded, to elaborate a clear understanding of just what they expected of the PQ and their role in it and consequently have no short or long term strategy. For the technocrats there has been little problem. For them, the PQ is a political party – more democratic and open to be sure – but still like the others. As such, its immediate goal is to win office. Once in office, the priority is to bring in reforms necessary to rationalize and modernize Quebec and in the process win the people over to independence, which would then be negotiated in a reasonable business-like manner. Clearly, such a strategy assumes the continued existence of parliamentary, bureaucratic, and economic institutions, reformed here and there to make them more honest and just but otherwise much as we have known them. The technocrats thus faced few difficulties in developing strategies and putting them into practice in their work in the party and the National Assembly. They were the ones who corresponded most closely to the public's image of political leaders: assured, competent, experienced... Finance Minister Jacques Parizeau, Intergovernmental affairs Minister Claude Morin, and, perhaps Labour Minister Pierre-Marc Johnson, son of Daniel Johnson and rising young star of the party, provide the best examples in the cabinet. Lévesque's principal aide, J. R. Boivin and Louis Bernard, chief lieutenant to House leader Robert Burns, are probably the two major non-elected figures cast in this mould, though most of the long-time party staffers who have now gone to work as aides to ministers would also qualify.

For the participationists the problem was everywhere at once. They sensed that the domination and exploitation they wished to overcome was not only "out there" in Quebec's colonized status but reproduced in all its socio-political institutions and even in the party itself, unless party members waged a constant internal struggle against these influences. This interpretation on their part led participationists to concentrate great energy on the principle of party reorganization but remain wary of taking positions in the party bureaucracy themselves. Consequently, it led to a tendency to concentrate their regular activities as party members on supporting the actions of workers' and citizens'
groups in their district. (After the 1976 election, the technocratic establishment of the party shifted its main attention from running the party to running the government. With the way made easier, and motivated by the obvious need to strengthen the party as a counterweight to the government, participationist elements led by Montréal centre have begun to make significant inroads into the party structures, for example in the executive elections held at the Spring 1977 Congress. However, it is still too early to assess the extent and likely effects of this trend.)

As far as the program and priorities were concerned, the participationists' intellectual state middle class nature is betrayed by the fact that time and again they concentrated their heaviest fire on the questions of independence and language. Afraid that the technocrats would sell out the national project by stopping short of independence or not vigorously defending the French language, they fought their most intense battles around these questions which, win or lose, could not tangibly advance their cause. As a result, programmatic changes of an economic or social nature were often brought in piecemeal outside of any genuine analytical thrust and so, even when adopted, had little impact on the global orientation of the party. This problem reflects not only specific strategic errors on the part of the participationist faction, but a deeper flaw in the state middle class intellectual nature of its composition. In the PQ, as in the trade unions and elsewhere, radical elements from this background have a tendency to confuse words with their meanings. They often seem unable to adequately distinguish the adoption of program amendments at party congresses from the realization of the content of these amendments in the everyday workings and political activities in the various structures of the party and in the hearts and minds of its members, failing to see – and suitably adjust their strategy to – the fact that the former is at best a means to be used in an effort to achieve the latter.

The Left forces of the party never really attempted to mobilize behind a comprehensive statement of their views on the direction of the party; nor did they even attempt to formulate and state it. As a result, the public's main perception of the party was always tailored to the image projected by the technocrats as respectable reformers. Major clashes were ultimately peripheral, focusing on specific party stands or on whether it should support certain actions by workers' and citizens' groups in the streets rather than on a concerted and informed effort by participationists to transform the party.

Little would be gained in attempting to analyse the record of the PQ in power in any detail. We are far too close to it to be able to see it in any perspective except that of current news events; and today's news usually means little tomorrow. Legislation seems to come in cycles – nothing of importance for many months resulting in general disgruntlement and then a barrage of bills and White or Green Papers. Only after a reasonable elapse of time can any balanced perspective be
achieved. We can at this point only offer a few general observations and point to one or two examples to be tested and elaborated as experience accumulates.

The Lévesque government is dominated by the technocratic wing of the party. The explanation for this is similar to that accounting for this group's earlier importance in the party's executive. Leading members have a penchant for power, their background and orientation makes cabinet positions natural for them, especially when power arrives as unexpectedly as it did on November 15, 1976. In addition, there is of course the fact that the party leader, whose affiliations are well known, has great discretion in selecting his cabinet colleagues. Finally, we cannot ignore the tendency for those in power in our system to adapt to its constraints rather than attempting to transform that system in keeping with the purposes which drew them to politics in the first place. They become the government of "all the people" including the majority who supported other parties. To put it somewhat baldly, the technocrats gravitate toward power, and power pushes individuals in a technocratic direction.

One indication of such a drift is the reserve shown by the Lévesque government toward the mandarins in Quebec's senior civil service, an attitude which has irritated party activists. For example Denise Leblanc, a young Péquiste backbencher complained to Montreal's *Le Devoir* in May 1977 of the power of "the highly placed public servants... [and the resulting] impotence at the decision-making level". 1 All this is not to deny the presence in the cabinet of individuals who remain loyal, at least in principle, to the goals of the PQ Left, among whom might be included Robert Burns, Jacques Couture, Louis O'Neil, Denis Lazure, Pierre Marois, and Claude Charron. Nevertheless, their position in the cabinet appears somewhat analogous to the participationist contribution to the program, namely, improvements and additions to a general line set out by the technocrats. Bill 45, the projected anti-scab legislation, is one instance of several important recent initiatives in labour, health, and cultural development policy. But, like the rest, it is set within a technocratic context, especially as far as financial expenditures are concerned. The very tight 1977 budget, the last-minute amendments to Bill 45 which severely weaken its anti-scab provisions, and the refusal of the government to nationalize the bulk of the auto insurance and asbestos industries as set out in the program, are examples of the predominance of the fiscal conservatism of the technocrats.

Nevertheless, the existence of the PQ Left cannot be discounted. It remains strong in representative party bodies and at least moderately so in the caucus. When mobilized, it is a force to be respected. For example, from the evidence that may be gathered, the 1976-1977 professors' strike at the University of Quebec, Montreal campus, was resolved in favour of the union because the latter had the

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backing of the PQ Left in Montreal and with it gained sufficient support first in the caucus and then in the cabinet. It was able to overcome the Education Ministry's determination to break what it saw as control by a Marxist-led faculty over the university, a determination apparently championed by Minister of Education Jacques-Yvan Morin and much of the party establishment.

But such instances are rather few and far between. The participationists seem to subscribe to the rationale that it is necessary to avoid any action which might prejudice the outcome of the referendum on independence and are therefore, with the noble exception of Pierre Vallières, holding back their criticisms. They apparently continue to see themselves as first and foremost the watchdogs over the party's unshakeable commitment to an independent French Quebec. At the May 1977 congress, the first held in two and a half years, they seriously challenged the party's direction over only three items. These concerned the rate and extent of the elimination of private schools, the nationalization of auto insurance and, most controversially of all, the endorsement of a policy of abortion on demand. Yet, when right afterwards Premier Lévesque declined to follow party policy on auto insurance, repudiated the abortion resolution, and concluded that his government is bound to the program only in general principle, he met little public opposition from within the party.

On balance, it seems more appropriate at this point to regard such events as tactical retreats rather than as convincing evidence of the participationists' weakness or co-optation. The election of a number of Montréal centre-backed candidates to the executive at the 1977 congress indicates that the situation is far more a case of the participationists restraining themselves than of their being restrained. In addition, the principle of subordination of the elected leadership to the party membership has always been strong and remains a potential rallying call. A 1973 survey of PQ deputies and national council members found eighty-three percent to agree that party MNAs had no right to publicly contradict any article of the program, and sixty-two percent to affirm that a PQ government must submit to decisions of the congress.

Whether the present entente between the government and the party can be preserved is not the question – it cannot. The question is when and how will it be ruptured. Signs of restiveness are there, even in the caucus, and will surely increase. Already, at least three PQ MNAs have come out publicly in opposition to the amendments to Bill 45 proposed by Labour Minister Johnson in November 1977. The timing and form of this inevitable confrontation depends mainly on events outside the PQ's control such as the outcome of the referendum and the political stance taken by other groups, notably the trade unions and corporations.

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2 Réjean Pelletier, "Les Relations entre le Parti québécois et le nouveau gouvernement", in Latouche (ed.), *Tome II*, op. cit., p. 129.
From what we have seen of the party's history and structure it seems clear that the best way to understand the PQ is indeed to see it as the political instrument of the state middle class. It is the ideology of this group that links the nationalism, participationism, statism, and general opposition to the socio-economic status quo that characterizes the PQ. Hence also its ambivalence toward partisan organization and electoralism as well as its reluctance and inability to take its socio-economic analysis to its logical conclusion – all of which results in the PQ being disproportionately cast in the mould of its more conservative minority.

The PQ is united by the shared social background of its members and their agreement on independence, language, and the need for certain immediate reforms. A good example of reforms that serve to unite the party are those designed to eliminate abuses in the electoral system. But beyond this common ground lies the question of just what long-term interests the party is to serve and how. Those who would see the party as an instrument of fundamental social and economic change will have to orient their strategic assessment of its potential role not around their own intellectualized interests but on the concrete interests of the classes that in the long term must form the basis of the polarization of Quebec society, namely the working class and the bourgeoisie. When this moment comes, and it will likely be delayed until the independence question is settled, a split will be provoked within the ranks. This process will constitute a further stage of Quebec's evolution repeating the developments of the past but at a more advanced level. The Parti Québécois will likely go the way of the Liberals of the Quiet Revolution. Its progressive wing will break off and, joining together with a number of extra-parliamentary political forces, especially in and around the trade unions, create a new organizational entity which will play a central role in the next stage of Quebec's socio-political development.
CHAPTER VIII:
QUEBEC LABOUR IN POLITICS

Apart from the primary instruments of political activity, namely Quebec's political parties, there are other such instruments, themselves not without importance. We are not referring to the whole gamut of organizations and associations which mainstream political science usually lumps together as "interest" or "pressure" groups, but to a far more limited number of institutions. Of course, every association of Quebecers, from *Les Gens de lair*, to the Federation of Home and School Associations, does have some measure of indirect influence on Quebec politics. They are so varied in size, structure, strategy, resources, and political orientation however that any attempt to adequately portray the range of their activities and assess their political influence would require an effort at classification and categorization disproportionate to the information likely to be gleaned from it.

Instead, let's look at three types of organizations whose links with the political process are indisputable and whose impact upon Quebec society is forceful enough to make any discussion of politics incomplete without reference to them. In this category are Quebec's trade unions, the various organizations that constitute the extra-parliamentary Left and, finally, certain political movements on the municipal scene, principally the Montreal Citizens' Movement. This chapter and the next two will consider each of these in turn.

This chapter concerns the trade unions in Quebec politics rather than the unions in and of themselves. It refers to a number of developments in the rich experience of Quebec's trade unions not in any attempt to do justice to the latter but rather insofar as they are necessary for an understanding of the trade union's role in
Quebec politics. Fortunately, a burgeoning literature on syndicalism in Quebec is now available to the interested reader.  

The growing link between the state middle class and Quebec's trade unions is verified by the fact that of the up to sixty PQ candidates in the 1976 election with state middle class backgrounds, twenty were closely affiliated with the trade union movement. This link remains crucial to understanding the important aspects of Quebec politics, among them the role of the trade unions. A brief chronicle of the major stages in the development of Quebec's trade unions is a good way to begin.  

While records of workingmen's associations in Quebec go as far back as the 1830s among printers and a few other skilled tradesmen, with periods of intensive organizing in Montreal in the 1860s and 1870s, it is really only after the end of the depression in the latter decade that one can point to the establishment of durable trade union organizations. In addition to a consolidation of the craft unions loosely knit together in the Trades' and Labour Congress (TLC), the last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise and, in the face of Church opposition, decline of Knights of Labour assemblies in Montreal and the election of a few "labour" candidates, the most famous of which was A. T. Lepine, in working class wards and legislative districts. It was only the craft unions, however, with their informal links to Samuel Gompers' American Federation of Labor (AFL) that succeeded in embedding themselves in Quebec's growing working class well into the twentieth century.  

While no one could accuse Gompers of being a radical, the penetration of craft unions into Quebec was regarded by the Church as a contaminating influence spreading atheism and materialism. In opposition, a number of Catholic unions were formed and in 1921 representatives of several such unions met to found the Confederation of Catholic Trade Unions. The ideology of the CTCC was corporatist. It taught the papal doctrine that workers' interests, though legitimate, were always subordinate to the combined corporate interest in the maintenance of order and stability toward which each class was expected to play its own separate but unequal part. Therefore, there could practically never be sufficient justification for going on strike and, in fact, the CTCC called only a handful of strikes in its first two decades of existence.  

The CTCC's existence and activities inhibited the spread of class-consciousness and militant action among Quebec workers. During the depression, when one in four workers was jobless, there was little organized workers' protest and union membership sharply declined. Employers preferred to bargain with the  

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2 The most famous of these is A. T. Lepine. See D. Héroux and R. Desrosiers, *Le Travailleur québécois et le syndicalisme* (Montréal : Editions de Sainte Marie, undated).
CTCC especially as it inhibited the formation of AFL-affiliated craft unions and (in particular) CIO-organized industrial unions then waging hard-fought struggles in the mines and auto and steel plants of the U.S. and Ontario. Only with the war prosperity of the 1940s was there sign of significant action on the Quebec labour front. ¹ The Godbout government responded first by enacting the 1944 labour code which gave it the power to intervene in labour disputes, certify trade unions, and regulate syndical activities. The Duplessis administration was more brutal in its response, combining regulation with suppression.

The Quebec grouping of trade unions affiliated with the AFL (and TLC) known as the FPTQ, influenced by the anti-communist turn its parent organizations were taking in this "McCarthyite" period, condoned UN repression going so far as to condemn its rival, the CTCC, as "revolutionary". ² The CTCC had by no means become revolutionary, but the accession of Gérard Picard to its leadership in 1946 and the experience of the 1949 asbestos strike had certainly marked a change in orientation from corporatism to reform unionism. The CTCC’s opposition to the Duplessis regime brought it into alliance with the informal intellectual group around Cité libre, as well as increasingly into the orbit of the provincial Liberal party which itself was undergoing a reform of its structure and policy orientation. In fact, leading figures in the CTCC at this time were to become key intellectual architects of the Quiet Revolution, among them Jean Marchand and Gérard Pelletier.

Allied with the CTCC in opposition to the regime were Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) affiliated national and international unions, among them CIO industrial unions such as the steelworkers. It was the Quebec Steelworkers (metallos) whose long strike against Noranda Copper in Murdochville in 1957, like the asbestos strike of the previous decade, became a symbol of workers' resistance against an oppressive regime and the corporations it served. By this time most Quebec affiliates had begun to follow the lead of their Canadian central organizations, the CCL and TLC, who had merged to form the Canadian Labour Congress (and who had themselves followed the merger of the AFL and CIO), affiliating with the newly-formed Quebec branch of the CLC, the Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL).

At the end of the 1950s, Quebec's organized workers were thus served by two solidly-based organizations, the CTCC and the QFL, and only the death of Duplessis was required for the inauguration of a new era for Quebec labour. One sign of the new era came in 1960 when the CTCC deconfessionalized and a year

later changed its name to the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU), selecting Jean Marchand as president.

Before going any deeper into the subject of the trade unions during and after the Quiet Revolution it would be as well to note that, given their structural differences, the CNTU and QFL cannot be readily compared in terms of their impact upon Quebec politics. The CNTU was already a full-fledged Quebec institution and its structure and orientation enabled it to play its part openly. The QFL was structurally and financially inhibited by its member international and Canadian unions from playing the kind of role that the size and economic importance of its membership would otherwise have called for. It was a slow uphill battle during this period for the QFL to wrest any significant power from its constituent locals below and from the CLC bureaucracy above, as its small staff and meagre budget attested. For most of these years the QFL was little more than the sum of its parts, the weak creature of powerful affiliates. In the CNTU, the federations, which group members by industry or economic sector such as education, social affairs, construction, clothing, and textiles, etc., are as much creatures of the central as vice versa. The budget and staffing reflect the importance of inter-federation (confédéral) bodies such as the conseil confédéral and bureau confédéral, and the regional (or central) councils which link CNTU locals in a given region.

Unquestionably, whatever problems it may have encountered, the CNTU has been the leading political force in Quebec's trade union movement during the present era. In fact, the subsequent politicization of the QFL, and its moves toward greater autonomy vis-à-vis the CLC and its international affiliates, arose more than anything else out of an effort to compete effectively with the CNTU. For, though the QFL did expand rapidly in the 1960s, growing from 100,000 in 1960 to 215,000 in 1968, practically all this growth came not from tapping new sources of previously unorganized workers but rather by affiliating locals of CLC and AFL-CIO unions until then independent of the QFL.

For the CNTU, the sixties were a time of unprecedented expansion. The close relations established with the Liberals in the 1950s continued after Lesage came to power, Marchand being an especially close adviser to Lesage and other high-ranking Liberals. The government's redrafting of the labour code to protect workers fired for union activities, remove the sanction of binding arbitration, and extend the right to strike to all public sector workers except policemen, firemen, and prison guards, won the approval of the trade unions. The CNTU was the prime beneficiary of this legislation. A provision in the new act permitting civil servants to strike prohibited their unions from endorsing a political party. This provision helped the CNTU sign up the great majority of workers in the rapidly growing

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1 See Milner and Milner, op. cit., pp. 185-188.
government sector as it was argued that the QFL, as a provincial federation of the CLC, technically supported the recently formed New Democratic Party. And so, of the 120,000 members gained by the CNTU from 1960 to 1968 (bringing its total membership in that year to 215,000) 106,000 were government workers. For very much the same reasons the third of Quebec's union centrals, the Corporation of Catholic Teachers, also grew rapidly during this time. Its 12,000 members in 1959 grew to 68,000 in 1968 and, in the process, it deconfessionalized to become the Quebec Teachers' Corporation (later Quebec Teachers' Central), the CEQ.

While social justice was a motivating factor in the government's liberalization of the labour code and encouragement of its employees to unionize, the primary one must have been the desire to integrate the trade unions more closely into the increasingly complex economic structure where the government was playing an expanding role. For example, the trade unions were encouraged to sit on consultative bodies, the most important of which was the newly-created Economic Planning Council (Conseil d'orientation économique). As a major employer in its own right, as well as regulator of collective bargaining, the government saw the value of close collaboration with the unions, as long as both operated within the same framework. In the early heady years of the Quiet Revolution, when union organizers, like other former "undesirables", enjoyed the long-awaited freedom to work proudly and openly, this appeared to be the case. The CNTU even went so far as to justify the unionization of public employees in exactly these terms stating that it was "convinced that working in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, it could greatly aid the government by putting the working conditions, salaries and job classifications of its personnel into order. Gradually patronage would be eliminated and public service improved".  

The honeymoon ended in the mid-sixties when it became clear that further progress meant that the state begin to wrest both investment power from the corporations – which the government was unprepared to attempt – and further concessions in taxation and social policy jurisdiction from Ottawa–which were not forthcoming. The ensuing frustration was felt from the cabinet level down to rank and file trade unionists unwilling to tolerate any longer a continuing gap in their salary and working conditions with those of workers in Ontario and elsewhere. While in 1964, for example, only 401,710 work days were lost due to strikes in Quebec, this number shot up to 1,926,890 in 1966.  And leading the way that year were strikes among public or para-public workers including Liquor Board

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2. See Milner and Milner, op. cit., p. 188.
employees, *Hydro-Québec* engineers, teachers, hospital workers, and professionals in the public service. ¹

As early as 1966, the newly elected president of the CNTU, Marcel Pepin, (Jean Marchand having found greener pastures in the federal Cabinet in Ottawa), saw fit to assess the government in its role as employer to be "often at least as harsh as private enterprise... [copying their] worst practices.... The negotiations [evidently] take place under the watchful eye of private enterprise to ensure that the government adopts a no more socially progressive attitude toward its employees than it [private enterprise] is disposed to take toward its own employees". ² Pepin concluded rather negatively that the government’s economic record was one he found "repeatedly disappointing". ³ Statements of this kind indicated that a gradual rethinking of its political role was beginning within the CNTU in the mid 1960s.

Although it did see fit to condemn the U.S. intervention in Vietnam at this relatively early date, the 1966 CNTU congress was generally silent on political issues. Not so in 1969. By this time the climate had changed. For general, often universal, reasons, a period of direct action "in the streets" over language, unemployment, housing, student rights, women's liberation, imperialism in Vietnam, elsewhere, and so on, had begun. In addition, the Quebec government, now under Daniel Johnson and the UN, was increasingly using its power to legislate workers back to work. For example, it passed the infamous Bill 25 which decreed a return to work settlement ending a long and bitter teachers' strike in 1967. These two factors, combined with increasing economic discontent among the rank and file, and the fact that more than a few of the individuals who had earlier been involved in the various direct actions as students, "social animators", and the like found their way to the unions' research and organizing staffs, brought a significant change in the orientation of the trade union movement in Quebec. We may date the contemporary era in Quebec trade union political development as having begun at this point.

The adoption of the "second front" strategy at the 1968 CNTU congress is in itself an important step. It marked a sharp change in the CNTU's orientation toward the government which was from then on to be regarded as a boss like other bosses and a servant of their interests. Moreover, because political power in its various forms was now seen as intimately tied to economic power, a second front of actions in the community had to be opened to complement the first front in the workplace. On the second front CNTU militants would work together with other

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³ Ibid.
trade unionists and progressive forces to establish co-operatives, fight social parasites such as finance companies, support tenants' and other social rights, and elect pro-labour candidates. These activities would sometimes take the form of the establishment of local political action committees (CAPs) to coordinate activities. Despite the fact that there was little concrete, coordinated application of this strategy, second front rhetoric and various actions seen from this perspective become standard practice for many trade unionists.

The years from 1968 to 1971 saw the national question and the language question come to occupy central stage in Quebec trade union politics. The 1969 QFL congress, for example, noting Quebec's uniqueness in that it constituted a nation, demanded the right to act independently. It called for a total restructuring of its relationship with the CLC. And, at the same time, over the objections of its president, Louis Laberge, and other members of its executive, it denounced Bill 63 which the UN government had just passed guaranteeing to all parents freedom of choice in the language of their children's education. A similar decision was taken by the *Conseil confédéral*, the CNTU's supreme body between congresses – also over the objection of the executive. For the CEQ, which had become politicized under Raymond Laliberté especially after its 1967 experience with Bill 25, the language question presented no problem. The CEQ became a leading constituent of the *Front pour un Québec français* (FQF), a common front hastily organized to fight Bill 63, and along with the CNTU and QFL participated extensively in the week-long series of FQF-organized mass demonstrations against Bill 63 in the early fall of 1969.

The national/linguistic dimension stood out during the late sixties, a period which saw serious divisions emerge in the trade union movement. The QFL and CNTU fought regularly and bitterly in attempting to recruit construction workers. In the CNTU itself, the leadership came under strong attack from union militants whose spokesman was the fiery Michel Chartrand, president of the CNTU's Montreal Central Council (CCSNM) since 1969. Pepin insisted on the principle that although the CNTU could be active in local political activity, it had to stay out of party politics. His known federalist sympathies were one factor that led him to try to head off any possible CNTU support for the newly-founded PQ. Chartrand disagreed. The Montreal Central Council resolved prior to the 1970 election that "in spite of certain omissions and certain weaknesses in its economic program and policy on workers; the CCSNM indicates its preference for the *Parti québécois* on the ballot of April 29, but makes it clear that the real battle for national liberation for the Quebec workers does not stop at constitutional independence; this constitutional liberation must be taken as a step toward the economic and social liberation of the people of Quebec".

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1 Reported in *Québec-Presse*, April 12, 1970.
Though this was the only formal endorsement the PQ received from among Quebec's trade unions in 1970, the large participation by union militants in the PQ cause and its success in French-speaking working class ridings accelerated the trade unions' nationalist course. So did the federal government's intervention in Quebec in the 1970 October crisis. In response to the crisis, the Union central presidents, the PQ's René Lévesque, and several other prominent Quebecers established a common front with the specific goal of urging negotiations upon the government, but which was viewed more widely as a source of national leadership in the face of Premier Bourassa's virtual abdication.

The October crisis and the repressive atmosphere that descended in its aftermath set back the independence movement for a time. The trade unions returned to the economic front. 1971 was "the year of the manifestos", the year of the La Presse strike, and a year of preparation for the next round of negotiations between the Quebec government and its employees.

The most all-embracing of the manifestos were the work of the CNTU. In September 1971, it published "There is no Future for Us in the Present System", which harshly attacked capitalism in Quebec, and just afterwards came "Let Us Rely Solely on Our Own Means" (Ne comptons que sur nos propres moyens), which goes to some lengths in an effort to show that the Quebec state's economic intervention primarily served the interests of the capitalists, and concludes that there can be no halfway measures. Quebec has no choice but to become socialist; the state must own and the workers must manage Quebec's industry. Even more important than the contents of Ne comptons que... was the fact that Marcel Pepin, up to this point regarded as a moderate, defended the document and, without standing behind every line, attacked those inside and outside the trade unions who sought to dismiss and discredit it. Clearly, a shift had taken place in the CNTU.

The CEQ's White Paper of 1971, entitled "The Schools in Service to the Dominant Class", though not as complete as Ne comptons que, delivers the same angry attack on capitalism in Quebec, going on to describe the role of the teacher in the process. And the 1972 QFL manifesto, "The State is our Exploiter", evoked a similar attack on the capitalist system in its detailed description of the underlying causes of Quebec's unemployment. While the QFL manifesto was perhaps the least complete of the three, its publication nevertheless represented a startling change in political orientation. The La Presse struggle was probably the major precipitating event of this transformation.

A bitter strike at La Presse took place in 1964 and, rather than resolving anything, left a dispute simmering between labour and management. In the late

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1 For a description of the debate and Pepin's role see Arnold Bennett, op. cit., pp. 48-54. The three manifestos may be found in D. Drache, (ed.), Quebec-Only the Beginning (Toronto : New Press, 1972).
sixties, as La Presse strengthened its position as Quebec's leading newspaper, this conflict became more intense, especially beginning in 1968 when ownership fell into the hands of Paul Desmarais' Power Corporation. Desmarais did not appreciate the journalists' insistence on writing from a position of openness to the forces of social and political change, a position rather at odds with Power Corporation's view of things. A conflict over technological change with the paper's typographers (QFL) provided management with a pretext for locking out all its employees; consequently the journalists (CNTU) found themselves in the midst of the struggle. When the conflict was finally ended in compromise several months later, the long-term issue remained unresolved. The more important effects of the strike were its impact on syndical unity. A common front of all three federations was formed to support the strikers. Workers from all sectors joined in actions in solidarity with the La Presse strikers, the most important of which was the October 1971 march. The solidarity inherent in it set an example for things to come, and the police violence that greeted the strikers served to shore up that solidarity. Laberge was resoundingly applauded when he told the 1971 QFL convention that only a united workers' struggle could defeat a combined business and government effort to destroy the unions.  

During these same months, with a fair amount of wrangling, the three centrals agreed to form a common front of unions representing Quebec's 210,000 public and para-public service employees. In combination, they were able to force the government to negotiate salaries and related monetary clauses at one "central" table, where the common front's main demand was for a one hundred dollar minimum weekly salary. Negotiations began in late 1971 and in April, after months of fruitless talks, a two-week strike ensued. Then, partially in response to a scare campaign, especially in the English press, on the condition of patients in some of the hospitals affected by the strike, the cabinet brought down Bill 19. Bill 19 effectively imposed a collective "agreement" and set heavy fines for non-compliance. A few days earlier, a judge ordered the jailing of a number of local union officers who had defied a back-to-work injunction, and just afterwards, the presidents of the three federations, Laberge, Pepin, and Yvon Charbonneau, were sentenced to one-year prison terms on the same count.

A very angry common front found itself facing Bill 19. After a day of deliberation and uncertainty, the union leaders advised the still defiant workers that they had no choice but to return to work; the strike was over. However, the actual jailing of the three leaders in early May set off a new explosion. For over a week Quebec was shaken by a series of strikes, occupations, and walkouts. The public sector unions taking part in the protest were joined by workers employed in the steel, textiles, printing, construction, and mining industries. All regions were

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1 See Milner and Milner, op. cit., p. 208.
involved, and various stoppages took place in practically every Quebec community with organized workers. ¹

The 1972 common front strike marked a high point of union solidarity, and serious problems arose soon afterwards. First, there was the jailing of the three leaders, then the defections from the CNTU. Approximately 30,000 members from textiles, aluminum, construction, and asbestos went over to the Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions (CSD) – a new breakaway central led by three former CNTU executive members who had opposed the militant direction of the central – and a similar number of provincial civil servants were lost when their federation narrowly voted to become independent of the CNTU. In late fall of 1972, there was renewed hostility between the CNTU and QFL as each attempted to raid construction unions federated with the other. In 1974, the Bourassa government, partially at the urging of the CNTU, appointed a commission under Judge Robert Cliche to investigate the construction industry. The evidence of corruption in three QFL-affiliated construction unions uncovered by the commission, especially as the Bourassa government went to great lengths to publicize this aspect of the report, did not exactly strengthen the public's image of the trade union movement.

Intensive actions continued on the labour front. Important strikes, notably among workers at United Aircraft, asbestos miners, Montreal transportation mechanics, and Olympic construction workers were soon to follow. Nevertheless, the earlier solidarity never quite returned. One serious problem concerned finding the funds needed for strike pay because of which the CNTU found itself in increasingly deep financial straits. The resulting raising of dues provoked further division and the short-lived secession of several locals.

Meanwhile, the public service "contract" expired on June 30, 1975, and a second common front came into existence. Where tangible accomplishments are concerned, the strategy proved far more successful this time. The common front simply escalated a series of rotating strikes and other sporadic work stoppages over a period of five months and forced settlements which in most cases constituted victories for the workers, especially as they far surpassed maximum increases allowed under federal government wage controls. In addition, the workers' collective strength had increased to the point of making it impossible for the government to force the issue by simply passing back-to-work legislation. The teachers, for the most part, ignored Bill 23 which had been enacted to force them back in time to finish the school year and instead took part in further escalations. Hospital workers similarly overcame Bill 253. Yet, in spite of its accomplishments, the second common front never quite achieved the spirit of solidarity and common struggle of its predecessor.

The progress and problems of the common front provides additional insight into the state of the labour movement. The front was structured along highly complex lines in order both to coordinate activities in each region and the province as a whole, and to enable the members of each local to participate in the decision-making process. Only the CNTU may be said to have effectively co-ordinated the positions taken by its leaders in public statements and at the bargaining table with the votes and actions of the members. The CEQ leadership which was the most aggressive at first, pushing for an early unlimited general strike, was, on several embarrassing occasions, forced to backtrack when the rank and file refused even to go along with tactical escalations well short of general strike. For the QFL, which had a smaller number and proportion of workers involved, the problem was not so much getting the members to endorse the actions in principle, but rather to do so in practice. QFL locals often failed to participate in actions they had voted to support.

In general, the common front experience has had only a limited effect on the QFL. Certainly it did not lose ground during this period – its membership is now notably larger than the CNTU, over 250,000 to the latter’s 175,000. There has also been a gradual clean up of its construction unions which has improved its public image, and a slow streamlining of its structures, staffing, and financing so that the membership can take more coherent political positions. In general, the QFL appears to be moving toward a position of increasing rapprochement with the Parti québécois. The QFL endorsed the PQ (though not independence as such) in the 1976 election which came just after the end of the strike, and went without protest to the joint Business-Labour-Government "summit" at La Malbaie in May 1977. While by no means entirely uncritical of the new government, the QFL leadership seems prepared to work hand in hand with it, a policy championed by Senior Vice-President Jean Gérin-Lajoie. The QFL’s loud and constant hammering of federal government policies as contrasted with its almost approving silence of provincial government policies at its November 1977 convention testifies to this attitude. Particularly striking was its denunciation of the Canadian Labour Congress’ endorsement of tripartism – given its own participation at Malbaie. It would not be unfair the accession of the PQ to power has strengthened the hand of the QFL in a way reminiscent of the effect on the CNTU of the Liberals’ accession to power in 1960.

For the CEQ and the CNTU the PQ victory brought underlying divisions and problems to the surface. While these divisions were there all along, the solidarity required during the days of the common front kept them submerged, although they clearly showed themselves in the difficulties encountered, especially in the CEQ. In this central, the split has emerged as being effectively between the Péquistes and anti-Péquistes. Under the Liberal regime, CEQ pronouncements and publications attacked the employer/enemy in quasi-revolutionary terms. As long as the teachers were not asked to go on strike or take action, they went along with these pronouncements and re-elected Yvon Charbonneau and the other members of the executive. Nevertheless, while the attacks identified the Quebec state as the
enemy in that it served the interests of the ruling class, the enemy the majority of the members evidently had in mind was not the state as such, but rather the Liberal government. The victory of the PQ in 1976 changed things. Opponents of the leadership now pointed to the large number of CEQ members among PQ deputies and ministerial advisors and to the overwhelming electoral support teachers gave to the PQ, arguing that the Marxist orientation of the CEQ needed shelving since it was out of line with the position of the membership. 1 And in the spring of 1977 the long-time "Trotskyist" leadership of the Montreal wing of the CEQ, the Alliance des professeurs de Montréal, was soundly defeated by a pro-PQ slate. In addition, the PQ government's strong language policies were extremely well received among all factions within the CEQ and strengthened the already powerful hand of the Péquistes within it. Perhaps the present stance of the CEQ may be summed up best as a position independent from, but "favourably prejudiced" toward, the PQ. 2 All in all, therefore, although Yvon Charbonneau has at times attacked the PQ government for failing to live up to its promises to the workers, there is an unmistakable hollowness to the attack these days.

As far as can be seen from here, a merger of the CEQ with the CNTU seems a likely prospect. The leadership in both centrals is positive and the only major remaining obstacles seem to be bureaucratic. So we can foresee the formation of a single, enlarged union central that is practically exclusively in the public sector. Because of the larger more varied nature of the CNTU, a merger would inevitably mean an effective swallowing up of the CEQ into the CNTU. Although it seems likely that the QFL will hold to a social democratic-Péquiste stand in the present period, it may also be suggested that, for the immediate future at least, if the Quebec trade union movement is to remain an independent political force, which is by no means certain, it will be the CNTU that will lead the way. A more detailed description and analysis of the present situation in the CNTU is called for at this point.

Let us state here and now that the CNTU is, by any reasonable understanding of the term, a consciously socialist trade union in its orientation and structure. Recently, Marcel Pepin, along with Yvon Charbonneau, even had the dubious honor of being denounced as ultra-radical "go-gauchistes" in a La Presse editorial. 3 In 1976, to use a more reliable indicator, the CNTU congress adopted the report of Pepin, its outgoing president, entitled "Let us Take our own Power", which included the following statements:

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1 The author of a much publicized document outlining this position was Hubert Sacy, CEQ chief of public relations. It was partially published in Le Devoir, January 11, 1977, p. A8. See also "Le CEQ : la stratégie 'trotskyiste' aura tout gâché", Le Devoir, May 5, 1977, p. 7.
It is no longer the abuses of capitalism that we must fight but capitalism itself, for it is by its very nature the source of injustice. That is the basic distinction between business unionism and a unionism of struggle.  

While socialist convictions are clearly recognizable in these and other public pronouncements of the CNTU, the actual practical and strategic implications of such pronouncements are not abundantly clear. Practical applications pose the fewest problems in relation to the CNTU's internal structures. The emphasis is on cohesive collective action at the base – what we have called "participationism" in another context. For example, CNTU decisions on strikes and other common front tactics ordinarily took the following form. First, one of the locals or a union committee appointed for that purpose would propose a certain action, then representatives of all locals involved in the dispute would discuss the proposal. Once a majority of these representatives agreed, the question would be submitted to the membership in general assemblies called in each local. Only when a majority of assemblies representing a majority of members voted to act would a decision be considered to have been taken, and action initiated.

The question of orientation to the regime presents greater problems for the CNTU now that the PQ is in power, though the problem manifests itself somewhat differently than in the other centrals. With the Bourassa Liberals in power, the CNTU led the way in its denunciation of the capitalist state. Common front posters provided by the central usually expressed strong sentiments of this kind, the most popular being "Fight Capitalist Aggression". While no one wishing to retain credibility in the CNTU will go so far as to suggest that the workers have in fact attained power under the PQ, there is no doubt that sympathy does exist for the étapiste analysis which takes Quebec's independence as a prerequisite for socialism. This is the position that Vallières has advocated so clearly. "It is insufficient merely for the trade unions not to oppose the PQ with another party. They must concretely and actively politically support the objectives sought by the PQ.... They must transcend economism... to engage resolutely in the struggle for independence.... The independence struggle does not eliminate the necessity for the daily struggles in the workers' interest, but it gives them a political context and meaning".  

Yet strong voices, especially among Marxist-Leninist elements denounce "the objectives sought by the PQ" as nothing but bourgeois tricks meant to divide the workers. (Interestingly, the CNTU's Montreal Central Council, which was the first to support the PQ, has evolved to a point where its paper, Unité ouvrière, is the

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loudest and most constant antagonist of the Péquiste tendency in the trade union movement.) Not surprisingly, the issue of Quebec independence poses a difficult dilemma for this socialist trade union. Up to now, the CNTU has simply avoided taking any clear position. For example, *Ne comptons que...* does not touch upon the independence question, yet indépendantistes have had no trouble reading into the document that independence is both implicit and assumed. Moreover, the question is likely to force itself upon the union as the referendum approaches. The 1977 congress took an important step by setting up a mechanism for consulting the membership and preparing a report on the question within the year. In so doing, however, it accepted the executive's initial posing of the question, which asked: "Is it [independence] a step toward socialism"?

The right of peoples to self-determination is universally recognized. It is not the legitimacy of this right that will be discussed but rather the opportunity of the people of Quebec to affirm their political independence.

The specific oppression of francophone Quebecois workers as French Canadians is an admitted fact. Hence, many ask about the effects independence will have over the capitalism that is responsible for the oppression. Otherwise said, is it a step toward socialism?

The people and workers of Quebec are victims of crying exploitation by American, Canadian and Quebec capitalism. The forces needed to pressure the state to limit this exploitation must be joined from sea to sea – and we see the results. Would a Quebec government bringing in [wage controls through] law C-73 have been able so long to resist organized workers' opposition? But Quebec resistance to law C-73 is diluted in (the rest of Canada....

Such a framework asks the key question: "is it a step toward socialism", but in the next paragraph sets it into a narrow economistic context. This effective trivialization of the question of independence should be seen as representing the CNTU's compromise of the two opposing views. A similar pattern emerged with regard to the economic summit at La Malbaie. Unprepared to say that the state (with the PQ in power) is a capitalist instrument which must always be opposed, but equally unprepared to give any credence to the PQ's self-image (supported by the QFL) as a people's government biased toward the workers, the CNTU (and the CEQ) went to the summit constantly making sure they took a highly antagonistic public posture. Hence, observers were treated to the political equivalent of ill-mannered guests who came to the party but spent the whole time complaining about what a "drag" it was.

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1. Arnold Bennett, *op. cit.*
It is clear that the majority of CNTU (and almost all CEQ) militants and officials are sympathetic to independence; that most would oppose political action such as the formation of a party to rival the PQ which would set back the possibility of independence, and that a significant number are supporters and members of the PQ and especially its participationist wing. (To take one striking example, Jacques Desmarais, the CNTU’s common front co-ordinator, is now chief aide to Consumer Affairs Minister Lise Payette.) Due, as we shall argue, mainly to the state middle class position of many of these elements, they, like the PQ participationists, have been able to articulate no real political position from which to develop a series of programs or policies. They thus usually find themselves on the defensive against hard-line gauchistes of the Marxist-Leninist persuasion who are implacably anti-indépendantiste, or of the Trotskyist persuasion who want the union to found a labour party.

On the economic (first) front, the problem takes a parallel form, though it has more to do with everyday practice than with abstract ideology. To see this, however, requires a brief digression into trade union organizing theory. Trade unions are primarily defensive weapons of workers under capitalism. As such, they are reformist to the extent that the owners are able to grant their demands. Those demands are first of all economistic, that is they aim at safeguarding the buying power of their wages, and second, they are control-oriented in the limited sense of seeking to secure protection from the whims of management by guaranteeing a set of quasi-judicial grievance procedures. And such guarantees are found in the labour contract which, by its very existence, recognizes the right of management to manage. Wildcat strikes usually occur when the bosses are unwilling to abide by grievance procedures and union officials are unwilling to fight for them. These wildcats are potentially radical only if, for given reasons such as its own technological or economic imperatives, management cannot give way on even these control issues. If it can, then capitalist control – the owners’ right to own and manage – is not threatened. The wildcat is over; its leaders may even enter the union hierarchy. If it cannot, then either the wildcat is defeated or the company closes. Of course, one may argue that the latter eventuality brings socialism a step closer by creating possibilities of the workers taking over the plant themselves. Unfortunately, Quebec’s experience of such takeovers, notably at Tembec (pulp and paper) and Tricofil (clothing), is discouraging. In addition, those gauchistes who have pushed shop-floor militancy most strongly are not sympathetic to individual attempts at workers’ control.

There is a second function of trade unions which we may call an offensive function, which corresponds roughly to Pepin’s conception of the second front. Let us be clear that the offensive function is possible only to the extent that it does not directly conflict with the defensive requirements of unions to win a liveable

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1 See Le Bourgue, op. cit., pp. 54-58.
contract for their members. The offensive activities of trade unions have to do with the encouragement of political organizing and education for wider social change through use of the resources at their disposal. These consist of public declarations; circulating internal documents which spell out a socialist analysis of events; a structural commitment to union decentralization and democratization which makes it extremely difficult for the central powers to control radical action; the support of political organizing of various kinds and among popular groups and institutions, using union facilities, communication channels, and other resources; and an attempt, where possible, to use collective means that encourage direct mobilization such as marches, rallies, etc., rather than individualistic and quasi-judicial ones. In this secondary and indirect manner unions have a potentially vital role to play in the building of socialism. However, it is a mistake to see trade unions as the primary agents in any socialist movement. Such a strategy would place the socialist project in the hands of organizations in which it could only be a secondary function.

The very nature of trade unions will ensure that those who wish to do so will always have ammunition to attack the bureaucrats for selling out the workers' long-term interests every time a settlement is reached. Such attacks are unavoidable, yet they too have served to put union officials on the defensive in confrontations with gauchiste elements.

The CNTU has unquestionably made its major contribution to the cause of Quebec socialism on the second front, in subsidiary activities such as the education of members, public declarations, use of resources, etc. The same is true of the CEQ and the QFL. It would be hard to find a socialist-oriented cause or progressive popular organization of any significance in Quebec which has not benefited from trade union support of one kind or another in the past ten years. Those that have received support include international causes such as the anti-junta movement in Chile and the California grape and lettuce workers, national battles such as the cause of immigrants' rights, and opposition to the deportation of Haitian and other "illegals" to fascist reprisals, municipal struggles such as that of FRAP and the RCM in Montreal, the Front pour un Québec français, women's groups fighting for abortion on demand and equal pay, the now defunct radical weekly, Québec-Presse and, of course, the many varied "popular" struggles of welfare rights groups, tenants' groups, anti-demolition campaigns, food co-ops, consumer bureaus and so on. Not only have the trade unions continuously helped by putting such groups in contact with, and their cases before, potentially interested workers and by providing needed material resources, but they have also frequently made use of their public prominence to draw attention to the struggles of these groups. In all of these things, the trade unions undoubtedly helped advance the framework of political debate in Quebec.

These are indeed important contributions but it is unjustified to take the next step and automatically juxtapose the content of second front activities with the
daily economic battles waged by the unions on the shop floor, the picket line and the bargaining table, however much outward appearances may seem to warrant it. A picket sign saying *Combats l’agression capitaliste*, is not all that different from the usual North American one which reads "fair wages," in that both are being carried by workers seeking to sign a contract. In both instances they will put away the picket sign when the contract is signed, and capitalism will still be there. But this is precisely the kind of wishful thinking that socialists in and out of the trade unions often engage in. The common fronts and other industrial struggles have frequently been seen as primary instruments in the political project to win a socialist Quebec. If so, where does that leave someone like Jacques Desmarais? In addition, radical rhetoric in the slogans of defensive struggles or in resolutions passed at meetings and congresses has too often been interpreted as proof of concrete achievement in that direction which it seldom is, rather than as words setting priorities for action yet to come and struggles yet to be fought.

Without going into detail, this may well be the particular error of a Left in which the predominance of the state middle class is a major factor. Teachers, social animators, journalists, etc. are enamoured of the written word, as attested by the mounds of paper (newsletters, reports, position papers, manifestos, and the like) that constantly flow out of the CNTU and CEQ headquarters, and are expert at passing resolutions through the structure of complex participationist organizations. This is not meant as an attack, merely a statement of fact. In addition, their normally greater job security as employees of state institutions permits a too easy divorce between the content of revolutionary public statements and their consequences. As a result, the socialist commitment of CNTU and CEQ state middle class militants and officials, though undoubtedly genuine and in fact an important factor in the radicalization of these centrals, nevertheless has an air of unreality about it. We have already made the same point with regard to the PQ participationists. The problem here is perhaps even more serious. The PQ Left at least has its conflict with the technocratic wing to help it distinguish rhetorical excess from reality. With the practically universal legitimacy of socialist language in the CNTU, the temptation is to couch everything that is done in that language, especially when confronted by a challenge from Leninists who attempt to appropriate the socialist position all to the workers. Unfortunately, the rhetoric inevitably takes on a life of its own, often hiding the reality of just what the union actually does.

Perhaps weaknesses of this kind are inevitable in the early state of a process during which time the leading edge of the socialist movement is largely composed of college-educated new middle class state employees. As a consequence, it might be expected that the greater experience gradually being accumulated by these groups in working with more traditional workers outside the protection of state structures should go a long way toward overcoming this tendency. The projected major public sector CNTU-CEQ central unfortunately militates against such an eventuality.
In the meantime, two concrete questions must be confronted. The first concerns Quebec independence. When the referendum debate begins in earnest the unions, in the name of the working class, will no longer be able to avoid facing this question head on. Secondly, the trade unions (and especially the CNTU) will have to begin to work on strategy – how in fact can the unions contribute to the achievement of socialism, *concretely and realistically*. For all the rhetoric, this has never been attempted. Every CNTU and CEQ manifesto, report, and analytical publication seems to take the same form – a ringing denunciation of capitalism as a system and of its specific evils: unemployment, inflation, industrial accidents, pollution, poverty, etc. Then a great call to solidarity, greater determination, more valiant struggles – period. In the early 1970s this may have been enough. Now it merely plays into the hands of the various Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist elements whose growing strength attests to the fact that they have their own clear idea of just what to do with the workers determined to "struggle valiantly" against capitalism.

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1 See, for example, *La CSN aujourd'hui* and *Prenons notre pouvoir*, op. cit.
CHAPTER IX:
THE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY LEFT

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Just who are these *gauchistes* who dog the steps of trade union organizers and popular group leaders? What is this *go-gauche* which is derided but no longer dismissed by Quebec's editorialists. ¹ And why the great interest in the subject in Quebec? After all English Canada and the U.S. are not without their own so-called "crazies" in political sects of one allegiance or the other, all placing themselves on the ultra-Left. The difference is that Quebec's *gauchistes* cannot be dismissed as a lunatic fringe simply parroting poor translations of foreign slogans. They are too strong and too well entrenched.

No one in Quebec talks anymore, as was the fashion in the early 1970s, of *groupuscules*. Instead, knowledgeable observers today speak in hushed tones, for instance, of *La Ligue*, instantly recognizable as the Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist), the strongest of the current Maoist or "M-L" groups. While foreign influence remains a factor, what makes Quebec stand out is the fact that most of such groups are also rooted in the political and social ferment it experienced in the late sixties and early seventies far more deeply than elsewhere in North America.

It is important to look at the *gauchistes* in the light of the historical development of groups and events falling under the heading of extra-parliamentary politics, a sometimes mysterious and closed world. But this is not an exercise in political voyeurism, nor an excuse to spread rumours about what goes on behind

¹ See, for example, "La 'Go-Gauche' se fait démasquer," *La Presse*, éditorial, December 11, 1976, p. A4.
closed doors nor to indulge in red-baiting. The point is that any analysis of current Quebec politics ignores the extra-parliamentary Left only at the risk of distorting what it professes to describe and explain. The numerous references to the gauchistes in the discussion of trade union politics have already shown this to be the case.

In the 1960s political extremism in Quebec was associated most of all with the letters FLQ. In early March 1963, the letters first appeared on walls of several armouries hit with small Molotov cocktails. Soon afterwards, Montreal newspapers received communiqués from the Quebec Liberation Front. In a language reminiscent of Algeria's FLN, the communiqués spoke of an "occupation", of "collaborators", of "English colonialism", and of "commandos committed to "independence or death". Bombings and attempted bombings continued into that spring, killing a caretaker named Wilfred O'Neil and maiming police demolition expert Walter Léja. A series of arrests in July crippled the FLQ though action did not entirely cease.

In early 1964 another series of actions, mainly armed robberies of armouries and the like, were carried on by an offshoot of the original group calling itself the ALQ, Armée de libération du Québec. In April, five men were arrested and convicted, and the stolen equipment and weapons recovered. Another offshoot, the ARQ, was broken up after attempting a robbery in the summer of 1964.

The next two years saw fewer FLQ acts of violence but some isolated incidents meant that it continued to exist. James Stewart, who wrote about the FLQ for the Montreal Star, suggests that at this time the group "was organizing on a much wider basis and developing its line... through the secret journal La Cognée". In this same period, another group emerged to spread propaganda among workers and students, taking a similar national liberation perspective. This was the short-lived MLP, Mouvement de libération populaire, an instrument of political action organized by the group which published the radical journal Parti pris (1963-1968). Despite its small circulation of 3,000, Parti pris' exciting, if sometimes naive and

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1 In May-June 1977, La Presse published a series of twelve detailed and presumably accurate articles on "L'Extrême gauche", by Jacques Benoit. A few weeks later La Presse made the series available in book format under the same title. Though not particularly sympathetic to most of the groups examined, Benoit's treatment seems designedly even-handed. While some have accused Benoit of red-baiting, we would suggest that the only basis for such a charge lies in the fact that a mass circulation daily saw fit to publish the series and give it wide publicity. Benoit's articles serve as a point of reference for major sections of this chapter. Though he provided new information in only a few cases, he did usefully confirm much that was generally known or merely suspected within circles of people active around the organizations of the extra-parliamentary Left.


3 Ibid., p. 29.
romantic, combination of Marxism, existentialism, and ultra-nationalism, was a major intellectual influence on radical Left development during this period. One target of this influence, as well as being a source of radical unrest in their own right, were the student organizations at the French language universities united in the now long-defunct General Union of Quebec Students (UGEQ). Syndicalist, socialist, and nationalist ideas circulated through the various structures of UGEQ through the late 1960s.

Spring and summer of 1966 saw renewed FLQ bombings and burglaries. Factories hit by strikes were popular targets, and at one of these, La Grenade Shoes, a secretary, Thérèse Morin, was accidentally killed. Subsequent arrests netted several alleged terrorists, most notably Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon, two revolutionary Marxist intellectuals who, as finally came out after three years of jailings, trials, and appeals, were convicted only because their writings may have inspired those who carried out the acts. Vallières and Gagnon were the first leaders of real stature produced by the FLQ. Their jailing created an important rallying cry for the extra-parliamentary Left and protests extended far beyond the FLQ.

The final years of the decade saw another renewal of FLQ violence beginning in October 1969. Bombs struck, among other sites, Montreal City Hall, the Liberal Reform club, the National Revenue Building, Eaton's, Domtar, and, most spectacularly, the stock exchange. But, except for the latter incident, FLQ actions seemed less significant and received less attention than other not as spectacular but more popularly based actions taking place in the streets. In September 1968, the newly opened junior colleges (CEGEPs) were closed by a wave of strikes, occupations, and marches to protest deplorable conditions and lack of student participation in decisions co-ordinated by the short-lived Mouvement syndicaliste politique. At about the same time, attacks on English schooling in St. Leonard and later at McGill University started with the emergence of the single-issue Ligue pour l'intégration scolaire (LIS) and the Marxist Front de libération populaire (FLP). This latter organization, composed of radical RIN members who refused to join the Parti québécois, was instrumental in forming the Mouvement du libération du taxi. The MLT sought to defend the interests of cab drivers especially in a series of demonstrations against Murray Hill, the company which monopolized airport taxi service, culminating in the burning of a bus owned by Murray Hill on the night of the Montreal police strike in the fall of 1969. There was also an extensive series of less spectacular but nonetheless significant protest activities among citizens' and workers' committees in disparate localities and districts.

Among the more important of these groups and actions in working class districts in the Montreal area were the social animation projects in St-Henri, the Citizens' Committees of Mercier and Milton-Parc, and the St-Jacques and Pointe St-Charles community medical clinics. Projet St-Henri launched struggles in the Little Burgundy community against urban renewal, the location of a nearby
hospital, and increased public transit fares. In Mercier, a highly visible campaign
of demonstrations and hunger strikes called Opération alarme was launched to
protest student unemployment. The Milton-Parc Citizens' Committee waged a
five-year campaign which delayed but failed to stop the neighbourhood's
demolition to accommodate the building of Cité Concordia, a massive project of
high-rise apartment buildings plus a hotel and commercial towers. The St-Jacques
and Pointe St-Charles clinics were important scenes of political organizing and
education on public health questions, at different times confronting municipal and
provincial authorities and the pharmaceutical industry.

Although independent of each other and operating at different levels of
 politicization, most of these popular and political organizations were frequently
cross-fertilized by common activities, by individuals who went from one group to
another, and by certain publications, such as Le Quartier latin, the former
University of Montreal student paper which re-emerged as an independent
monthly. Practically all these groups used two imprecisely defined words to sum
up their goals-socialism and independence.

The Cross-Laporte kidnappings of October 1970 brought the FLQ international
notoriety and also spelled its demise. The kidnappings precipitated swift and
widespread government repression and the entire Left nationalist movement from
the PQ to the FLQ suffered a setback. For the former the setback was temporary;
for the latter it was fatal. Revolutionary commitment to a socialist Quebec did not
die; it continued to flourish in the 1970s, but the FLQ and its urban guerrilla
tactics were universally rejected as counter-productive.

Although news reports still carry occasional rumours of renewed FLQ activity,
the FLQ today belongs to the world of myth and legend. In fact, even during its
active years the FLQ was above all else, a symbol under which loosely knit small
groups conducted highly fragmented campaigns. Only at the end was the FLQ able
to project a clear position to the people of Quebec: its 1970 manifesto which, at
the demand of James Cross' kidnappers was read over radio and television,
certainly struck a responsive chord with its ringing denunciation of the existing
order and its clarion call for Quebec workers to take control of their economic
institutions. 1

The kidnappings and their aftermath affected another important event in the
evolution of Quebec's extra-parliamentary Left. Spring of 1970 had seen the
founding of the Front d'action politique (FRAP), which brought together militants
from among the various popular and political Montreal area groups. After a wide
ranging discussion of their experience in the various social animation-oriented
projects and citizens' and workers' committees, the founders of FRAP decided to

1 The Manifesto is reprinted in many places such as B. Finnigan and C. Gonick (eds.), Making it :
combine efforts to oppose Jean Drapeau's dictatorial administration in the municipal elections due in October. FRAP-affiliated political action committees (CAPS) existed in a few districts and were set up in several others.

Undoubtedly, FRAP at this time represented the hopes of an extra-parliamentary Left for the first time assembled in any real numbers. Unfortunately, it also showed up the divisions and tensions within this group. While always there beneath the surface, the divisions erupted in the face of FLQ kidnappings which took place only a month before the election. Over the objections of its president, Paul Cliche, and others around him, FRAP came out publicly in support of the aims of the FLQ as proclaimed in its manifesto. (There is good reason to believe that RCMP-planted agents provocateurs played a part in these and subsequent FRAP decisions.) When Pierre Laporte was found dead, the hysteria generated by this act guaranteed FRAP's demise. Two of its city council candidates, Henri Bellemare and Jean Roy, were among the hundreds arrested in the wake of this event, and Drapeau had no difficulty associating his electoral opponents with FLQ kidnappings and murder. Not only did FRAP disintegrate as an organization within six months of the election, but the whole idea of an open and decentralized democratic socialist electoral challenge to the established order suffered a resounding defeat.

In the relatively quiet two years following the October crisis the extra-parliamentary Left's order of the day was "self-criticism". All vestiges of false consciousness had to be stripped away; only then could the errors which had caused the setbacks be understood and transcended. This self-criticism centred mainly on the citizens committees (CAPS) in working class St. Jacques and Maisonneuve, which had constituted the most radical and solidly-based elements within FRAP. The outcome of their deliberations may be seen in issues of the semi-clandestine journal Mobilisation (formerly published by the FLP) and the Agence de presse libre du Québec (APLQ) Bulletin, both published by groups associated with CAP St-Jacques and CAP Maisonneuve. These generally concluded that the problem lay in the predominance of "spontaneist" social democratic tendencies within FRAP, tendencies resulting from its petit bourgeois orientation and trade union bureaucrat and social animator leadership. How then to transcend this weakness? One may discern at least three widely shared imperatives that emerged as answers. First, greater determination and total dedication – no more political dilettantism; secondly, long and careful collective study of the key works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin (in a few cases, Trotsky), and Mao; and thirdly, implantation into the working class, which meant that militants were expected to give up petit bourgeois intellectual lifestyles and go to work in the factories.  

1 See, for example, "The Autonomous Left in Quebec", Solidaire, no. 5 (September 1973), for a portrayal of the various positions that followed the demise of FRAP.
The discussions, actions, and publications then associated with the two CAPS constituted the prime internal impetus which presaged Quebec's present gauchiste configuration. The second major source was external – a series of internationally affiliated organizations which in most cases had originated in English Canada and then begun to recruit members in Quebec, usually succeeding first in the English-speaking milieu around McGill University. The eldest of these was the relatively moderate Trotskyist Fourth International affiliate, the *Ligue socialiste ouvrière* (LSO, or LSA in English), which was first organized in Quebec in 1964 and soon became distinguished by its early support for unilingualism and independence. In 1972 the LSO split, with its most militant and revolutionary elements forming the Revolutionary Marxist Group (GMR) which also affiliated with the Fourth International. In August 1977, these two groups reunited as the *Ligue ouvrière révolutionnaire* (LOR). Trotskyists, to simplify somewhat, are so called because they consider Trotsky Marx' and Lenin's legitimate heir, and not Stalin and Mao Tse-tung (as do the Maoist or Marxist-Leninist "M-L" groups).

The first and most extreme ("way out" might be more appropriate in this case) of the Maoist groups was the CPC (M-L), which was established in Quebec in early 1970. The CPC (M-L) soon distinguished itself by violence (especially directed at others on the left – for example, its violent attack on anti-Vietnam war demonstrators in Ottawa in February 1970) and by often blind adherence to rather crude slogans shouted to adoring followers by its leader-founder Hardial Bains. Filling in the picture are three more recently created groups: *le Groupe socialiste des travailleurs du Québec* (GSTQ), a little-known but important Trotskyist organization founded in 1973; *En Lutte*, a Maoist offshoot of a newspaper with the same name first published in 1972 by a group which included Charles Gagnon; and *La Ligue communiste* (LC (M-L) C), the newest of all six groups (September 1975) and yet the most powerful. Not coincidentally, these three organizations originated in Quebec and remain far stronger there than elsewhere in Canada.

These three also constitute Quebec's most important extra-parliamentary political actors today, especially in the trade unions. The obvious self-destructiveness of the CPC (M-L), which became particularly evident during a purposeless bloody riot with the police in Montreal on May 20, 1971, could not help but cause significant defections and soon eroded the group's importance. Its last major stronghold, the new Quebec students' association (ANEQ), was lost to it in early 1976 when its sympathizers there lost out to *Péquistes* elements. The now combined LSO and GMR are still relatively weak in number of adherents and these are mainly students. Of the Trotskyist groups, the GSTQ is somewhat more significant, having an apparent influence in certain trade unions, though this is due

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more to a few strategically placed union officials, especially the teachers' unions, than to any real mass support.

Following the 1976 PQ victory, the GSTQ reversed its pro-federalist stand and moved in the direction of favouring Quebec independence.¹ Because its differences with the Fourth International groups are more general, dating back to a split in that organization in 1953, the GSTQ is not likely to join with the LOR despite the fact that their positions on Quebec are now similar. Whether acting together or alone, the "Trots" have not succeeded in efforts to get the unions to found a labour party, but their members have sometimes managed to convince unions, especially in the education sector, to take a harder line. Yet, except for a few actions, such as the unsuccessful fall 1975 fight against Montreal public transit fare increases, they remain virtually unknown outside trade union and education circles. When the Trotskyists attempted to enter provincial politics in 1976, their party, the Regroupement des militants syndicaux (RMS), fell flat on its face and dragged the provincial NDP, with which it ran in coalition, down with it. The RMS-NDP slate ran in twenty-one Montreal area ridings, capturing an average of just 150 votes.²

The fiercest opposition to Trotskyism has come from the Maoists, notably the Ligue, whose newspaper La Forge in May 1977 went so far as to characterize Trotskyists vermin to be exterminated. Such language is typical of the Ligue but not of En Lutte which has occasionally even worked with the GMR. The Ligue is characterized by a fierce, tough, uncompromising style which affects even its members' personal lives. With a highly disciplined membership and secret cellular organizational structure, the Ligue will brook no compromise. Once it has established a fine through internal discussion and deliberation, its members and sympathizers must follow it to the letter. Yet its style is no mere sloganeering as is the case with the obsessive CPC (M-L). Rather, strategy is well thought out and carefully applied. The normal procedure is that Ligue members are expected to speak up as members of unions, popular groups etc. They identify themselves as communists, pronounce the previously established correct line on the subject in question as the only possible expression of the workers' true interest, and denounce the incumbent leadership as witting or unwitting agents of the working class' oppressors. This pattern has been repeated in recent years in several hospital and some industrial unions, welfare recipients' rights' groups, day-care parents associations, consumer information and service centres, food co-ops, and popular education centres. Either the Ligue's attempt to take over is rebuffed or, with the exception of the trade unions the continued existence of which is not challenged, the organization once taken over is either transformed into an agitational instrument for the Ligue or dissolved outright. In either case it ceases to carry out

¹ Ibid., p. 107.
the activities for which it was formed. Of course, such practices are common to a lesser or greater extent to all of the groups. None, however, demonstrate the Ligue's sustained determination.

The Ligue's present strategy of attempting to "liquidate" popular groups and organizations is the practical consequence of certain conclusions emerging from the reassessment and self-criticism of the early 1970s centred in CAP St-Jacques. Not only were the many fluid, often spontaneous, popular actions of the late 1960s found by them to be misdirected, they were also "counter-revolutionary", deceiving the working class into believing their interests could be served without a revolution led by a proletarian vanguard. Not all those who came out of the social animation and FRAP experience felt the same way; but an important and determined group did. The fair success of the Ligue and to a lesser extent En Lutte in this strategy of "liquidating" popular groups and recruiting their most politicized members makes them the present heirs – however doubtful their legitimacy – to the extra-parliamentary political tradition of the late 1960s.

From the perspective taken here, a good reason to question the legitimacy of the Ligue's succession is clear in the group's position on Quebec nationalism. The Ligue came to oppose independence in principle because the Canadian working class must not be divided, but also because nothing should be done to weaken opposition to the Soviet Union which, according to Chinese foreign policy dictates, is the primary enemy. In fact, the Ligue has apparently chosen to unswervingly follow the Chinese domestic and international line.

The resolute pro-federalism of the Ligue represents a triumph of abstract ideology, but one which is understandable in terms of this group's origins. Among the chief organizations which merged to form the Ligue in 1975 was the resolutely bilingual and bicultural Quebec Revolutionary Student Movement (MREQ), itself formed originally in a split from the CPC (M-L) in 1972. Joining with it to form the Ligue were the St-Henri-based Cellule ouvrière révolutionnaire and the Cellule militante ouvrière which grew out of CAP St-Jacques. The Ligue soon attracted other groups and individuals with similar backgrounds, notably the group which had formerly put out the journal Mobilisation, the Groupe d'action socialiste, the staff of the Librairie progressiste (formerly affiliated with the CPC (M-L)) and individuals from the factory-based Regroupement des comités de travailleurs and from the Agence de presse libre du Québec. The loss of the APLQ's Bulletin

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1 Benoit details the incursions by La Ligue and En Lutte into such groups as the ADDS (welfare rights), ACEF (consumer protection), the Comptoirs alimentaires (Food Co-ops), SOS garderies (day care), the Centre deformation populaire – CFP (labour education), as well as into several unions such as those at hospitals Notre Dame and Hôtel Dieu. Some, as in the case Of ADDS, proved successful; others such as the CFP, did not. Op.cit., passim.

2 Ibid. See especially his brief notes identifying the composition and origin of the various groups, pp. 133-137.
which thereupon ceased publication was an especially important step in the Quebec extra-parliamentary Left's slide into rigid sectarianism.

Many of these individuals had been sympathetic to Quebec independence but, in rallying to the *Ligue*, they renounced their independentism. The whole process was one in which political conviction based on sentiment and personal political experience was uprooted and replaced gradually by a series of "lines" deduced from an ongoing global analysis of class relations and the role of nations within them. The same intellectual process recurs among people recruited as possible members through the *Ligue's* agitational activities. A first stage is participation in a group studying issues of *La Forge*. Graduates from this phase collectively study various classics by Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. Only then are the new converts eligible for membership. According to Jacques Benoit, this process takes a minimum of six months for workers but eighteen months for students and intellectuals. ¹

While the actual number of *Ligue* members and sympathizers is a carefully guarded secret – probably known only to members of the party's Central Committee (whose composition is even more stringently secret) – it can be roughly estimated. The number 1,500, which includes both members and sympathizers, seems reasonable, perhaps even slightly low. Approximately that many marched in orderly fashion under the *Ligue's* banner in Montreal on May Day 1977. While 1,500 is a small number, these people are politically conscious and experienced and subject to rigid discipline making them available around the clock. *Ligue* members' uncompromising attitudes carry over into all aspects of their activities. Former friends, colleagues, even family members, are treated as possible agents of the class enemy. The organization is everything. Adherents exist in most of Quebec's regions and important centres. They include students and intellectuals plus an impressive contingent of blue and white-collar workers. Despite Canada-wide pretensions, there are as yet few *Ligue* adherents to be found outside Quebec's frontiers.

Much of what has been said of the *Ligue* is true of *En Lutte* as well. Their organization, strategy, and tactics are so similar, in fact, that they often find themselves in direct competition for power and recruits within trade unions and popular organizations. There are few fundamental differences in their world views. Both observe the international scene from the Chinese perspective, though *En Lutte* is far less slavish in following the Peking line. Both are federal in orientation – *En Lutte* also has small chapters in several Canadian cities – and both are Leninist in structure and in their view of how socialism will be won. The instrument of this victory is the party, not the issue-oriented and democratic labour party which the Trotskyists currently propose as the agent of their transitional or

short-term program, but a highly disciplined vanguard such as Lenin prescribed for Russia at the turn of the century. Unlike the CPC (M-L), both the *Ligue* and *En Lutte* proclaim themselves organizations attempting to help found such a party rather than constituting the party in itself, and both thus see its establishment as the immediate political task.

Still there are differences, though mainly in style more than anything else. *En Lutte* appears less doctrinaire, more capable of subtlety, and less caught up with secrecy and rigid discipline. It is more capable of operating in coalition with other groups inside popular organizations and appears less intent on overtly taking them over. Attempts to unite various Canadian groups with an ML perspective to begin the work of forming the party have been frustrated, according to *En Lutte*, by *Ligue* intransigence. Early 1977 issues of *En Lutte* accused the *Ligue* of torpedoing such initiatives because it sought hegemony over the party to be formed. *La Forge* responded by accusing *En Lutte* of opportunism: the *Ligue* was not prepared, it said, to found the party at the cost of diluting its line and thereby betraying the Canadian working class.

There is no question that the *Ligue* is, as of this writing, the strongest of the *gauchiste* formations, with two to three times as many members and supporters as its major rival, *En Lutte*, and with an unmistakable presence in all aspects of extra-parliamentary Quebec politics. Yet its inflexibility and insistence on total commitment, which were no doubt an original source of strength and accounted for its great success in recruitment, may very well inhibit further growth as the political consequences of such an approach become more plainly evident. This seems to be happening to some extent in the CNTU where long-time dedicated unionists are showing signs of being increasingly fed up with what they see as intimidation on the part of the *Ligue*. While the Maoists were able to beat back a motion indirectly condemning them at the CNTU's 1976 congress, by appealing to the strong sentiment against any form of red-baiting, the very discussion of the question indicates that they may expect greater internal opposition in the future, since their tactics are now far more widely recognized. There are, in fact, indications that the group’s growth stalled in 1977.

And in general, Maoist formations have recently suffered a sharp decline in most Western European countries. ¹ Due to its potential for greater flexibility in adjusting to the political reality in which it operates, *En Lutte* may possibly prove to be the more lasting political formation.

The national question, it would seem, poses the problem squarely. As best as can be made out, the M-L position flies in the face of reality – there is very little Canadian working class consciousness per se. Surely, there is little danger of

¹ David Plotke speaks of the "relative decline-and in some nations virtual disappearance – of orthodox 'Maoist' groups". *Socialist Revolution*, no. 35 (September-October 1977), p. 80.
"splitting the Canadian working class", since it has never been united. In Quebec, where worker solidarity is strongest, labour could lose a great deal through efforts to tie its political destiny to that of the working class throughout Canada. Since all admit that Quebec is indeed a nation, it should be interesting to observe the development of the gauchiste groups on this question. We have already noted the shift by the GSTQ. The Ligue appears to be sufficiently sheltered by dogmatism against the danger of having to alter its line to correspond to political reality. Perhaps this is not the case for En Lutte. We shall see.

Beyond the Trotskyist groups' support for Quebec independence, another important distinction between them and the Maoists is that they are willing to tolerate a greater degree of internal disagreement. The relative weakness of the Trotskyists is due primarily to what one may call their chronic sectarianism: they are persistently plagued by a style in which groupuscule needs always seem to come before those of the trade union or other working class or people's organizations in which they act. Because these needs are fully comprehensible only in terms of international Trotskyist affiliations, and intrigues and ideological debates known only to the groups' stalwarts, the outside observer automatically associates artificiality with their style of operation. Finally, especially as far as the GSTQ is concerned, the predominance of labour bureaucrats, particularly teachers and professors, adds to this air of unreality. Compared to the "Trots", the Maoists are equally sectarian, but theirs is more "up front" and total – they may often be called crazy but seldom petty. The strategic moderation of the "Trots", combined with their frequent obstinacy concerning essentially minor points derived from unstated principles and esoteric affiliations, accounts for their reputation as petty sectarians.

The serious weaknesses of all these groups certainly must limit their ultimate effectiveness, but their present political impact should not be underrated: they regularly monopolize the extra-parliamentary Left's political discourse. Many difficulties and uncertainties besetting the trade union movement, as well as doubts and disillusion presently in evidence in various popular organizations, result from failures to meet challenges posed by the gauchistes. This, in turn, retards the ability of non-sectarian militants to develop an in-depth socialist analysis of Quebec political reality which transcends prescribed texts and is grounded in Quebec's own richly varied political experience.

A similar apperception should help explain the gauchistes' success and growth in Quebec. We have described two related factors which are central to understanding Quebec politics: state middle class radicalization, and this group's importance to socio-political legitimation in education, information, entertainment, the arts, social services, etc. For more than a decade, radical socialist and independentist ideas were developed and communicated through such institutions. However rhetorically expressed, these ideas have had real effects upon those exposed to them – notably students, but also some workers who are politically
active in their places of work or in their communities. This general process of intellectual radicalization took place in the context of socialist terminology, concepts, modes of analyses, and overall goals which therefore became commonplace in much social, political, and economic discussion.

But where and how to apply, act upon, and live by the socialist precepts and perspectives thus acquired? There was of course the PQ, but to many its limitations have rendered it unacceptable. Thus the field was wide open for the gauchistes whose clearly defined line, vociferous denunciation of the PQ, and ability to provide adherents with political tasks to which to devote their time and energy perfectly suited the needs of a large number of young Quebecers. Most successful of all has been the Ligue communiste, and it is not surprising, for example, that Ligue sympathizers control the University of Montreal student paper, still called Le Quartier latin.

Yet, for all the gauchistes' success, something is indeed missing on the Left in Quebec politics. An organizational focus is lacking in which the socialist project for Quebec could be discussed and elaborated in a non-dogmatic, non-sectarian manner. Such a focus would, presumably, come to treat some form of national independence for Quebec as unquestionably necessary, even inevitable. It would explicitly reject the idea of the trade unions as the leading political instrument for the achievement of socialism, instead exploring in depth the potential real contributions to the project that might be expected from trade union actions in the workplace and in the community. And it would begin to elaborate a strategy and consider the organizational instruments required. Thus, it would squarely pose the question of orientation toward the PQ. Should the PQ be given a clear field, should it be opposed, or should a coalition with it be sought and, if so, under what terms? Finally, it would attempt to clarify the part to be played in this process by the various popular groups at the base. In this scenario left-wing Péquistes, non-sectarian socialists in the trade union movement and elsewhere, local activists, and even some gauchiste sympathizers prepared (if that is possible) to talk and act on a non-sectarian basis would come to identify a common position and develop complementary strategies through the evolution of shared theory and practice.

Such a grouping certainly does not now exist. With the intensity of energy going into the actions of the gauchistes, the PQ, and the trade unions, it is unlikely to come to fruition soon – if ever. One possible hopeful sign, though on a far more restricted front, involves the renewal of radical political action on the Montreal municipal scene.
CHAPTER X:
NEW POLITICS IN MONTREAL

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This chapter, more restricted in scope than previous treatment of political activity at the national (provincial) level, deals with the politics of Quebec's metropolis – Montreal. It attempts no general analysis of Quebec municipal politics, an important subject crying out for comprehensive treatment. Present-day Montreal politics is nevertheless worth considering per se for therein lies a unique contribution to Quebec's political experience. Of particular relevance is the evolution of Montreal's most significant radical municipal party, the Montreal Citizens' Movement, the RCM.

Having persevered this far, the reader should need no convincing of Montreal's importance as a scene of political activity in Quebec. Furthermore, the city's evolution has been such that it has emerged as a significant political arena. This may be shown by briefly examining the stages of North American municipal political development generally and those of Montreal in particular. ¹

A few generalizations about North American cities do appear legitimate. Most larger northeastern cities have demonstrated roughly similar patterns of economic, technological, and population development during at least the past one hundred years. Consequently, they tend to show marked similarities on the political level as well. As a general hypothesis, it is suggested that until recently North American city politics has been underdeveloped; the essentially "public" nature of political activity has been virtually lacking at the municipal level. Instead, even those activities relating to the selection of city government officials, not to mention behaviour in office, on the whole have been "private" in nature. ²

¹ For a more detailed discussion of these points see Henry Milner, "City Politics : Some Possibilities", Our Generation, Vol. 10, no. 4.
² See Ibid., pp. 48-51.
It is possible to distinguish three broad types of urban political systems which have successively appeared in north-eastern cities. The first might be called the patrician, generally coinciding with that part of the nineteenth century before the period of accelerated heavy industrialization. In this period, urban politics was usually the province of a small group of men within the local elite who accepted, as a noblesse oblige of their social prominence, guardianship over the limited tasks defined as within the jurisdiction of the municipal government. The process of selection tended to be private; vacancies were filled through co-optation and elections seldom contested. These officials were usually quite reluctant to use or even assert their limited powers. Few issues or elections elicited widespread public participation. Patrician city politics was basically private in nature.

The second urban political form, that of the "boss" or "machine", was most pronounced in larger cities in the industrialized north-eastern U.S. late in the last century. It thrived on the immigration from Europe which was then burgeoning, and later on internal migration of blacks from the south which peaked in the 1930s. The boss system was highly organized, built from the block to the ward or neighbourhood political clubhouse, up to the city council, and finally the boss who was sometimes, though not commonly, the mayor. Its survival depended upon corrupt business collusion plus wholesale trading of favours in the form of jobs, contracts, handouts, and the like, for votes. The essence of this system had little to do with organized party politics. It consisted instead of private, behind-the-scenes dealings between individuals and public officials. The machine was attacked as inefficient, which in its heyday it usually was not, and corrupt. The boss system had a built-in dominance over elective positions which allowed (without ensuring) the co-ordination needed for effective government. Even its corruption usually produced tangible benefits for the immigrant working class population, a primitive form of welfare at a time when other levels of government had not yet created any comprehensive programs for social assistance. Though otherwise distinct from the patrician system, the machine, too, was essentially private. Under the machine, the political arena was virtually closed to public scrutiny, debate and collective activity.

Finally, a third form, the municipal reform movement, appeared just before the turn of the century and continues to influence urban politics. It sprang up in direct reaction against the excesses and abuses of the boss system. The reformers' goal was to clean up city hall by throwing out the corrupt politicians and replacing them with honest, efficient administrators. Among the promised reforms were the short and non-partisan ballot, at-large electoral districts for a smaller number of city councillors, new regulations to cut off the supply of patronage, and the

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2 See, for example, *ibid.,* pp. 138-203.
replacement of weak-mayor systems by commission, strong-mayor, and council-manager alternatives.

The reformers were anti-political, often consciously so to the extent of advocating "taking politics out of city hall". They stressed analogies between the city and the private corporation; the voters were shareholders (rate-payers), the councillors, now that they were to be elected on an at-large basis, were the city's board of directors whose job was to oversee the managers they appointed on behalf of the shareholders. The measure of the "good government" they insisted upon was businesslike efficiency – greater and more professional output at less cost.

Most of the reformers, especially in the early years, had humane and progressive motives, but their disdain for partisan city politics and their (not unrelated) upper middle class Anglo-Saxon character limited the political impact of the movement. As a whole, the reform system constituted private politics in a novel form, only now it was to be slanted in the direction of the middle and upper classes who wanted better, cheaper, and more efficient municipal services. The reformers were not always successful, and even when victorious, reform administrations often took on the appearances of the previous regimes. This is mainly because the middle class base on which the reform movement depended was beginning to erode as increasing numbers of families took advantage of now widely available private automobiles and fled to the suburbs. As a result, some reformers sought to have certain services stripped from the city's jurisdiction and given over to administrative commissions appointed by higher levels of government and thereby outside the reach of city politics. Robert Moses, New York's urban renewal entrepreneur, is the most famous example of an individual who accumulated a vast array of such administrative powers so as effectively to become the non-elected "czar" of metropolitan New York. ¹

The decline of Robert Moses' position in the 1960s symbolically marks the beginning of a decline of the old forms of city politics which, in the three types of systems described and in various combinations of them, attested to the private nature of municipal political activity and the consequent underdevelopment of public politics. Of course, decisions affecting everyone were now being made at the municipal level, but they were typically made outside the urban public political arena. And many of these decisions were highly political in the sense that they affected everyone. Along with purely technological innovations, such as the development of strong structural steels and the availability of movable cranes which allowed construction of modern skyscrapers, concrete acts on the part of municipal and "higher" administrations fostered rapid changes in the city especially after World War II. Industrialization, immigration and internal migration, the destruction and redevelopment of the urban core, the establishment

¹ Moses' career has been well documented by Robert Caro's The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York (New York: Knopf, 1974).
of an automobile-based system of urban transportation and the resulting suburbanization, all these and other factors changed the face of the city and the lives of its inhabitants without their political participation or consent.

As the city fully emerged as the vital centre of population and modern life, urban space and its utilization became a key commodity of exchange and consumption. The resulting changes affected the lives of all, but directly affected the profits, and thus bound the interests, of a number of individuals and firms which constitute the "(private) property industry". This industry is understood to include financiers, developers, real estate firms, construction companies, property managers, etc. In the large north-eastern U.S. and Canadian cities, including Montreal, the condition of such major components of city life as houses, streets, parks, and even the air was increasingly the result of property industry decisions, based on private considerations and taken outside the public arena.

The urban political forms most common in the 1950s were hybrids – combinations of earlier systems, notably those of machine and reform. While a few "pure" city manager-run systems and even fewer boss systems such as Richard Daley's Chicago remained, the usual form of big city government lay somewhere in between. In this period, political change was secondary to economic change, most notably in the economic role of urban property. While urban property speculation and related forms of unearned wealth accumulation are not new phenomena, it seems clear that the private property industry has only recently achieved such central social and economic importance as virtually to transform the city itself into a commodity. The resulting constellation of urban power was no longer a mere secondary aspect of a productive system catering to subsidiary economic needs, but had become a direct and primary objective of control by the dominant economic classes.

We see this new postwar structural reality in the relative decline of the gentlemen, ward-heelers, and reform-oriented professionals in city politics and their replacement by individuals who were effectively representatives of the private property industry. City councils typically came to be dominated by real estate agents, insurance brokers, property lawyers, contractors, and the like. While not having the field entirely to themselves, property industry representatives were usually influential enough to ensure that their private interests were furthered through direct decisions of municipal politicians or, more commonly, through the politicians simply abdicating such decisions to the property industry. Hence, the private nature of urban politics remained essentially unaltered, though the stakes had been dramatically raised.

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1 This term appears to have been coined by James Lorimer in *A Citizen's Guide to City Politics* (Toronto: James Lewis and Samuel, 1972).
2 For evidence of this fact with regard to major English Canadian cities see *ibid.*, pp. 96-127.
The property industry operates mainly within the traditional competitive sector of the new monopoly capitalist economic system. But the city is affected by the wider transformation associated with the social evolution from competitive to monopoly capitalism especially through the leap in the demand for municipal services. Cities must provide the needed facilities for the transportation, recreation, education, welfare, and housing of a burgeoning population thrown together inside their boundaries by the productive forces of monopoly capitalism but increasingly unwilling to tolerate indecent social standards. Yet city governments lack the financial means to do so. The city is likely the weak link in legitimation, the place where the cracks and fissures alluded to in Chapter Four first appear. The resulting pressure has led to the creation of metropolitan or regional governments and to the accelerated amalgamation of cities and take-over of municipal powers by the states and provinces. There is, moreover, an undeniable resemblance between recent moves in this direction and the thrust of the early reform movement. In both cases, the rationalization of services was the prime impetus and goal; only now the scope is much wider.

In consequence, to some extent as part of the move toward rationalization, but mainly in opposition to many of its practical effects, a new vision of the city emerged in North America, inspired by the writings of Paul Goodman, Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, Murray Bookchin, and others. It envisaged the city as a harmonious "ecological" centre of life clearly antithetical to the urban agglomeration being "developed" through the good offices of the property industry, and stressed decentralization of administrative power to counter the pressures toward rationalization. This theme has been picked up by a number of new urban groups, especially in the U.S., in what might be called the "neighbourhood power" movement of the seventies. Yet it would not be fitting to attribute to this unfocused and still rather weak movement the status of a new type of urban politics. Nor is it clear that its proponents seek to wage a collective political struggle. There are pronounced tendencies to view the achievement of neighbourhood power less as a means of collective transformation than of private escape.

By surveying Montreal history one can sketch the contours of these private urban political forms. The earliest period, roughly from 1840 to the turn of the century, tended to be patrician. The mayoralty was held by such figures as Peter McGill, from the wealthy merchant family, and Sir John Abbott (who went on to become prime minister), gentlemen from "up the mountain" regally fulfilling the respectable duties of municipal public officials. The second period, during the first half of the twentieth century, was one in which machine-like political organization and frequent scandal were combined with the personal popularity of long-time mayors, notably Médéric Martin and Camilien Houde. Houde, Martin, and the other successful urban politicians of this era relied on a populist base of support, representing themselves as true sons of the plain ordinary French-speaking people of the east end. This populism was necessary because, unlike their American
counterparts, they had so little access to provincial and federal party structures and resources that personal popularity had to serve as the major ingredient in the cement which held the machines together. The Montreal machines were far less powerful than those in the United States, but they fulfilled the same basic functions, as anyone who remembers Montreal in the 1930s will affirm. The success of Ste-Anne's ward boss Frank Hanley, which continued well into the 1960s, is a reminder of this fact.

Reformers became active in Montreal as early as the turn of the century, and a reform administration, elected in 1910, was committed to the setting up of a board of control form of government as well as building a water filtration plant and wide boulevards. Reform ended in 1914 when Martin successfully rallied the francophone workers of the east end against the west end businessmen reformers. While reform-oriented elements remained active during the next two decades, attempting to pressure the Quebec government into amending Montreal's charter, their efforts proved mainly unsuccessful. It was only with the formation of the Civic Action League (LAC) in the late 1940s and the 1954 election of its mayoral candidate, Jean Drapeau, that reform came into its own in Montreal.

The property and gambling interests that enjoyed a free hand in the open city that was Montreal in the postwar decade had no use for this austere reformer and, with the help of Premier Duplessis, denied him re-election in 1957. However, with Duplessis dead and reform in the air, Drapeau and his associates easily came back in 1960. By 1962, Drapeau had rid himself of the LAC and was returned to power as head of his own political instrument, the Civic party; he was returned again in 1962, 1966, 1970, and 1974. In 1970, under circumstances already described, the Civic party won every seat on city council.

One may regard Jean Drapeau even today as something of a classic urban reformer. For example, it has been said that Drapeau sees his position as that of an elected city manager, regarding city council as essentially a rubber stamp to his administrative decisions. The fact that this city manager could not be fired by his "board of directors", especially since in the early seventies practically all city council members were his own hand-picked candidates, ranks him among the most powerful of urban political figures. Those who would compare him to Richard Daley are mistaken. Daley was boss but also partly slave to the machine he created; Drapeau at his height was slave to no one. His practically absolute power and architectonic disposition make a comparison to Robert Moses more apt.

The initial opposition of the property industry to the Civic party was overcome by the obvious benefits made available to it through contracts, land sales, commissions, and fees flowing from the mayor's schemes to transform the city – of which the luxurious metro system, Expo '67, and the 1976 Olympics are the most famous. Yet Jean Drapeau was no ordinary property industry mayor. For him politics was a grand engineering project; the administrative apparatus was not
there simply to serve the propertied interests when called but, by fostering and employing locally available resources and expertise, to co-ordinate and plan large scale economic growth. And Jean Drapeau was prepared to ride roughshod over any opposition and stretch city finances beyond the limit to achieve his projects. This extreme technocratic outlook is particularly remarkable in that it predated the Quiet Revolution. While the technocratic project of the Quiet Revolution represented a genuine if superficial collective national impulse, Drapeau's architectonic vision has always been highly personal. Above all else, Montreal of the 1960s and early 1970s was a waiting landscape for this man's visions.

In 1974, when Jean Drapeau finally faced serious opposition, urban politics had evolved in keeping with Quebec's wider political transformation of the preceding decade. Though undoubtedly influenced by the ideas of "ecological urbanism" current at the time, the main factor in the rise of this new opposition was the political experience undergone on the many fronts of political struggle by activists in the Montreal area. For, while "neighbourhood power" is a major theme of this new opposition, its expression takes an increasingly socialist political form. In Montreal, perhaps more than elsewhere, the city had been forced onto political centre stage. Citizens' committee struggles to preserve neighbourhoods against demolition, as well as other mass activities resulting from the work of tenants' groups, anti-poverty groups, trade unions, women's groups, students and minority groups grew out of the wider social ferment of the period. Though limited, these actions provided important lessons for the participants and also helped to unmask the true nature of urban power by exposing concrete examples of the role of the property industry. Beginning with FRAP in 1970, serious efforts have been made to channel collective energy from the city's streets to its political structures. Efforts such as these may very well mark the onset of a new and potentially genuine (that is, no longer private) form of urban politics.

The goal of FRAP, and the RCM after it, was, in effect, no less than to make urban politics political; it sought to force the question of control over the city and all that this entailed into the arena of public debate. What kind of city did the working people of Montreal really want and need, and what forces were working to ensure that they didn't get it, and why? The urban political arena is particularly important because such fundamental questions cannot be simply theoretical; they are evident in the urban dwellers' everyday lives, in their environment, in the basic services they do or do not receive. In Quebec, municipal political involvement has paid an additional dividend. Activists have been able to forge new alliances and develop original strategies, and thus to attain forms of unity of purpose sometimes inconceivable in the provincial or federal political arena, because involvement in the municipal political struggles was clearly separable from one's position on the national independence and language questions.

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1 Jean Drapeau, Drapeau vous parle (Montréal : Les éditions de la cité, undated).
2 FRAP's program was published as Les Salariés au pouvoir, (Montréal : FRAP, 1970).
There is no real ongoing or past experience which serves to guide or explain the new forms. Despite the fact that early in this century socialists and communists achieved considerable urban electoral success, the current urban politics of citizen involvement constituted a novel phenomenon in North America. These earlier victories were mainly isolated incidents, the translation of a general class-consciousness present at the time in national politics, into municipal votes mobilized on the basis of the geographical concentration of socialist support, but without any real socialist vision of the city. In Europe, on the other hand, in regions where the organized Left has attained the concentrated and long-term support of a sizeable segment of the working class, there have been instances of cities, Bologna and Grenoble for example, where important political innovation and transformation on the municipal level has resulted. While extremely interesting and valuable, the European experience cannot be applied to a city like Montreal where the context is so completely different.

In our treatment of the rise and fall of FRAP we learned that, while FRAP's experience marked an important stage in the development of a certain extra-parliamentary Left, as far as the urban project is concerned, it must be considered a false start. The real start was in early May 1974 when its successor, the Montreal Citizen's Movement (*Rassemblement des citoyens de Montréal*) or RCM, formally came into existence at a founding convention attended by some 300 people. This convention was the result of activity on several fronts beginning in late summer 1973. Initially, the impetus came through the Montreal Inter-Trade Union Council (CRIM) where a few former FRAP militants, some of whom were members of the Trotskyist GSTQ, had convinced the Montreal-based union centrals to begin work toward the foundation of a municipal workers' party. The CRIM produced a valuable document, *Une Ville pour nous*, but it had little effect in interesting rank and file union members in the project.

A second group, with no organizational base per se but with greater success in attracting people, was the Progressive Urban Movement (PUM). Formed in September 1973 by a cadre of intellectuals and community organizers, the PUM succeeded in reaching several hundred people, many of them progressive anglophones lacking a political instrument to express their concerns, and drew public attention to its goal of creating a municipal opposition party. The PUM produced a reasonably comprehensive program and set up organizing committees in six of Montreal's nineteen electoral districts.

In February 1974, two hundred or so Montreal *Parti québécois* militants gathered at a conference on municipal questions and decided to help found a municipal party. Finally, in March the Quebec NDP announced that it too was joining the fray. During this time, negotiations began among representatives of the four groups with the idea of joining forces. At the district level, too, parallel events were proceeding; in some districts, the only existing organization lay with one of the groups, but in others two or more of the groups came together.
The main difficulty in the negotiations was insistence by the Trotskyist elements in the CRIM that the party be a worker's vehicle run by the unions. The CRIM could not join forces with the other groups without the agreement of each of its constituent elements, the Montreal councils of the CNTU, QFL and CEQ. Since the PQ insisted and the PUM and NDP agreed that the unions were fundamental to the creation of such a party and since the Trotskyists were strong in the Montreal Council of the CNTU, it was not until their demand was narrowly rejected in late April at the Council's annual meeting that the CRIM could formally announce union involvement and the party came into being. Ironically, the program adopted by the RCM was entitled, and largely based on, *Une Ville pour nous.*

The basic agreement was that it was not to be a coalition but a new entity, with direct representation only from district RCM groups. Local assemblies representative of each participating group were then set up in almost all districts. These assemblies selected delegates to the founding convention and proposed amendments to the draft program and party constitution which had been drawn up by a special committee of representatives of the four groups. The amendments were then compiled and brought to the founding convention in May. There, workshops in housing, transportation, health, the Olympics, budget, municipal democracy, and party structures considered the various amendments and made recommendations to the plenary session. A program was adopted and a constitution hammered out. The delegates finally elected an eight-member executive and adjourned to their districts to prepare for the November election. And so the RCM came into being.

From its founding, the goals of the RCM were vaguely socialist and explicitly decentralist. Its program stresses the goal of popular participation in decisions, and this requires a basically decentralized structure. The main decision-making body between annual congresses is a general council composed of three elected delegates from each district plus the members of the executive. Of the RCM's elected city councillors, only three have a vote on the general council. The participationist emphasis is even more pronounced than in the PQ. The caucus of RCM city councillors is politically subordinate, by design, to the representative bodies of the members, the congress, and general council.

The program promised reforms such as the development of public transit and co-operative housing, and stressed the creation of neighbourhood councils. The orientation was implicitly socialist; the RCM attacked speculation even to the point of pledging to municipalize land. Generally, it sought to end the system in which basic needs such as decent housing and reliable urban transit were subject to collusive private interests. Still, all this was less than clear given the rushed circumstances under which the program was put into operation.

In the election, Drapeau's Civic party candidates for city council amassed 50.7 percent of the popular vote to the RCM candidates' 45.3 percent. Drapeau himself
drew 55 percent against Jacques Couture, a community organizer, Jesuit priest, and RCM candidate for mayor, who took 40 percent of the vote. The Civic party elected thirty-six city councillors, the Montreal Citizens' Movement eighteen. The anti-Drapeau vote tended to be higher in areas which had undergone extensive social and physical dislocation due to speculation and development. In working and new middle class central districts of St-Jacques, St-Louis, and parts of Côte des Neiges particularly affected by the urban crisis, the revolt against Drapeau's policies was particularly strong (RCM 51 percent to 43 percent for the Civic party.)

The RCM tended to be weakest in the poorest districts like St-Henri and Ste-Anne where the Civic party operated populist old style machines to "serve" the many individuals in a clientele relationship with government, such as welfare mothers and residents of public housing. The RCM appears to have benefited from serious disaffection from the dictatorial mayor among anglophones which helped it to win the comparatively middle class west end districts of Notre Dame de Grâce and Côte des Neiges.

Only after the euphoria of its unexpected electoral success subsided did it become evident to party militants that the program's sometimes vague and inexplicit language had tended to introduce an element of ideological uncertainty. In addition, since the RCM was founded only six months before the election, other problems naturally arose. Candidates were often hastily chosen, some turning out to be unfamiliar with parts of the program and the goals which lay behind it. Also, campaign strategy and content laid insufficient stress on the intent behind the proposed reforms. Not surprisingly then, the newly elected RCM city councillors sometimes found themselves without a clear alternative conception and thus ill-prepared to deal with public pressure from and through mass media which sought to cast them in the mould of a "loyal" opposition operating within traditionally accepted bounds of parliamentary behaviour and fiscal responsibility.

The caucus never succumbed to urgings to name an opposition leader whose authority would supplant that of the representative bodies of the party, but such pressure did have effects. Some reporters covering the RCM'S internal debates over socialism consistently treated socialist positions in print as mere gauchiste irresponsibility. This made it difficult for some of the councillors, who were after all "responsible officials", to support party positions. While the debate was portrayed by these journalists as an attempt by "extreme" elements to "take over" the party, the reality as seen from within the RCM is very different.

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1 For example, the leading editorial of the Gazette on December 7, 1976 referred to "the romantic political meanderings of coffee house politicians". See also the editorial by Jean-Guy Dubuc in La Presse on January 18, 1977, entitled : "Un nouveau RCM ou un autre parti".
The need for clarification and deepening of the analysis behind the party's orientation became clear to party militants soon after the election. An early manifestation of both the need for such clarification and an attempt to provide it on a limited basis came with the RCM's campaign for free public transit for the elderly in early 1975. A clear difference in orientation emerged between the campaign's leader, Jacques Couture, plus a few of the more closely involved city councillors on one side, and the party's executive and transportation committee on the other. The former group single-mindedly concentrated on the issue ignoring wider questions raised in the party's position paper prepared by the latter group and adopted by the general council. That paper asked several questions-and proceeded to answer them:

Is the current administration really going to tell us that it can find $250 million plus to cover a deficit for the grandiose Olympic projects of Drapeau, but not $3 million for 137,000 senior citizens?... But all that is not by accident. No, it is not by chance that a $3 million expense of a social nature is closely scrutinised by all levels of government, while millions are easily allowed to be spent whose profits will benefit only the large corporations and whose prestige will benefit only their political allies. It is not by chance, because it is not only Drapeau who is responsible for the decay of our urban life, but the capitalist system which he defends and promotes. It is typical of capitalism that it is interested in citizens only in so far as they are capable of working; once thrown out of the job market and hence no longer capable of generating profits, these citizens are abandoned to a miserable fate to which capitalism itself has condemned them.

The inability or unwillingness of some in the party to translate specific issues into wider questions to do with class and power in the city made one thing clear to many active party members. A priority for the years before the 1978 election would have to be an elaboration of the goals and strategy of the RCM from within a socialist perspective. For the gauchistes such an exercise would merely involve the almost ritualistic application of a global line. For RCM activists socialism, especially in an urban context, was understood as a project whose specific shape was yet to be charted; its main objective was first to clarify common principles as far as was possible and then to develop a praxis out of which further clarification would emerge. Socialism was widely understood by RCM activists not as dogmatic rules to be imposed from above but rather as a possibility which one should seek to enhance by generating favourable conditions through one's actions. ¹

Those who supported such a position – and they were concentrated in the most active districts in the east-central parts of the city – found unacceptable the

"moderate" position increasingly associated with several of the councillors. These latter viewed the party as a "coalition of oppositional forces", and were concerned not to scare off any group which might join the RCM's opposition to the Drapeau regime. They were not necessarily anti-socialist (some in private would admit that deep down they were personally committed to socialism), but in order to build their broad coalition they wanted to put off the hard questions. Fearing that avoiding such questions would play into the hands of established interests who would seize the RCM's lack of ideological clarity, using the media to make it over in the public's mind into a traditional urban reform party, the executive decided to confront the issue head-on at the fall 1975 party congress.

In its report to the congress, the executive probed the limitations of a narrow reformist strategy as practised specifically in the fight over transit fares for the elderly. It concluded that the RCM should confront the problem squarely by declaring itself socialist and adopting a series of strategic measures to mobilize as a socialist party in the districts. Many delegates were not convinced, especially as they felt they had been given insufficient opportunity to really consider the implications of such a decision. In the end, the congress settled nothing. The delegates balked at a forthright declaration in favour of socialism, adopting instead a compromise position which spoke of the party's determination to implement "the most advanced elements of the program", and leaving the question unanswered. Nevertheless, they did pass the proposed strategic measures and elected a new executive, the majority of which was closely identified with the socialist position.

As might be expected, 1975-76 saw an intensification of the debate within the party. The congress had enabled supporters of each of the two positions to get to know each other. The next few months were characterized by a series of behind-the-scenes meetings and by personal sniping between exponents of the two sides at the general council.

The "moderate" strategy was clear. End the arguments over theory and principle and get on with planning and organizing for the elections. Given their majority in the caucus, the only thing required to carry it out, they felt, was control over the executive. They sought to put together a winning slate. Their first idea was to put Jacques Couture at its head, but when Couture was unexpectedly elected as a PQ MNA in November 1976 (and even more unexpectedly entered the Lévesque cabinet), the mantle fell on the shoulders of city councillor Paul Cliche. Cliche had been president of FRAP, a position in which he had been the prime target of the CAP St-Jacques radicals, and was an employee of the CNTU. Ironically, though not surprisingly, he was also considered to be an important figure on the Left in the Parti québécois.

While also planning a slate for the executive, the socialists concentrated on the content of the debate to take place at the December 1976 congress. They decided to support the explicitly anti-capitalist report of the party's housing committee, the
radical position on neighbourhood councils proposed by the St-Louis district, plus a series of amendments designed to enhance the participatory nature of the party's structure.

The great showdown at the congress ended with a victory for the Left. Almost all of the resolutions they favoured were passed by the workshops and plenary session, and the socialist slate took five of the eight executive positions. However, this was soon to provoke a backlash. There were a few well-publicized resignations and denunciations by the most conservative councillors and their supporters in the party executive, followed by similar moves in a few district executive councils. This division created a public climate which made it very hard for the party to operate effectively for several months. In particular, the RCM found it much more difficult to collect funds and so was forced to work in a situation of constant financial uncertainty. Under these circumstances, it had to respond publicly to the weekly barbs aimed at it by two ex-RCM councillors* and their journalist supporters.

By late spring, the situation had stabilized. Individuals who might be described as centrist within the party, among them Cliche and two or three other city councillors, had apparently decided to stay. By the summer of 1977, the party had pretty much returned to work, attempting to deepen its analysis in terms of the program and candidates it would present in the 1978 municipal elections. The declaration of principle adopted at its December 1977 congress testified to its newfound unity. Its socialist orientation is no longer in question, but it is a socialist conception which has matured, marking a starting point for serious analysis and strategy. Socialism as a convenient label for separating the good guys from the bad guys seems to have been left behind where it was found – in the establishment media.

Still, its relatively small number of active committed members leaves the RCM quite powerless, especially given the complexity of its socialist project. It is also in serious danger of being sandwiched between the gauchistes on the one side and the PQ on the other, both of which offer more simple and straightforward recipes for political engagement. Therefore, its prospects are by no means certain. Yet whatever its achievements in the long term, the RCM experience provides

* These two were Robert Keaton and Nick Auf der Maur whose status as party members generated much controversy when they violated party rules concerning city councillors and ran in the provincial election of 1976 as candidates of the Democratic Alliance. While officially Keaton and Auf der Maur thus ended their association with the party, their actions before and after the congress indicated that their unwillingness to submit to the decisions of the party-given its socialist prise de position – was really at the base of the rupture. There is no question but that both would have been easily readmitted had they been willing to admit the fact that party rules and decisions applied to them, just like everyone else. They even came to lose the support of their district association in Côte des Neiges which had originally supported their re-admission, as well as that of the other members of the caucus.
important elements for the elaboration of a middle course between the opportunism of the PQ and the revolutionary posturing of the gauchistes. The uniqueness of the RCM experience lies primarily in the nature of the urban political project as set in the context of present-day Quebec politics.

In fact, the RCM is a state middle class phenomenon to at least the same extent as the PQ and the gauchistes. A profile of RCM activists in terms of class origins and present or future occupations would resemble that of the Péquistes or gauchistes in Montreal, probably the only significant difference being that the RCM supporters are younger (and more anglophone) than the former, and older than the latter. Not surprisingly, then, several leading figures in the RCM have gone to work for the Quebec government. Recently, this group included one of the leaders of the socialist majority, Léa Cousineau, president of the RCM during its first two and a half years of existence, who was given responsibility for dossiers regarding the status of women in Quebec, and working under Minister Lise Payette. (Cousineau, incidentally, had previously been vice-president of the Alliance des professeurs de Montréal [CEQ-Montréal]). The overlap with the trade unions is even more notable, going back to the RCM's earliest days. In fact, trade unionists played an important role in the internal struggle within the RCM, with Paul Cliche and Michel Bourdon of the CNTU on the side of the "moderates", and several Montreal officials in the QFL on the side of the socialists.

We have already noted the problems faced by state middle class socialists in attempting to apply their goals and principles concretely to the institutions within which they operate. In the PQ, this weakness has played into the hands of the technocrats, and in the trade unions, it is the Maoists who have benefited, both, from rather different points on the spectrum, offering leadership around comparatively easy and neat political formulae. The main cause of this weakness, we have suggested, lies in the nature of the state middle class itself, its educational experience, and the role it continues to play in Quebec culture and society. Politically, this weakness has too often amounted to a confusion between rhetoric and reality, mistaking formal acceptance of theoretical positions in deliberative bodies for political application of the goals entailed by them.

The very fact that the RCM is a municipal party perhaps constitutes a partial antidote to this tendency. Certainly urban politics is less attractive to aspiring technocrats and would-be Lenins. Furthermore, the quality which makes this so, the necessity to deal more with practical everyday problems than with "fundamental" ones like control over production or national sovereignty has served to continually force the RCM to translate its socialist principles into finite policies and actions which relate directly to the lives of the working people of the city.

This is not to deny that socialists in the RCM have fallen victim to the same rhetorical excesses and confusions: we have already seen that they have. It is rather to suggest that by and large they have been able to learn from their
experiences, and thus increasingly to link theory with practice. For example, by the early summer of 1977, the RCM showed signs of beginning to extricate itself from its seemingly continuous internal wrangling, not by renouncing its goals and analysis, but rather by applying them to a concrete case. This was the struggle over the location of the Namur metro station in north-west Montreal. In the process, it was able to provide evidence of collusion between the administration and the large developer, the Campeau Corporation, in a decision to move the station to a location that favoured the developer over the needs of the residents. Internal documents obtained and made public by the RCM proved that the administration had also undertaken to build a 120-foot corridor from the metro station to the planned complex (which, in fact, never materialized) which would be used as a shopping promenade – all at public expense. The Namur struggle brought together local party activists, RCM city councillors using meetings of the Montreal urban community to expose the collusion, and specialists in the transportation committee of the party with close links with the state bureaucracies involved. Finally, it also gained a measure of support from certain trade unions in the urban transit field. Without having to take recourse to slogans and rhetoric, the RCM campaign generally succeeded in exposing concretely just how capitalism and its political apparatus operated in the city.¹ (The final outcome of the struggle was decided by the provincial government. Its own inquiry agreed that the RCM was indeed justified but that, given the millions of dollars already spent on excavation, it was too late to move the station.)

The party's general perspective can be seen in its attitude toward elections. Without downplaying the importance of electoral activity or the concrete resources available to a municipal administration once elected, the RCM looks upon electoralism in the context of "permanent opposition". "A socialist government in capitalist society is still, in effect, an opposition, (especially) a socialist municipal party".² The fighting of elections, as the RCM noted, is part of a fundamental struggle for mobilizing the population.³ Hence also its commitment to neighbourhood councils. The party program begins with a declaration spelling out its long-term vision of the role of neighbourhood councils as part of its conception of both the achievement and practice of socialism:

An RCM administration will... have to operate within a capitalist society in which the housing market is controlled by the corporations. Without the elimination of that control and its replacement through a socialist society in which the workers will control the production and distribution of housing, no full resolution of this problem is possible....

¹ See, "La Station Namur est à ajouter à la liste des pires erreurs qui détrivoirent la ville, soutient le RCM", Le Devoir, August 10, 1977, p. 5.
² Schecter, op. cit., p. 34. Schecter was vice-president of the RCM in 1975-76.
³ This is the central point of the 1977 RCM position on elections.
The fact that one is in office... does not necessarily mean that he or she is less circumscribed by the power exercised by the corporations at that level. On the contrary, any concrete accomplishments will require building popular strength at the base sufficient to force capitalist governments to take action in our interests. Moreover, such political strength at the base is surely essential as a lever with which an RCM administration could challenge the other levels of government and the large corporations they represent. How could an RCM government freeze rents, bring free public transit, etc., without facing these interests: and how could it win such reforms without the support of hundreds of thousands of militant citizens acting through their own political institutions? This is why we cannot be content to bring in the political reforms outlined in this program at the governmental level without working at the same time to establish the instruments of popular power.

From this perspective, we see neighbourhood councils as the organizational instruments through which the citizens shall be able to build new forms of genuinely democratic power. Born of the struggle of citizens against the deformation of urban life, these neighbourhood councils will bring together the politicized citizens and increasingly enable them to resist the forms in which capital is transforming their neighbourhoods....

Thus, for example, neighbourhood councils, through control over the permits required to undertake any development project, will begin to control the use of land in the community.... In this way citizens will acquire a taste for and experience in the democratic management of their city, and this will replace the present control exercised by capital.

The neighbourhood council must never become simply another level of government within capitalist society. It must rather become a powerful alternative to the present state at all levels. That is why a neighbourhood council must never be imposed from above.... The task of the party and of an RCM government will rather be to aid in its creation within the community by mobilizing citizens through their struggles and by using the... resources of City Hall. An RCM government will aid not only in their creation but will also... transfer to them the necessary powers needed to enable them to construct a political force for community neighbourhood control. Let us take for example the case of transport. An RCM government will bring in certain policies to improve public transport; nevertheless, it will not change the fact that GM, Ford, Chrysler, and so on control the production of the means of public transport and have therefore the power to determine the forms of transport policies of governments as well as 'development' in cities and regions. Because of this, an important action element of an RCM government will also be to aid citizens in combating such restrictions over a long term, by giving them the power to resist the manner in which the large corporations such as GM determine the development of their city through control of automobile production.
An RCM government will, for example, transfer to neighbourhood councils the power to close streets. Of course, this will not affect the control of GM over transport, but it will set in motion a process which one day, could lead to it and in the meantime will permit the citizens to have greater control over their urban existence. This process might eventually include setting up co-operatives to produce public transport equipment under the authority and ownership of neighbourhood councils.

Ultimately, struggles are all the same, and the RCM will have to be present in all of them, both globally and locally: in struggles against the wage freeze, in tenant struggles, in teacher struggles, in the struggles of the residents of the street, and in the struggles of factory workers. The organizational point where all these links could be forged is the neighbourhood council.  

It is sentiments such as these that begin to spell out the basis for what might be called participationist socialism, and which serve to distinguish this potential "third force" from the technocratic PQ establishment to its right, and the Marxist-Leninists to its (presumed) left. Early chapters provided the framework for the emergence of an important group in contemporary Quebec harbouring participationist socialist ideas; later chapters illustrated its existence but also its limitations.

The experience of the RCM, not only its electoral accomplishments in Montreal politics but its wider success in linking up with individuals and groups sharing a similar perspective in other cities and regions, in the trade unions, popular groups, and the PQ around an increasingly clear statement of the principles of participationist socialism based on concrete lived political experience, will indicate to what extent these limitations may be overcome. Some encouraging signs may be seen in the growth of RCM-style opposition movements in several cities, notably Quebec, with the recent rise of the Rassemblement populaire de Québec (RPQ). Although the RPQ failed to win a seat on Quebec City's municipal council in the November 1977 elections, better than twenty percent of the popular vote manifested the movement's rootedness, especially in several working class districts. But this is only one scene within a wider and far more long-term project. There are some very important events lying just ahead, and their outcome will affect the course of Quebec's development now and in the long range.

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1 From the RCM program revised summer 1977, pp. 2-4. (Author's translation.)
EPILOGUE: QUEBEC AND CANADIAN UNITY

English Canadians and Quebec

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No analytical work on contemporary Quebec politics can disregard the questions posed by Canada's ongoing "national unity debate". This book is no exception, although it enters this controversy only briefly, and with some reluctance. For one thing, a certain superficiality is unavoidable when speculating at this level; for another, any such speculations risk becoming dated even before publication. Moreover, to say the least, the subject is somewhat over-worked these days. Every day, it seems, political commentators, politicians of all stripes and "ordinary citizens" in newspaper letters to the editor are speaking out on the national unity question. One can hardly glance at a magazine or consult the weekly TV listings without finding another "in-depth" treatment of the question. In fact, a magazine is now regularly published on the national unity issue alone. And just recently in mid-November 1977, the press and electronic media ran feature upon feature on the topic of "Quebec: One Year After...". Can there remain anything still to be said?

The answer is yes: insofar as the analysis provided in these many pages is valid and in any way original, we ought to be able to contribute something by shedding a little new light on such recurring questions as the meaning of the referendum and the prospects for constitutional reform. But we claim no academic distance from the subject. There are important decisions to be taken straight away, and the stakes are high. These remarks are cast principally as a plea to English Canadians – and especially those among them who regard themselves as progressive – to retain a concrete historical perspective when forming their position on the Quebec/n

To ask English Canadians to approach Quebec independence with an open mind is no little thing. For most English Canadians, the present situation is fraught with contradictory emotions. Apart from a generally heightened interest in the Quebec question, two somewhat conflicting reactions have greeted recent events. The first is a growing fearfulness and anxiety about the future; the second is a hesitant but nevertheless genuine new openness toward the aspirations of the Quebecois. While this latter attitude gives some grounds for hope, it appears for the most part misdirected. To have the openness necessary to focus on the real content of Quebec aspirations rather than remain limited to naive gestures – such as willingness to learn French in Calgary – English Canadians must directly confront the sources of the attending anxiety.

Two separate phenomena appear to account in large part for English-Canadian anxiety. The first is a general feeling of gloom about Canada's economic prospects, a pessimism generated by the shakiness of monopoly capitalist institutions, and the resulting defensiveness against any disturbance that threatens the "economic climate". This sentiment is articulated most explicitly by vested interests that inevitably raise the spectre of economic instability when their position is threatened. Spokesmen for these interests in politics, business, and the media have, not unexpectedly, shown an almost obsessive preoccupation with the present "economic uncertainty" and with the "economic costs" of Quebec independence. Unfortunately, this preoccupation is widely shared by the mass of English Canadians who, ultimately, do not share these interests. There is indeed a possibility of societal instability, but that fact constitutes no argument against change: all change of any significance contains an element of risk. Obviously, the risks must be weighed carefully in one's assessment of the situation, but a generalized anxiety over the uncertainty is in fact an obstacle to just such an assessment.

The second form of anxiety is more profound. It is a kind of formless dread that the existence of Canada, and therefore the continuity of the community, of the way of life, and of all the things held dear is in grave danger. Again, powerful sentiment stands in the way of rational evaluation. Indeed, an independent Canadian community will be preserved if the desire for it among English Canadians remains strong and is channelled in positive directions; such strong feelings will ensure its existence much more than the retention of Quebec inside its territory. And however strong one's feelings, a sovereign Quebec will leave the Rockies standing, the Great Lakes flowing, the Maple Leaf flying, the wheat growing, and the mounties saluting (not to mention breaking and entering, opening mail...). Even the most powerful image of all, that of territorial integrity ruptured by the physical separation of the Atlantic provinces from the "mainland" is exaggerated. For one thing, the development of modern transportation and communication systems mean that physical proximity is no longer imperative, as the example of Alaska demonstrates. For another, there is no reason why a corridor
between Ontario and New Brunswick permitting the unrestricted movement of people and goods through Quebec could not be one element of a settlement.

But the fear of any challenge to the status quo persists and inhibits Canadians from confronting some of the most basic issues at stake, from "thinking the unthinkable". For example, no one ever seems to ask exactly what would be the effects of a sovereign Quebec upon Canada. Is it in fact so bleak a prospect? If English-Canadian openness were directed beyond asking "what does Quebec want?" to posing squarely the question of whether ordinary English Canadians really have so much to defend in the present federal set-up, an initial step might be to view the status quo from a critical perspective through the following interrogation. Could it not be that when a nation's political institutions, patterns of political behaviour, and even attitudes are formed as constituent elements in a quasi-colonial relationship between that nation and another, the structural consequences of that relationship are as potentially damaging in their effect upon the descendants of the colonizer as upon those of the colonized? This would seem particularly likely when, as is the case with (English) Canada as compared with Quebec, the national identity of the latter is in fact more secure. Surely the very weakness of Canada's central government vis-à-vis the provinces and the fact that the only compromises at present conceived by defenders of the status quo are further steps toward decentralization eloquently testify to this fact.

But the over-decentralization of Canada is but the tip of the iceberg. It would not be difficult to link this quasi-colonial structure - which in Chapter Four was termed "consociational" – with a series of profound weaknesses in the socio-political make-up of Canada including: the persistence of region - and ethnic-based inequality, pronounced passivity and disinterest in federal politics, a rather casual attitude toward civil liberties, and the widespread tendency to delegate political responsibility to civil servants. Nor would it be difficult to link many of these factors in turn with Canada's inability to challenge or even confront its own domination by American capital and culture. To demonstrate each of these is beyond the scope of a work on Quebec politics, though the logical link should be evident in the argument presented in earlier chapters. If, as is sometimes said, the crisis of confederation does indeed provide Canadians with a rare opportunity to examine their political system in depth, then perhaps some will take this opportunity to explore and assess these flaws and investigate their causes.

Such an investigation might start with the federal party system. A poorly kept secret of Canadian political history is the fact that, with rare exceptions, the party that wins Quebec rules Canada. This was the case with the Conservatives in the early years and with the Liberals since. Such an arrangement has well suited the existing elites – the English-speaking bourgeoisie and the French-speaking traditional professionals. But did the people of Canada benefit any more than the Quebecois? When Canadians go to the polls to choose the federal government their practical choice lies between two moderately pro-business parties whose
policies are, for all intents and purposes, indistinguishable. These two parties, the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives, differed little even when first organized in the nineteenth century, a time when the terms liberal and conservative were distinct, being associated with the ideological positions of two separate social classes. Before long, these two classes, one based on land, the other on capital, spurred on by the threat of a rising industrial working class, joined forces and, in most Western societies, lined up behind the single Liberal/Conservative political formation they saw as most electorally viable against the labour-oriented party then emerging on the scene. But not here. Canada remains fixated on a nineteenth-century party system. Is this fixation not the result of the Canadian federal parties' ability to associate themselves, however implicitly, with the consociational status quo, for the present-day Liberals to appeal to "French power in Ottawa", and the Conservatives to stand for holding it in check? The greater national consciousness of Quebec thus accounts for the dominance of the "Quebec party", both because of Quebeckers' ability to concentrate their votes, and to the perceived need, on occasion, to elect governments capable of appeasing Quebec.

There appears little reason to expect any change in this situation short of a resolution of the Quebec question. After all, a "crisis of Confederation" will always arise or can always be induced to reaffirm existing patterns. A concrete example lies in the vagaries of popular support for the Trudeau Liberals in 1976. Early in the year, popular support had fallen to a low of 29 percent linked very much to an anti-French Canadian and anti-bilingualism backlash. After November 15, Liberal support quickly rose to 51 percent – after all that party was easily able to portray itself and its leader as the guarantor of Canadian unity. But let there be no mistake about it, the resentment against the "French-Canadian arrogance" represented by the Trudeau Liberals did not evaporate; it remains beneath the surface. When the air has cleared and the time is right, it will surely be evoked again.

But can ordinary Canadians afford the luxury of these constant federal-provincial economic quarrels, constitutional conferences, and bilingualism-biculturalism controversies? Especially when they are faced with the reality of fundamental national decisions that must be taken concerning the power of the multinational corporations, energy policy, the environment – all in the context of the difficult economic times ahead.

Consider the question of energy consumption. Canadian society is rapidly depleting its fuel reserves, and harnessing the required amounts of power to maintain present consumption levels into the future risks destroying the remaining environment and/or inviting nuclear catastrophe. Yet the problem is not insoluble; much present consumption is inefficient and wasteful, and can be eliminated through a concerted effort to alter patterns and priorities in energy production and utilization. But under the prevailing system even a reassessment of fundamental priorities is impossible. With no cohesive popular force to contend with, private
corporate interests predominate; and energy policy is determined on the basis of current corporate profits rather than long-term human needs. The fact that Canadian energy production is dominated by American corporations adds a further and typical problematic element to the situation.

The transformation of the party system in Canada to one in which the fundamental democratic struggle is between a party of the Right, be it the Liberals or Conservatives, and a labour-based party of the Left, be it the NDP or a new formation, is surely a prerequisite for any real hope of even addressing these problems directly, let alone overcoming the class-based economic forces at their origin. The requisite national consciousness and determination can only come through the replacement of consociational posturing with the establishment of class-based politics. Political experience at the provincial level indicates that under appropriate conditions a class-based system is natural and feasible. But such conditions are absent from federal politics. "Unity... will be assured", suggests Gad Horowitz, "when a powerful party of the left operates at the center rather than the periphery of our political power structure. Such a party will emerge only if the regionally and ethnically segregated victims of our society can be united by a set of common ideals and symbols based on class". Indeed – but what of the obstacles to class politics inherent in our present consociational structure?

The point of this line of argument is not to convince English Canadians to work for Quebec independence. This is a decision to be taken by the Quebecois. Nevertheless, the response of English Canadians during the process of decision is vital, not so much for its effect on the final outcome, as for the manner in which the decision will be taken and implemented. We have suggested that it is perfectly rational for ordinary English Canadians to be at least open-minded on the entire question, rather than reacting emotionally in an a-priori "Quebec independentism is treason" fashion. An open-minded and realistic assessment of the present situation concerning Quebec and Canadian unity would have to incorporate certain elements. These elements emerge most clearly if we consider and compare the main scenarios of upcoming events as they have been portrayed.

Three Scenarios

Though reference is sometimes made to a "reformed" federalism, the central assumption, of the first scenario is that the solution to the "Quebec problem" lies within the present set-up consisting of ten provinces with equal powers and one central government. This outcome will be guaranteed by a series of events, perhaps beginning with a "Save Canada" mandate being sought and won in a 1978 federal

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election. Next, it is assumed that the "Canada option" would resoundingly win in the Quebec referendum, bringing with it the resignation and/or defeat of the PQ government. The new federalist-oriented government in Quebec would be mandated to consent to "repatriating" the Canadian constitution in return for a few additional powers and sources of revenue for the provinces. The issue would thus be resolved and national unity preserved.

Such a scenario, however comforting, must be rejected as wishful thinking. First, it is inaccurate in terms of everything we know of the attitudes of Quebecers and the intentions of the present government. It is clear that the referendum will pose the question of "sovereignty-association" and not that of outright independence. And, while outright independence has consistently received the support of slightly less than 20 percent of Quebecers, this figure doubles among those expressing an opinion when the question is one of sovereignty-association, and, depending on the wording of the question, may be as high as 50 percent. The fluidity of opinion on this question and the persistence of an undecided group of 15 to 20 percent mean that the outcome of the referendum is by no means certain, though the odds currently favour a narrow defeat for the proposal. Furthermore, support for the PQ government has remained solid during its first fifteen months in office. Voter preference has consistently placed the PQ well ahead. In most of the polls, the number of PQ sympathisers exceeded the sum total of those of all other parties. Unless something occurs to change deep-rooted attitudes, there is no reason to expect the "Quebec problem" or the PQ to go away.

The only possibility for such a change lies in the wholesale cooptation of the social stratum that articulates the specific content, and mobilizes support for the present thrust, of Quebec nationalism – the state middle class. We have already noted that this was to some extent the purpose of the "French power in Ottawa" and the "bilingualism and biculturalism" emphasis in federal policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and have also noted that it failed to work. One particularly relevant example of this failure were PQ victories in the 1976 Quebec election in the two ridings which are closest to, and comprise the main French-speaking suburbs of Ottawa. These ridings had become increasingly populated by families of francophone middle-level civil servants recruited by the federal government. The vote should thus be seen here for what it was – a painful bite out of the hand that feeds. Another example emerged in revelations by RCMP witnesses before the McDonald Commission in late 1977 that not only provincial but also some federal

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1 Major polls on this question are conducted regularly. The usual interval between them seems to be three months or less. Among those in 1977 we find: (1) a wide attitudinal survey published in the Toronto Star in mid-May; (2) a poll of a "barometric" Quebec district (reported in Le Devoir on July 18th); (3) a poll conducted for Reader's Digest and published in its October issue; (4) a poll conducted for the CBC program 90 Minutes Live (reported in Le Devoir on November 11); and (5) a survey commissioned by Radio-Canada (reported in the Montreal Star on November 16).
civil servants, several of them highly placed, systematically leaked information to the Parti québécois. Is this not a case of adding injury to insult to the "French power in Ottawa" strategy?

On the whole, it seems clear that the consociational bargain has been stretched close to its limit by the various policies of the Trudeau government. Especially given that the fiscal difficulties of the state have forced hiring freezes and cutbacks on the federal government, there is little more that can be done to entice the Quebecois state middle class to Ottawa, certainly not without provoking an even greater English-Canadian backlash than witnessed in 1975-1976.

Another possibility for co-optation lies in the economic sphere. The francophone state middle class is small enough to make it conceivable that substantial elements be co-opted into the corporate hierarchy. Such a strategy would necessitate a united and determined effort on the part of the owners and directors of Anglo-Canadian/American corporations rapidly to bring large numbers of educated new middle-class Quebecois into managerial and professional positions, and a willingness to shoulder the resultant dislocations in personnel and profitability. Implied in such an effort is a total capitulation on the question of language, and a wholesale transformation in the mores and cultural patterns of business operations. While there is evidence of some increased hiring of francophones in English-speaking corporations, their sum total does not even approach the kind of monumental effort required. The almost unanimously antagonistic reaction of English-speaking business in Quebec to the Charter of the French language indicates that such a strategy, however consistent it might be with the long-term interest of the bourgeoisie, goes very much against the grain and is not a practical possibility.

From the above, it is clear that the Quebec new middle class will remain concentrated in and around the Quebec state, and continue to articulate and propagate the goals of positive nationalism. Hence the rejection of the sovereignty-association option in the first referendum, unless it is unexpectedly decisive, would leave the situation virtually unchanged.

A second scenario poses a very different set of circumstances. If the first scenario assumes the retention of the present arrangement, the second raises the possibility of dramatic changes. The precipitating factor here would be a sudden severe flight of capital from Quebec – a capital strike by the financiers and industrialists, perhaps with the tacit support of the federal cabinet – to force the hand of the PQ government. The government would, presumably, capitulate, giving up its aspirations for a sovereign French Quebec in order to avoid economic collapse. Of course, a second variation emerges as a distinct possibility here, namely of a counter-attack on the part of the Quebec government through a public campaign and emergency legislation giving it control of key sectors of the economy in order to stop the outflow of capital. Such bold measures might very
well win wide popular support, rallying the people behind the government's determination to defend national honour in the face of blackmail by external forces. The trade unions, in particular, would surely mobilize their membership in support.

This second scenario raises a whole series of intangibles that are impossible to analyse in any systematic or useful manner. For example, nationalisation on a large scale as envisaged here might provoke American and/or Canadian military intervention. Precisely because this scenario assumes external agents precipitating a revolutionary turn of events that is premature given the stage of Quebec's political development, any attempt to predict its consequences can only be futile.

Nevertheless, this second scenario cannot be ruled out entirely. Given the risk of precipitating a "Cuba on the St. Lawrence", one might presume the members of the economic establishment capable of comprehending their own long-term self-interest to lie in avoiding such an eventuality by taking the necessary steps to restrain rather than intensify the present limited but real flight of capital from Quebec. However, this presumption becomes unwarranted if it turns out that they are incapable of diagnosing the situation correctly, assuming instead, for example, that the PQ government is itself intent on a revolutionary course. This was the implicit message in the Fortune magazine story on Quebec in its October 1977 issue. The magazine's Quebec correspondent, Hebert Meyer, spoke of the "hideous fears among Canadian businessmen", and implied that it was the intention of the Quebec government to court such fears. "Radical political change is always more saleable to voters, and therefore easier to achieve, in time of economic trouble.... And radical political change is the consuming goal of Lévesque and his advisers". And businessmen cannot but take notice when as usually reliable a source as Fortune makes such allegations.

The January 1978 announcement by the Sun Life Insurance Company of its intention to move its head office and up to 1,500 employees from Montreal to Toronto and the reactions and controversy this decision provoked provide a very good illustration of underlying attitudes. The announcement was greeted with alarm and disappointment not only by the Quebec government but also in the Montreal business establishment and the federal cabinet. Richard Holden, a corporate lawyer in Montreal with political and economic connections at the highest levels immediately initiated a well-publicized campaign to organize company policy-holders; to force the board of directors to reverse its stand, and other business leaders publicly deplored Sun Life's decision. This public criticism combined with pressure from the federal cabinet succeeded in winning a reprieve. Sun Life put off its decision for a three-month period of reconsideration.

The adverse reaction was aimed not at the fact that Sun Life was planning to take money and jobs out of the province; after all, this has become standard practice among many companies. (Other firms, however, have been going about
these activities quietly and more slowly.) Sun Life had provoked a public confrontation with the Quebec government, blaming its language policies for making the move necessary. And Sun Life is no ordinary company. It is old, established, and large, one of the pivots of English Canadian business in Quebec; even its building in Dominion Square is an important symbol. When it came right down to it, the corporate establishment and its allies in the federal cabinet simply did not want a direct confrontation.

Hence, all things considered, it seems fair to suppose that while the business leaders of Quebec lack the foresight to take the needed radical measures to co-opt the francophone new middle class, and thereby "save confederation", they are not so lacking in foresight as to risk triggering a revolutionary scenario through a capital strike. If this is indeed the case, then a third scenario falling somewhere in between, one which envisages the realization of "sovereignty-association", emerges as the most likely. Concretely, this scenario unfolds as follows: the 1979 referendum will pose the question of sovereignty-association and will result either in a victory for the Oui-forces or, more likely, in a defeat narrow enough to allow the PQ to seek a further mandate. In the next or even a subsequent election and/or a second (or even third) referendum, a mandate would be won to initiate the process of establishing a sovereign Quebec in a Canada-wide economic association.

The exact configuration of this scenario hinges on the meaning of sovereignty-association, and the response of English Canada to such a prise de position by Quebec. Critics of the Parti québécois have frequently contended that the idea of sovereignty-association is vague and ambiguous. This is not the case, though it is true that in its first year in office the PQ made few attempts to explain its content, and that there therefore remains a great deal of misunderstanding surrounding this notion. One hears a lot of talk about economics, but little about the fundamental political principle that is at the base of sovereignty-association. This principle effectively states: that only the Quebec government is to be elected by and to speak in the name of the Quebeccois. A second, "Confederal", tier is envisaged as well, but its Quebec members will be delegated by and responsible to the Quebec government. Once this primary principle has been established, a whole series of mutually agreed-upon powers in such fields as transportation, customs, monetary policy, and environment would be delegated on a continuing basis to the "confederal" assembly by Quebec and by Canada (and/or Canada's constituent units).

The many pages written on this subject have almost invariably dealt only with aspects of this second element, the economics of monetary and customs union and the like, without even raising the prior question, namely: what is to be Canada's response to the assertion of the central principle of political sovereignty? Yet Canada's response on this primary question will indubitably have repercussions on the course of events. If the Canadian position were to be one of standing fast in the
face of Quebec's choosing sovereignty-association and refusing to enter serious negotiations, then the Quebec government would surely, and perfectly justifiably, return to the people of Quebec with words to the effect that since the Canadians had rejected the moderate course of sovereignty-association, there was no choice left but to move toward total and unilateral independence. And there is no reason to be confident that such an appeal would fall on deaf ears. The undeniably serious dislocations of total separation might very possibly be accepted in Quebec as the price to be paid for securing the national destiny against economic blackmail.

English Canadians genuinely seeking accommodation, as well as a number of Liberals and Union nationale spokesmen in Quebec trying to find a middle ground on which to stand, are currently (re)discovering the idea of a "special status" for Quebec in the Canadian confederation. On the whole, this represents a step forward, but proponents of special status have generally failed to spell out the implications of this option. Given that several provinces, including Quebec, are already technically distinct under specific clauses in the constitution, to be meaningful in the present context, special status for Quebec could only be such as to render Quebec's constitutional position fundamentally and unmistakably different from those of the (other) provinces. With regard to a number of basic powers, Quebec would be the equal not of the nine provinces but, effectively, of the federal government. This is because any arrangement concerning their exercise would require not federal-provincial but rather bilateral (binational) Quebec-Canada ententes – as well as give rise to an administrative apparatus structured along binational lines.

In the end, special status poses, in a different way and in terms more acceptable to "moderate" sentiments, very much the same questions as sovereignty-association – including, one would sooner or later expect, the issue of Quebec's direct representation in the federal parliament.

**A Sovereign Quebec?**

Commentaries abound on the supposed net financial benefit federalism has brought to Quebec. Rather less careful consideration is usually given to the political reality surrounding a possible tariff barrier along the Quebec Ontario border – except for the usual knowing references to Quebec's dependence on selling textiles, clothing, and leather goods to the rest of Canada. The equally serious dislocation this would cause to Ontario's heavy industries based on automobiles and electric appliances is mentioned far less frequently.

This failure to take the national unity question to its logical extreme in this direction is not surprising. Leading English-Canadian political figures still cling to the first, or federalist, scenario; they for the most part shout out "no way"! In chorus when queried on an eventual association with a sovereign Quebec. After
all, they are loath to provide ammunition to the proponents of Quebec independence in the upcoming referendum debate. Yet even here, there seems to be some flexibility developing on the part of the premiers of the Atlantic provinces. While some additional signs of flexibility may materialize before the referendum, a general response of intransigence in the Canadian political establishment is likely to remain the rule. This prospect is disappointing but, in the long term, not all that worrisome. It is not likely to have a significant effect on the outcome of the referendum. While some votes may be lost owing to the absence of a promise of economic co-operation on the part of Canada, they are likely to be relatively few in number and may be partially offset by a well-co-ordinated government appeal to Quebecers to stand firm rather than allow themselves to be frightened into a decision. This is exactly what René Lévesque succeeded in doing in the 1976 election campaign, turning Robert Bourassa's warnings of impending catastrophe in the case of PQ victory to his advantage.

Insofar as the long-term reaction of English Canada is concerned, present intransigence may drastically recede in the face of a solid, even if not majoritarian, pro-sovereignty vote in the referendum. It is a general fact that once a new stage is reached for all to see, people tend to accommodate themselves so as to best safeguard their interests under the changed circumstances. Until November 15 1976, a PQ government was inconceivable to English Canadians; once it materialized, almost everyone found their way of rationalizing and coming to live with the new reality with a minimum of inconvenience. The same should hold true in the event of the people opting for sovereignty-association.

Of course, the going will not be easy. The federal Liberals stand to lose a great deal in partisan terms, as the disappearance of the seventy-five-odd Quebec federal seats would deprive them of their political base. If, as might be expected, Canadian federal politics would then move toward a class-based system, it would likely be the Liberals who would be slated for replacement by the NDP. Hence, we may expect the federal government, if the Liberals are still in office, to be especially hard-nosed.

Another significant obstacle to a realistic sensitivity in English Canada, lies in the general attitude of English-speaking Quebecers, since, like the federal Liberals they largely support, they too feel they have a great deal to lose. Rather than utilizing their position halfway between Quebec and English Canada to foster dialogue between them based on a practical assessment of the position of each, they have been very much caught up in denying that which is right before their eyes. Quebec anglophones, often misled by their "leaders" in business and by the English-language press, seem to have reacted to the situation in Quebec as if it

* It was quite remarkable, really, how English Quebec's "leaders", who on November 15 had been rallying their forces to defeat the "separatist threat," discovered on November 16 that in fact the people of Quebec had merely endorsed "good government".
were a hijacking, with a small group of "extremists" somehow having seized power (René Lévesque is often seen as a kind of Patricia Hearst figure from this perspective, a hostage or unsuspecting dupe). The emotional reaction of the Quebec English against the Charter of the French Language, which does not seriously affect either their schools or their economic interests, bears this out. Instead of accepting the new reality and attempting to adjust to it, many Quebec anglophones show signs of growing impatience, frustration, and anger. This "rejectionism" is dominant in the letters to the editor section of the Montreal Star, the Gazette, and the English-language weeklies. A climate has thus set in, in which patent nonsense, such as the analogy of the PQ with Nazism, becomes credible, and political realism becomes treason.

In spite of all this, the pressure to adjust to the new reality – once an assertion by the Quebec people makes it undeniable – should be intense enough to win out. Ontario, after all, would certainly not lack clout in the rest of the country and with the federal government. Assuming that the various regions do not choose to seek annexation to the United States, which is one of those intangibles that seem unlikely but cannot be foretold, we may anticipate, after much soul-searching, English Canada is proceeding to work out terms for a new relationship with Quebec and moving toward certain significant internal adjustments. These adjustments might include, for example, the unification of the Atlantic provinces and the relocation of the capital from Ottawa to a more central location such as Winnipeg.

Even the attitudes of English Quebecers may change. There is already some indication that not all are caught up in the present rejectionism. A fall 1977 poll found 38 percent of allophones (speakers of languages other than English or French) and 22 percent of anglophones to favour the "hated" language charter, Bill 101.1 If this reality were to penetrate to the leaders of opinion in English Quebec, the role to be played by English Quebecers in the long-term process of accommodation and in the evolution of the new Quebec could be an especially vital one. And such an eventuality cannot be ruled out. If one lesson is to be drawn from our account of recent historical evolution in Quebec (and there's no reason for it to apply only to francophone Quebecois), it is this: that which is utopian, impractical, and inconceivable today may tomorrow be possible and the next day obvious. Alternatives must be seen within the context of existing realities, but the political choice made at one point in time results in actions that transform that context, so that the choice made at a subsequent point in the new context may very well have been inconceivable at the earlier stage. As already noted, not long ago the coming to office of a party committed to Quebec independence appeared an unrealizable dream; it then became a possibility; now it's a fact.

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1 This was one of the findings of the Radio-Canada poll. Ibid.
Changes in attitude of this kind reflect more profound structural changes. In this book, we have attempted to demonstrate and explain the logic of these changes in our analysis of the dynamic of class, nation, and state through the evolution of Quebec politics. While nothing is certain, while structural changes only create preconditions making certain developments possible rather than predetermining their specific nature, they at the very least oblige all observers, including English Canadians, and especially English Canadians calling themselves progressive, to address themselves directly to them. Is it so inconceivable that by the mid-1980's Canada will have been transformed into a true confederation in which the Quebec nation enjoys an unquestioned sovereign status?

The unwillingness of the present federal government and the rest of the Canadian political establishment even to raise this question at present has already been explained. Less explicable is the temerity and me-tooism of the New Democrats. Its all very well and good to say "the problem is economic: solve unemployment and independentism will vanish". Unfortunately, it is neither true nor likely to have much effect; but merely a rather transparent effort at dodging the issue. One can only assume that the NDP has come to such a position either out of a false and very short-term electoralism or out of the unthinking "defence of Canada" mentality described earlier. This is unfortunate. An unequivocal stand by the NDP in favour of Quebec's existence as a nation and its unassailable right to decide its own future when and how it wishes would not only contribute toward prospects of eventual accommodation but also, potentially, help move Canada in the ultimate direction of a two-party system oriented toward social class—something presumably fundamental to the NDP's basic party stance. The attitude of trade unionists in English Canada has been similar, though greater attention and flexibility toward Quebec is in evidence. Few unions, however (a notable exception being the Canadian Union of Public Employees [CUPE]), have yet publicly endorsed Quebec self-determination.

The reaction of those to the left of the NDP in Canada has been by and large disappointing. Unencumbered by any emotional or other commitment to the national status quo, they might have been expected to take a forthright position on the question. This has seldom been the case. Few Left organizations or publications have bothered to make support of self-determination a matter of significant public record; fewer still have seen fit to denounce those Canadian politicians who seek to inhibit the process of self-determination by ruling out in advance even the possibility of association. And the lip service paid to self-determination for Quebec is normally coupled with a facile dismissal of the present primary instrument of self-determination, the Parti Québécois, as "petit bourgeois". This too is taking the easy way out. Of course, it is true that sovereignty-association is mere constitutional tinkering and ignores almost entirely the underlying and more fundamental questions of economic exploitation and domination by multinational corporations. But so what? No one has even begun to show how, in Canada as well as Quebec, to go about concretely placing these and
other more profound class-oriented questions on the agenda without passing through this stage.

The Canadian Left has mounted a powerful intellectual critique of the reformism of the NDP and its allies in the trade union leadership. Unfortunately, most workers in English Canada do not define themselves politically in class terms even to the extent of looking to the NDP for representation in the first place. Without in any way committing themselves to support the NDP or its limited reformism, the Canadian Left might surely consider helping create a set of circumstances which would make the rank and file of the trade unions more disposed to seeking out and supporting a class-oriented labour party, however moderate. At least the workers would then be brought into a political arena where the Left's criticisms of this labour party and its orientation could be given some kind of hearing. When regarded in this manner as a potential step toward replacing consociational with class politics in Canada Quebec self-determination merits the Canadian Left's unequivocal support.

We have already given a similar argument concerning Quebec, though the evolutionary process is clearly more advanced there. It seems evident that the state middle class continues to be essentially united over its goal of a sovereign French Quebec. As long as that goal remains frustrated, political debate will be skewed in its direction. Once the goal is achieved, we may not unreasonably expect that institutions under state middle class influence will increasingly come to be split along more fundamental class lines. Quebec politics would enter a new state with, on one side, the technocratic wing of the PQ working more closely with some Liberals and other establishment elements oriented toward the newly attained status quo, and, on the other, "participationist" elements within the PQ joining forces with various (non M-L) left groups in the trade unions, at the municipal level, in citizens' groups, and the like. This latter formation would take the form of an electoral alliance or perhaps some other form of association to carry the struggle to the next stage – a stage that will more directly pose the social question: who is to control the material existence of the working people of Quebec, they themselves, or a small dominant class?

**A Final Note**

The above summary of the national unity question may, to some, seem harsh and callous. So be it. Through the course of this analysis, we have undoubtedly offended not only supporters of the political and economic status quo, but also many who wish to change it radically. The very notion of stages of political development offends many socialists in Canada and Quebec who prefer to merely allude to a far-off revolution and in the meantime simply to denounce the reformist tendencies around them, thus effectively side-stepping the hard strategic question of just what is possible in the present context. The perspective herein has been a
critical Marxist one, but it has taken the existing situation for what it is, rather than selecting only those aspects that we, the left-leaning intellectuals who ourselves have some part to play in the situation we describe, would prefer to see.

If one lesson springs out of the political experience of this writer, it is this. Socialists, like all serious political actors, must not give in to the inclination to boost morale and build up organizational strength by ignoring hard and unpleasant aspects of the real world around them. The long-term cost of building a strategy upon distortion can only be negative. Either the suppressed reality will impose itself and the strategy will fail, or the suppression of that reality will itself become the raison-d’être of the movement and will become inherent in the "new" society it is struggling to build. The history of socialists in power in the East and of gauchiste activities in the West is replete with examples of this.

For those of us seeking to transform our society, just as for those simply trying to understand it, nothing is gained through creating and spreading myths – however nice-sounding. The opposite is the case. Especially with all the often-superficial attention given to Quebec these days, the debunking of some of the myths surrounding its politics can only be salutary for all concerned.
SELECTED READINGS

This list is arranged along major topic lines. It is restricted to books fairly readily available to most readers. A list of several comprehensive bibliographies is included which the enterprising reader should utilize as a supplement—especially for articles. In addition, there are listings of anthologies and major periodicals where useful articles have appeared.

Sociological and Philosophical Treatments


Historical Works


**The Economy, Social Classes, and the Trade Union Movement**


**Political Parties, Political Movements**


**Language and Culture**


**Bibliographies**


**Anthologies**


**Magazines and Periodicals**

Canadian Dimension  
Canadian Forum  
Canadian Journal of Political Science  
Cité libre  
Chroniques  
Journal of Canadian Studies  
Last Post  
L'Action nationale  
Le Travail  
Maintenant  
Mobilization  
Our Generation  
Parti pris  
Possibles  
Recherches sociographiques  
Relations  
Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique du Nord  
Socialisme (québécois)  
Sociologie et sociétés Solidaire  
This Magazine