

Political Scumbag Kicks Off

Fifth Estate Collective

1988

FE Note: The leaflet reproduced on this page was issued following the death late last year of Quebecois nationalist politician and ex-premier of the province, Rene Levesque. It was posted in several locations in Montreal, including Cafe Commune/Comun, a libertarian, worker-run restaurant and gathering place for leftists, as well as anti-authoritarians. Apparently nationalism runs high even in places where one would least expect it, and the leaflet was torn down by persons unknown. Two meetings were held at the Cafe during which the author was asked to explain his motives for publishing rather than to ask who had taken it upon themselves to become the official political censor of the Cafe. As of this writing, the question remains unresolved.

The tears have dried and the media circus winds down—as good a time as any to step back and take a second look at the career of Rene Levesque. The question, of course, was never whether Levesque was sympathique. Whatever their ideology, the ability of politicians to seduce us is simply yet another example of the emotional impoverishment that permits their existence: if we were really alive, we would live without them.

Levesque, the media inform us, incarnated a vision. But there is nothing visionary about forming a state (a system of domination). As Fredy Perlman points out, “Nationalism is the opposite of imperialism only in the realm of definitions. In practice, nationalism is a methodology for conducting the empire of capital.” A new elite emerges and pushes out the old. “Our” bosses replace “their” bosses. And the misery of daily life goes on. As the ravages inflicted upon community by industrial capitalism continue to increase, nationalists have only false communities (states) to offer.

The left and right wings of national liberation movements are simply expressions of the left and right of capitalism. Nowhere here are the state, money, work and industrial civilization—the pillars of modern domination—questioned and rejected. At the extremes of this ideology one finds the various national socialisms (Castro, Hitler, Mao, etc.) or nationalisms without pretensions of socialism (Pinochet’s Chile). In between is everyone who, as Perlman says, “wields or aspires to wield a portion of capital.” If the more pedestrian Parti Quebecois’ left/right coalition eventually blew apart, a regrouping of sorts seems to be taking place around L’Aut’ Journal (20,000 copies/issue), where FMLN press releases bump against full-page articles by the president of the ultra-reactionary Societe Saint Jean-Baptiste. Left or right, cultural/political vanguards never seem to know their place—the garbage dump of history.

Ironically, nothing is more deadly to culture and community than the alienated, rapidly industrializing model championed by Levesque and the Parti Quebecois. As the myth of progress crumbles, though, it is more and more apparent that humans are no longer the initiators, the subjects of technological change: we have become the objects of a megamachine that is totally out of control. And when the Sandinistas and the International Monetary Fund propose the same seemingly universal model of industrial development, it only proves how deeply the logic of capital has penetrated.

It would be mistaken, therefore, to interpret the apparent demise of the Parti Quebecois as a positive event. Nationalism remains very much alive and the reigning mood of cynicism cannot be considered equivalent to an

anti-political critique: people were easily taken in by the next racket (the Montreal Citizens Movement) to come along. Only when the edifice of power itself is rejected will real change become possible.

—PRIMITIVE NATURE

Montréal, November 1987

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
Political Scumbag Kicks Off
1988

<https://www.fiftheastate.org/archive/328-spring-1988/political-scumbag-kicks-off>
Fifth Estate #328, Spring, 1988

[fiftheastate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheastate.org)