

# The World According to the Parti Quebecois

by

Yarema Gregory Kelebay

## I

The purpose of this essay is to attempt to explain what has been going on politically in Quebec in the past twenty years. If you will, it is a form of exegesis; an exercise in the interpretation of the authoritative thought and opinion in Quebec. I have in mind the major works of the "Quiet Revolution" but particularly the thought of the Parti Quebecois as disclosed in the various white papers on language policy, the referendum, cabinet ministers' pronouncements, departmental regulations, educational guidelines, curricula and legislation. The intention is not to engage in wild words, but rather, to maintain a philosophical calm and present the argument directly, so as to invite reflection. The purpose is to give a bird's eye view rather than a worm's eye view, a form of intellectual traffic report as if from a helicopter.

The level of generalization is of the upper range. The size of concepts used will be large but, I hope, not inaccurate or imprecise. The thesis is that a distinctive ideology has been and is at work in Quebec, and that an essential ideological coherence exists behind post-Duplessis developments. I am suggesting that to understand political goings-on in Quebec, we must remember Quebec's two major historic characteristics: its colonial legacy and its Catholic heritage. Its colonial legacy tied it to Britain and its Catholic heritage tied it to France.

When the "quiet revolutionaries" first decided to engage in revolution, they searched for ideas. Obviously, they did not turn to the British or French establishments, the custodians of the colonial legacy and the Catholic heritage which "oppressed" them. However, the anti-imperial circles in Britain and the anti-Catholic revolutionary circles in France suggested themselves as good sources. Much of Quebec's intelligentsia, therefore, turned to the ideas which were fashionable in both British and French "adversary cultures" after the Second World War. In London this was the corpus of British Fabian socialist thought and opinion as it evolved between 1890 and 1950. And in Paris it was French "gauchisme", a mixture of Marxist conviction and existentialist sentiment, as articulated after the war in the cafés along the Left Bank.

Today's "Pequistes" drank from these wells and imported these ideas. Hence, the major thrust of their policy has been to "decolonize" Quebec by making it independent, and to completely "de-Catholicize" Quebec by making it secular and modern. In order to find and recognize the most salient characteristics of this ideology we must consider the following.

In the March 1975 issue of *Commentary* there appeared an essay under the title "The United States in Opposition", written by Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan of Harvard University.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, in Quebec, it

has not received nearly the attention it deserves. In that essay, Professor Moynihan argues that in the 1970's, for the first time, the world felt the impact of "what for a lack of a better term I shall call the 'British Revolution'."<sup>2</sup> He continues,

"The 'British Revolution' began in 1947 with the granting by socialist Britain of independence to socialist India. . . With this began the process of 'decolonization' or 'the liquidation of empire'. . . In slow, then rapid, order the great empires of the world, with the single major exception of the Czarist/Russian Empire, broke up into independent states."<sup>3</sup>

Originally, when founded, the United Nations had 51 member states, but by 1975 it had expanded to 138 member states. Eighty-seven new independent states had joined the U.N. However, 47 (more than half) of these new states had previously been part of the British Empire. Professor Moynihan continues,

"These new nations naturally varied in terms of size, population and resources; but in one respect they hardly varied at all: to a quite astonishing degree they were ideologically uniform, having fashioned their policies in terms derived from the general corpus of British socialist opinion as it developed in the period roughly from 1890 to 1950. The Englishmen and Irishmen, Scotsmen and Welsh, who created this body of doctrine and espoused it with such enterprise — nay, genius — thought they were making a social revolution in Britain. And they were; but the spread of their ideology to the furthest reaches of the globe, with its ascent to dominance in the highest national councils everywhere, gives to the British Revolution the kind of worldwide significance which the American and French, and then the Russian revolutions possessed in earlier times."<sup>4</sup>

But this twentieth century British Revolution did not attract much attention.

"Everyone certainly recognised that new states were coming into existence out of former European, and indeed mostly British colonies, but the tendency was to see them as candidates for incorporation into one (American-French) or the other (Russian) of the older revolutionary traditions then dominant elsewhere in the world. It was not generally perceived that they were in a sense already spoken for — that they came to independence with a pre-existing, coherent and surprisingly stable ideological base which, while related to both the earlier traditions, was distinct from both. . ."

"In truth, a certain Hegelian synthesis had occurred: on the one hand, the 'Minimal State' of the American Revolution; in response the 'Total State' of the Russian Revolution; in synthesis, the 'Welfare State' of the British Revolution."<sup>5</sup>

Empire apart, by the end of the Second World War British culture was the most influential and most suffused with socialist ideas and attitudes.

As George Orwell said, Britain was almost unique in that “there exist(ed) in England almost no literature of disillusionment about the Soviet Union. There (was) the attitude of ignorant disapproval, and there (was) the attitude of uncritical admiration, but very little in between.”<sup>6</sup> This, of course, is evident in recent revelations of widespread British aristocratic allegiance and cooperation with the Soviet Union. One has in mind, men such as Philby, Burgess and Blunt. . . But back to Moynihan: it was the British civil servants, he argues, who brought the doctrine of British socialism to the colonies. And what the civil service began, British education completed. The colonial (native) élites most always sent their sons to study in London. Edward Shils has noted, “The London School of Economics was often said to be the most important institution of higher education in Asia and Africa”.<sup>7</sup>

The British *New Statesman* followed Asian and African graduates after they had left Britain and returned home. For example, in her autobiography, Beatrice Webb wrote that she and her husband felt,

“assured that with the School (LSE) as the teaching body, the Fabian Society as a propagandist organization, the London County Council as object lesson in electoral success, our books as the only elaborate original work in economic fact and theory, no young man or woman who is anxious to study or work in public affairs can fail to come under our influence.”<sup>8</sup>

British socialism was part of a movement of opinion which spread in the course of the first half of the 20th century to the whole of the British Empire, a domain which covered one-quarter of the earth’s surface and which Moynihan says, “an inspired cartographic convention had long ago decreed be colored pink”. What was the content of this British socialism? What did British socialists believe in? In answer to this question Samuel H. Beer has identified seven major themes in this doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

1. British socialists believed in “fellowship”, which is a society based on brotherhood, participation, and political kindness. A commitment to this kind of fellowship distinguished their political approach.
2. They were hostile to “private ownership” and argued for the “public ownership” of property, wealth and means of production.
3. They believed in “production for use”, and were resentful toward any notion of “profit”.
4. Society ought to be increasingly based on the principle of “cooperation” and any form of “competition” ought to be discouraged or eradicated.
5. They were proponents of a “cultural and ethical revolution” which would change men’s “motives”. Motives that had aimed at “individual benefit” would yield to motive aimed at “common benefits”.
6. All productive industry should be under “collective and democratic control”.

7. In their view, the role of government consisted in "comprehensive and continuous planning and administration" of society.

Professor Moynihan has made two general observations about the British doctrine. First, it contained a suspicion of, almost a bias against, economic development and production, which carried over into those parts of the world where British culture held sway. This bias held that there was "plenty of wealth" in the world. Hence "profit" was synonymous with "exploitation". Therefore, "redistribution of wealth", not production, remained central to the ethos of British socialism. Second, the British doctrine was anti-American, more anti-American than it was ever anti-Soviet. America was seen as "quintessentially capitalist". Hence the United States was seen to be in a prolonged and profound decline and history to be moving in other directions altogether. In short, America was the "past"; Russia was the "future".

But if the new nations absorbed ideas about others from the doctrines of British socialism, they also absorbed ideas about themselves. There were four such ideas. The master concept was that they all had the "right to independence". It was most often the socialists who became the principal political sponsors of independence in the colonies of the British Empire. Two further concepts triangulated and fixed the imported and learned political culture of these new nations: the belief (often justified) that they were "subject to exploitation" like the "working class" in socialist theory; and the belief that they were subject to "ethnic discrimination" corresponding to class distinctions in industrial society. Moynihan continues,

"At root, the ideas of exploitation and discrimination represent a transfer to colonial populations of the fundamental socialist assertions with respect to the condition of the European working class, just as the idea of independence parallels the demand that the working class break out of bondage and rise to power."<sup>10</sup>

The fourth distinctive characteristic of the British doctrine concerns procedure. Wrongs were to be righted by "legislation". The movement was fundamentally parliamentarian. British socialists were going to change society by statute. No longer was the government going to be simply a "nightwatchman".

Beginning with India in 1947, for the first time in the history of mankind a vast empire dismantled itself, piece by piece, of its own systematic accord. A third of the nations of the world today owe their existence to a Statute of Westminster. In short, British socialism taught and the colonial élites learned the "politics of resentment" and reparation, and the "economics of envy". Professor Moynihan concludes his essay by saying "we are witnessing the emergence of a World Order, dominated arithmetically (in the U.N.) by countries of the Third World. . . in which the U.S. finds itself in opposition".

My suggestion is that Moynihan's thesis can be fruitfully applied to Quebec. Very much of the content, opinion and language of British socialism was borrowed and imported into Quebec during the Quiet

Revolution.

## II

Quebec was and remains an intricate part of the British Empire (now the Commonwealth). Many of our present leaders and opinionmakers, such as Camille Laurin, J.Y. Morin, Claude Morin, and Jacques Parizeau made their trek to London or were subject to the same British intellectual influences. The credentials cited to prove that we now have the "smartest cabinet in the history of Quebec" are degrees from London School of Economics, Cambridge or its North American intellectual and ideological branch plants such as Harvard and Columbia. Leaders of the Quiet Revolution and later often members of the P.Q. have breathed this air and borrowed these convictions.

It is no one but the Quebec intelligentsia which has written Quebec into the Third World and articulated Quebec's aspirations in terms of the decolonization rhetoric of Asia and Africa. It was the late André Laurendeau who characterized the late Maurice Duplessis as "le Nègre Roi" (the Negro King). The most popular revolutionary tract in Quebec written by Pierre Vallières was called *The White Niggers of America*. It is no accident that René Lévesque called the English of Montreal "Westmount Rhodesians" or the "200 sons of bitches in Westmount". Quebec's professors, pundits, politicians, poets — a large segment of its intelligentsia — has joined Quebec to the Third World and posited the Third World as a model for Quebec. And although the politics and ideology informing practice in Quebec is not completely identical to that of the Third World, it is more similar to Third World politics than to any other school of thought. In the light of this it is useful to ask wherein lies the present conflict in Quebec? At what level is the conflict? What do the "two scorpions in the bottle" represent? If "two solitudes", what two solitudes?

I believe the traditional explanation of "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state" (Lord Durham) is no longer relevant or satisfying. The conflict in Quebec is not between English and French, nor between Catholic and Protestant, nor is it between "cultures" in the sense that we tend to understand that word. And one of the reasons why it is difficult for us to realize this is because the real conflict goes on behind a picket fence of euphemism. In a sense, the jargon and euphemism is intended to obstruct disclosure. If the conflict is not between "cultures" in the traditional sense of that term then perhaps it is between "cultures" in a new sense of that term. To better understand this I draw attention to another essay which deserves our serious attention.

In the October 1980 *Encounter* there appeared an essay by Roger Sandall, "From Arnold to Anthropology".<sup>11</sup> There Sandall shows the evolving definitions of "culture" and alerts us to the current use and misuse of that term. Sandall argues that from Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) to contemporary anthropology the word "culture" has acquired three distinct meanings.

First, Matthew Arnold gave us a subjective evaluative and prescriptive

definition of "culture" in the sense of "high culture" of "refinement". Culture, Arnold said, was "the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time" and that "men of culture are the true apostles of equality".<sup>12</sup> Then, in 1948, T.S. Eliot equated "culture" with "religion". According to Eliot "the best that had been thought and said" and the "most exemplary conduct" in traditional societies was embodied in the societies' religion. Because, claimed Eliot, "religion addressed itself to questions and problems of living and provided answers to life from the cradle to the grave", therefore, the fullest and most elaborate expression of the culture of a people is contained in its religion.<sup>13</sup> Thirdly, modern anthropologists still further expanded the definition of "culture". Modern anthropology gave us a "scientific" descriptive and "neutral" definition. "Culture" was broadened to include the "whole way of life, the inherited manners, customs, styles" or the whole repertoire of answers to the problems of living.<sup>14</sup>

In traditional societies, such as pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec, the source of answers to the problems of living tended to be their religion which in the case of Quebec was Roman Catholicism. However, in a society that is rapidly modernizing and hence secularizing, the authority of its source of answers, religion, tends to wane. But problems continue, so other sources of answers have to be found. Therefore, with the passing of traditional society and the waning of traditional religion, modern secular *ideologies* tend to become sources of answers. Ideology tends to inform people, and so the "culture" in such a society often begins to increasingly resemble some ideology. In an important sense then, the ideology of a secular society becomes its culture. This is particularly the case with complete ideologies which provide a total set of answers and which are complete and coherent systems of thought. Thus in a modern secular society such complete ideologies fulfill the same function as T.S. Eliot ascribed to religion in traditional society.

Roger Sandall says the Left has realized this new function of ideology in a secular society and has consciously appropriated the word "culture" as an euphemism for their own ideology.<sup>15</sup> What socialism and Marxism suggest is considered "humane", "just", "decent" and "wise". What critics of socialism and Marxism suggest is considered the opposite. The propositions of the critics are deemed unsophisticated, "inhumane", "unjust", and downright "indecent". In fact, the critics of socialism are maligned by being characterized as the so-called "stupid party". Or, as the Russians like to say "nekulturny" (uncultured). Very similarly, the word "culture" has been captured by the Parti Quebecois.

If we examine social life in Quebec, we see no conflict between "cultures", or culture in Matthew Arnold's sense of the word. There is no conflict between "the best that has been thought and said." There is no conflict between the language of Shakespeare and the language of Molière. There is no conflict between English and French. But there is conflict along another axis, the *axis of ideology* disguised as "culture". The conflict is between the thought and language of Marx, Lenin, Sartre,

Gramsci, and Althusser on the one hand and the thought and language of Adam Smith, Mill, Camus, Hayek, Aron, and Revel on the other. It is a conflict between two repertoires of secular answers to the problems of living. To paraphrase Arthur Koestler, it is two intellectual worlds locked in combat. And this is the present situation in *modern* Quebec. In contemporary Quebec the real conflict is between the "old left" and what has now begun to be called the "new right". Unfortunately, this conflict, if not actively disguised, remains undisclosed.

The Italian thinker Vilfredo Pareto has said that social change is usually limited to the displacement of a ruling élite by a more dynamic élite. This is called his theory of the "circulation of élites".<sup>16</sup> And what often makes a new élite "dynamic" is a new ideology. In this sense, Pareto's theory helps our understanding of the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec and our present predicament.

In the post-war period, particularly the 1950's, in opposition to the conservative content of "Duplessisme" Quebec had witnessed the emergence of a new clerical and lay intelligentsia spawned under the intellectual guidance of men such as Abbé Groulx, Archbishop Charbonneau (of the Asbestos strike), Père George-Henri Levesque of Laval University, Frère Untel, and other Quebec variants of what have come to be called "worker-priests". That Cardinal Leger abandoned his episcopal throne and left Quebec in order to work among lepers in Africa may very well be symptomatic of this climate of opinion in Quebec.

The pattern of perception, the array of convictions and the corpus of thought and opinion among this new intelligentsia amounted to a fundamental antagonism to Quebec's (and to an extent Canada's) social, economic and political systems. They became Quebec's men of the Left. And their ideology was remarkably similar to British socialism. Gradually they began using the vocabulary of Fabian anti-imperialism and the lexicon of decolonization. Having arrived at a different conclusion about the fundamental aims of politics they became discontented. They wanted something called "social change". No longer content with being a "loyal opposition" in an evolutionary, gradualist, political process, they inflated their complaints to systemic proportions. Their stance ended up amounting to an attack on the fundamental structure of our social, economic and political systems. They arrived at having both feet planted within the boundaries of what Lionel Trilling called the "adversary culture" of leftist intellectuals who are unfriendly toward the ideals of western liberalism, democracy and capitalism.<sup>17</sup> As the late Ortega y Gasset observed in *Meditations on Quixote* about comparable people in the 1930's in Spain, they confronted Socrates (political reason, moderation and wisdom) with Don Juan (political emotion, romance and seduction).

This new elite found its organized expression in the formation of the Parti Québécois. And although one often heard the Parti Québécois described as "separatist", rarely were we reminded that it was also a "socialist" party. Using a nationalist and "liberationist" rhetoric, in the long run the Parti Québécois pursues what are fundamentally socialist

aims. This is apparent in their constant tendency to nationalize, collectivize, centralize and bureaucratize. It is apparent in their uninterrupted record of concentrating power in the state and elaborating the jurisdiction of the state. The P.Q.'s model for modernizing or de-Duplessifying Quebec is in this sense essentially borrowed from what has been called the Third World (south) "opposition" to the developed nations (north). However, the Parti Quebecois is not exclusively indebted to British socialism. There is also a distinctly un-Fabian tone to their ideology and politics.

### III

*Quebec's colonial legacy and its Catholic heritage are tightly linked to the two most fundamental processes going on in contemporary Quebec. These two commanding processes are: "decolonization" as evidenced on the one hand by Quebec's separatism and on the other by Canada's patriation of the constitution; and secondly, "secularization" of which there are many examples, the most recent being the government's plan to "deconfessionalize" the Catholic and Protestant school boards. Intelligent discussion of Quebec politics without cognizance of the processes of "decolonization" and "secularization" is impossible.*

Neither of these two processes ever occur naturally or spontaneously. In fact these processes are suggested and introduced into societies by active, thinking and committed men and women who thereby make their entrance upon the historical stage. Nor are "decolonization" and "secularization" so-called "empty processes". Both are guided and informed by a set of values, a corpus of thought and opinion or a system of ideas. Each of these processes therefore has or assumes a distinctive intellectual content.

As has been suggested, Quebec's colonial legacy has made available to Quebec the corpus of British socialist thought and opinion as it was evolved between 1890 and 1950. As in other parts of the old British Empire the process of "decolonization" in Quebec has been informed by the borrowed and imported ideas of British socialism.

Similarly, Quebec's French Catholic heritage, which is now being dismantled and substituted with "secularism", has turned it toward contemporary France and those ideas most talked about on the Left Bank in Paris since the end of the Second World War. Hence, the process of "secularization" (or "de-Catholicization") is enhanced by a unique aggregate of Marxist opinion and existentialist enthusiasm, popularized by Jean-Paul Sartre, which Raymond Aron has aptly called French "gauchisme".

The connection between French "gauchisme" and the policies and practices of the Parti Quebecois requires more elaboration than is possible here, but let us suffice to say there exists an intriguing link between traditionally Catholic societies, Marxist thought, and modernization. On the surface (and in the public imagination), Catholicism and Marxism are "enemies". However, the matrix, categories and form of Catholic and Marxist thought are highly similar. Often in Catholic countries the process



of "secularization" assumes a distinctly Marxist form, flavor and content. It is no accident that Marxism tends to be more widespread and Marxist parties tend to be more popular in Catholic Europe than in Protestant Europe. The largest and most influential communist parties in Europe are in Catholic Italy, France, Spain and Portugal.

Marxism is also more widespread in Catholic America than in Protestant America. As in the "Old World" so in the "New World": Marxism is more popular in Catholic Latin America, where Catholicism befriends Marxism in the so-called "liberation theology" movement, and in Catholic Quebec where priests and teaching brothers first sermonized on the "new sociology" and the "new social thought", than it is in Protestant America. The most suggestive interpretation of the origins of the "Quiet Revolution" among Canadian historians is that it was spawned in the bosom of Quebec's Catholic Church by clerics such as Abbé Groulx, Père George-Henri Levesque, Archbishop Charbonneau and Frère Untel.<sup>18</sup> In today's Quebec, the most significant aspects of French Canada's intellectual life and political discussion is the interesting mix of imported British socialist opinion and French "gauchiste" thought.

Clearly, any discussion of an imported French "gauchisme", Marxism or Eurocommunism in Quebec should not suggest the "communism of the Bolshevik Revolution". The French "gauchisme" brought to Quebec is mainly the communism of the Fourth Internationale. It is the so-called "legitimate" communism, the "communism with a human face" as articulated by Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams, and others. It is the communism of the "historic compromise" of Marxism (with its traditional principle of "dictatorship of the proletariat") with bourgeois democracy.

The intellectual father of this Marxism was Antonio Gramsci of Italy who, by 1968, had become the guru and darling of the French intelligentsia in Paris, exactly the same time the eventual founders of the Parti Quebecois were learning their lessons and struggling to devise their platform and strategy.<sup>19</sup> And they did learn their Gramsci.

The Parisian Left Bank intelligentsia of the 1960's and 1970's considered Antonio Gramsci as "the Lenin of today" or "the Lenin of the Occident". As such, his thought had a great influence on a number of Marxist thinkers, especially Louis Althusser, Europe's foremost Marxist philosopher who was widely read at the University of Quebec at Montreal and by the founders and counsellors of the Parti Quebecois. Gramsci's major contribution to Marxist theory was his modification of the doctrine of "dictatorship of the proletariat". Instead of "dictatorship" he proposed the concept of "hegemony" and in place of the "proletariat" he argued for a "new historical bloc" of intellectuals, labor leaders, students and workers.<sup>20</sup>

There are several other respects in which Gramsci "softened and humanized Leninism". First, he urged Marxists to stop paying exclusive attention to economics and "economic determinism", the so-called "substructure" of society. He stressed the social importance of ideas, con-

viction and values as agents of social change and revolution. Second, rather than arguing for the destruction of the bourgeoisie as a class (as the classical Marxist-Leninists did) Gramsci argued for the destruction of the bourgeoisie's "hegemony" over a society's "culture". He told Marxists not to preach the destruction of the bourgeoisie but the destruction of the bourgeoisie's prestige, influence and "authority". In other words, destroy the authority and credibility of the bourgeoisie's repertoire of answers to the problems of living. Third, he taught the Marxists to consider their party not as an instrument of one man or one "personality" as was the case with Lenin and Stalin, but as a Machiavellian sly and foxy "Prince Collectif". Fourth, Gramsci urged them not to demand a "monopoly of power". Theoretically he was against a "single party state". The communist party should work and aim for simply a "controlling or leading role". Fifth, he taught not to "dictate", but rather to "develop councilism" and the "appearance" of bourgeois democracy. Gramsci had disdain for compulsion and command and proposed the development and articulation of what he called the "strategy of consent". Finally, Gramsci told Marxists to "capture the culture" of the society. Capturing the culture meant providing society and all its problems with a complete repertoire of answers consistent with Marxist-Leninist thought. Only then would Marxist-Leninism win people's allegiance, loyalty and gain authority. In order to achieve this Marxists would have to go on a "long march" through the institutions, from the kindergartens to the press.

Lenin taught the party to first "capture the state" and then remake society and its culture according to the New Order. The state would create the New Soviet man. Gramsci, the new mentor of Marxist-Leninists taught the opposite; "capture the culture" and then the state will fall into your hands like a ripe fruit.

In light of this, any observer of Quebec politics over the past decade or so cannot fail to see the uncanny resemblance between Gramsci's theory and the political practice of the Parti Quebecois. There can be little doubt that the Parti Quebecois has been advised by counsellors who have thoroughly read and have liberally borrowed from Lenin, Trotsky and Gramsci — without any acknowledgements.

#### IV

The most blatant example of intellectual borrowing is the Parti Quebecois' keystone doctrine of "sovereignty-association". Let us briefly examine the origin of this conception. "Sovereignty-Association" is a Marxist notion in a number of respects. First, it posits two logical opposites. Two contradictory notions are joined by a hyphen. Most Quebecers were at first confused by it, but then everyone conceded that it was a crafty and "original" ploy.

However, the positing of logical opposites has a long history and many precedents in western thought, the most recent example of which is Marxism. It is at the center of Marxist reasoning or so-called "dialectical logic". "Sovereignty-association" is consistent with this Marxian predilection for dualistic thinking. No one is more renowned than Marxist

philosophers for the celebration of "conflict" between two opposites. We are indebted to them for our awareness of the "struggle" between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, capitalism and communism, rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped, East and West, North and South. Similarly, Sovereignty and Association. In this sense "sovereignty-association" emanates from the forms of classical Marxism.

Secondly, "sovereignty-association" can be justified by the most recent developments in Marxist theory, because it echoes the "historic compromise" between Marxism and Democracy. The doctrine of "historic compromise" teaches that two logically irreconcilable concepts can live in "historic" if not "logical" harmony. So although "sovereignty" is logically irreconcilable with "association", "sovereignty-association" can live in historic conciliation. And if one finds that intellectually disconcerting then all one has to do is abandon bourgeois linear logic and learn to reason "dialectically". In short, learn to adhere to two contradictory notions about the same thing at the same time.

In addition to this general resemblance of "sovereignty-association" to Marxist canons, there is the evidence of the doctrine's immediate pedigree. To see this we must read the three major essays on the "nationalities question" which Vladimir Ilyich Lenin wrote between January 1902 and July 1916 on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>21</sup>

In these essays Lenin promised to nations the "right to self-determination" and explained how this right was to be historically understood. Lenin's view was that the "right to self-determination" of nations existed only during the last stages of capitalism (and imperialism) on the eve of the socialist revolution. He rejected the argument that the "right to self-determination" could mean "cultural autonomy" (as argued by Bauer and Renner) and insisted that it meant "political separation" and the "formation of a national state".<sup>22</sup> On the question of strategy he likened political separation (or the formation of a national state) to "divorce" and cited the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905, by a national "referendum" as an example.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, according to the Marxist-Leninist theory of history, the self-determination, independence or sovereignty for a colonized nation is inevitable in the last stage of the capitalist epoch. On the other hand, voluntary federation or association is possible only in the following socialist epoch. This is the only context within which the doctrine of "sovereignty-association" and its real implications can be properly understood.

In addition to their indebtedness to Marxist doctrine for the commanding themes of their policy there is the evidence of their political etiquette which is also typically leftist. All Quebeckers will remember that when an opposition member gave evidence that there was an exodus of business from Montreal, he was accused by a P.Q. minister of "political destabilization". When the leader of the Opposition spoke on the subject to the economy during a recent by-election he was accused by the Premier of "intellectual terrorism". When a private and respected company decided to move its head office from Montreal it was accused of being a

"bad corporate citizen". When the anglophone minority expressed its independent opinion it was admonished for living in a "cultural ghetto", its secret ballots described as a "captive vote", and their legitimacy discredited. Citizens expressing scepticism about the P.Q. and its policies are lectured to enter the "mainstream" of Quebec life and stop sabotaging "social change" and "social justice" in Quebec. When minorities disagree with party policy the Minister of Culture, a psychiatrist, diagnoses them as being "abnormal". The party line is always described as "normal" and it is implied that dissidents are deviants from this "norm".

Let me conclude with a brief reiteration. The political convictions and conduct of the Parti Quebecois highly resemble the opinions of British Fabian socialism such as "fellowship", "hostility to private ownership", "resentment toward profit", "emphasis on cooperation", belief in a "cultural revolution", "collective control" and government "planning" and regulation. It is also British socialism which taught the colonial élites of the empire to believe they were subject to "ethnic discrimination" and economic "exploitation" and therefore had a "right to independence". On the other hand the Parti Quebecois has also been borrowing liberally from French "gauchisme" à la Gramsci, particularly the notions of "hegemony" and "the new historical bloc" which is to "capture the culture" by a "strategy of consent". And finally, the *raison d'être* of the Parti Quebecois' existence which is "sovereignty-association" is based on the Marxist-Leninist philosophy of "historical epochs" and has been virtually lifted from Lenin's essays on "nationality policy" beginning with the metaphor of divorce, the lexicon of normality and abnormality, and ending with the strategy of the "referendum".

Lord Durham's "two nations warring the bosom of a single state" may have been the case in 1840. But traditional 19th century "nationalism" explains much less about contemporary Quebec than does the imported mixture of British socialism and French "gauchisme". Traditionally French Canadian nationalism was tempered by Catholicism. Catholicism gave nationalism some universal international, all-men-are-brothers content. In contemporary Quebec French Canadian nationalism has been de-Catholicized and subsequently Marxified. Today socialism and "gauchisme" give French Canadian nationalism its specific content, shape and direction and as such have *accented* its divisive exclusionist tendencies.

To those who would be surprised by my coupling of nationalism and socialism in this way or who have learned to see "facism" and "nazism" on one side and "socialism" and "communism" on the other (as they were in World War II) I suggest they are mistaken. Both "fascism" and "nazism" were essentially and distinctly socialist movements. Their socialist content made them inherently tyrannical and illiberal. And the war between "nazism" and "communism" was not a war between two opposites. It was not a war between a negative and positive. Opposites attract. Only similarites conflict. And the similarity between "National Socialism" and "Socialism in One Country" was their *socialist* content. But this is another question.

There is a recognizable pattern to the economic and political posture of the Third World and the Parti Quebecois of which the central reality is,

“ . . . that their anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist ideologies are in fact themselves the last stage of colonialism. These are imported ideas every bit as much as the capitalist and imperialist ideas to which they are opposed. The sooner they are succeeded by truly indigenous ideas, the better off the former colonies will be.”<sup>24</sup>

The conflict in Quebec today is between two ideological tendencies and postures, not between two peoples. It is a collision of two visions of the world and future: the liberal-democratic vision of the world and the world according to the Parti Quebecois.

#### Footnotes

1. Daniel P. Moynihan, “The United States in Opposition”, *Commentary*, vol. 59, no. 3 (1975), pp. 31-44.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
5. *Ibid.*
6. S. Orwell and I. Angus, eds., *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell. Volume III, As I Please 1943-1945* (New York, 1970), p. 272.
7. Moynihan, p. 33.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
11. Roger Sandall, “When I Hear the Word ‘Culture’. . . From Arnold to ‘Anthropology’”, *Encounter*, vol. 55, no. 4 (1980), pp. 84-92.
12. R.M. Hutchins and J.M. Adler, *Gateway to the Great Books*, vol. 5 (Chicago, 1963).
13. Sandall, p. 87.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
16. N.S. Timasheff and G.A. Theodorson, *Sociological Theory* (New York, 1976), p. 130.
17. Irving Kristol, “The Adversary Culture of Intellectuals”, *Encounter*, vol. 53, no. 4 (1979), pp. 5-14.
18. I am indebted to Professor Carman Miller of McGill University, for this insight.
19. Francois Fejto, “A New Guru of the Paris Intellectuals — Gramsci in France”, *Encounter*, vol. 50, no. 3 (1978), pp. 37-40.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
21. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works. Vol. 6 (January 1902-August 1903)* (Moscow, 1961), pp. 454-463. See also, *Vol. 20*, pp. 395-454, and *Vol. 22*, pp. 143-156.
22. *Ibid.*, *Vol. 20*, p. 400.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 421-427.
24. Moynihan, p. 43.