we'd talk about this new Jerusalem, this great world that was going to arise, and we were all going to go to Czechoslovakia, for some reason, because we thought that real democracy was going to be there, and I had great faith in Masaryk. We were all very naive.

I think of how Simone de Beauvoir says "Je t'as dis": — I don't have the bitterness that she has, because I'm not bitter about my life — but I do sometimes think, if I could be 20 and sitting on a step and thinking about what's going to come with such radiance, optimism...and how quickly it sank, it was like a souffle. Almost from V-E day, it was over. People were scared to death for their jobs. People were terrified.

LL: Why was the end of the war a terrifying event?
MG: Because any major change is. And I think people were unconsciously terrified of unemployment. The unemployment of the thirties was still very much on their minds. People rooted in the streets. I was living downtown in Montreal. People went up and down. They wondered about their future.

LL: You stayed in Montreal a long time in 1955, didn't you?
MG: I think I stayed there quite a while, and then I went to New York.

LL: Were you aware of changes on a political level — of anything that would anticipate what would happen after Duplessis' death in 1959?
MG: No. I remember somebody came over when Duplessis was first elected, and said, "we've got this new mayor, and he's absolutely marvelous, and he's got rid of the Mafia. All the guys with the big cigars are gone. The city's been cleaned up." I believed him.

LL: The reason I ask that is because "Bernadette," which arose out of your stay in Montreal in '55, seems to anticipate dramatic change in Quebec.

MG: Well, of course, fiction is a different thing. Fiction has its own dynamic. It almost seems to grow out of itself. I can't comment on that.

I was greatly criticized by a woman who taught at Laval. She got very worked up about that story because she felt that I was writing about French-Canadians as a servant class. She said, "Why didn't you make her Ukrainian?" I said, "Because I never saw a Ukrainian maid in Montreal in my life — in the time I'm writing about — never." There were Ukrainians in other parts of Canada — but a Ukrainian maid in Montreal, in the stories and films? Really and truly.

Linda Leth, the new editor of Matrix magazine, is writing a book on English fiction in Quebec since 1945.

Linda Leth wishes gratefully to acknowledge the generous assistance of the FCAC in Quebec in supporting her work on the English writers of Quebec.

Walking the Gatineau, walking the planet

Malcolm Reid

The man in the baseball cap let a long silence go by.

"I just wanted to listen to us walking," he finally said. "I just wanted to hear our steps again, crunching on the gravel."

He was one of the twenty people seated in a circle in a church basement in Hull, preparing for their walk into Ottawa the following morning. He spoke in French, a slow sort of French that went well with his straw-brown beard.

Each person, in turn, gave a little statement on why she was walking in this march.

"This is my work," said an American woman with white hair. She was crisp, sitting in a studied uprightness. "I'm a fulltime worker for peace and social justice. That's all. I'm walking because we have to do something to change things."

Another woman, younger, long wavy hair, a narrow between her eyebrows. "Well, I got involved in this at the University of Montreal. We were studying the theology of liberation. It was very good, it was theoretical — and it seemed to me this march might be a way of making it practical. So now, tomorrow, I have to decide if I'm going to sit down at the Defence Department. And I've got the shakes..."

A lean, olive-skinned young man was careful, almost dainty, in a battered coat, his sleeping bag rolled up beside him.

"Every prisoner camp guard has said," he said, "I'm not responsible. We've all said, 'I'm not responsible. That's why I'm walking.'"

The circle was being filled in, there was something ceremonial about it. Something Indian. In my twenty years around the peace movement I've often found peace people good at this kind of setting of an atmosphere. Marxists are better at evaluating the real chances of an action, NDIPers and Pégistes are better at following up their actions with phone and doorbell work. But the peace people have the council-fie in them; the flame of the.created moment.

My turn came.

"I'm doing this," I said, knowing I had very small claims in the discussion, arriving this late in the event, "because of three rivers."
bec toward the end of summer, 1987.
(The telephone and hydro poles are one of the basic media of communications in Saint-Jean-Bap-
tiste. They always announce at least a dozen events that you probably wouldn’t have heard about other-
wise... And they’re an art scene, too. Some of the
finest graphic work in Quebec, both high-quality
colour work on slick paper, and quick counter-culture
stencils, is on view on the poles at any given time.)
This poster was fairly simple black-and-white
work with a sketch of three women walking along
with placards in their hands. “The Long March
against War and Money,” it said.
The event was a walk from Quebec City to
Ottawa, laid out over a period of a few weeks in
the fine autumn air. Rod on the hills.
The walkers would talk to people along the way,
and though each would bring his own concerns, her
own passions, to the stroll for peace, to the hike for
humanity, a focus of all it all was the White Paper
on Defence.
One of the marchers, a sardonic young guy from
Montreal, had bought a copy of the White Paper from
the government store for the sole purpose of filling
in the pale-blue skies in which lighter planes flew, and
against which missiles and submunitions were silhouet-
ted, with his diary of the March. And with the com-
ments and poems of people he met as he walked, and
asked to write in his book.
I was born and brought up in Ottawa, ten minutes’
walk from a beach on the Ottawa River; and I’ve lived
the recent years of my life in Quebec City, in Saint-
Jean-Baptiste district, just back of the Plains of Abra-
ham.
So I’ve made the trip from Quebec to Ottawa,
upstream along the Saint Lawrence, along the Ottawa,
hundreds of times. Perhaps a thousand.
These two valleys are my region, you could say.
The habit of the animal that I am, the part of the
place that is familiar to me, that is written into my
codes.
And yet I’ve always made the trip by bus! By car?
By train? I don’t really know these valleys as part of
nature; or rather, I know a few, only a few, of the
things of millions of things there might be to know about them.
As soon as I saw the poster, I realized it was
asking me to do something I’d always wanted to do,
at least since I was fourteen years old. To walk, step
by step, my land. To truly qualify as an animal of the
Ottawa region.
But of course I was busy.
Of course I put off making definite plans.
I chatted noticeably about the coming march
with my friend Monique, a native of the Saint Lawrence Valley,
over toward the Appalachians, who has made
her whole life in the past six years into a walking of the
Americas in the cause of —
Peace and socialism?
Peace and feminism?
Peace and ecology?
Peace and plenty, let’s say; that controversial
proposition in 1988. Peace and the things that would
enable peace to move in and take up habitat on earth:
more sharing of the earth’s resources among its
peoples and within its people; and a wise using of
oil, metal, air, water...
(These things, of course, are not "things." They
are an idea, a stop, an undefined spirit which
Marches, Meets, and parties all participants in, along
with other humans. They are what Bob Marley and
the Warriors were singing for, what the Shouting
Spaintupsters were shouting about, what Irish prophets
and Almgrey Voice voiced. What your next-
floor neighbour believes in when he’s feeling his most
neighbourly. Don’t you love thy neighbour when he’s in
that mood?)
In Ottawa, I was brought up to call this spirit
by the name socialism. So on my walk, I’d think of
myself as walking for socialism, walking to the city
where I first heard the word "socialism."
Then it was the last weekend of the march.
If I rushed, if I got on board an All-Stop expedi-
tion with Gilles and Nathalie of the Anvers de la Terre,
I could just make it to Gatineau for the evening of the
tenth. I could walk the last few miles into Ottawa
with the people on the Long March contre la Guerre et
la Hearer. Red on the hills, red on the soil and sarge
of the Gatineau Hills.
I could help place a wreath on the war memorial
reading "To Truly Remember is to Stop all Practices
of War." Oh, how dull and sad and at the same time
pith-inspiring those November Eleventh ceremon-
ies had always seemed on television in the fifties.
How pretentious the angel’s bronze wings had
seemed, how absurd and official.
The civil servant who, through All-Stop, had pro-
vided us with our lift, let us off in Ottawa, not in
Gatineau. So we arrived too soon. We would have
to find our way back to the town of Gatineau, we’d
have to slow down to the right pace.
For Gilles and Nathalie this backtracking con-
tained no emotional resonance. They came from else-
where and had already dipped into this march at
several points along its route. They were full of
practical movement concerns: Was the march getting
enough press? Who’d be at that meeting in Mon-
tral with Valibises and Berrigan? How was morale?
We crossed to Hull and found ourselves in a maze
of concert that was entirely new since my childhood.
It is filled and emptied every day, with thousands of
workers in government services. We got out of the
rue and onto a suburban bus, we headed east to
Gatineau (also known, when I was young, as Pointe
Gatineau, or Gatineau Mills).
We got off at the bus a little early, and entered
the town on foot. It was, for Gilles and Nathalie, a strip of
gas stations and hot dog concession and bathhous-
ing stores exactly like every other Quebec locality
they had ever been in.
But I was an animal of the region.
I was getting excited.
Hey, weren’t those the smokestacks of Canadian
International Paper? Weren’t those the piles of logs? No smell today, but the whole working-class energy
of the place was the small black block on the side of
downtown Ottawa ever to erect a black
And there...
The space was the
side block with a
manner, an airman
one containing no
knowns of the next
volunteers — a real
Transport

Gilles and Nath-
leak at least a look at the
marchers, but...
Then, in the
began to be most
downs over rocks,
crashing down from
across them. Crashed
down past a small
quietly into a wide
with the Ottawa R

The very point
of myself —
sagged off in the
‘trees sit at the
in the Gat
occasionally
a disappeared
bounder of South
Later we joined
them in the church.
I walked with Gill
erty streets where I
I’d always pass.

The people in their
conscious of being
of people by now,
world, softened to
March.” And they
abstract reason the
confirmation of the
had, they
they
They were
Goldsman. What
could it be?

It has occurred to
the most characteristic
The space that
the more reason for
one planet we do

When the Tam
no-longer- imperial
or, and all the
Quebec, in Canada
it seems to me
clarifying and ex
stance, The med
The medium include
buses and computer
reservations; October
and money, and the
money (representa
above all planes, the
through the sky.
That’s the med
And the messa
Surviving Thatcher

Ioan Davies

Across debate what will happen to the cultural industries after Free Trade, the Brit-
ish are not so much concerned with the take-
over of their industries by foreigners as they are with the
enemy within the gates. Thatcher’s government has cul-
ture all over its agenda, but most of its concerns are
actively hostile to the idea that the arts and the
media should be critical, independent, innovative and
socially conscious. It abolished the Greater London Council largely because the GLC’s cultural policies
were politically assurgent in favour of working class,
black, gay, feminist, left activities (see Franco
Briolinchi’s article in New Formations, No. 1, 1987).
It has established a committee under the chair-
man of a very conservative ex-editor of the Times
to monitor sex and violence on TV and Radio (appar-
ently Arthur Conan Doyle and the A-Team are on the
hit list). It has decided to “open up the air-waves” so
the BBC may become a pay-tv network, while Rupert
Murdoch will have no less than four regular channels
(based mainly on American imports). In its notorious
“Spycatcher” trials and their many repercussions it is
attacking the press. (In the past year, Index on Censorship has found the Thatcher govern-
ment more censorious than the USSR). In its policy
of promoting the arts it chooses to reduce funding in spite
of a major report published by the Policy Studies
Institute on the economic importance of the arts in
Britain which shows that in 1985/86 the arts (in terms
of spending on supply and services) were as important
a part of the economy as automobiles. And in educa-
tion, not only has it decided to “privatize” a large
segment of the schools, but it has so savaged the
grants to universities that some of them have estab-
lished sub-faculties (called “credit-hubs”) where
departments have to demonstrate its marketability
in order to survive.

The picture is not a happy one and anyone who
returns to Britain is quickly made conscious of the
overwhelming greed of the moneyed classes, their
eyes bulging with panic as they grab anything that
is marketable and turn it into plastic gold, and talk,
quite freely, of the riff-raff who populate the rest of
the country. (The most famous quote that I found was

of the place was thars, the shoulder of a town shaking off its young men into the taverns and juvenile courts of downtown Ottawa. And also being the first town ever to elect a black man to the Quebec legislature. And there —

There was the war memorial of Gatineau. A four-
sided block with a soldier on one side, a sailor on another, an airman on a third. And on the fourth, the one containing no dates (for the dates aren’t yet known of the next war that will call on Gatineau for volunteers) — a service woman.

Transport trucks whizzed past.

Gilles and Nathalie were bored. Come on, I said, let’s at least look at this town. Maybe we’ve missed the marches, but...

Then, in the middle of town where the houses begin to be mostly of wood, there came, crashing down over rocks, the Gatineau River. A little river, crashing down from the hills with the red slatted across them, Crushing down under a bridge, crashing down past a town festival platform, and then going quickly into a widening, into a mixing, into a fusion, with the Ottawa River.

The very point at which my earliest Quebecois sense of myself — a kid who went to "the Gatineaus," squared off in "the Gatineau," had friends with rela-
tions "up in the Gatineau," this mood with my Canadian sense of myself, the slow, plain, wide river, named for a disappeared Indian tribe, that formed the upper border of Southern Ontario.

Later we joined up with the marchers, we found them in the church basement. The sun came down and I walked with Gilles and Nathalie in these mild-poor-
ery streets where I’d never been on foot before, which I’d always passed through by car.

The people in this church basement were scarcely conscious of being in Hull. They were a special tribe of people by now, they were toughened towards the world, softened towards each other, they were "the March." And they were entirely caught up in the vast and abstract reasons which were driving them on to the conclusion of their adventure.

The had, they felt, their regional selves be-
hind. They were philosophers now, and pilgrims. They were Isiah, and Aimé-Gy Voice, and Emma Goldman. What did it matter what riverbank they were on?

It has occurred to me that drastic travels are one of the most characteristic actions of the 1980s. The space shuttle explores and kills its crew; all the more reason for us to dash frenetically about the
one planet we do know how to travel.

When the Tamils of Sri Lanka, the Turks of post-
no-longer-imperial Turkey, the illegals of El Salva-
dor, and all the other drastic-travelers, arrive in
Quebec, in Canada...

It seems to me that these human beings are both
clarifying and extending the meaning of the famous sentence: the medium is the message.

The medium, here, is the world system of ships,
phones and computer circuits to certify tickets and
reservations; bribery, also, of course, and prostitution
and money, and the electronic signals that represent
money (representing, thus, a representation) — and
above all plates, those pieces of savage buzzle flying through the sky.

That’s the medium, all that.

And the message, transmitted along this medium,