

pour un  
**QUÉBEC  
SOCIALISTE**

---

---

**Manifeste du Mouvement  
pour un Québec socialiste,  
indépendant, démocratique  
et pour l'égalité entre  
les hommes et les femmes.**

---

---

*LE COMITÉ DES CENT*

I

**QUÉBEC TODAY**

In this beginning of the 1980's, the great majority of the men and women who live and work in Québec cannot help but ask themselves about their conditions of existence, and those of other peoples, in a world in crisis where everything seems to be going awry.

Anxiety increases everywhere. The arms race menaces more than ever our collective survival. Harshly exploited for centuries, a growing number of Third World peoples are reduced to misery and angrily watch their children die of hunger by the millions. The right of peoples to control their own fate, their natural resources, and their economic and political development is denied. Human rights lose ground before the rise of dictatorships most everywhere in

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

the world. Waste and the deterioration of the environment grow. The inequalities between peoples and between classes expand. The future appears bleak.

**Yet hope persists.** Enslaved by capitalism, millions of men and women resist, gather together, mobilize, awaken popular consciousness, combat privilege and struggle for peace, justice, equality and solidarity. Millions of men and women are also working for a true socialist democracy in societies of the Soviet-type. African peoples continue liberation struggles against racism, colonialism and imperialism. The native peoples of North America demand their rights. The peoples of Central and Latin America shake the yoke of the multinationals and the oligarchies. In France the struggle for socialism assumes new dimensions. Great transformations are underway: Nicaragua, Salvador, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Poland...

In this tormented world, what is happening to Québec? In this troubled epoch, where are the Québec people going?

The immense hopes raised by the "Quiet Revolution", by the modernization of our society and its opening up to the world, have been silenced, abandoned and betrayed by the movements and parties that pretended to embody them. Nothing has been resolved. Our survival as a people continues to be in danger. We have achieved neither equality nor independence. We are not masters of our own household. On the contrary, our economic, political and cultural dependence is being perpetuated. Social inequalities not only remain, but consolidate themselves. Exploiters proliferate. Profiteers increase their profits. The conditions of existence of the population deteriorate. To the extent that the just society has fallen into oblivion, favorable attitudes toward workers erode... How could it have been otherwise? Have not these parties and movements always refused to call into question the true causes of the dependence, exploitation and domination to which we are subjected? When all is said and done, have they not served the interests of the minority rather than those of the majority? Today as before the Québec people finds itself disillusioned.

Nevertheless a collective awareness of the necessity of a radical change (*rupture*) and of the urgency of a new political path is in the process of emerging within the working and popular classes of Québec.

The men and women who work in the exploitation of resources, in the mines, forests, agriculture, fisheries, construction, manufacturing industries, transport, commerce, finance, research, cultural affairs, communications, medical and social services, education and all other services; all these men and women deprived of all collective control over their working and their living environments, reduced by the system to unemployment, social welfare, or retirement full of insecurity, all these, allied to housewives, small independent producers, male and female

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

students, together form the social basis for a new political force to be constructed for the profound transformation of Québécois society.

It is to these men and women of the working and popular classes of Québec that this manifesto addresses itself. For it is with these men and women that lies all hope. No will to act, no real change can come from anywhere else.

### **Living in Québec Today**

We live in an industrialized country that is potentially very rich. Astride the mouth of one of the principal maritime communication systems in the world, pivot between the continents of North America and Europe, Québec benefits from an interesting geographical position.

With its fertile agricultural lands, immense forests, a sub-soil abounding in asbestos, iron, zinc, titanium, copper and all sorts of minerals, its rivers dispensing hydro-electric energy, Québec possesses considerable natural resources.

With its communication networks, its industries, its institutions and its service infrastructures built by men and women workers, Québec possesses undeniable material resources.

Still more important, the dynamism and creativity of its people could allow it true development.

### **And yet...**

In this land, said to be rich and free, in this society purportedly modern and just, the working and popular classes that make up the great majority of the population live daily in concrete conditions of domination, exploitation, and oppression.

Men and women workers bear the toll of **rising unemployment and no job security**. Factory shut-downs, lay-offs, and job cut-backs in the public service multiply. 300,000 people are unemployed. 9% of the working population in Montréal, Québec, and Sherbrooke! 12% on the North Shore and in Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean! 13% in the Outaouais! 14% in Abitibi-Témiscamingue! More than 16% in the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé!

Jobs are not only harder to find, but **work is more and more precarious**: Occasional work, part-time work, free-lance work, work on call, work at home, work that places men and women workers at the mercy of their bosses. In 1981, 50% of the jobs created in Québec are part-time!

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

**Less interesting and lower-income jobs for francophones, immigrants or native peoples;** while anglophones, representing 14% of the population occupy 31% of administrative positions and scarcely 10% of jobs in production!

**Jobs that are more and more controlled and supervised.** One foreman for three or four employees in many enterprises and services, uniforms and ID cards are obligatory, control systems are an integral part of the machinery! Even in the medical services there are arbitrary productivity norms!

**Jobs that endanger our health and our life.** Nearly 300,000 work accidents a year! Every year one out of three workers in the forestry and metal-products manufacturing sectors! In 1977, one death and 40 cases of permanent disability out of 1,000 workers in the mining sector!

**Working conditions that do not improve except at the price of lengthy and difficult strikes.** Salaries that for a long time now can no longer keep up with the dizzying rise in the cost of living. Non-stop work, evening work, night work. Breaks that are too short, vacations that are inadequate. Work areas that are cramped, noisy machinery, cold, over-heated, dangerous products, depletion and premature aging...

**Unskilled jobs increasingly fragmented, dehumanising and monotonous.** An automatization of production is taking place on our backs. A division between the conception and execution of work condemns us to boredom. Not only do our bosses tell us what to do but how to do it, in the minutest details!

This constant deterioration in working conditions spills over in a global manner onto the quality of life in general, in such a way that the vast majority of Québécois waste their lives in order to make a living.

**These are the conditions that are given to men and women workers in Québec today.**

In this land that is, so they tell us, privileged, in this society purportedly better than all others, the women, the children, the young and the old people of the working and popular classes confront conditions of existence that are often painful, at times degrading, always difficult.

**Women...**in their daily lives, victims of the sexual division of labor, of sexism, of sexual harassment, dominated by a medical apparatus that tends to dispossess them of their bodies, deprived of their right to freely-chosen maternity, confined to traditional roles of wife and mother, assuming daily and without pay the education of children, familial tasks, housework, all of which lead them too often into the anguishing paths of solitude and dependence. Of the 135,000 Québec women living alone with their children, two-thirds dwell in poverty. More and

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

more women enter the job market only to find themselves faced with discrimination and job-ghettos, confronted by inequalities in access to work, in working conditions, in salaries. 66% of women's work is in offices, in commerce and in services! Secretaries, waitresses, sales-women, hostesses, nurses, teachers, garment workers. The average income of women on the job market is equivalent to 58% of the average income for men!

**And it is expected that they be silent?**

**Children...**victims of housing conditions, of health, nutrition, environment, education so unequal that 50 times more whooping-cough, three times more pneumonia and tonsillitis, seven times more ear infections are found in popular neighbourhoods than in privileged neighbourhoods! The infant mortality rate in east Montréal is three times higher than in the west end. Children are deprived of daycare... barely a few thousand openings are available when the demand is 10 times greater; centres badly equipped, begrudgingly subsidized, strangled by exorbitant rents. Our children are too numerous in discovering life through the eyes of Goldorak, too numerous in discovering the world in schools often organized like prisons!

**And it is expected that they be happy?**

**Youth...** entangled at a very young age in a selective school system in which inequality of opportunity is still loaded against francophones, the poor regions, the working and popular classes: making up the majority of elementary school students, the children of these classes comprise only one third of the manpower at the university level. Furthermore, a great number of them end up in the vocational sector, the first step towards a labour market and the unemployment that strikes the young before all other social categories! Faced with an illusory possibility of access to higher positions and incomes through the barely open doors of the universities and the certitude of becoming a cog in industry through the predetermined path of vocational training courses, how many of the young "choose" to drop out of school in order too often to loose themselves in delinquency? There are, for instance, almost 5,000 minors, young men and women prostituting themselves in Montréal! Competition, individualism, submission is what they are taught. To make as much money as possible and accumulate material possessions, these are the goals that are offered them! Every man for himself is the proposition held up to them!

**And they are not supposed to be disillusioned?**

**The aged...** excluded from work and so condemned to poverty and solitude, impoverished, rejected from social life, deprived of the services and care that is their due from a society to which they have devoted a lifetime's work. Of the 500,000 senior citizens of Québec, 63% live below the poverty line! In Montréal,

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

where three-fifths of Québec's aged are to be found, 25% live in neglected housing or in cramped rooms often without stoves, fridges, baths, private toilets, hot water or telephones!

And these are supposed to be "the golden years"?

In this land that is said to be open to the world, in this society that is ostensibly welcoming and tolerant, are not **handicapped people** the victims of enormous discrimination in work, in transportation, in social life?

**Male and female immigrants...** are they not confined to employment ghettos (textiles and garments, hotels and restaurants, home maintenance, domestic work, work at home) where working conditions are particularly bad and where the right to free unionization is either denied or made impossible? Are they not confronted with linguistic problems, discrimination and increasing racism, and the ignorance of their social rights, governed by laws and rulings like the Federal Immigration Law C-24 that limits the exercise of their democratic rights? Are these men and women workers not faced with living and working conditions that are increasingly precarious?

**Native peoples...** have they not been decimated in the reserves? Have not their rights to an immense territory been extinguished? Must they not put up with an education that does not respect their values and needs, discrimination in employment, an unemployment rate that is four times higher than ours, an average income that is 20% lower, an infant mortality rate that is 2½ times higher, dependence on social welfare that affects over half their population? And what is to be said about their housing conditions? Barely one-third of their homes are equipped with running water, inside toilets and bathtubs! Almost 20% still do not have electricity!

Just because our children are not dying of hunger, and we are not the victims of terrifying droughts, catastrophic floods, disastrous earthquakes, must we close our eyes and not see the deterioration in housing and environmental conditions, the decrease of services especially in medical and social services, the decay of urban life, the growth of insecurity, the increase in indebtedness, the impoverishment of cultural life that result in an actual decline in the quality of life for a growing part of the working and popular classes?

Just because we enjoy a relative, but real, prosperity if compared to the dramatic conditions of existence of Third World peoples, must we close our ears and not hear the rumbling of poverty that is establishing itself in our society? Over 300,000 people are "officially" unemployed, 500,000 others subjected to the social welfare regime! In all, one million poor people in Québec, out of which 600,000 can barely satisfy their basic needs!

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

The heart of exploitation in capitalism is found in the private appropriation of the value created by work. It is in this appropriation that capital grounds its domination. Through the *grands bourgeois* that own and control the means of production and exchange, the administrators and executives of the industrial and financial monopolies, the high officialdom of the State, the capitalist system determines the conditions of existence of the working and popular classes.

Our society is dominated by these few thousand individuals, millionaires or billionaires, Québécois, Canadian, American or other, anglophone or francophone, the Rockefellers, the Bronfmans, the Desmarais. Business being business, they do not always see eye-to-eye, and sometimes endeavour to snatch from one another control over an enterprise or lay hands on a market, but at the slightest threat to their interests and common privileges, they swiftly reunite in ties that are multiple and solid.

Issuing for the most part from a limited number of great families, educated at the same private schools, members of the same select clubs that admit only their allies in their company, these lawyers, judges, top civil servants and politicians share the same contempt of the needs of the people, a common thirst for power, and they are all important cogs of capitalist accumulation. They most loudly proclaim their faith in private property, free enterprise, and the virtues of competition, but all the while, they never cease to seek to stifle their smaller competitors, to consolidate their monopolies and fix market prices. They demand that men and women workers respect the laws under all circumstances but never hesitate themselves to transgress, distort and flout the laws.

Administrators of the banks and of financial institutions, they control the money, credit, interest rates, using the savings and riches of the community in order to increase centralization and the accumulation of capital.

Big stock-holders and directors of multinationals, they hold in their hands the lives and destinies of entire populations. They provoke crises in the supply of energy or raw materials from which they obviously derive great benefits. They speculate on the exchange rate of monies and the values of stocks. They put themselves above nations and laws. Within the framework of the international division of labour they transfer capital and businesses at the expense of the evolution of salaries, the costs of energy and raw materials, and the social and political situation...

Owners and managers of companies regrouped in multiple associations, chambers of commerce, industrial and other types of councils, they never cease to intervene to impose their point of view on society as a whole. They own the largest part of the information media, and of the means of production and diffusion of culture. Through advertising, companies encourage over-consumption and waste, individualism and consumerism. They are principally responsible for the

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

pollution of the air and waters and for the depletion of the earth and resources. Through the mechanism of the State, they maintain an organization of manpower, work, health, education, culture and knowledge, subjected to the imperatives of production. Capitalism provokes and sustains division at the very heart of the working and popular classes, alternately playing one group against another: workers against the unemployed, men against women, manual labourers against intellectuals, francophones against ethnic minorities, the men and women workers of the private sector against those of the public sector, the regions against Montréal...divide and rule!

And the capitalist class rules! It decides the quality, the quantity, the diversity, the cost of the entire range of products available to the population. One goal drives it: making profits, the most profits in the shortest time. **All of production and all of economic life are organized round this one and only goal: profit.** Can it be surprising then that existing relations, not only between countries and between regions, but also between groups and individuals, are relations of competition, inequality, and exploitation? Nor can one be surprised either by the absurdity of a society in which everything including men and women becomes a commodity, and which demands of children, adults, families, increasingly uniform and standardized behaviour?

**Our entire social life is conditioned by relations of exploitation, oppression, and domination, imposed upon the millions of men and women of the working and popular classes by the capitalist class, the minority that has been in power since the industrial revolution, when it learned to appropriate the collective wealth and the means of production, diverting them for its own profit and making them the bastion of its privileges.**

The State, far from being neutral, maintains, neutralizes and reproduces these relations, constituting simultaneously the political framework of society, the instrument of domination of the capitalist class; as well as a field of interaction and struggle between classes.

Yet the working and popular classes refuse to allow the State to be a mere "administrative council" of capitalism. They continually exercise pressures and often succeed in extracting concessions that improve their social condition.

Be it against the State or against industry, the men and women workers must struggle tirelessly to have their rights respected. **This struggle between social classes had profoundly marked all of Québec's history for 150 years.** From the 1833 carpenters' and joiners' strike for a reduction of the working day, right up to the foresters' strike against contract work in 1981, through the 1937 Sorel strikes, the asbestos strike in '49, that of Murdochville in '57, of the teachers in '67, and the Common Front in '72, how many great *corvées*, how many boycotts, how many United Aircraft occupations, how many picket-lines and demonstra-



## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

tions were required in order to abolish child labour, to reduce schedules and intolerable speed-ups, to obtain more decent salaries and more dignified living and working conditions, to win the right to association and negotiation, the right to claims for occupational injuries, pensions...?

Innumerable struggles, not only in the workplace but also in other areas, in neighborhoods, villages, cities and regions,...against national oppression, for the liberation of women, against expropriations, for the right to unemployment insurance and social welfare, for the respect and growth of democratic liberties and rights... for free medical services, for public education, for adequate housing at reasonable prices...

Long and difficult struggles punctuated by violence on the part of the bosses and the police, injunctions, intimidation, expulsions, firings, fines, imprisonment, humiliations...struggles that had to be renewed generation after generation because **nothing is ever truly secured by those who have nothing but their solidarity with which to defend themselves and to improve their lot.**

### We Live in a Dependent Society

To live in Québec today means living within a part of the Canadian whole with everything that this represents in terms of **inequalities** in development and integration in the American imperialist system.

To live in Québec also means submitting to **national oppression** that the Canadian *grande bourgeoisie*, through the federal State, exercises over the people of Québec. By imposing its language, its culture and its policies of development, the Canadian bourgeoisie exercises a range of discrimination that affects the Québécois on an economic level as much as on a cultural and political one. Unemployment, poverty, inequalities are so many forms of national oppression that afflict the working and popular classes in their daily lives.

To live in Québec means finally to submit collectively to a situation of **dependence** that is considerable and multifaceted: economic, commercial, financial, technological, military, political, cultural and ideological. To such a degree that the most important positions of power and the principal levers of command are to be found outside Québec.

Certainly there exists a group of Québécois capitalists that rely on the provincial State to grab a piece of the cake. And they have been relatively successful as is shown by the development of such financial institutions and businesses as Trust Général, Provigo, Québecor, Normick Perron and Bombardier... But in spite of the fact that the majority of the medium and large Québécois businesses have benefited from the support of the Québécois State for their development, all of which only accelerated under the PQ which has placed public capital at their

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

service and reinforced them through State firms such as the Caisse de dépôt et placement, the SGF, and Hydro-Québec, Québécois capitalists remain confined to activities left to them by Canadian and foreign capitalists in sectors that are minimally productive and markets that are local and regional. Our economy and our commerce remain dominated by Canadian and foreign capitalists. Sixty per cent of Québec's international exports are controlled by 20-odd large American and European multinational corporations!

Even more than the Québécois capitalists, the true masters of Québec are the Canadian capitalists and big firms of the Canadian State such as Noranda Mines, Petro Canada, Northern Telecom, Consolidated Bathhurst, Dominion Textile, Canada Packers, Abitibi-Price, John Labatt, Stelco, Bell Canada, Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, Sun Life, the Royal Bank, Bank of Montreal... but also the foreign capitalists, in particular the Americans, who control Alcan, General Motors, Imperial Oil, Kraft Foods, Celanese, IBM, ITT, Pratt & Whitney, Reynolds, Iron Ore, Wabush Mines, Johns-Manville and how many others!

**For Québec the consequences of the dependence are tragic:** an unbalanced economy, a slow-down in manufacturing, specialized international commerce, underdeveloped technology, and stagnant regional development... Québec is more than ever a vast reservoir of manpower and natural resources at the disposal of, firstly, the American capitalist class, secondly, the Canadian one, and, thirdly, the Québécois if anything remains. So it is no wonder that Québec capitalism, unable to develop short of further integration into the Canadian and American economies, should be opposed to true Québec independence.

**The American imperialist system conditions the policies of the central Canadian State and of the Québécois State.** No government has ever truly questioned this multifaceted dependence: neither the federal Liberal government that keeps Canada in military, political and economic alliances that serve American imperialism, nor the Parti Québécois one of whose first political gestures, it should be recalled, was to go to New York's Economic Club to reassure Uncle Sam!

Since the very first hours of Confederation, the history of the Canadian State has been characterized by subservience to the interests of American capital even if under the cover of policies that have been called 'national'.

**The history of the Canadian State, over and above the national oppression to which it subjects the Québécois people, is that of the oppression of the native peoples and ethnic discrimination against all men and women immigrant workers.**

And these relations of oppression and dependence, that have developed in the

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

framework of the Canadian federal State and North-American capitalist society, show no signs of disappearing, on the contrary...

The Micmacs of Restigouche know it, invaded and bludgeoned by Sûreté du Québec squads in the name of salmon protection. And the Haitian taxi-drivers of Montréal know it too in seeing, more and more, manifestations of racism spread around them!

The people of Matapédia and of eastern Québec know it as they continuously rebel against the under-development and stagnation to which their regions have been reduced! And the people of the Outaouais, anxiously succumbing to an economic and cultural invasion that threatens their identity, know it too!

The men and women workers of the North Shore know it as they powerlessly watch the American multinational corporations shut down: ITT subsidized by tens of millions of dollars, and Iron Ore that has nevertheless made fabulous profits! And the miners of Thetford and those of Abitibi know it too as witnesses to today's as well as yesterday's scandalous rape of our natural wealth, transported to the US only to be transformed into the finished products that will then be sold back to us at high prices.

And the Montréal dockers have suffered the consequences of the displacement of harbor facilities towards the Great Lakes since the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway; men and women workers of General Motors saw the Canada-US auto pact give industrial superiority to Ontario and have had to strike for the right to work in French; women textile workers whose jobs are sacrificed to the new international division of labor; men and women workers in the film industry, in music and publishing who are still protesting the PQ government's inaction in the face of the growing invasion of foreign cultural products in our market; do not all these men and women workers know that the effects of national oppression are still being felt in Québec today?

**It is no accident that the struggles of the working and popular classes have always been linked to struggles against national oppression such that they mutually re-enforce one another. It is first these classes that were subjected to the effects of national oppression and it is particularly through their resistance that the Québec nation has been constituted.**

But, in the absence of a political direction through which our national liberation could have progressed by relying on a social project fitted to working class and popular aspirations, this resistance has always been used to advance the ends of the political classes that have dominated the Québec State throughout all its history.

Faced, as we are today, with a federal State which renews its attacks and which

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

increasingly menaces our self-determination and collective future, and with the Parti Québécois that presents no other perspective but that of administering the economic and political crisis, it becomes ever more imperative for the living forces of the nation, the working and popular classes, to take the fight for national liberation into their own hands, and bring it to its conclusion.

### We Live in a Pseudo-Democratic Society (Une Société Faussement Démocratique)

Living in Québec today means living in a society that is increasingly authoritarian and where power is concentrated in the hands of a minority.

To be sure, we have the right to elect members of the National Assembly, mayors, municipal councillors, and directors of school commissions. This is an important aspect of democracy historically the end-result of the people's long battle against despotism. Nevertheless this democracy is limited because it does not permit us to have real control over every dimension of our collective life.

Who decides about the needs of the population, the distribution of resources among economic sectors and regions, priorities in development, energy policies, production goals, the distribution of goods and revenues, imports and exports; the way in which work, education, health, housing, transport, and cultural activities are organized? Who decides about the price and the quality of food, clothing, housing, automobiles, and all other consumer products? Who has the power to open or close the mines, factories, commercial enterprises, hospitals, schools, and recreation centers?

Each day millions of decisions are taken that will concretely affect the way in which the Québécois people live, work, eat, dress, educate or amuse themselves and this people has but little control over all these decisions that nonetheless determine its conditions of existence and its future. Outside of popular and union organizations—whose autonomy is continually threatened and attacked by the media and the State in their efforts to create disunity—where can the working and popular classes exercise their democratic powers? What does democracy mean for those on unemployment and social welfare, for the native peoples and the ethnic minorities, the men and women students, the housewives and the aged? What control have we got over our lives, our environment, our neighborhoods, our villages and our cities?

Certainly by gathering together and waging struggles, by making use of pressure and by exercising relations of force (*un rapport de force*) in our places of work and habitation, we can influence the authorities and sometimes even get them to act in favour of our collective interests, but we do not control the decision-making power. We have acquired rights and liberties that are enviable to other peoples, but are not these liberties and rights continually threatened,

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

questioned, scoffed at and restricted? What happened to our rights and liberties when the Canadian army trooped in for a "visit" in October 1970? What can be the meaning of the right to work for the hundreds of thousands of people out of work? What can be the meaning of the right to circulate freely for the thousands of aged people who lack the means to keep up with the rising costs of public transport? What can be the meaning of the right to education for young people from poor neighborhoods? What does the right of association mean when unions must fight for years to obtain recognition? What does the right to limited strikes mean when they are banned by injunctions and constantly mocked by anti-union legislation? What does freedom of expression mean when the means of communication are not available to us? What does the right to health mean for a worker who does not have the right to stop working if he considers his life or his well-being endangered?

**We live in a society that is dominated by a minority—the capitalist class, which by owning the means of production and exchange and dominating the state apparatus and the political parties, exercises real control over our economic, political and social life.**

Leaning on politicians, high officials, lawyers, judges, who share the same interests, the capitalist class uses instruments of "persuasion" of the information media and instruments of repression like the police corps and the coercive apparatus of "justice" in order to exercise its authority and power. Let us simply remember the rain of injunctions, fines and prison terms that fell upon the MUCTC and Common Front strikers while, in contrast, the goon who fired at point-blank range at the Robin Hood millers was scandalously acquitted! Let us remember, too, the \$10 million in fines plus interest imposed on the Reynolds union in Baie Comeau, though the seven oil companies responsible for extortion to the tune of \$12 billion, according to an inquiry by the auditor-general's office, have not even been taken to court!

Whether it be in the State, whose presence is growing in our lives, in the public services as they become more and more bureaucratized, or in companies where the authoritarianism of the bosses reigns almost without limit, a complex hierarchy of power has been established: from the foreman to the manager, from the departmental assistant-director to the deputy minister, a multitude of small bosses agitate, fight for privileges and daily rest the weight of their authority upon our lives.

But the real center of power is situated way beyond this pyramid, and far beyond the parliaments in which "our" representatives figure: within the limited circle of the administrative councils of the multinationals, the large financial institutions, in the upper spheres of the State and the Council of Ministers, they are but a few hundred who determine our present and mortgage our future!

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

### **We live in a society in crisis**

Living in Québec today means living in a society that is plunging into a profound economic, social and political crisis.

Daily we hear speak of the devaluation of the money, the rise in prices and interest rates, the decline of investment and production, the increase in the cost of energy and raw materials, the stagnation of productivity, the saturation of markets, the exacerbation of commercial and technological competition between capitalist powers, the persistent and simultaneous growth of inflation and unemployment, the reduction of buying power and real salaries, the deterioration of public services and the quality of life, the increase in bankruptcies and factory closings... so many aspects and signs of a crisis that does not let up and only deepens.

**What is hidden beneath it all and what our governments are careful to keep from explaining to us, is that we are being subjected to the impact not of a temporary recession, or a foul-up in the economy, but of capitalism itself which can only survive by means of crises. Not a single generation of Québec men and women workers has not lived through one!**

Imprisoned by an absurd logic which imposes upon it, for its maintenance and development, the genesis of a constant growth in profits, the capitalist system as we know it has been in a profound state of crisis for 10 years now. As a way out it now attempts to proceed toward a global re-organization of the international economic order, the modes of production and exchange, the markets and monetary system, the organization and division of labor, the role of States....

And Québec, fragile and dependent, is also affected by the crisis of world capitalism. All the more so because the crisis has developed here in the context of a political crisis, the questioning of national oppression and of the centralizing authoritarianism of the federal State, which seems at present stalemated. By itself, the extraordinary rise in poverty that victimizes one out of six people in our society is an indication of the extent to which the working and popular classes are threatened in their conditions of existence by this crisis. And what can be said about the economic death of the North Shore that only yesterday was being presented as the symbol of our collective prosperity?

Faced with the crisis that does not cease to deepen, the government of the Parti Québécois, like the federal government and all other capitalist governments, only initiates economic and social measures that intensify exploitation. The PQ "solution", the one that emerges from "Bâtir le Québec" and Parizeau's budgets, puts the entire weight of the crisis upon the working and popular classes: the reduction of real salaries, job cuts, the important decreases in medical and social

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

services, rises in electricity costs and in public transport... and this, at the same time as it substantially reduces taxes imposed on business profits and subsidizes them as never before.

In this way one is witness to the redirection of an important part of the collective wealth, allocated to the profits of private interests at the expense of public services.

Inspired by the multinationals, elaborated at economic summits and by major international organisms such as the World Bank, the OECD and the International Monetary Fund, the capitalist response to the crisis here, as elsewhere, goes directly against the interests of the working and popular classes.

And here, as elsewhere, these classes still have only and always no other recourse but to resist and fight, be it only in order to limit the more nefarious consequences of this crisis in attempting to preserve their rights and the improvements in living and working conditions dearly acquired. In addition, a social crisis, linked to the political and economic crisis, is slowly developing that tomorrow could well reach a point of no return.

Relations between the classes are more and more tense. Aggravated by the crisis, the entirety of social problems resulting from relations of exploitation, oppression and domination, explode in the face of the capitalist class that sees itself increasingly confronted with the combativeness and solidarity of the working and popular classes.

This is testified in the demands and struggles of the trade-unions for the right to work, against the closing of factories and job-cuts in the public service, for health and safety at work, the dequalification of labor and the negative effects of automation, precarious employment, unemployment...; the demands and struggles of the people in the areas of housing, health, urban planning, the environment, public transport, social rights...the demands and struggles, of the regions, in Saint-Scholastique, in the Gaspé, in the Matapédia valley...the demands and struggles of the aged, of immigrant men and women workers, and of the native people.

Equally testifying to it are the extraordinary struggles and demands of women for equality in access to employment and in working conditions, for the recognition of the social value of housework, for the establishment of a network of popular daycare centres, against sexism and sexual violence, for the right to free and costless abortion...the struggles and demands in the cultural field, in music, in the new theatre, in film, in community media...the struggles and demands of the ecological movement...the movement in support of peoples struggling against exploitation and domination.

To be sure, these demands and struggles more often than not remain confined to

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

the defence of the immediate interests of the men and women workers, and do not manage to extend toward and articulate a project for a radically different society. And despite certain initiatives at the municipal level or, for example, occasional debates on the national question, the working and popular classes do not have the means for autonomous political expression, and remain dependent on capitalist political parties that continually corrupt and distort their collective aspirations for a better life.

But the fact remains that these demands and struggles constitute the foundations of a real resistance to national oppression and are the expression of a will to break away (*volonté de rupture*) from capitalist society.

Through their demands and struggles, the men and women of the working and popular classes are slowly outlining the elements of a project for a radically new society and are more and more asserting the necessity for an in-depth transformation of Québec society in the direction of their interests and their collective aspirations.

Borne by this growing consciousness, change is under way. And to the extent that the working and popular classes will provide themselves with their own social project (*projet de société*) and the political instrument for its realization, nothing shall be able to stop it.

### II

## A SOCIETY IN NEED OF PROFOUND CHANGE

Where are our collective aspirations taking us if not to the establishment of a radically different society, in which our life would be better, more creative, freer, more worthy of being lived?

Where are our demands and our struggles leading us if not to build a society in which production and work as well as social, cultural and political life would no longer be organized around the profits and interests of a minority class, but around the needs and aspirations of the whole of the population instead?

Where do we want to end up if not at a new society in which relations of exploitation, oppression and domination would be replaced by relations of equality, liberty and solidarity?

In order to achieve these goals the working and popular classes must begin work on an in-depth transformation of contemporary Québec by undertaking a collective appropriation of control over their work, their lives, and over the whole of society.



## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

To this end we must collectively appropriate the means of production and of exchange of goods and services, by democratizing property, its organization and operation. It is necessary to radically transform the State not only by achieving independence but by inventing new means of control for the working and popular classes over the parliamentary system, the bureaucracy and the legal system. We must destroy the sexual division of capitalist labor and establish authentic egalitarian and solidary relations between men and women. We must proceed toward a major decentralization of the economic and political power, promote popular autonomous organizations, animate a true democracy at the grass roots.

The in-depth transformation of Québec in the light of the aspirations and interests of the working and popular classes involves the construction of a popular power (*pouvoir populaire*) that can only be achieved on the inseparable foundations of socialism, independence, democracy and equality between men and women.

This represents, as we should be aware, a difficult undertaking since it implies putting into question national and international capitalist powers that have no interest in change and that do not hesitate to intervene in the lives of peoples in order to maintain their domination.

This represents a large-scale undertaking which simultaneously presupposes economic, social, cultural and political mutations whose difficulties and depth must not be underestimated.

This represents a complex and long-term political project that calls to be specified, clarified, elaborated and transcribed into a program of struggles and stages to follow in accord with the conjuncture and evolution of the social forces that will bear it. This political project does not belong and would never belong either to an avant-garde or to a group of experts. **The construction of popular power can only be the work of the people themselves.**

### For a socialist Québec

A society such as we want—egalitarian, free and solidary—cannot emerge short of the **Québécois people's radical break with capitalism** and thus the exploitation and dependence it engenders.

Only such a break can permit the creation of conditions favorable to the freeing of the working and popular classes.

We must overturn the capitalist class' economic dictatorship and political domination by proceeding toward **socialization of the means of production and exchange** in such a way as to eliminate the private power of decision that

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

permits this minority to exercise despotic "rights of management", to set the prices of consumer goods, to direct the organization of the economy and of work, to impose unemployment...all to maximize their profits.

We must put an end to dependence by proceeding toward a **collective appropriation of the foreign companies** that have established themselves in Québec—at a pace and modalities to be collectively determined—and by henceforth disallowing all foreign control over our resources and our means of production and exchange.

The Québécois people will not be the first to want to sweep away the structures of exploitation and dependence and to want to overthrow the capitalist system. In undertaking this difficult combat, it owes to itself to take stock of the experience gained elsewhere and to learn from the successes as well as the errors.

While the socialization of resources and of the means of production and exchange is an essential condition for the realization of the popular power, it still does not guarantee it. There is no recipe, there is no fatherland of socialism, no guiding country nor model society. We must seek our own way of liberation through the conditions that are our own.

By placing the accent on the construction of a real popular power out of the collective appropriation of the means of production and exchange, our socialist project refuses to consider the State the only agent for the transformation of society.

And if we place the objective of socialization rather than that of state control (*étatisation*) to the fore, it is to forcefully underline that for a socialist society it is necessary to bring together the conditions allowing that **all economic decisions be the object of public debates and democratic choices**. For it is neither a minority of capitalists hiding behind the market's pseudo-laws nor a minority of technocrats and ministers hiding behind the mysterious veils of their expertise, but the whole of the working people that, through the collective elaboration of democratic mechanisms, must decide the needs to be satisfied, the goals of production, imports and exports, the allocation of resources among sectors and regions, the distribution of production between consumer goods and services, the quantity and quality of these goods and services, the distribution of wealth, the choices in the domains of energy, the orientations of development—in short, the whole of those decisions that above all others determine living and working conditions.

In arriving at the elaboration of a **plan for overall development**, this democratization of economic power must be exercised on the national as well as the local and regional levels and must leave ample room for the autonomy of the various collectivities.

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

**Economic power must be collective not only on the level of major orientations, but also in the very direction of enterprises and services. Their administration must be simultaneously placed in the hands of the men and women workers, of the representatives of the democratic institutions of society, and of the representatives of the collectivities concerned, as determined by the nature and function of the enterprises and services in question.**

In addition, the socialization of the economy cannot be achieved by planning alone, no matter how democratic. It must be concretized in a radical transformation of the organization and division of labour. **The men and women workers must have actual control over their work and the manner in which it is organized;** among other things, this implies a reduction of the size of enterprises, control over technological changes and the integration of the conception and execution of work such that men and women workers not only can provide themselves with clean and safe working conditions but also transform the content of their work as well.

For, ultimately, we must put an end to this real dispossession of the world to which men and women workers are subjected through the impoverishment and growing subordination of their activities. We must strive to abolish the division between manual and intellectual labor, as well as all the discriminations and privileges that derive therefrom.

On the other hand, **the abolition of unemployment and the recognition of the right to work** are made possible only through the actual socialization of the economy and the planning of development.

By putting an end to the private appropriation of the wealth that work produces and by establishing a mode of remuneration based on participation in social labour, we are giving ourselves the means to **eliminate poverty, to considerably reduce inequalities, and to guarantee to everyone a decent income that satisfies socially defined needs.**

No longer seized by a privileged minority, the social surplus becomes available for the improvement of our collective equipment and services and thus our living conditions.

In addition, the building of a true popular power demands an in-depth socialization of public services, at all levels, in all sectors, and for all groups.

We must transform social services in such a way that they are no longer subject to the demands of industrial production, but rather directly anchored in the aspirations and the needs of the collectivities through the extensive autonomy of popular groups and organizations. **We must undertake to democratize and re-organize services in such a way that the population can appropriate them and**

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

orient them to their real needs.

Thus in health care, as well as in education, the autonomy of individuals and collectives must be promoted through the increased diffusion of knowledge. In addition to offering the best curative care, the health system must be based on the promotion of health and prevention, and must strive to check illnesses of social origin. Education, in the framework of a public, secular, and francophone system, respectful of the right to difference of the minorities, greatly decentralized and subject to popular control, must be oriented toward the permanent education of the population. It must in particular serve everyone, in accordance with their choice and the needs of the society, providing vocational and balanced (*polyvalente*) training that can give the men and women workers real control and a true capacity for intervention in the conceptualization and organization of their work and social life as a whole.

What we must seek through the socialization and the democratization of the economy and services, as well as through the planning of development and the transformation of the organization of labor, is not a new way to structure and administer the same old production-oriented (*productiviste*) society that sees in individuals nothing but their "labour power" and their capacity to produce "profits", but on the contrary a transformation of this capitalist vision of the world and a real change in the modes of living and working.

Building a socialist Québec means to reunite the conditions that make for a different and better life: for children and young people at last recognized as persons in themselves with needs for supervision, education and leisure that the society must strive to meet; with the right to speak, to organize themselves, and to act so as to transform society in the light of their aspirations...for men and women, finally liberated from the sexual division of labor and henceforth able to establish authentically egalitarian and solidary relations...for the aged, finally re-integrated in social life, liberated from officialized impoverishment, and henceforth disposing of a real capability to add to the collectivity with their knowledge and expertise.

### For an Independent Québec

Our project, because it is that of the working and popular classes, affirms the indivisible relationship between socialism and independence. One could not fight for a socialist democracy without taking up the national question in all its historic significance, without assuming the project of national liberation.

The creation of a new and fully independent Québécois State is an indispensable condition for not only overthrowing the domination of the capitalist classes and achieving a true sovereignty of the people, but also for

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

putting an end to national oppression.

We must put an end to the present situation: to the provincial State, toothless cog of the central Canadian State and defender of "local" capitalist interests; to the federal State that embodies the class power of the bourgeoisie as a whole, reproduces the national oppression of the Québécois people and the native peoples, and that serves as the transmission belt of American imperialism.

We must radically reconsider the whole of the political, economic and military alliances to which we are integrated, and which not only maintain Québec in a state of profound dependence but make it an accomplice in American imperialism's enslavement of numerous peoples.

We must acquire the independence that allows the working and popular classes to collectively and democratically appropriate economic as well as political power. In this respect our project is clearly distinct from the Péquiste perspective of "sovereignty-association". The PQ does not question either the capitalist system, or the exploitation and dependence it engenders. Wishing to protect the American and Canadian capitalists' interests and develop Québécois capitalism, it ends up, under the pretext of modernism, becoming the promoter of the safe-keeping of the principal federal institutions in the framework of a "new" association and the maintenance of all the political, economic and military alliances that bind us to the American imperialist system. Moreover, it recommends integration of the Québécois economy with the North-American economy, and submission to the present international division of labor. But political and economic independence cannot be separated this way, and it is certain that the construction of a popular sovereignty (*pouvoir populaire*) cannot follow such a dead-end street.

On the other hand, we must elaborate and collectively put into effect a strategy of development based on the satisfaction of our real needs and the realization of our democratic aspirations. This presupposes both a restructuring of our economy with the objective of reliance at first on ourselves alone, and a restructuring of our international exchanges which should henceforth evolve from our development objectives.

This means not only maintaining but developing economic, financial, commercial, technological and cultural relations with other peoples, and in a radically different way: in due respect of the independence of peoples, mutual avoidance of the creation of relations of dependence, in the adherence to a policy of international co-operation at the service of development in equality and solidarity.

In addition, we must put an end to all political, economic and military alliances and treaties that involve us in complicity with American imperialism. By

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

contrast, our project demands that we establish relations of friendship and solidarity with peoples struggling against all types of exploitation, oppression and domination; we must as well fight the thermonuclear menace and make ourselves active emissaries of peace among peoples.

Moreover, in the same spirit of independence and internationalism, we must cast off our dependence on the dominant cultural industries both by supporting the production and diffusion of the culture of the people of Québec and by permitting true access to the culture of other peoples, of minorities, and of the native peoples.

Building an independent Québec, from our point of view, also means to undertake the establishment of new relations with the ethnic minorities: eliminating all forms of discrimination and racism perpetrated against them; recognizing both their right to difference and their right to integration by favoring the study, knowledge, use and expression of their own languages and cultures within the framework of a policy in keeping with the principle that French is the language of use in Québec; according to men and women immigrants the same rights as to Québec men and women workers; favouring in our immigration policies the re-unification of families and welcome to political refugees.

Equally this means putting an end to the oppression of the native peoples, and recognizing their national rights to self-determination and independence; all the while inviting them to join as equal members in our social project and negotiating with them on the basis of their demands: the delimitations of their territory, the preservation of their culture and way of life, the autonomy of their social, economic and political organizations.

**Independence** as we conceive it stands for a good deal more than a new juridical form of the State. It is the watchword for a whole people; not only for putting an end to dependence and national oppression, but also for collectively and democratically appropriating control over that people's conditions of existence and its future.

### **For a Democratic Québec**

Through the realization of socialism and independence is raised the necessity of democratizing all the powers in society. Only a socialist and independent society can achieve true socialization and authentic popular sovereignty. These three terms are irrevocably linked.

To construct popular power, we must put an end to the private appropriation of decisional powers in politics just as much as in the economy, and eliminate authoritarianism and relations of domination in society.

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

We must bring together the conditions that will allow the majority—the working and popular classes—to exercise effective power in the elaboration of collective decisions as well as upon their application in working places, neighborhoods, villages and cities, in the regions and on the national level.

On the level of its organization and its operation, the Québécois State must be radically transformed through the democratization of the legislative, executive, administrative, judicial and police apparatus, so as to guarantee the effective realization of the wishes (*volontés*) of the people.

The power of the State must be decentralized, debureaucratized, and dehierarchized so as to interdict the appropriation of power by a minority. Far from being based on a monopoly by a single party, or on the fusion of the State with a party, the organization of political power must express a new dynamic based simultaneously on the recognition of the freedom of political organization, on the recognition of the role and autonomy of popular and worker organizations, on the development of fundamental solidarities and the decentralization of power towards the local and regional collectivities, as well as on the birth of multiple locations of political expression and intervention appropriate for working and popular classes.

Certainly political power, be it on the local, regional or national level, must dispose of a true capacity to co-ordinate and effect collective decisions. It must also possess sufficient force to resist internal or external pressures in opposition to democratic decisions. And this power must exercise itself within a dynamic of participation, exchange and interaction in such a way as to prevent dominating and repressive bureaucratic apparatuses from being able to take root.

Our democratic project recognizes that the rights and liberties of the individual are inalienable and guarantees their permanent respect through specific and independent institutional mechanisms.

Our democratic project equally recognizes the rights and liberties of the collectivities and that these must be fully recognized: the rights and liberties of association, union, expression, demonstration, the right to negotiation and the continuous right to strike. It recognizes the rights of individuals and groups with common interests and objectives to form autonomous organizations and to establish relations of force (*rapport de force*) in defence of their rights. It recognizes the fundamental right of individuals and collectivities to be real agents of political power; that is, to democratically direct all aspects of their work and lives.

Instead of opposing individual to collective rights, and thus seek to eliminate one in the name of the other, our project on the contrary favors their reciprocal

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

expansion and reinforcement.

Building a democratic Québec is to provide the means to establish new relations between individuals and collectivities.

Certainly tensions and conflicts of interest will continue to exist between the individual and the collective, between the national, regional and local collectives as well as between different groups. The elimination of dependence, the abolition of social classes, the disappearance of inequalities between men and women, the socialization of the economy, the democratization of powers will not be achieved overnight, and even once achieved they will not eliminate all contradictions.

Nevertheless, all these transformations will create a new dynamic in social relations that will allow tensions and conflicts to be recognized and to be democratically resolved in the framework of the organisms that society will have created in accordance with the interests and aspirations of the working and popular majority, and in a common spirit of solidarity.

### **For Equality Between Men and Women**

Just as fundamentally as socialism, independence, and democracy, the establishment of egalitarian relations between men and women on the social as well as economic, cultural, political, and juridical levels is an essential basis for the construction of a veritable popular power in Québec. This represents one of the objectives that is at the very heart of our political project.

We must put an end to the sexual division of labor and sexual discrimination be it in culture, advertising, information media, the school, the family or work, and to establish special measures to systematically check the historical and structural discrimination of which women are the victims.

We must eliminate all forms of the domination of women, the constraints, harassments, humiliations, and the violence that the present society exercises against them.

This presupposes in particular the recognition of parental responsibilities and familial tasks as being social responsibilities, such as to establish conditions to allow these responsibilities and tasks to be shared between men and women in an egalitarian fashion as well as a greater socialization of the tasks of reconstitution and reproduction, notably by means of a network of daycare services that is universal, free of charge, and controlled by the users and men and women workers. Equally this supposes that the costs brought about by the fact of having children be shared by the collectivity as a whole.



## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

Moreover, this supposes that maternity, the function specific to women, be finally socially recognized, that all maternities can be freely consented to, and that consequently all women have the possibilities and means either to interrupt a pregnancy or bring it to an end without harm to either their health or other rights.

Finally this supposes a radical transformation of the organization of work which eliminates all discrimination both in working conditions and in pay between men and women, favors the development of egalitarianism for women as well as for men in all sectors of employment, the taking into account of pregnancy, birth and nursing as much through the flexibility of schedules and the granting of leaves as in the nature of the work, and moreover an egalitarian sharing of familial responsibilities and tasks.

To build equality between men and women is to put together the conditions such that socialism, independence, and democracy are realized not halfway, but fully and for all men and women.

### **Towards popular power**

By collectively appropriating the means of production and exchange, socializing enterprises and services, transforming the organization of work, democratizing economic and political power, achieving independence, and transforming relations between men and women, the working and popular classes will build a new society that will answer to their needs and their collective aspirations.

How will these transformations be expressed with respect to one another? At what pace will we proceed with the required socialization? What stages will we have to go through in the realization of independence? What democratic mechanisms will we have to establish? What kind of relations will there be between the State and the political organizations, the social movements, the rank-and-file collectives? How will the political power be expressed with respect to economic power?

So many questions to debate, so many problems to resolve, so many political choices to effectuate, for us to undertake today to raise in the very heart of the working and popular classes.

In order to conduct this collective reflection, to elaborate their project of society, construct their power, the working and popular classes must undertake to forge an instrument for themselves.

It is for this end that we must now get down to work.

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

### III

#### A MOVEMENT TO CONSTRUCT

Undertaking to transform in-depth Québécois society in accordance with their interests and their collective hopes, the working and popular classes must henceforth count only on their own power (*force*).

The time has come to put an end to our class dependence in the face of those political parties—Liberal, Péquiste, or other—who have largely demonstrated, in varying degrees, that they are the political expressions and the servants of the interests of the capitalist minority that exploits and dominates us.

The time has come to stop being in tow to these political administrators of capitalism, and to no longer leave the defense of our interests to those parties, that, from election to election, if not from generation to generation, do not cease betraying our collective aspirations.

These parties will never tackle the real causes of exploitation and domination. They will never really question the inequalities between men and women, nor dependence, nor unemployment, nor poverty. Only the working and popular classes have the interest and the political will to do so, because they experience the necessity in their lives and in their work.

**The construction of a radically new society necessitates the establishment of an autonomous political movement of the working and popular classes. This represents an essential condition and an indispensable step.**

Already with our trade-union and popular organizations we have given ourselves the collective instruments that have permitted us to appropriate for ourselves through autonomous measures, the defence and the transformation of our living and working conditions. We must today appropriate for ourselves "politics" ("*la politique*") by giving ourselves our own instrument of political struggle.

Our political project supposes such radical changes in social relations, and meets head-on such powerful interests, that we cannot hope to realize it without disposing of a collective instrument with which to confront the considerable resistances that we will encounter. It is easy to imagine that the capitalist class, having access to political, economic and military power, will not witness the questioning of its privileges and the explosion of its domination without reacting.

How are we to achieve victory without having a political lever that will carry our project and that will gain such support from the people that the capitalist domination can be broken?

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

The project of a socialist, independent, democratic Québec in which there will be equality between men and women, can only be realized within the framework of a political movement that is wholly and profoundly controlled by the social classes that bear the hope for it.

### Let Us Construct Our Movement

The **Socialist Movement** that we today undertake to construct, as well its strategy of implantation and development, are determined by the political project that we put forth.

Our project implies radical transformations in the political, economic, social and cultural organizations of Québec society. It affirms the necessity for the working and popular classes to conquer not only the State power, but all sites of power, and to appropriate, transform and democratize them in such a way that socialism is one that is lived by the men and women workers in their daily lives, and the sovereignty acquired be that of the collectivities—autonomous and solidary—over their development and their future.

This represents a profound change that cannot be realized by the simple election of deputies. Certainly, given the present political void and the urgency of change, the temptation to constitute a party to hurl ourselves in the conquest of State power could be great and legitimate...but this is a temptation to be wary of, one that in the present situation could at best lead to ephemeral and fragile successes. It is not sufficient to simply decree that Québec is henceforth socialist, independent and democratic, for it to become so!

The changes to which we aspire will not take place overnight. We must first bring together a constellation of political conditions: transcend divisions and realize the political unity of the working and popular classes; deeply implant our project in all the regions and spheres of life and work; arouse and develop a will to struggle and change, construct a relationship of strength, develop international solidarities; in short, put into operation a social dynamic capable of carrying out our political project.

We must bring about a true political and unitary mutation in the midst of the working and popular classes. It is through the construction, as of today, in our working and living environments, of a large movement for socialism, independence, democracy and equality between men and women, that we will get there.

And if it is reasonable to believe that in its development this movement will in its time undertake the conquest of State power, we must today start at the beginning and act in such a way as to make this seizure of power not only possible but significant with respect to our fundamental objectives.

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

To the power of capital, the working and popular classes oppose their unity and their solidarity. The coming into being of a movement that will realize in its internal operation the main orientation of our political project will be the expression of it.

### **A site for regroupment not centralization**

The **Socialist Movement** will be a site of regroupment, not of centralization.

It will aim at regrouping, as broadly as possible, all those men and women who adhere to its orientations as expressed by this manifesto, and **who want to take concrete action in the areas of work and life**, in order to establish at the base the foundations for a socialist, independent, democratic Québec where there will exist equality between men and women.

**To become a member**, it is necessary to subscribe to the manifesto, to engage oneself in the organizational tasks that evolve from it, to accept the statutes and rules, and pay the dues that have been established. Those belonging to another political organization will not be able to join.

In its procedures of implantation, our movement will seek to be as representative as possible in its male/female, geographic and social distribution.

It will be of a national character, rooted in all the regions of Québec, and all sectors of activity. In a first step, it will be formed around provisional **regional committees** that will be set up soon after the publication of this manifesto.

It will be constructed on the basis of a democratic and decentralized structure, allowing simultaneously **its members' control over the orientations, the actions, the leadership decisions**, and the democratic expressions of the different regions and various fields of struggle.

Until the convocation of a first **congress** at the latest one year after the publication of the manifesto, the Movement will function under provisional statutes and will be co-ordinated by a committee of eleven persons elected from the project's initiating group, and by a provisional **national council** composed of a **co-ordinating committee** and of delegates from regional committees.

### **A site of egalitarian relations between men and women**

The **Socialist Movement** will be a site of egalitarian relations between men and women.

Not only will it leave a clear field to the expression and development of the specific struggles of women, and support them through the creation of a

## POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE

permanent committee concerned with the living and working conditions of women, but it will grant constant priority to the establishing of egalitarian relations at all levels of organization and at every stage of its implantation as much in its recruitment efforts as in its decision-making and concrete activities.

Taking into particular account the parental and familial responsibilities of its men and women militants, the Socialist Movement will aim at establishing concrete conditions that permit full, entire and egalitarian participation of men and women.

### A site of convergence not domination

The Socialist Movement will be a site of convergence of solidarities and struggles, not a site of domination. It will be fully autonomous with respect to trade-union and popular organizations, and will only accept individual memberships. It will be respectful of the very nature and specific autonomy of trade-union and popular organizations, rejecting absolutely political conceptions that aim at subordinating social movements, the notion of "transmission belt", attempts at monopolizing the political field. By contrast it will clearly affirm that an essential condition for the in-depth transformation of Québec society is precisely the existence and development of trade-union and popular organizations that are autonomous and dynamic.

Seeking the political unity of the working and popular classes, the Socialist Movement will certainly strive to attract the adhesion of members of union and popular organizations, though in the strict respect of democratic mandates and outside all strategies of manipulation.

Autonomous and respectful of autonomies, the Socialist Movement will be a site of convergence so that the demands and struggles of the working and popular classes open onto a larger political framework.

### A site of debate not dogmatism

The Socialist Movement will be a site of democratic discussion and debate, not of dogmatism.

It will pursue a collective reflection so as to elaborate, in the light of its development and its struggles, a project of society, a program of struggle and a program of transition to socialism that will give rise to the adhesion of the working and popular classes of Québec because these will be the expression of their interests and their aspirations. It will give itself the appropriate means to become a true site for political education (*formation politique*).

### An instrument of struggle and intervention

## *POUR UN QUÉBEC SOCIALISTE*

But even more the Socialist Movement will be an instrument of struggle and political intervention.

Through it the working and popular classes will be able to provide themselves with all the necessary means to denounce all forms of exploitation, oppression and domination. It will be their instrument for making known their point of view, and for defending their collective interests in all major debates. It will be their tool for getting down to work, as of today, on the egalitarian, free and solidary Québec of tomorrow.

As female and male activists for a socialist, independent, democratic Québec in which there will be equality between men and women, we are today making an appeal through this manifesto to all those men and women of the working and popular classes who share our aspirations and will for change: let us together construct the Socialist Movement!

Conscious of the amplitude and the difficulties of the political combat that we are undertaking, it is with confidence and determination that we launch this call. For we are profoundly convinced that this combat will tomorrow be that of the Québec people as a whole.

Québec  
October, 1981

---