



# 'BORN FOR HALF A LOAF' vallieres and the flq

*It has now been one year since Canada joined that community of nations whose governments control the lives of its citizens by means of martial law, intimidation and political repression.*

*On October 15, 1970 the Trudeau government imposed the War Measures Act in an attempt to crush the Front de Liberation du Quebec and all other movements articulating the desire of the Quebec people to escape the yoke of English-Canadian economic and cultural exploitation.*

*The act suspended civil liberties for all Canadians and resulted in the imprisonment of citizens from all areas of society. It was introduced to deal with what Trudeau and Quebec premier Robert Bourassa liked to call an "apprehended insurrection".*

*The rationale for introducing the War Measures Act has since proved to be pretty hollow as most of those charged under the act have been released and the charges dropped. The Quebec government realized that it couldn't carry the sham any further.*

*One of those against whom charges have not been dropped is Pierre Vallieres.*

*Vallieres is a Quebec journalist and intellectual whose political writings have been compared to those of Eldridge Cleaver for their poignancy and their evocation of the needs and struggles of an oppressed people.*

*Vallieres stands accused of seditious conspiracy and membership in the FLQ but failed to appear for trial in mid-September.*

*Instead he issued a communique saying that rather than "submit interminably to fake political trials" he was going underground to continue the struggle for Quebec liberation.*

*Since the War Measures Act and the publication of his best-selling book "White Niggers of America", Pierre Vallieres has become sort of a cultural hero to the people of Quebec.*

*What follows is an expert from his book.*

THE AUTHOR OF this book is an idealist who, from childhood on, learned from his father to long for a better world in which the men who work anonymously from day to day—the farmers, workers, day laborers like my father—could enjoy life after having toiled so hard to subsist, to endure...and to perpetuate the species. Enjoy life not by getting drunk on the weekend, by "drinking up their pay," beating their wives and children and destroying themselves in useless fits of anger, but by possessing the material and intellectual means of creating something in this world, of giving of themselves to others and of exchanging with them something other than curses, sarcasms, and humiliations.

"I wonder when we'll be able to take it easy for a bit and enjoy life without worrying about tomorrow," my father often said. And with a bitterness mingled with resignation, my mother would answer: "When you're born for half a loaf, you can't expect..." My mother was learning to forget all the dreams of happiness that, like all women, she had in her youth. And she did not want to discuss fantasies with my father. What was the use? You hurt yourself by hoping. You increase your disappointments and life becomes unbearable. Better to expect nothing and take what comes as it comes.

My mother would complain about her headaches, the dullness of the radio broadcasts, the slovenliness of such and such a neighbour...while I, trying not to hear anything that was going on around me, would listen to the revolt that mounted inside me and heated my blood.

They say that silent suffering is the most terrible. (I read that in a prose poem of Baudelaire's, I think.) I learned very early to question fate in silence. Especially on those long rainy days when it seemed to me that the whole universe had withdrawn into the depths of a swamp of misery.

Life very early posed for me the questions that are hard for men to answer. It took me many years to begin to find the elements of an answer, and even more time to discover what had to be done to provide a concrete solution, a real solution, to servitude, passivity, alienation, and poverty.

My itinerary from working-class slums to the FLQ was long and tortuous. For a workingman's son, nothing in life is laid out in advance. He has to forge ahead, to fight against others and against himself, against his own ignorance and all the frustrations accumulated from father to son; he has to surmount both the oppression laid upon his class by others and his own congenital pessimism, to give his spontaneous revolt a consciousness, a reason and precise objectives.

Otherwise, he remains a nigger, he turns into a delinquent or a criminal, he consents to becoming at the age of thirty the ruin of a man...a bitter and disenchanted slave.

The entire experience of workers shows them that the explanation for their poverty and impotence lies in the brutal fact that there are, on the one hand, those who possess everything and, on the other, those who possess nothing. That is something they all know, they live it every day. But, they say to themselves, what can you do when you are one of those who possess nothing?

If revolt is natural... Except in times of crisis... workers can take advantage... system to deal it... long-enforced degradation... fatalism, resignation, and... everything, including the...

When a "great darkness"... the Duplessis regime from... over a whole people, the... questions about man's... tempted to despair of... The triumphant reign of... the metaphysics of the... Anarchy and of Nausea... "quiet revolution",... dictatorship of Stupidity... Quebecois struggled vainly... like penniless prisoners... the procedures that cause... day and in court the need... without ever understanding... machine that moves the... universe from which all... are shut out, the universe... Order, the Public Interest.

Under the reign of... for the Quebecois to resist... by reading the classics of... give a meaning to this social... men? Not even the best... how to turn their own... Everywhere there was... conspiracy among all... their ghettos, to die there... no longer have to breathe... submission mixed with... practically no one dared... beyond his own immediate... the downfall of Stupidity!

It was as if after the... depression and war, the... indifferent to their fate... had left.

If seemed as if, having... years of black misery, the... attached any importance... they called their fantasies... only thing they looked for... even really believe in... money that Duplessis dan... the bishops, deputies, any... when there was any left... farmers or workers who... and complicity in advance... years before, these same... to denounce the dictator... demand the heads of the... invaded the business qu... damage to the big buildings... had refused to go and fight... of Rockefeller. They had... armed with their rifles. Th... their wives and children... the military police. They had...

## Those who dared be

And now here they... demagoguery of Duplessis and vulg... drunkard Camillien Houde... during 1940's and early '50'.

The country was becoming... one still wanted to give a... to have blind faith and com... a solitary hope, hard as th... black as the mines of Abit... of the workers of Montreal... of Quebec.

Few were those who... Nevertheless, during the war... had spoken to other me... language of combat and... which men like my father... the hope that one day... would give the homeland... those days there was war...

At the very time when... men that they were wrong... there were workers in Que... countries of the world, who... ever for a change of system.

When you are only a "k... that c... escape from the room... exit... frustrating conditioning... before you have even becom... as an adolescent, you start... already bent by too much... better position to win out?

And when you are a man... takes just to try to "reverse..."