

Chartrand on capitalism and Quebec

No liberation within system

"Pierre Elliot Trudeau said there can be no national liberation within the capitalist system. I agree with him," Michael Chartrand, one of the Montreal five charged with seditious conspiracy, told Dalhousie students March 22.

Speaking to a crowd of about 230 people, most of whom were quite receptive in his ideas, Chartrand told his audience about the events of October and explained the necessity for an independent socialist Quebec.

He called the War Measures Act, brought down on October 16, an "anarchist bill" passed by a majority of English MP's. "It gave power to the Minister of Justice," said Turner, "because it was more democratic," Chartrand said. With the bill, he said, power has been taken out of the courts. This is against the constitution, the criminal code, and the Magna Charta, from which the right to trial originated. He and other accused persons pointed this out to the three judges of the court of Queen's bench.

"They didn't want to hear it," he said. "They said it has been decided by parliament that there had been an apprehended insurrection, and power to bail you out was taken from us."

There was no protest from the lawyer's association, he added. Those Canadians concerned with human and civil rights did protest.

"I was in jail for four months without a trial, and so I hope that every minister and every judge (who are supposed to be concerned about legal actions in this country) would be in jail for four months without a trial," he

said, "then they will make up their minds about whether it is fair or not."

"What is the freedom of speech in this country?" he asked.

Those who are speaking out against problems in Quebec and the world were on the police lists, he explained. They were the ones arrested on October 16.

"There were no terrorists there. During the five months, they were unable to convict anybody of being a member of the FLQ. They have to find a brain for us for that revolution, that armed insurrection."

They took Vallieres and Gagnon, who have been in jail for over two years for nothing, because they had been in jail before, he explained.

Chartrand explained that Canada lives under an economic dictatorship. With separation, "we won't be dominated by the U.S. because we already are. I don't see how we can have a lower standard of living because we have 250,000

unemployed now. How can we be worse off?" he asked.

One of the large resources Quebec has is newsprint. Chartrand assured one questioner that he thought the American papers who buy newsprint from Quebec might hold out a bit, but they would soon decide to buy newsprint from the country, because they needed it. "They may even be willing to pay an extra 1/2¢ to 1¢ per ton for it," he added.

If Canada became socialist, he was sure Quebec would be glad to enter into some friendly relationship with her.

Another question of ten asked about separation is whether the US Marines would come in, once Quebec declared herself an independent socialist country. Chartrand combated this quite easily saying, "let's wait and see if the Marines come in and then the people will decide whether they will be slaves or if they will fight."

Chartrand feels separation will come.

"The youth of Quebec are looking for a new philosophy of life," he explained. The older people who have tried the present system and not made it, are telling their children to build a new society, he said. This new generation, like that around the world, is more human, and demonstrate more solidarity. They have a basic instinct of liberty and want to control their own lives.

Others, like Laurier Lapierre, he said, were radicalized during the days of October. "Many others have made the same decision. A lot who were hesitating have now made up their minds."

"The good part of the people have to make the decision whether they want socialism, or not, and when the army comes in, they'll have to decide whether to take arms," he explained.

However, "you never saw a slave get rid of his master's will because he had to get rid of his master's chains," Chartrand

said. The Quebecois must make up their own minds about their future.

This will be accomplished democratically, he thinks. For those who disagree with him, he feels he is not their father, and they can have ideas contrary to his.

He said that the Waffle is the only sensible part of the NDP. However, he felt that the Waffle's support of separatism and self-determination for Quebec would hurt them in English Canada.

He dismissed the Parti Quebecois as a non-socialist party. "They can't bring over the goods within the capitalist system," he said.

He warned that Bourassa would have to change the electoral system soon, or there would not be another election.

"We want a government elected by the people, to have legislative and economic power — We want government for the people, by the people; that's democracy," he concluded.

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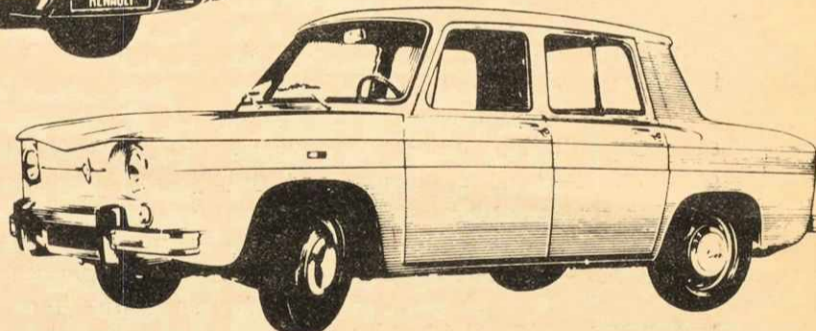
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