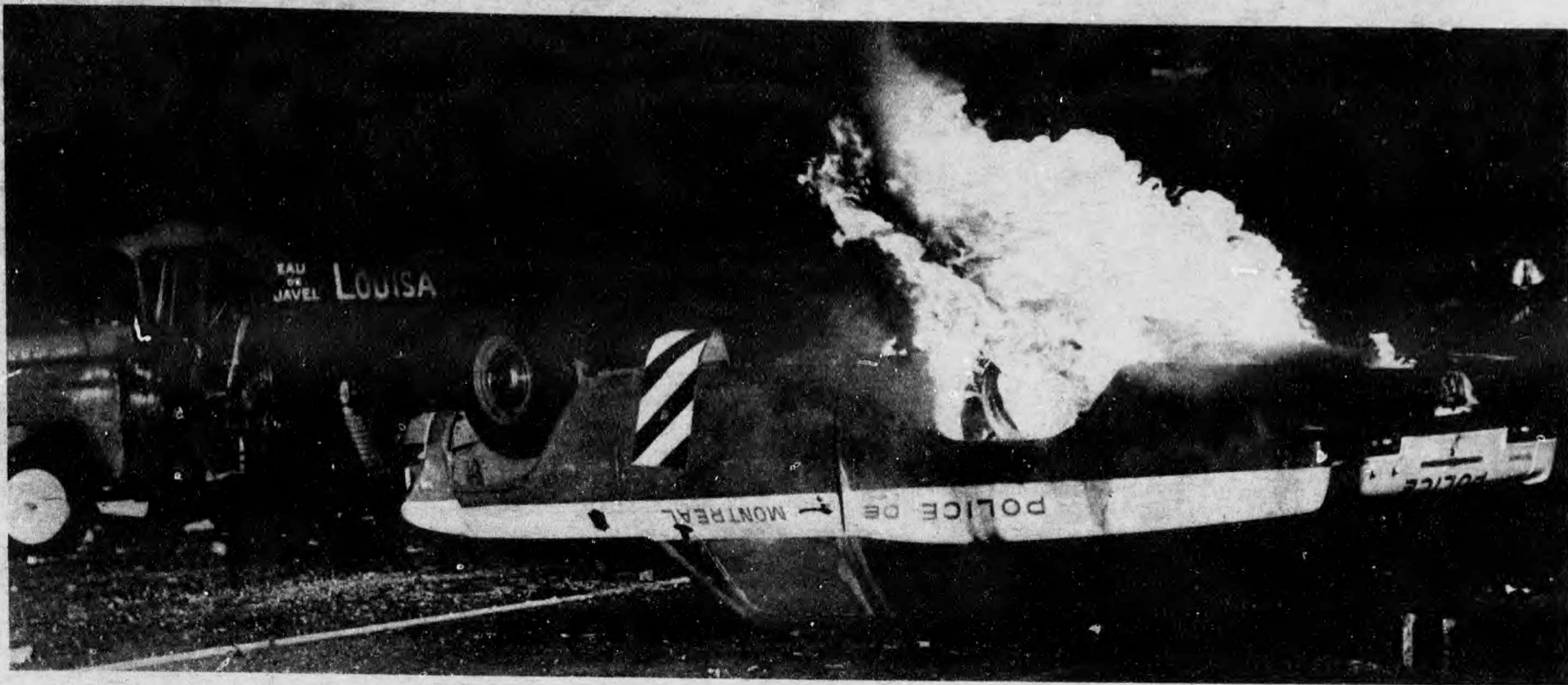


EGRAL PART OF FLQ HISTORY



thing like the Shaw, Deputy Commissioner-General of the Montreal World Fair, said here.

"There are four of them, they're out, they make a lot of everybody talks about them and they're nowhere near a threat to civilization that some people think," Mr. Shaw told interviewers.

"Like the ones, they'll have disappeared from the face of the earth by now."

He was reported at a press conference to have publicized violent separatists might frighten tourists away from the city. (Montreal Star, Feb. 22, 1964)

(We need only that Mr. Shaw, now administrative vice-principal of McGill University, was referred to as "sub-singe" which might be translated "sub-ape".)

If the FLQ temporarily disappeared, Quebec left was alive and well. A number of groups formed which emphasized the need for political work among the working class: L'Action Sociale Etudiante, the *Jeunes Etudiants du Québec* (especially its social action sector), the *Mouvement Populaire* (an offshoot of the socialist-independent *Parti Pris*), and the *Comité des Chômeurs*. These groups organized, picketed, and demonstrated in support of demands for better wages and living conditions for the right to unionize alongside workers. Gilbert Ayers, LaGrenade, International Environmental Refuse and Destroyers. They were beaten alongside workers whose bosses brought in security forces and thugs and often could only swallow the government kept silent. Only after having been diligently with the workers, and having seen the law with it, did they turn to violence.

It was thus that experienced groups of militants formed the 1966 Front de Libération du Québec. The targets of the bombings were all factories where workers had been struck. The reasons for the attack were explained in press releases, and were phoned in where they might be endangered. The FLQ's propaganda in La Cogue was published in four editions a month before direct actions were feasible. It was a longed-for strike at the shoe factory which was the Front's action. On May 5, 1966, an explosion killed LaGrenade secretly.

rested them on charges, filed three days later, of illegal entry. They were held in the Manhattan House of Detention, where Vallieres wrote *Les Negres Blancs d'Amérique*, an autobiography telling of his childhood in Montreal slums and of his later politicization. Meanwhile, back in Montreal, police were rounding up the *Comité d'Action*. A half-dozen *Comité* members pleaded guilty on arraignment to a wide variety of charges; most are still in jail.

US and Canadian authorities apparently grew weary of the long legal battles necessary to extradite the two men they considered to be the ideological leaders of the FLQ. Finally they hit upon a stratagem that four years later was to occur to the terrorist enemy; kidnapping. On January 13, 1967, Vallieres and Gagnon were released without notice. As soon as they stepped on the sidewalk outside the jail they were picked up by US customs and immigration authorities, and put aboard a plane to Montreal.

For the forces of law and order, the battle was only half over. They had Vallieres and Gagnon behind bars, but keeping them there was still a problem. Bail was denied the pair, and the Crown asked for and received several postponements. They finally appeared together for trial on February 26, 1968, having prepared a joint defence, but were ordered to stand trial separately. Vallieres' trial for murder in the LaGrenade case lasted until April 5. Since two *Comité d'Action* members had already admitted having built and delivered the fatal bomb without the knowledge of Vallieres or Gagnon, the Crown had to build its case on a mass of circumstantial evidence, articles, pamphlets, *Les Negres Blancs*, and so on. Vallieres was found guilty on a reduced charge of manslaughter and Judge Yves Leduc sentenced him to perpetuity "given your belligerent inclinations". Seventeen months later, in September, 1969, with Vallieres still behind

bars, an appeal court quashed the conviction and order a new trial. One of the appeal judges explained: "...it seems to me that the appellant was condemned for his subversive ideas and seditious writings rather than for the crime of which he was accused." Another judge contributing to the joint ruling commented that: "No witness testified directly that appellant was aware of or condoned the plan for the delivery of the bomb which killed Mlle Morin." Realizing the difficulty of providing any concrete charges, the Crown decided to take a new tack. On October 31, 1969, without awaiting the outcome of the new LaGrenade trial, it filed charges of sedition based on Vallieres' book *Les Negres Blancs d'Amérique*, which had been on public sale for two years. Despite the inability of the Crown to furnish any new evidence, the LaGrenade retrial resulted in another conviction, which is still under appeal. Pending both the outcome of the appeal and trial on the sedition charges, Vallieres was released on bail this spring. He is now back in jail as a result of the proclamation of the War Measures Act October 16. The new charge against him is seditious conspiracy. His co-accused are Jacques-Langlois, chairman of the Vallieres-Gagnon defence committee; FLQ lawyer Robert Lemieux; Michel Chartrand, who on behalf of the Confederation of National Trade Unions had put up Vallieres' bail; and, of course, Charles Gagnon.

Gagnon has fared only a little better than Vallieres in his battles with Quebec justice. He was acquitted in the death of Jean Corbo; had a hung jury on a charge of conspiracy to commit armed robbery, for which he was later convicted and sentenced to two years; had another hung jury in the LaGrenade case, and was acquitted on retrial. This February, having served the armed robbery sentence, Gagnon was released on bail pending trial

on a number of relatively minor charges. His hard-won freedom was brought to an end October 16. There is little hope of bail being granted pending the seditious conspiracy trial.

There is an old saying that you can jail revolutionaries, but you can't jail the revolution. The artificial glow of prosperity and harmony that Expo '67 brought to Montreal did not long conceal the realities of class struggles; the pretty fences Drapeau built to hide the slums from the tourists did not cause those districts to disappear. 1968 brought increased unemployment and labor-management conflict ... and the rise of a new FLQ. The group began its attacks in May 1968, but not until the fall did they hit the frenetic rhythm that was the trademark of this cell. From September 1968 until March 1969, scarcely a week went by without at least one or two bombs exploding in Montreal. The list of targets is in part a history of the labor movement during that period: Seven-Up bottling plant, Lord and Co. structural steel, Victoria Precision Works, Quebec Liquor Board, Domtar, Murray Hill - wherever working men demanded their rights, FLQ bombs added noise and urgency to their cause. Towards the end of their active period, the "felquistes" launched a series of attacks not directly related to labor conflict. Shortly before 3 pm on February 13, 1969, an explosion in the visitors' gallery of the Montreal Stock Exchange injured 30 people but miraculously killed no one. An Armed Forces building and the Maisonneuve Armory were hit in the same week. These attacks seemed to represent a regression to the 1963 strategy of all-out assault on the apparatus of state. They were cut short on March 4 when police raided a "St-Dominique Street tenement" and arrested the red-bearded, 25-year-old Pierre-Paul Geoffroy. They found three bombs and 200 sticks of dynamite in his apartment. In

order not to betray any of his comrades, Geoffroy pleaded guilty to a record 129 charges. He got life.

The remainder of 1969 brought only sporadic bombings, and these were clearly linked to struggles then being waged by the left. Worth noting were the explosions at Loyola and McGill Universities (in support of French unilingualism) and the one at Mayor Jean Drapeau's home (protesting his reactionary and repressive régime). During the winter and spring of 1970, the FLQ remained silent. Through the *Parti Québécois*, young people were making a serious attempt to change the system by legal, electoral means. Apparently the felquistes wanted the young "péquistes" to learn by experience that elections were only "crumbs that the Anglo-Saxon capitalists throw into the Québécois poultry-yard every four years." Indeed, because of unfair districting and the scare tactics used by the Liberals and their wealthy friends, this was precisely the lesson that some péquistes learned. Moreover, unemployment in Quebec was reaching a new high. The government's only response was to go begging for more American capital, and to clamp down hard on strikes that would "erode the confidence" of investors. These developments set the stage for the events we know to well...

The development of FLQ ideology from 1963 to 1970 has followed clear lines. The class line has superseded the race line - there is no longer any doubt whether FLQ politics are "fascist or socialist". Moreover, the messianic, apocalyptic vision has been abandoned: "The FLQ is not the messiah nor a modern-day Robin Hood." The FLQ now calls on workers to organize themselves to take control of what is theirs. The imposition of the War Measures Act testifies eloquently to the fact that their calls beginning to be heeded...

Towards the end of September 1966, after Vallieres and Gagnon had been in New York nearly three months, they learned Canadian authorities wanted them for questioning. Friends offered them \$2,000 to flee, but they chose to picket at the United Nations to dramatize their cause. While picketing they granted TV and radio interviews. The next day, September 27, New York police arrested