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guaranteeing the English position, it would have served to prevent school boards from taking action that would challenge it. Clauses like the one 'encouraging' immigrants to speak French — while leaving the final choice up to parents and the free play of economic forces — made the purpose of Bill 85 quite clear — there would be no more St-Leonards.

The Bill satisfied nobody. The English complained that it didn't go far enough in guaranteeing their rights. The MIS saw all its work in St-Leonard being scuttled. It realized that its struggle went far beyond the boundaries of a small suburb, and conducted demonstrations against the bill in Quebec City.

Around the same time, a small group of MIS militants occupied the data centre at Montreal's wealthy, English-language McGill University, and were promptly evicted by police.

Attacked from both sides, the government eventually shelved Bill 85 (temporarily, as it turned out) and set up the Gendron Commission to carry out a global study of the language question. Meanwhile, the MIS was growing rapidly, and the time was ripe for an alliance between the unilinguist group and the dispossessed CEGEP students against what both now perceived as a common enemy.

The target they chose was McGill University. The CEGEP students saw the relation between the lack of university places and the existence of an institution that ate up 22 per cent of the government's university grants, but was closed to them—because its fees were the highest in Quebec, because it maintained a discriminatory admissions policy, and most of all, because it was English. The MIS—which had changed its name to the Ligue pour l'Integration Scolaire (LIS)—saw it as a blatant symbol of English privilege.

Operation McGill consisted of a massive information campaign and a march to the university's locked gates on March 28, 1969. Its slogans were 'McGill francais' and 'McGill aux Quebecois'. It was the first major common front action—alleged along with the LIS and the CEGEP students (organized in the MSP and independent action committees) were the FLP, the Montreal council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU), the Mouvement de Liberation du Taxi, action committees in factories, citizens committees, and a small group of English-speaking McGill radicals who saw that the critical university they sought, serving the people and allied with the progressive forces in society, would, in the specific case of McGill, have to be a French-language institution.

Operation McGill pamphlets, and an eight-page tabloid paper put out by McGill radicals and distributed in CEGEPs and factories, linked the language question to the forces that ran McGill University and were served by it so well. McGill's Board of Governors boasted representatives of major corporations from the Bank of Montreal (seven directors) to Abitibi Paper to Bell Canada to U.S. Steel.

A sensitive spot had been hit, and a powerful alliance rose up to defend it. It included the McGill Administration (and the vast majority of McGill students); the press, both English and French language; local, provincial and federal police; the Union Nationale government, the Liberal opposition, and, significantly, Parti Quebecois leader Rene Levesque (who still talked about the need for American investment in a separate Quebec). An atmosphere of hysteria prevailed. In the week before the march, the media conducted a scare campaign. Operation McGill organizers were arrested on the street and in taverns. The Canadian army was placed on standby.

On March 28, at least 10,000 people took to the streets (led by LIS president Raymond Lemieux and soon-to-be-fired McGill political science lecturer Stanley Gray) but, as the marchers' slogans pointed out, it was only the beginning.

## New Wave In 60

The new wave that hit Quebec politics in 1960 was not restricted to the Lesage Liberals; that same year Jean Drapeau was elected Mayor of Montreal on promises to "clean up the city" of corruption, provide better services for its citizens and generally bring progress to the metropolis. As mayor he toured the world, feted the appropriate visitors, and successively built the city's stainless steel skyline, a super-efficient subway system and an island playland in the St. Lawrence River.

Meanwhile, jobs for unskilled labor steadily decreased; urban unemployment remained higher in Quebec than Ontario. Drapeau could claim 935 low-cost housing units put up during his tenure. Toronto constructed 12,645, Vancouver (with less than half Montreal's population) 1,350 for the same period. Thirty-eight per cent of Montreal citizens were below or teetering precariously on the poverty line—\$3000 a year.

In 1965, a sociologist at l'Universite de Montreal told the Montreal Labour Council: "The heart of Montreal is rotting in poverty". So it was no surprise to find Comites des Citoyens

(Citizens' committees) popping up in the poorest areas, organizing service projects to cope with the necessities of life—food cooperatives, medical clinics and revitalization loans. The committees also engaged in political activity, mostly around unemployment and housing.

The Front de Liberation Populaire (FLP) entered the community struggles, linking the poverty and unemployment problems to Montreal and Quebec government policies. Comites des Ouvriers (Workers Committees) began organizing around their factories, as offshoots of the citizens' committees. In August, 1969, the various popular committees and the FLP organized Operation Alarme, a campaign focussing on the critical job shortage. Workers and unemployed demonstrated in front of provincial government offices in Montreal with placards reading "jobs—or there will be trouble" and "Le faim justifie les moyens" (hunger justifies the means).

But Mayor Drapeau and Executive Committee Chairman Lucien Saulnier were also facing the anger of another group of Montrealers—the taxi drivers. Many of these had supported Drapeau in 1960 by taking voters to the polls; in exchange Drapeau was to grant their demands upon the City. But by the fall of 1968 this had not been done: the drivers were still facing unfair discrimination in favor of the Murray Hill Limousine Service, and were suffering more than the average worker in the city. A militant group decided they had waited long enough. Led by 55-year-old cabbie Germain Archambeault, they formed the Mouvement de Liberation du Taxi, convinced that direct action was the only way of obtaining decent treatment.

There are about 1,000 more cabs in Montreal than the city can support, giving each taxi driver (many more than cars) a wage of between \$.75 and \$1.00 an hour. They have no unemployment, pension or medical benefits. Further, job conditions have made unions impractical. And operating right beside them was one of the largest Canadian transportation firms, the Murray Hill Limousine Service—enjoying a monopoly of Montreal International Airport traffic, as well as running charter buses, ambulances, long distance transport and taxi service from the major hotels to the airport.

In the fall of 1968, a Mouvement de Liberation du Taxi member spoke at a large CEGEP student rally. A few weeks later, student supporters accompanied taxi drivers to the airport. There they celebrated the 60th anniversary of Murray Hill—limousines were overturned and set on fire, and molotov cocktails were hurled at Murray Hill buses.

The pamphlet announcing the action read in part: "4316 taxis times 6 passengers equals 25,896 demonstrators...We demand the complete disparition of the cancer that is daily eating away at our Way Bill. Oct 30 is the beginning of a series of demonstrations that will continue without let up until our complete victory".

## Poverty-Line Cops

But alienating the taxi drivers was not the Drapeau-Saulnier administration's worst blunder.

The job of a policeman in Quebec contains elements not found elsewhere. Apart from normal beat duty, he has to defend institutions like McGill University and the Union Nationale from his ethnic and class brothers. A Quebec cop is a French-speaking worker, only slightly better-paid than the average. In Montreal in particular, where the situation has been hottest over the last year, many police have become conscious of the contradiction between that and wielding a *matraque* or risking being maimed by a molotov cocktail in defense of English capital. On top of that, the police were involved in a protracted dispute with the city over wages and working conditions.

Both the police and the firemen were demanding wage parity with their counterparts in more placid Toronto; but the city, its coffers depleted to the extent that Mayor Drapeau now ran a lottery to raise money, could not or would not agree. Their demands were sent to compulsory arbitration; in each case a judge appointed by the Quebec government, one man appointed by the city and one appointed by the brotherhood were to decide the new contract.

The firemen learned their result first, on October 4. It was \$8,000 — a Toronto fireman earns \$9,000. In a fury they stormed to Le Vaisseau d'Or, Drapeau's posh new restaurant in the Windsor Hotel. Montreal police kept them in line. Two days later, the police got theirs — \$8,480, \$700 less than they were demanding.

The next morning, the overnight police shift left work and called a meeting of the Brotherhood at the Paul Sauve Arena. The morning shift came on — and joined them. The city streets were without police. The firefighters were impressed. They walked out too.

The police continued their Brotherhood meeting all day, avoiding a strike declaration. Montreal radicals visited them, chatting with the cops about how their struggles sprang from the same source. The police did not show immediate support, but they discussed the idea seriously.

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