

## ...Repression in Quebec

trained agitators who sell their mothers for a stick of dynamite — a very hysterical way to come out against terrorism. He proclaimed these famous anti-terrorist laws at a big conference of all the police chiefs of Quebec.

What are the anti-terrorist laws?

Well, they include the power to legalize or to stop in advance demonstrations and political rallies. Whatever is the relationship between an individual placing bombs, and stopping demonstrations and rallies? There isn't any relationship.

Clearly, they were trying to use the laws against terrorism and some public opposition to terrorism to smash the left as a whole in Quebec. The minister of justice made it quite clear himself when he said: "If we had had these laws before, there wouldn't have been marches like Operation McGill, St. Jean Baptiste and Operation Alarme."

Operation Alarme, by the way, was a small march and a few hunger fasts organized by youth in a working class area. Now they even consider a hunger fast against unemployment, a very passive tactic, as the equivalent of terrorism. It's quite clear they intended to use the anti-terrorist laws to begin an increased campaign of repression to wipe out the left, to wipe out in fact any kind of opposition to the government.

The reason for this is quite clear: they feel they are increasingly isolated from the population, there's a big wave of popular discontent, the system is incapable of satisfying the rising expectations of these groups.

And since they're incapable of acting in a liberal way, of giving concessions, the only way they can use now — and they're certainly using it — is the direct violent repression of all the movement on the left, of all the popular groups that oppose the government.

This is part of the whole situation of polarization that has been occurring: on the one hand, growth in numbers and a rise in militancy on the left and in popular movements; on the other hand, the government is becoming much more reactionary in using repressive means.

The same thing is true of the English-French question: the English themselves are reacting in an absolutely hysterical way to the whole thing, particularly since Operation McGill.

For them, of course, Quebec is on the brink of anarchy, revolution, communism, separatism — they're taking over McGill, what's going to be next? Bell Canada?

Well, in fact, the CSN demanded last week that it be nationalized. So there's a real scare and panic towards the right. And this polarization is happening at all levels of political forces in Quebec.

The next step in the escalation of repression by the government occurred just at the time of the St. Leonard demonstration in September. It all started because the Ligue pour l'Integration Scolaire held a very calm, quiet meeting — intended to be such — to discuss the situation there.

The meeting was invaded by a group of English-speaking people who threw chairs at them, so that there was a big brawl. Of course, no charges were ever brought against the English-speaking people.

Violence from the right is OK. Violence from the left everyone gets hysterical about.

So the LIS organized a march to support the original demands of the St. Leonard movement. When the march started, the Riot Act was read — so that no one saw or heard it read — but everyone there was potentially guilty of violating the riot law just because they were in the area.

After the march was over, they charged in court three of the leaders of the march with conspiracy, violation of the riot laws, sedition and things of the sort, very serious charges carrying heavy jail sentences.

The interesting thing is that it was the first time they had used such charges against a legal group and a legal demonstration.

Previously they had frame-ups; for example, Vallieres and Gagnon, who were in the FLQ.

Now for the first time they're saying: If you hold a mass demonstration in Quebec, even if it's legal and no matter how respectable its organizers are — the guys charged at St. Leonard are extremely respectable in the context — you can face criminal charges in court, you can be framed, you can face life imprisonment, the whole thing. This is just part of the whole escalation of repression.

The next stage, of course, was Oct. 10, when they didn't wait until after the march to say it was illegal. Before the march occurred it was announced it was illegal. And after that, the witch hunts, arrests, raids. If there's no massive public opposition to what's happening in these repressive measures by the Quebec government, within a year Quebec will be a police state, indistinguishable from other police states that exist around the world.



I just want to finish off by talking about one particular action that we're organizing within two weeks to be our main anti-repression or counter-escalation on our part and on the part of the movement on the left and of all the movements of opposition to counter the police state that is being instituted in Quebec at the present time.

This is a march being organized for Nov. 7.

It's being organized by a common front of the CSN, FLP, MSP, LIS, popular committees, the Vallieres-Gagnon Defense Committee and others. This march will put forward three demands:

(1) The immediate release of Pierre Vallieres and Charles Gagnon from jail. Vallieres and Gagnon are two Quebecois Marxist revolutionaries who have been in jail for three years without having a single accusation or charge proved against them in all those three years. There are about six or seven charges against them. On a few of these charges they have been found not guilty; on a few there have been hung juries. But nothing at all has been proved against them except that they wrote revolutionary literature and were engaged in Marxist education with left groups. So we are demanding immediate freedom for political prisoners like Vallieres and Gagnon, and that the state drop all charges against the three organizers of the St. Leonard demonstration in September who were charged with conspiracy and sedition.

(2) The immediate resignation of Remi Paul, minister of justice.

(3) The immediate retraction of Bill 63, the new language bill, which is a complete capitulation to Anglo-American imperialist interests in Quebec, which guarantees in theory the linguistic equality of the English in Quebec, when it in fact gives a privileged status to English as long as English continues to be the language of the dominant class. As long as English is allowed to be taught in the schools, all immigrants to Quebec are going to learn English if it is possible for them to learn English. This is one more step in the direction of the cultural genocide of the Quebec nation that's been developing for a long time.

The demand for French-only schools in Quebec links the popular struggles around the national question and the class question that have provoked the current wave of repression to an anti-repressive fight.

This march on Nov. 7 is extremely important, because if there is not a massive wave of opposition and protest to this repression, in a very short time we are going to have a police state in Quebec.

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