

## **Nationalism and Class: A Case Application**

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This paper examines the relationship between class and nationalism within Quebec. An effort has been made to reconstruct the historical narrative through reference to suggestive and complex factors of political discourse. In the Quebec conjuncture, the crossroads of these varied forms of discourse have had a profound effect upon the disorganization of working class ascendancy in the political sphere. This paper sheds light upon the nature of the present vacuum at the center of the mainstream nationalist crisis.

Dans cette étude, nous nous penchons sur le rapport qui existe au Québec, entre les phénomènes de classe et de nationalisme. Ce faisant, nous nous sommes efforcés de reconstruire la trame historique, à la lumière des éléments significatifs et complexes du discours politique. Dans le contexte québécois, la rencontre de ces différentes formes du discours a contribué de façon marquante à la disorganisation déjà amorcée de l'influence de la classe ouvrière sur la vie politique. Dans cette étude, nous tentons également de faire la lumière sur la nature du vide présentement au coeur de la crise du courant nationaliste.

## Introduction

The relationship between class and nationalism in Quebec has often been posed within the context of assigning broad or at times narrow definitions to ethnicity as the primary analytic format. Similarly, the class-oriented structuralist analyses by Marxists and non-Marxists alike have often been reduced to the now classic framework of a rising regional and/or petite bourgeoisie as the sole gatekeepers of the new politico-territorial consciousness. This paper will argue, on the contrary, that nationalism within relatively homogeneous societies is expressed as well as appropriated by various class interests under the pervasiveness of a complex hegemony. Whilst the expression of this hegemonic process is deeply rooted in cultural, social and economic factors, its manifestation becomes most apparent in the realm of political discourse and 'popular' organization. In this regard, I will attempt to explain the contradictions which exist between the organized sector of the Quebec working class and the contemporary nationalist format. In the process, I will be underlining the problematic and protean nature of these varied ideological positions.

The case studies which will be reviewed for this task are the Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN) and the Federation des Travailleurs du Quebec (FTQ). Both of these union Centrals have often been uncritically identified with the nationalist persona since the early 1960s. I shall show that this relationship is best understood within the contemporary complex of class alliances. In so doing, this paper, in a broader sense, equally addresses the effects which the contemporary mainstream nationalist discourse has had upon the disorganization of working class ascendancy in the political sphere.

### Theoretical Considerations

The question of class and nationalism is primarily a problem within Marxism itself. In effect, how does one relate nationalism, a political manifestation, and its defining characteristics within the working classes in a paradigm which lacks a comprehensive approach to political organization?<sup>1</sup> The association of these two analytic processes, i.e., class and nationalism, have, however, provided an intellectual and pragmatic agenda of some debate. No doubt, this has been due in some part to the instrumentalist perspective often found at the heart of the controversy itself. The essence of the polemic revolves around the inherent and seemingly irreconcilable priority of one historic category and its explanatory features to the detriment of the other. Attempts to redress the contradictory nature of these two concepts have generated various interpretations.

Within Marx's own writing the issue of nationalism, though an implicit undercurrent, remains a relatively undeveloped notion. Davis (1975:3) attributes this condition to the general absence of a systematic political theory within Marx's early and later monographs. Without doubt, nationalism as a legitimate area of study has been relegated to a secondary and epiphenomenal status precisely because of the analytic primary accorded to class analysis within the historically specific materialist framework. In this regard, the contradictions arising between these two concepts creates a cancelling effect in the production of analytic terms when, in fact, they are particularly needed. Bloom (1941:16) has argued that Marx used the concepts of nation and nationhood less than rigorously. In fact, early mention of these designations were fraught with ambiguity. As Bloom has shown in his meticulous and seminal study of national concepts within Capital, Marx often made reference to the nation with considerable licence, using it as a synonym for country, state, and occasionally, the ruling class of a given country.

The general thrust of Bloom's argument merits some consideration. In his view, Marx considered the national question in an indirect manner. Therefore, nationalism became an implicit notion within the many monographs. It is in the totality of Marx's analyses regarding the problematic of modern and earlier societies that one finds the national perspective. In this light, for Marx, a nation as well as a society represented a degree of autonomy and self-consciousness within a particular historical bloc. Nations in this sense were often depicted in Marx's writing as containing necessary historical background which centered around traditions, questions of unification and so forth.<sup>2</sup> These preconditions were then set against the identifiable structure of class relations.

One of the approaches various writers have used to assess Marx's thought on the national question, and its expression amongst various classes, has been to decipher his usage of such terms as 'the national class and the universal class.' In this instance, Bloom posits the horizontal notion of class and the vertical concept of nationalism as fundamental inquiries into the process of class struggle. This dichotomy, he argues, is resolved through Marx's use of the concept of 'national class' (1941:59). This class, Bloom asserts, assumes a leadership role regarding the organization of production and the content of social, political and legal institutions. It is, in a sense, the juncture within Marx's work wherein class meets the nation. The 'national interest' in this regard is subservient to the interests of the national class, a role traditionally occupied by the bourgeoisie.

Davis (1967) questions the usefulness of the national class concept, so central to Bloom's understanding of Marx. For Davis, though there are many references in Marx's work to the leading class, national class and universal

class, caution should be exercised in their explanatory value. He finds within Bloom's classic study a notion of common purpose hovering tenuously over the battlefield of contending classes (76).

Haupt, Lowy and Weill (1974) have also examined the relationship between class and nationalism in Marx's work. These writers have, however, attributed considerably less emphasis to concepts such as the national class in their search for an explanatory correlation. An analysis of national implications in Marx's work, they assert, must recognize his emphasis upon the absolute primacy of class formation above any other historic category or process. They argue (33):

- (a) the nation in this regard is a transitory category that corresponds to the development of capitalism and its peculiarities,
- (b) there is an absence in Marx's work of an explicit theoretical position vis-à-vis nationalism. There is however an implicit assertion in Marx's work not to treat the problematic in an autonomous manner, i.e., affording it a theoretical status,
- (c) the notion of nationalism often developed incidentally is however present in all of Marx's work as a condition of historic legacy.

For Marx, according to Haupt et al., the issue of nationalism, in whatever context, was never a goal in itself, but an instrument within which workers may or may not pursue their own interests. Certainly, this was an important element in Marx and Engels' analysis of German unity in 1848. It was also in this sense that Marx supported the unification of Italy and Germany during the 1860s as revolutionary events even though he acknowledged the immediate benefits accrued by the bourgeoisie. Marx's writing on the Irish question was another example of how he dealt with the problem. It was within a consideration of the Irish question that Marx and Engels in effect dealt with the notion of the oppressed nation through an understanding of the

articulation between national interests and the progression of working class interests. This was, of course, always placed within the larger framework of class struggle outside the exigencies of the particular nation-state. In fact, as Marx argued, Ireland was without question the key to solving the English question, as England itself was the key to resolving the larger European question.

Most representative of the modern Marxist approach to the question of self-determination is the work of Nairn (1981). He equates the growth of nationalism with the political entry of the lower classes into the actual process of history. Nationalism receives its social and political thrust from a joint occurrence of external pressure and an internal balance of class forces (41). As Nairn would argue, nationalism arises when conscious middle class elites react to the phenomenon of uneven development through the mobilization of cross-class characteristics, myth, etc. The populist element of nationalist or revolutionary nationalist movements receives its momentum at this crossroads in class relations.

National self-determination, Nairn asserts, whether of the Left or the Right is never independent of class structure. It has, however, become the mobilizing ideology most effective in portraying the common concerns of a given society and that society's perception of its own internal and external relations. Nairn argues in this regard for an amended version of Lenin's conception of self-determination. However, whereas Lenin's grappling with the problem took place within the historic context of the multinational state, new theorizing, it seems clear from Nairn's position, must proceed from the uneven development of modern capitalism.

For Nairn, the silent intellectual interim between the vibrant 1914 debates of Lenin and Luxemburg and recent theorizing in the area of class and the nation are linked to various historic weaknesses in Marxist studies. Principally, this area of concern is one in which Marxism has tended to be particularly vague, i.e., the analysis of political structures and the state, particularly the bourgeois democratic state and its accompanying ideology. Secondly, in areas where Marxism is particularly strong, such as historical development, orthodoxy has prevented new approaches until the recent growth in developmental studies. Nairn's contention, in a reformulation of Lenin's dictum, postulates that nationalism has been the necessary alliance sought by the middle classes with the working class in the form of a new political complex. This process, he contends, is particular to the current stage of capitalist development in the first as well as the third worlds.

Hobsbawm has become Nairn's most articulate interlocutor regarding the problematic relationship of Marxism and nationalism. Briefly, in a rebuttal to Nairn's thesis, he argues three salient points: First, addressing Nairn's assertion of the positive characteristics of nationalism in the global capitalist system, he argues that independent states are clearly dependent upon a global economy which transforms sovereignty into a modern form of dependence. In effect, as Hobsbawm asserts, transnational neo-colonialism favours a maximization of sovereign states to effect a minimization of power under which foreign capital will ultimately have to operate.<sup>3</sup> Second, he argues that there is a danger that territorial demands would come to be seen as the criterion of a potential nation. Hobsbawm's concern here is that this assumption can too easily become a premise for satisfying the various aims of groups. This second observation ties in well with his third consideration which remains the problem of how to organize the co-existence of various

ethnic linguistic factors in indivisible areas under the guise of nationalism to the exclusivity of one or the other group. In Hobsbawm's view, therefore, nationalism, far from clarifying class relations, at best obscures and prohibits the development of socialism within individual nation-states (1977:7)

Clearly, the central question asked earlier regarding the relationship of the working classes and nationalism retains a significant level of complexity as well as ambiguity. This has been the case particularly when seen in purely structuralist terms, as by our previous authors, or in a more strategic design, as put forward by Hobsbawm. The parameters, therefore, within which the question has been posed are delineated by a towering sense of irreconcilability.

The task remains to draw upon a framework which puts the problematic upon a different terrain and suggests, if but in a broad theoretical context, an analysis of levels of articulation between and within social classes while maintaining the essential position of historical materialism.

#### Gramsci and Nationalism

Antonio Gramsci's conceptualization of the relationship amongst social groups, particularly within the political sphere, offers, at the very least, a point of departure. In this sense, Gramsci's understanding of the complex interplay of social relations suggests a method by which to progress from the structure in which classes are constituted at the economic level (i.e., fundamental classes and class fractions) to the political level in which classes and class fractions combine. Gramsci's notion of the political allows us to project the issue of nationalism toward the level of superstructure, to give it a complex political stance while maintaining the

essential link with structure itself. For Gramsci, the relationship of these two levels is, in effect, mediated by the political.<sup>4</sup>

Pivotal to this form of analysis, which lays a significant emphasis upon political discourse, is the Gramscian notion of hegemony. Hegemony refers to the dialectic relation of class forces. As Hall, Lumley and McLennan have asserted (1978:79), the richness of the concept allows an analysis that keeps the levels of the social formation distinct "and yet held in combination."

#### Hegemony: An Operationalization

For Gramsci, hegemony (and its numerous ideological components) is tied to the political moment and is achieved "experientially" through such inclusive notions as transformism and expansiveness. As he contended in The Prison Notebooks, transformism is indicative of parties of the Left and Right who merge their interests in the form of common political programs. This aspects of hegemony is synonymous with the notion of passive revolution, wherein class interests become neutralized through political groupings. A transformist hegemony, as Gramsci argued, is a process of class absorption wherein the class striving for hegemony has extended its ideological hold over

...active elements produced by allied groups and even of those which come from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile (1971:59).

The above form of hegemony, and this can be practically read as a type of corporatism, entails a strong dose of political momentum and implies the steady absorption of elites.

The dialectic of a transformist hegemony is the expansive hegemony. Expansive hegemony results in consensus wherein the interests of the popular

classes would be adopted by the hegemonic class and thus give rise to the creation of a genuine "national popular will."

These two notions of hegemony as a "lived relation" have, therefore, two components, as Mouffe (1979:183) points out: (a) the ability to neutralize class interests (transformism), and (b) an articulation of class interests (expansiveness) which through their full development would ultimately bring to the foreground their inherent contradictions. Such an understanding of hegemony would suggest that ideology, through its material base (social class), develops "inter-class subjects which manifest themselves politically." The essence of the problem rests in understanding the development of a given hegemony and the political processes whereby we can pinpoint the adoption of one world view by a social class with apparent differing interests.

#### An Application and Analysis: Quebec

The following discussion of class and nationalism in Quebec will be divided into three distinct time periods:

- (a) 1960 to 1965; the period of the Quiet Revolution characterized by its transformist qualities.
- (b) 1966 to 1975; a period of sustained state repression indicative of a harsher "transformism", bordering upon integration by coercion.
- (c) 1976 to 1980; the political ascendancy of the Parti Quebecois and the referendum on sovereignty-association characterized by the expansive nature of class alliances.

Each conjuncture is typified by a particular form of nationalism as exemplified by the mainstream (political parties) as well as marginal (nationalist political groups) political current. It is impossible within the confines of this paper to elaborate upon the exact nature of these

periodic mainstream nationalist expressions. I have done this in some detail elsewhere (1984:28-47). It is however possible to appraise the positions of the two union Centrals under consideration during these same periods and thereby establish their divergence or capitulation to the predominant political expression. These two Centrals have played a unique role in the intellectual formation and dissemination of ideas within the Quebec working class. This becomes particularly important given the absence of a legitimate Left-oriented political party within the province.

#### 1960-1965: The Transformist Project of the Modernizing State

The Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN) entered the decade of the sixties having surmounted a vast array of structural changes. In May 1961, Jean Marchand was elected president of the organization, succeeding Roger Mathieu. The Marchand period, which lasted until 1965, was characterized externally by the transformative project of the Lesage Liberals and internally by a particular genre of trade-union reformism.

A review of minutes of annual congresses through the Marchand period provides a perspective on these important years. The fortieth congress of the CSN in 1962 occurred within a span of great expansion for the Central. Specifically, massive reform of the educational system and the development of the social service sector by the state created a significant reservoir for syndical growth. As shown in table 1, the public service sector representation within the CSN increased roughly 100% in a six year period. Similarly, industrial and skilled workers decreased in relative terms.

Table 1: Composition of Membership of the CSN by Sector of Activity by Percentage 1960-1981

	1960	1966	1973	1981
Public Service Sector	27	52	67	56
Industrial and Skilled Workers	73	48	33	44

Source: Rouillard, Histoire de la CSN 1921-1981

Surrounding these internal structural changes were, however, the political realities operating in the larger social formation. Major themes throughout the union literature during this period were focused upon attempts by the CSN to clarify its role in relation to the state in both its provincial and federal form. This type of dialogue took place during a period of structural symbiosis and a growing ideological affinity of the Union Central within the modernization projects of the Lesage Liberals.

The groundwork for this political response was laid at the 1962 convention which dealt specifically with various strategies for political action in view of the federal and provincial state structures. Marchand addressed himself at some length to the 1959 constitution of the CSN concerning the substance of its political outlook. The following is a condensed version of positions taken during the 1959 convention (CSN, 1962:48-49): (a) to reaffirm the CSN's independence toward political parties; (b) to pledge complete freedom of affiliated organizations regarding political action as long as it caused no prejudice to the general interest of the movement and (c) to restrict political interventions on the part of the President or the Secretary General during electoral campaigns.

Marchand sought to change various precepts of the 1959 charter. Primarily, the political independence of the CSN would remain intact, i.e.,

trade unions and politics would remain disjointed realities lest political opinions weaken and divide the union. However, the President or the Secretary General would have the power to make political interventions during election campaigns. Marchand went further and suggested that the Confederated Board of the CSN should, under certain circumstances, recommend support for a party of its choosing. This reassessment must be seen within the support of affiliated locals for the New Democratic Party, and the more immediate provincial political stage in which the Lesage Liberals were dominant. In effect, Marchand's amendments were intended to address the Central's lukewarm support of the NDP, the proportionally greater support of the NDP within the locals and the Central's increasing reformist pact with the provincial state.

The forty-first congress which took place in 1964 resembled the 1962 session in many respects. The major theme was not, however, the evident strains of political alignments which were at the apex of various positions taken during the previous congress. The 1964 session returned to a more traditional discussion of economic development of the province and the pressing problem of intersyndical relations, particularly given the intense raiding practices between the CSN and the Federation des Travailleurs du Quebec (FTQ).

The national question for the CSN represented a contradiction in terms of its own political orientation. The two congresses of 1962 and 1964 suggested a measure of autonomy from the federal state, which was not dissimilar from the Left-oriented expression within the Lesage Liberals spearheaded by the Levesque faction. The CSN's regular yearly memorandum submitted to the federal Cabinet was, however, indicative of its own self-perception as a pan-Canadian central, concerned with such issues as the nationalization of

Bell Canada, the Canadianization of the economy and the opening of relations between Canada and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In the 1964 memorandum, federal/provincial relations were pervasive. The CSN discourse offered various approaches toward powersharing, with greater revenue generating power for the province. Also, the immediate need for federal/provincial conferences was stressed. The demands which the CSN submitted to the federal Cabinet paralleled quite closely the general political debate between the province and Ottawa. The larger context within which these appeals were being made was that of a greater alliance between the Central's actions and the interests of the provincial form of the state. It is little wonder that in its 1964 memorandum to the Cabinet the CSN would plunge more deeply into the current centralization/decentralization debate. In a sense, the vicarious quality of the previous memoranda in which the Central expressed the concerns of larger regions for greater Canadian independence had come to an abrupt halt.

Le Borgne (1976:12) argued that, given the prevailing circumstances of the period, it was inevitable that the militants within the CSN as well as the progressive sector of the provincial Liberals would share a common ideological framework. This commonality was fixed, amongst other factors, with the emergence of new class fractions in the sphere of unproductive labour which was intent upon pushing forward the reforms of the Quiet Revolution. Perhaps most indicative of this period, for the CSN, was a firmly held perception of the state as being in the forefront of the grand notion of common purpose being actively pursued by the Lesage Liberals.

The FTQ, in contradistinction to the CSN, entered the period of the sixties more inclined toward structural affiliation with a workers' party. Certainly this was due in large part to the FTQ link with the Canadian Labour

Congress, which had already committed itself to the NDP platform. In his introduction to the 1960 convention, the president of the Central, Roger Provost, outlined the FTQ perspective toward traditional provincial parties:

Today we have another new government which has made us new promises and which apparently contains some loyal friends of the working class. We will not change our political outlook however which is non-support for either of the two parties. We must maintain our political orientation all the more because the foremost problem of the hour (which will likely be the major problem of the years to come) is unemployment. There exists not one single example of a political party with a traditional philosophy which has taken effective measures to solve the problem except in times of war. This ideology, or lack of ideology, and the interests they represent mean that the old parties invariably stop in the threshold of real reforms and full employment (FTQ,1960:4).

Perhaps not surprisingly however, on an ideological level (as with the CSN) a comparative analysis of various declarations adopted by the FTQ in 1959 and the Liberal program of 1960 shows little disagreement as to the agenda of proposed reforms.

The difference between the FTQ and the CSN was, however, nonetheless evident above the prerequisites of the modernizing state which they both acknowledged to varying degrees. The main difference was contained in the differing notions of reform held by either Central. In the case of the FTQ there was a sense of reform which was immersed in a tradition (through structural links with the Canadian Labour Congress as well as the NDP) of addressing the federal form of the state. The CSN was, on the other hand, Quebec-oriented in its relation with the provincial form of the state, and, to a greater extent, the immediate provincial social formation.

The FTQ was as well a recipient of two particular types of political mobilization as expressed by its predecessors, the Federation provinciale des Travailleurs du Quebec (FPTQ) and the Federation des Unions Industrielles du Quebec (FUIQ).<sup>5</sup> In this regard, the FPTQ had a "bread and butter

orientation" and favoured structural links with the CCF/NDP political apparatus. The FUIQ advocated direct workers' action and was often behind the organizational attempts to create separate working class parties within the province.<sup>6</sup> The ideological gulf between these two factions was no doubt considerable at the time of the merger. The newly formed FTQ, over and above these traditions, found itself immediately ensnared by the nature of the working class struggles which were increasingly being enacted upon the provincial stage. This situation, in purely political terms, was further complicated by the active nurturing of the FTQ's shaky alliance with the NDP by the provincial Liberals who utilized the pact to justify excluding the FTQ from an organizational slice of the growing public and para-public pie. The conditions facing the FTQ were therefore: (a) the growth of the Quebec state and the concomitant isolation of the FTQ from the political arena, while participating in the reformist practices of the state and (b) the inability of the FTQ to institute a viable arm of the NDP within the province to represent the political form they so clearly sought. Both of these aspects were related to the new historic emergence of the national question. The isolation of the FTQ should in this sense be appraised equally through the growing importance of the CSN. The CSN incidentally faced none of the two above conditions as acutely as did the FTQ. Roback (1973) has argued similarly that, given the decline of efficiency by the international unions (as represented by the FTQ) and confronted with the more effective structure of the CSN, the FTQ was less adept in maintaining a collective front in its various struggles with the state.<sup>7</sup>

### The Quiet Revolution: A Summary

Aside from representing a period of considerable growth in the composition of the working classes within Quebec, 1960 to 1965 was an equally important time in the development of a modernizing petite bourgeoisie. This juncture is best characterized by its reformist participation and appropriation of class interests through the exigencies of the modernizing state. To a certain extent, these factors provided the background for the articulation of a type of working class nationalism immersed in a transformist pact with the state. Nationalism for the working classes of 1960 to 1965 was in this sense primarily, but not solely, of a structural design given the conditions of a changing class structure and modernization of state apparatuses. In the case of the FTQ, this was translated into a process of integration of its class interests with a more defined territorial perspective. Accordingly, the format of nationalism in the FTQ during this period was removed to some degree from the cultural claims of the Quiet Revolution.<sup>8</sup> This was less the case in the CSN which was well implicated as a spokesperson for the working classes. Its structural problem resided, however, in the absence of a defined political approach particularly given Marchand's earlier guidelines. It was precisely these types of conditions, in both Centrals, which would intertwine the political nature of working class interests in the then emerging petit bourgeois political and social agenda.

### 1966 to 1976: The Growth of the Repressive State

While the early sixties was a period in which working class organizations were adjusting to their own structural incapacities, 1966 to 1976 presented a more complex configuration. The conclusion of the Quiet Revolution found the

syndical movement within Quebec in a particularly fragile position. The dynamism of the period created the conditions for union participation in a series of state mechanisms such as the Société Générale de Financement (SGF), the Caisse de Depots et de Placement, and L'Office de Planification. Cracks in the social momentum were, however, beginning to appear. This was evident in the absence of cohesion amongst the new factions in power. Technocratic attempts to further the gains of nationalist ideologies conflicted with a neo-capitalist faction which was content with the structural changes already achieved. The program of the technocratic faction was finding political expression in the left of the Liberal party and, eventually, in the Mouvement Souveraineté Association.

The developments influencing the CSN and the FTQ during this juncture can be concretely typified by (a) a substantial change in the composition of union membership given the public sector expansion; (b) the defeat of the Liberal regime and (c) the increasing conflict between the Centrals and the state, which had already begun in the final year of the Lesage mandate. The last point is particularly pertinent, given the acquiescence of the two Centrals toward state decisions throughout the early sixties. Mascotto and Soucy argue that the prevailing interests and forms of nationalism reminiscent of the social bloc identified with the Quiet Revolution had reached the frontiers of its own capacity for change (1979:107). This capacity entailed the contextual framework of reformism which, for the Centrals could no longer maintain the types of policies they were increasingly advocating. Mascotto and Soucy refer to some of these stillborn policies as a substantially watered-down hospital insurance plan, slow progression in educational reform and unsatisfactory reforms to the labour code. This last point elicited a strong reaction from the syndical movement which resulted in a march upon the Quebec Legislative Assembly.

These failures of the Quiet Revolution were certainly at the base of disenchantment with the Liberal regime. However, as Mascotto and Soucy point out, instead of retreating to the classic posture of working class organizations (i.e. a greater inward emphasis upon syndical organization during periods of crisis), the two Centrals utilized the social dynamic of the period to develop a radical view of social forces in the larger society. Certainly, given the nature of discourse during the period, this seems to have been the case. In one sense, the radicalization of the two Centrals from the mid-sixties could be seen within the context of an absence of any other form of political organization firmly entrenched in the popular masses.

As a consequence of this situation, the Centrals became, by necessity, the sole polarized formation for working class grievances. These circumstances were not only operative for the then current plethora of social questions (given the trauma of economic and compositional changes with the working classes), but the Centrals also took upon themselves another function. This role was to act as a repository for various class interests on the national question while attempting to clarify its own voice.

In 1966, the unionized working class in Quebec was composed of 540,000 persons, 35% of the active labour force. Of this number, 35,000 belonged to the Centrale de L'Enseignement du Quebec (CEQ), 150,000 adhered to the FTQ (out of 350,000 members of the international unions) and 200,000 belonged to the CSN. Table 2 shows this distribution over a 17 year period:

Table 2: Union Affiliation of Working Class in Quebec over a Seventeen Year Period

	1960	1966	1976	1977
CEQ	28,000	55,000	70,000	80,000
CSN	94,000	200,000	245,000	200,000
FTQ	100,000	150,000	230,000	260,000

Source: Document de Travail, Centre de Formation Populaire

The political ascendancy of Daniel Johnson's Union Nationale in 1966 was marked by a changed relationship between the Centrals and the state. During the Lesage regime, the fruits of neo-gomperism blossomed from legislation favourable to the then perceived interests of working classes. The various projets de lois were seen by virtue of successful, however intense, lobbying efforts as geared toward the interests of the collectivity. This was uniformly the case, as both Centrals were active participants in state reform regardless of the level of recalcitrant rhetoric, particularly on the part of the FTQ. During the Johnson regime, we begin to see a division wherein the state uses its ideological apparatuses to distinguish the public interest from those of the Centrals. Johnson saw the role of the state in more coercive terms than his predecessor, and certainly this is borne out by the regressive labour legislation which he helped to enact.

The Johnson and Bertrand regimes (1966-1970) were, on the whole, less entrenched in the particular composition of social forces which typified the Lesage period. The Union Nationale represented a rear-guard reaction to the changes which had occurred during the Quiet Revolution, particularly the acquisition of greater powers from the federal state. It should be stressed, however, that the UN did follow through on various projects of the Lesage Liberals, particularly educational reform. In fact, once in power, the UN became a strong advocate of provincial autonomy. The lesser reliance which the Johnson/Bertrand regimes initially placed upon state intervention in the economy is evident from a comparison of expenditures with the previous Lesage government. Latouche's inquiry (1976:167) into the area of expenditure during these periods has yielded some interesting results. He found that

from 1960 total expenditure by the Quebec government rose steadily, reaching a significant increase of 29% in 1965 over the year before (in constant dollars). During the first year of the Johnson government, expenditures rose by only 9.6%. There was an elevation of 13.7% in 1967. Each following year, expenditure rose less than 10%. In 1970, expenditures decreased by 0.3% in constant dollars. The above figures can be used to explain the political and social prerequisites of class forces represented by the UN. These were regional interests which were less tied to the expanding technocracy of the state. However, given the new structural composition of the Centrals (particularly of the CSN, 50% of whose members were in the public and para-public sector) it was clear that the Centrals and the state were on a collision course. There were, of course, other relevant factors for this situation.

The 42nd congress of the CSN in 1966 was indicative of the growing militancy of the Central vis-à-vis the state. It was the first congress chaired by the new president, Marcel Pepin. Pepin expressed clearly the disappointments of the previous years for the working classes in Quebec. These observations were put forward mostly in terms of the full political weight of Quebec in provincial matters to counteract the imbalance in economic development. The imbalance to which Pepin was referring was most evident in the levels of unemployment throughout the province. These levels remained consistently higher than the national average.

The Moral Report of 1966, A Society Built for Man, addressed various issues. To a great extent, the monograph called for a democratization of the workplace as well as a rationalization of the economy. These issues were not very different from the views expressed in previous presidential reports. This, however, was the period during which the CSN had just completed its

first round of negotiations with the state for salary policies in the public sector. The effects of these negotiations were evident in the report. Pepin left little doubt as to the new perspective of the Central toward the State:

Comme employeur le gouvernement provinciale où ses agences se sont révélés parfois au moins aussi durs que l'entreprise privée. Les difficultés que nous avons rencontrées à l'Hydro par exemple, sont de ce nombre. Nous comprenons mal que l'Etat puisse copier les méthodes les plus mauvaises des entreprises privées ou plutôt nous croyons le comprendre trop bien; il nous est apparu assez clairement au cours de plusieurs de nos négociations avec l'Etat où avec ses agences à la régie des Alcools, par exemple où à l'Hydro, que ces négociations se déroulaient sous l'oeil vigilant des grands intérêts privés et que ceux-ci n'entendaient pas voir le gouvernement adopter à l'égard de la main-d'oeuvre plus sociales que celles dont eux-mêmes étaient disposés à faire preuve envers leurs propre employés (CSN, 1966:16).

There remained, however, a contradiction regarding the outlook of the CSN toward the state, one which would continue for years. This contradiction rested upon the recognition that the State, as a vigilant employer, was no more or less favourably disposed to the working classes than the private sector, and the state as

...that which must intervene and not leave economic domain to big capitalism. It (the state) must reassert its preeminence.<sup>9</sup>

Within the CSN, the image of the state acquired two faces, a perception shared by a rising petite bourgeoisie attempting to convince the regional bourgeoisie of the validity of its political project. This duality consisted of: (a) a dynamic structure whose interventionist quality had been muted and (b) a structure favourably annexed to the interests of big capital. The view of the state as a dynamic structure was in keeping with the developing hegemony of nationalist ideological elements within the general sphere of class formations. Struggles to revive the dynamism of state intervention in the economy and to remold the dialogue between labour and the state were at the base of this perception by the Central. Often, the struggles of labour

and the concerns of the new petit bourgeois acquired very concrete forms. This certainly was the case in the now famous CBC strike to affiliate with the CSN, which the Canada Labour Relations Board refused to accredit.

The state's favourable disposition to big capital again coincided with new petit bourgeois struggles against the prevalence of monopoly capital intrusion. Its interests lay in the encouragement of indigenous capital of a non-monopolistic character, which is not to suggest that the interests of these two classes were concurrent. They were not. The Central's perspective of capital and the state were often confrontational by their inherent class nature. This was not the case with the new petite bourgeoisie. However, what did cause a collusion of interests was the lack of a viable instrument of political expression by the working classes during a period of intense petit bourgeois mobilization. This mobilization was centered precisely on the national question which had at its very heart a quest for state power. The CSN remained, in this regard, a receptacle of latent political class interests with no legitimate ideological or practical channel. These interests were to find expression within the political project of a new emerging social bloc, which utilized the ideology of neo-nationalism as a motor for its vision of Quebec society.

The FTQ was more immersed in the federal/provincial debates than its counterpart in Quebec. The General Council Report in 1967 outlined the official position of the FTQ regarding the emerging constitutional question. The Report refers to the Brief submitted by the CSN/FTQ and the Union des Cultivateurs Catholique (UCC) to the constitution committee of the Quebec Legislative Assembly. In that Brief, the FTQ rejected a series of propositions aimed at resolving the constitutional crisis. The options objected to were: (a) an independent Quebec, (b) associate states, (c) the

status quo, and (d) greater centralization under the federal government. In lieu of the above, the Central proposed a federal system adapted to present-day realities and entailing a greater state role for Quebec.

It should be noted that the General Council's Report occurred during a year in which the national question was quite topical within the Central. It is not surprising that, given the differences amongst various factions within the FTQ, the Central's official proposal should remain so vague. The congress did not, however, come out strongly against separatism. In a repeat of Laberge's monologue of 1965, nationalism cum separatism was described as a bourgeois ideology that would ultimately reduce the standard of living of workers. At the same convention a resolution was passed, however, which acknowledged the right of autodetermination of the French Canadian homeland including, if necessary, the right of secession. This indicated the enduring strength of the FUIQ tradition, as well as the divided opinion within the Central itself. Regardless of the divisions, the official position called for a revised federalism through the growth of provincial state power:

We would, without any inconvenience reduce the preponderant place of the federal government in certain fields. Certain material that jurisprudence has declared to be under federal jurisdiction should come under joint control such as radio and television (Rapport de Conseil General, 1967:6).

Surely, the FTQ was reacting to a complex series of events. Given the various ideological stances within the Central, the FTQ sought a middle ground. In this regard, while having adopted a Left inspired analysis of Quebec society, it also articulated what was seen by many militant nationalists as a conservative approach toward federalism. The Central's position in the report to the Quebec Assembly satisfied for the moment both tendencies, as it contained a strong affirmation of a greater role for the provincial state on the language issue.

The substance of political action was once again assessed at the 1967 congress. Suggestions were put forward to organize with other progressive groups in Quebec and an exploratory conference toward unification of left-wing political forces in a provincial party was proposed. The irony of the suggestion must have weighed heavily upon militants, given the earlier failure of the Parti Socialiste du Quebec (PSQ). The report stressed the need for local union affiliation with the NDP. Resolution six stated:

...that the FTQ reiterate its intention to give its moral and material support to a provincial political party when it is required in the interest of workers, and when it is sure that there is a provincial party whose program and structures offer both in terms of ideology and integrity the same guarantees as the NDP-Q presently offers in federal politics (Rapport de Conseil General, 1967:6).

As well as being a turning point for the Central, Laberge's opening speech at the 1969 convention revealed much ambiguity. It was obvious by now that the great project of 1967 (to rally progressive forces in Quebec to create a new party) had not materialized and Laberge's statement reads like an indictment of the FTQ at having been "taken over by events." He addressed the seeming inability of the FTQ to implicate itself in progressive struggles outside of the union movement. Clearly, this speech was directed at the increasing impatience of militants within the Central to clarify a political approach. The essence of the convention, as the title of the speech, "Operation Collective Searching," indicated, was more than a reformulation of the inadequacies of political representation of the working class in Quebec. Rather, it was an affirmation that a new approach was needed. This was evident, given the realization of the difficulty of sustaining an NDP-Q presence in the province as well as the taking-up of the mantle of social democracy by the Parti Quebecois. In this context, he made no mention of the creation of a new party but, rather, urged the FTQ to re-examine its response to the large issues of the day.

The 1969 address was a harbinger of the type of political appropriation which would occur by the early seventies. Through its hegemonic regrouping of nationalist forces, the PQ had, in a very broad sense, acquired at least the appearance of the social democratic party for which the FTQ had hoped, for so long.

#### Radicalization and Reform

The decade of the seventies was initiated by the return of the provincial Liberal party. The privileged relationship that the CSN had maintained with the party during the sixties had been dramatically altered, given the departure of the PQ, its progressive wing. During the preceding four years, the Union Nationale had enlarged the role of the state in industrial relations, restricting union gains made during the first half of the decade. The Liberal party had in mind, no doubt, a further expansion of this aspect of the state, given their incoming platform of industrial peace. The first half of the seventies was a crucial period for the re-definition of syndical goals for both Centrals. It was during this time frame that we see a significant change in the outlook within the CSN/FTQ towards the entire question of nationalism. The period of 1970-76 was also marked by a more official movement by the two Centrals towards the Parti Quebecois.

The 44th congress of the CSN in 1970 stressed the need to eliminate the political vacuum which existed in the province. The atmosphere surrounding the convention was ripe for manifestation of solidarity amongst the various Centrals and diverse political groupings. This was the period of the War Measures Act. As a display of unity against the acquiescence of the Bourassa regime in the face of severe federal actions, the CSN, FTQ and CEQ formed the first united front against the military occupation of the province. The

natural party ongoing to counteract the repressive military action, was the PQ. The urgency of the political moment was not, however, the only aspect binding various class forces of the period. The 44th congress was also the occasion upon which the CSN called for an affirmation of the unilingual nature of Quebec, curiously rejecting, however, the application of this principle within the Central itself.

The 1971 FTQ document, Political Action Crossroads, summed up the magnitude of conflicting influences to which the Central was subject. The Committee begins by examining the reason why the political orientation of the Central, adopted at the 1967 convention, never rallied support amongst workers. Their conclusion was that support for the New Democratic Party of Quebec (NDP-Q) was premature. Workers were not sufficiently educated to accept this type of labour militancy. The problem lay with the fact that the political education of the working class had been provided by the traditional parties. The idea of politics for the working classes was one which was identified as a "dirty but essential thing which calls for our vote every four years" (FTQ, 1971:136). The above assessment of the political action committee was quite remarkable and perhaps attests more to the ideological disarray within the Central than to the actual political education of the workers. Certainly, by 1971, the FTQ had already given its implicit support to the Parti Quebecois. Within the rank and file, the party had done amazingly well in securing a large base over a very short period of time. The question was clearly not to educate the worker away from the crass political attitudes of the traditional parties but, rather, to offer an alternative to a party which was ideologically capable of winning the working class. The committee did suggest the integration of working class representatives in various extraneous organizations, most importantly,

municipal and school board elections. They also advocated a greater syndical support role for those workers who did engage in independent political action:

Up to now those organized workers who have been elected at the municipal and school board level were left to their own means. We should not be surprised if after some time those individuals hold views close to those of the middle classes and the financial elites than the working classes (FTQ, 1971:139).

#### The Manifestos

The well-known 1971 manifestos, Ne Comptons Que sur Nos Propres Moyens by the CSN and L'Etat Rouage de Notre Exploitation by the FTQ, were major articulations of the socialism/nationalism dialectic which was gaining ground in the Centrals.

Both manifestos were illustrative of several facets of the national question within the two Centrals. Primarily, the documents clearly separated the economic and social contexts from the dominant cultural context of the period. Relationships were not posed in Quebecois and Anglo Canadian terms, but in terms of the exploitative effect of capital upon the labouring classes:

The point, is not to engage in leftist activism of a particular tendency but to begin an authentic return to the trade union movement's grass roots, that is to forget the verbal battles especially the purely nationalist ones and to plunge into the very heart of a struggle against the exploitation of workers by capitalists (CSN, 1972:159)

The attempt to keep the two issues separate subjected the Centrals to much criticism from various Left nationalist coalitions. It was clear that Centrals had taken a distinct stand regarding working class priorities outside the realm of culturally motivated concerns.

While proposing a socialist definition of society, the CSN was particularly restrained in offering an examination of the role of state agencies. This was quite remarkable, given the popularity of state expansion in many sectors of the economy. The CSN approach to the economy was encapsulated in its call for the nationalization of sectors controlled by American capital. The FTQ proposal was qualitatively different. It saw the extension of state agencies as a solution to various indicators of class struggle, most notably unemployment:

Our first collective tool is the economic power of the state of Quebec. The state should be the only agency able to direct the use of everyone's savings, competence and initiative toward the creation of a real instrument of collective economic liberation.

The first task facing trade unionism and the people of Quebec is that of involving the state in economic activity and specifying the modalities of this action:

- (a) participation in the economy through the strengthening of government agencies;
- (b) the use of peoples' savings for collective purposes (FTQ, 1972:183)

Both of the documents stressed that the territorial prerequisite of Quebec was inextricable from the condition of the working class. However, the vagueness of their social project during some very crucial political moments created much room for the appropriation of consent within the labour movement. In effect, the two organizations were radicalizing workers in terms of their objective class position but they were not offering the necessary political dimension needed to express those interests. This was most evident during the debate within the Centrals concerning the implications of the manifestos. While the movement was debating the consequences of determined class action of a progressive nature, it was similarly aligning itself with a reformist approach reminiscent of the early sixties.

### Summary: An Absence of Options

The perspective of the FTQ, although similar to the CSN in that it offered no clear alternative to the political morass of the times, went somewhat further. This may have been due to the tradition of commitment to a party sympathetic to the working class, coupled with the repressive state mechanisms during the Bourassa regime. The 1975 convention of the FTQ (a year before the provincial election) saw an unprecedented shift by a Quebec Central toward a major party. The move, in strategic terms, was meant to plant workers in the party. A similar rationale was used by F. Daoust of the former Parti Socialiste de Québec as well as the Conseil Centrale de Montréal of the CSN, in the early seventies. The opening speech of the president of the FTQ on the eve of a new political arrangement within the province was particularly illuminating. The official line of the FTQ, particularly when it came to Laberge, was to relegate any nationalist rhetoric to the sideline. In no uncertain terms, however, the address was a capitulation to the various pressures within the Central for a greater implication in the PQ's social project. Laberge situated the FTQ in terms of the Party, stressing that the PQ was not a worker's coalition but could still constitute a channel of change. It was, Laberge argued, a challenge workers should accept.

In 1974 as well as during the special congress in 1975, the CSN echoed the same type of movement toward the social platform of the PQ, but with considerably less official aplomb than the FTQ. Though coming from different inclinations and strategies, both Centrals were involving themselves in the form of mainstream nationalism in the crucial year prior to the PQ victory in 1976. Both used essentially the same rationale in the appropriation of their consent. In terms of the developing hegemony, the securing of a stable social base seemed at hand.

### The Parti Quebecois and the Referendum

The election of the Parti Quebecois in 1976 was a welcome relief for the labour movement in Quebec. Over and above the vision of a sympathetic party which many workers saw in the PQ, the direction of the working class vote was clearly anti-Bourassa. Interestingly, the researcher investigating this period, intent upon finding material within the Centrals related to the national question, comes up against a wall of relative silence. The absence of dialogue was broken earlier by the CSN in 1978 and followed hesitatingly by the FTQ in 1979 and, more forcefully, a month prior to the referendum in 1980. Given the earlier recalcitrant tone of the '71 manifestos implying a socialist vision of Quebec society, the lack of position papers, resolutions, etc, was certainly significant. The paucity of analysis within the Centrals was indicative of a sceptical "wait and see" attitude exercised by the CSN and the FTQ towards the new party in power.

The absence of an official line by the Centrals was, however, not indicative of the substance of debate amongst the militants. At the 1977 congress of the FTQ, we do see a developing opposition to the FTQ's acquiescent relationship with the PQ. This opposition called for syndical unity and the creation of a true workers' party to offset the influence of the PQ amongst the working classes. Quite apart from these distancing attempts (which were consistently stronger in the CSN), it was the mobilization of the new petit bourgeois strategies for the referendum which ultimately motivated the enlivening of debate in both Centrals. To a certain extent, it was once more the political which became a factor in class relations. Whereas the political moment had appropriated class elements earlier in the Parti Quebecois' formation and later victory, it became (through the referendum testing, so to speak) the parameters of the existing hegemony.

The 49th congress of the CSN, held in 1978, had much to resolve. The preceding two years of PQ government had shown significantly less promise than the workers' movement had hoped for. The Rapport du Comité d'Orientation was reflective of the need to extrapolate the significance of the national question for the Central. The report, published a full two years prior to the referendum, made no mention of the approaching plebiscite. In part, the document represented a clarification of the socialist project enunciated in the 1971 manifesto. It was, however, more clearly directed at the preceding two years of PQ rule. The working paper was indicative of the ending of a very disturbing two years of consensual integration. The terms of consent were based upon a disorganization of the working classes, as Bill 45 had illustrated. The bill offered a mixed bag of reform and repression which tended to polarize factions within the working classes themselves. It would seem that this is inherent in a process of consensual integration, which incorporates a dialectic but is concretized in terms of the demobilization (in this case of a political type) of class interests. The Rapport du Comité d'Orientation was an attempt to address this type of hegemonic process by squarely situating workers' interests on the ideological battleground of the Parti Québécois, i.e., the national question.

The conditions of the debate, as the document state, were to be found in the efforts of political parties and associations to woo workers to their particular view of the nation. The paper argued that working people of all sectors in Quebec were threatened by Bill 45, as well as by federal legislation dealing with the economic crisis. It then became essential for workers to analyse the national question within the context of capitalist exploitation. The national question, like the state, the paper continued,

could not be seen in neutral terms, i.e., it takes on the form of the dominant class relationship:

Les partis politiques ont des représentations différentes de la réalité Canadienne et Québécoise, et cela en fonction des intérêts qu'ils défendent; ils ont pourtant en commun d'utiliser le concept de nation (Canadienne ou Québécoise) pour masquer les rapports d'exploitation qui sont le fondement même de la société capitaliste (Rapport du Comité d'Orientation, CSN, 1978:5).

The relationship between the PQ and the CSN was examined in some detail by the report. The document recalls the support of the CSN in the 1976 election. Its own studies indicated that 60% of all organized workers voted for the Pequistes (PQ), with 15% going to the Liberal party. In the Anglophone sector, it was the working classes which voted PQ, (33.3% of Anglophone workers under the age of 35 voted for the PQ as opposed to 22% who voted Liberal.)

The interim between the 1978 congress and special congress on the national question in 1979 saw two position papers by the CSN. The first of these, Proposition de la CSN pour la discussion sur la question nationale, approached the large question of stimulating debate within the popular classes. This working paper, as many before it, had clearly defined its intervention as that of a union composed of workers who hold many differing ideas, opinions and ideologies:

What binds us together are our common interests as workers and the resultant desire to formulate together and have implemented the changes needed to defend and transform our working and living conditions (CSN, 1979:6).

The mode of intervention, the document argues, must address cultural, economic, social and political consequences of oppression. This is to be done while maintaining its autonomy from any particular umbrella organization within each camp which "may bring together business and political groupings whose interests are diametrically opposed to those of the workers" (CSN,

1979:42). In a sense, lacking its own political mechanism, the CSN was outlining the many pitfalls ahead for itself. It would seem that the Central had underestimated the pervasiveness of the PQ as well as federalist dominance in the debate. The Central proposed equal time for labour groups and popular organizations in the various forms of the media. Little of this occurred. It is not surprising that the side with which the CSN had so hoped to avoid affiliating had already chosen. The paper argues that the election of the Parti Quebecois (over and above the disappointments) was essentially a positive development for the working classes, as it opened up the debate for the real issue of national oppression, which must be posed by the popular classes. It would seem from Resolutions 21 and 22 of the 1979 working paper, that the Central was again ready to afford the party its strategic accord:

It is proposed that the CSN resolutely engage in the debate to determine if it should decide in favour of the people of Quebec exercising their right to self-determination, that is the right of the people of Quebec to freely choose its political status including independence and to ensure freely its political, social and cultural development.

It is proposed that the CSN recognize that this struggle against national oppression may necessitate the independence of Quebec (Resolution 21, 22, CSN, 1979:40).

The 1979 brochure, La CSN et la question nationale, was a strategic working paper focusing upon the exact nature of entry into the political debate:

It is the common interest of workers beyond the working environment which makes union intervention in the national question a necessity (CSN, 1979:10).

However, the union's goals regarding its entry into the political debate were seen to be significantly different from that of political parties. In this sense,

...a political party's basic goal is to get into or stay in power and whose members join on the basis of a common platform or ideology (CSN, 1979:11).

From the CSN's view of the party, it was obvious that it had not yet sharpened its understanding of the class dynamic of political and social relations within the province.

#### The FTQ: The Politics of Nationalism

The FTQ entered the referendum debate at a relatively late date. The parameters of its discourse were evident during its 16th annual convention in 1979. At that convention the Parti Quebecois was singled out as being a "hesitant harbinger of change." Yet it was this party which had "proposed a political project which would have a determinant effect upon the collective future of the working class" (FTQ, 1979:2). The tone of the congress suggested caution. The President's inaugural speech asserted that the FTQ would have to examine its response to the national question very carefully, particularly given the hasty resolutions occurring over this matter in the CSN.

As did the various CSN documents before it, the 16th FTQ convention enumerated the drawbacks of the PQ performance, given their previous selection promises. As well, the CSN position taken at its 1978 congress regarding the national question was roundly criticized. In this context, Laberge argued that the CSN had avoided an analysis of the national question from a distinctively labour viewpoint. In reference to the CSN interpretation, Laberge argued:

It is indeed, starting from a renewed vision that we will be able to tackle the difficult national issue from a true labour perspective. There is no question of a sort of flight forward, of skipping the national issue debate behind a project for society. Quite the contrary, we must conduct two rather separate debates: one on the national issue and the other on our project for a society. Whatever approach we may follow on this national issue and whatever future Quebecers will decide for themselves at the constitutional level, the FTQ must continue the fight for the implementation of its project for society (FTQ, 1979:22-23).

Having determined the distinction between the two issues, the President's speech outlined the FTQ's 'project for Quebec society'. This project of democratic socialism stressed increased control of the community over its natural resources, key industries and management of the economy. The President's enunciation of the social and economic policy of the FTQ, although not dissimilar from earlier statements, shed a particular light upon a then prevalent perception of the national question. In previous FTQ documents, the same type of analysis had been put forward, but suggesting a distinct relationship between the national issue and class struggle. Often this relationship was posed within the context of the centralizing/decentralizing debate. This was still in marked distinction to the CSN documents of the early seventies, which many readers had interpreted as an implicit nationalist stance. Given the approaching referendum, the FTQ, as was obvious through the 1979 convention, had little choice but to address the linkages.

#### The CSN and the FTQ: Variations in Response

The affirmative responses of the CSN and the FTQ to the referendum differed. The CSN position has been referred to within the labour movement as being largely the 'yes critique'. On the other hand, the FTQ response has been colloquially called the 'unconditional yes'.<sup>10</sup> The disparity between the two Centrals can be attributed to various factors. Primarily, the FTQ tradition of support for parties sympathetic to working class interests brought it relatively closer to a form of political integration by the dominant nationalist forces within the seventies. As well, by 1980, the FTQ had given up hope for the NDP-Q and, instead, continued their tumultuous relationship with the

Parti Quebecois. But the FTQ's articulation of nationalism concentrated upon distancing themselves from the PQ platform throughout the debate. Principally, this was done by approaching the question from a detached labour standpoint, and by isolating the national issue as a tactical manoeuvre. This type of strategy failed, given: (a) the overwhelming desire of the membership to see their Central act as a podium for enunciating workers' interests within the debate and (b) the general effect of the mainstream nationalist debate, and its overlapping characteristic vis-à-vis working class nationalism.

The CSN had no such ideological attachment towards supporting a party sympathetic to working class interests -- the CSN relationship with the Lesage Liberals could hardly be seen in this light. This situation may well have been the reason for its more critical stance in the face of the PQ. The CSN and the FTQ both displayed different backgrounds endemic to a constitutional outlook. The FTQ was well entrenched in the federal/provincial debate; its own relationship with the CTC in many ways mimicking the larger Ottawa/Quebec conflict. The CSN had no such tradition, outside of once considering itself, in theory anyhow, a pan-Canadian Central, with a yearly submission of briefs to the federal cabinet. In a sense, as I have mentioned, the CSN was more implicated and perhaps more prepared historically to interlock the national question with its struggle for a socialist program.

### Conclusion

What I have tried to show in this paper is the utility of employing a class-based analysis to explain the internal articulation of interests around the national question within a relatively homogeneous ethnic setting. In

this respect, the paradigmatic application of a structural Marxism is not without its difficulties. I suggest there is a need to further develop approaches which treat inter-class relations and characteristics through an examination of the political implications of these factors. This must be done in the context of assessing the political realization of specific classes.

In an application of various theoretical guidelines, particularly those of Gramsci, I have examined the political manifestations of these inter-class occurrences. The analysis of the CSN and the FTQ has addressed a series of processes: the transformist periods of 1960-65 and 1966-75 were distinguished by certain structural conditions which formed the foundation (in consensual as well as coercive terms) of the Union Central/state relationship. The association between the labour Centrals and the Parti Quebecois from 1976 onwards was distinguished by an expansive dialectic which mobilized the working class within a political project which was entirely outside their sphere of influence. The varied conditions and circumstances outlined in this paper have prompted both Centrals in recent years (particularly the CSN) to reassess their method of political intervention.

#### NOTES

1. Indeed, Hobsbawm (1977) states that Marx did begin an analysis of political theory particularly in reference to Hegel's Philosophy of Law. This effort was abandoned, however, in favour of a political economy approach which, for Marx, was the "anatomy of civil society." In fact, Hobsbawm maintains that "the materialist conception of history actually discouraged the study of politics and the state as autonomous subjects -- except in the crucial field of the state and revolution." See "Gramsci and Marxist Political Theory" in Approaches to Gramsci, ed., Anne Showstack Sassoon, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., London, England, 1981.
2. It is noteworthy that much of the actual political arguments which were dominant in Marx's era were concerned with the issue of unification. The same concern for unification and its class implication was to be a continuing point of contention which overshadowed the debate between Luxembourge and Lenin.

3. This idea is picked up by J.H. Ehrenreich. He argues that "...nationalism leads not towards socialism but towards the integration of working class into the capitalist system and towards the integration of the less developed countries into the capitalist work marketplace." (John H. Ehrenreich, "Socialism, Nationalism and Capitalist Development" in Review of Radical Political Economics, Vol. XV, No. 1, Spring, 1983.)
4. S. Hall, B. Lumley and G. McLennan argue that for Gramsci it is the purely political moment that marks the passage from the structure to the sphere of the complex superstructure. ("Politics and Ideology; Gramsci" in On Ideology, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson of London, 1978).
5. Both the FPTQ and the FUIQ merged in 1957 to form the FTQ.
6. Many prominent members of the then defunct FUIQ, such as Fernand Daoust, were involved in the creation of the Parti Socialiste du Quebec (PSQ).
7. It was precisely this drawback, i.e. that the FTQ was simply not as entrenched a Central as the CSN, due to its reliance upon the CLC to ratify its decisions, which precipitated a certain crisis of identity leading to an internal struggle for greater autonomy from the parent body.
8. It should be pointed out, however, that both Centrals addressed the question of French language rights in the workplace during this period.
9. This was particularly clear given the report's approval of such state agencies as the General Investment Corporation. See "A Society Built for Man," CSN, 1966.
10. Yvon Charbonneau discusses the significance of these two affirmative responses in relation to the position of the Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec (CEQ) in his article "D'Octobre 1970 à Octobre 1980" in L'impasse: enjeux et perspectives de l'après référendum, ed. Nicole Laurin-Frenette and Jean-François Léonard, Les Editions Nouvelle Optique, 1980.

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