

CHAPTER 3

1939 TO PRESENT-DAY
*Modernization of Québec,
Quiet Revolution
& Contemporary Québec*

PART 7

Neo-nationalism & Employer-union relations

Neo-nationalism

Neo-nationalism

Since the 1960s, the term “**Quebecer**” has become synonymous with “French Canadian”.

What is the ideological explanation for this **shift in identity**?



Decolonization movement

Many colonies struggled to gain independence after WW2:

- They **rejected colonialism**
 - because it was destructive to their culture
 - because it profited foreign investors rather than the local population.
- The different **struggles for independence** took place both through democratic means and through violence.
- E.g. Cameroon, Congo, Senegal, Algeria, the Philippines, India, Pakistan and Vietnam.

Decolonization movement



Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948, assassinated)

- Indian lawyer who opposed British colonialism in his country.
- He organized campaigns of civil disobedience and non-cooperation through the boycotting of authorities and British institutions.
- Gandhi fought for India's independence using peaceful means (non-violence).
- He was imprisoned time and again by the British authorities.
- India became independent in 1947, but it was separated into 2 countries, India and Pakistan.

Territorial identity



OLD NATIONALISM

(Duplessis era)

- Leaders: clergy, lawyers, other professionals
- “French Canadians”
- “Province of Québec”
- Concerned with the cultural survival of francophone Catholics in Canada
- Proposed amendments (changes) to the Constitution to give the province more autonomy within Canada
- Glorified tradition
- Rural-based and conservative



NEW NATIONALISM

(as of the 1960s)

- Leaders: leftist intellectuals, labour union leaders, artists, technocrats
- Québec identity, “Québécois” + fleurdelisé flag
- Influenced by the decolonization movement
- Desire to be liberated from the political, cultural and economic power of English Canada and British imperialism
- Some wanted independence/sovereignty for the nation of Québec (separatists groups formed)
- Urban-based, looked to the future, proud, patriotic, progressive
- Attitude of openness to the world

Indépendantiste movement

In 1957, various groups began forming to promote an independent Québec:

- One of these was the *Front de libération du Québec (FLQ)*
 - It demanded a **sovereign, socialist Québec**
 - It used **propaganda** and **terrorism** to achieve its objective.



October Crisis (1970)

The FLQ:

- They robbed banks and weapons, attacked federal institutions like the army and the postal service using explosives.
- 23 felquistes (members/supporters of the FLQ) were arrested after a security guard died from the explosion of a bomb.
- They **kidnapped James Cross, a British diplomat, and Pierre Laporte, Québec's Minister of Immigration, Manpower and Labour**
 - In exchange for releasing their hostages, the kidnappers demanded the release of imprisoned FLQ members
 - They also demanded that a manifesto of their political position be read on TV.
- The group's terrorist acts **spread fear** throughout Canada.

October Crisis (1970)

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the prime minister of Canada, passed the *War Measures Act* 3 days later:

- Trudeau discovered that the FLQ had 2 tons of explosives to blow up Montréal buildings. He wanted to bring the situation under control.
- 85% of Canadians agreed with Trudeau's decision.
- The FLQ was outlawed.
- Armed soldiers were deployed in Montréal to ensure public safety.
- Martial law was imposed, suspending civil liberties and leading the police to arrest and detain "extreme-leftists" based on suspicion alone – 500 citizens were arrested, incarcerated up to a month and eventually released without charges (wrongful arrests).

October Crisis (1970)



October Crisis (1970)



1970: Pierre Trudeau says 'Just watch me' during October Crisis

October Crisis (1970)



- The members of the FLQ were eventually **arrested and some were exiled to Cuba** in exchange for **James Cross' release**.
- **Pierre Laporte was assassinated** by his kidnappers.

Creation of the *Parti québécois*

René Lévesque:

- was a member of the Liberal Party of Québec
- proposed to obtain **sovereignty-association** for Québec in 1967
 - The newly formed country would remain economically tied to Canada (trade).
 - Québec would keep Canadian currency.
- did not convince the Liberal Party and therefore left to **create the *Parti Québécois* in 1968** (united various sovereigntist parties)
- wanted to **use democratic and non-violent means (like elections) to achieve independence unlike the FLQ.**

The first sovereigntist government took power in Québec in 1976.



**René Lévesque, premier of QC
(1976-1985)
Parti Québécois (PQ)**



Victory of the *Parti québécois* (1976)

“I never thought I could be so proud to be a Quebecer.”

The election of the P.Q. in 1976 sent shock waves through Quebec's English-language community, the rest of Canada and, indeed, around the world.

OK. EVERYBODY
TAKE A VALIUM!



Employer-union relations

Unionization of government employees

During the Quiet Revolution:

- large numbers of government employees became unionized
 - They wanted to improve their working conditions, which were generally less advantageous than those in the private sector.
 - They had been denied the right to be part of a union under Duplessis, who was fiercely opposed to the spread of unionization.

In the 1960s and 1970s, unions became a force that no government could ignore.



Common Front (1972)

In 1972:

- **3 major labour confederations representing government employees decided to regroup in order to establish a better position in their negotiations with the government**
 1. *Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)*
 2. *Fédération des travailleurs du Québec (FTQ)*
 3. *Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec (CEQ).*
- **Union demands focused on changes that would reduce or eliminate the gap in the working conditions between the public and private sectors.**



Common Front (1972)

In 1972:

- 210,000 unionized government workers declared an unlimited strike
- the 3 labour confederation presidents were imprisoned for having encouraged their members to defy a government order forcing them back to work
- **an agreement was finally reached**
 - **Many benefits were given to the union members**
 - **Wages for the public sector surpassed those of the private sector.**

