

The October Crisis

Appendix C

“The Events Preliminary to the Crisis”

(in chronological order - 1960 to 5 October 1970)

I. Introduction

It can be said that the October Crisis *per se* took place from 5 October 1970 (when James R. Cross was kidnapped), until 28 December 1970 (when the kidnappers of Pierre Laporte were captured). Before this principal stage of the Crisis, there were, however, seven significant preliminary stages or waves of terrorist activity.

It is essential to appreciate these initial stages, if one is to understand **how** and **why** the kidnappers acted in October 1970.

II. The First Stage – the ASIQ, the CLN & the RR (1960-1963, i.e. before the FLQ)

The FLQ was founded in 1963, but up to that time there had already been considerable revolutionary and terrorist activity in Quebec and throughout the world. By 1960, 17 African nations had obtained their independence by revolution. A successful Marxist revolution had also been carried out in Cuba, which stimulated some young Quebec radicals to seek a workers' state in a separate Quebec.

1) In January 1957, Raymond Barbeau founds the “L’Alliance Laurentienne”, which called for the independence of Quebec.

2) In 1960 the “Rassemblement pour l’indépendance nationale” (**RIN**) is formed by André D’Allemagne, Pierre Bourgault and André Ferretti. (The **RIN** was very leftist, as well as being separatist.)

3) On 9 August 1960, “L’action socialiste pour l’indépendance du Québec” (**ASIQ**) is founded by Raoul Roy.

4) On 31 October 1962, “Le comité de libération nationale” (**CLN**) is formed. The four founders are Jacques Désormeau (age 25), Jacques (Santiago) Lucques from Chile, alias Jacques Latour (age 26), and two students, Robert Aubin (age 24) and Philippe Bernard (age 21). They eventually meld into the FLQ.

5) In November 1962, 24 militants of the **RIN** who call themselves “Le réseau de résistance” (**RR**) meet secretly and plan non-violent acts (graffiti on English signs). Le **RR** is later to join the FLQ.

6) On 20 January 1963, Marcel Chaput, one of the first modern separatists to take a stand and an early member of the RIN, is expelled from the RIN. Two days later he declares:

“Several members of the Executive of the RIN wish to achieve the independence of Quebec and to create an idealistic society, while I and those who follow me wish to separate, but maintain the Quebec society we have.” (My translation, Marc Laurendeau, 1974 at p. 35).

[In 1937, Marcel Chaput (1918 - 1991) had taken part in a debate on separatism in the parish hall of Notre-Dame de Hull Church. He was age 19 at the time and was on the side of separatism. In 1951 at age 41, Chaput published articles in Le Droit on 30 and 31 October 1959 declaring his

support for the separatist movement. In 1961, he published his manifesto “Pourquoi Je Suis Séparatiste.”)

7) On 23 February 1963 a Molotov cocktail is thrown against a window of English radio station CKGM in Montreal by the RR. This is the first terrorist explosion of the FLQ era.

III. The Second Stage – the FLQ is formed (February 1963-August 1963)

1) In February 1963, from many clandestine groups, which have been operating for years, the FLQ is founded by Raymond Villeneuve (age 19), who gives the FLQ its name, Gabriel Hudon (age 21) and Georges Schoeters (age 33), an itinerant Belgian revolutionary, whose hero is Che Guevera. Schoeters had fought in the Belgian resistance at the end of World War II and provided experience, Marxist aims and organizational techniques to the FLQ.

2) On the night of 7-8 March 1963, the FLQ commences operations by bombing three separate Canadian Army barracks - two in the centre of Montreal and one in Westmount. A communiqué, entitled “**Notice to the Population of the State of Quebec**”, describes the FLQ as a revolutionary movement made up of volunteers ready to die for the cause of political and economic independence of Quebec. Attacked would be all colonial symbols and institutions... factories, which discriminate against French-speaking workers...all vested interests of American colonialism, the natural ally of English Canadian Colonialism. Quebec can only become independent by social revolution... “**Students, workers, farmers, form your secret groups to fight Anglo-American colonialism. Independence or death.**”

3) On 29 March, 6 April and 20 April 1963, bombs explode in Montreal.

4) On 16 April 1963, the first Manifesto of the FLQ is distributed to the newspapers but published only in small portions. (It was published in full on 15 October 1965 in No. 45 of La

Cognée, the official organ of the FLQ.) It is in academic language, calls more for separation of Quebec from Canada than for a socialist revolution and attacks neither the Catholic Church nor religion.

5) On 21 April 1963, an FLQ bomb explodes behind the Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment Centre, at 772 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, and kills night watchman William O'Neill, age 65. André Laurendeau writes in *Le Devoir*:

“The hidden ones have killed. It had to happen. One does not play with fire unpunished. This time, they’ve done it. A man has been killed. Whether by error or deliberately, the FLQ have gone the whole way to crime. These are the fireworks of hate.”
(Gustave Morf, 1970 at p. 6).

“Laurendeau went on to say that the poor victim did not symbolize anything but a man of the people doing his duty. There was no real courage behind people who set bombs as others send anonymous letters.” (Gustave Morf, 1970 at p. 6).

Premier Jean Lesage, despite the death of O'Neill, when inaugurating Quebec House in London, declared: **“One should recognize, that this movement, as far as terrorism is concerned, is very limited. These small sparks are truly of little importance in the light of the real progress which is taking place in Quebec... I am certain the FLQ does not consist of more than four or five members.”** (My translation, 1972, Lacoursière at p. 39).

La Cognée and the FLQ described it otherwise:

“During a nocturnal raid against the recruiting centre of the Canadian Army in Montreal, something unforeseen happened, causing the accidental death of an English-speaking person. The press of the collaborators immediately spoke of murder and assassination. Unfortunately, no revolution takes place without bloodshed. It would be

Utopian to maintain the contrary. While Gandhi was on strike, hundreds of his compatriots were mowed down by British machine-guns. The patriots are not guilty of the death of O'Neill. The guilty ones are all the collaborators, the infamous exploiters who forced the Quebec patriots to take up arms for the liberty of the nation.” (Gustave Morf, 1970 at p.7). Actually O'Neill was bilingual and had a French-Canadian mother.

FLQ member Gabriel Hudon wrote: **“Without wanting to mock the death of Mr. O'Neil, ... for the FLQ, it was a victory.”** (My translation, Gabriel Hudon 1977 at p. 103).

The bomb that killed O'Neill was made by André Villeneuve (one of the three founders of the FLQ), who apparently said at the time: **“I am not at all concerned. If you ask me my opinion, I did not kill enough Anglos. I should have killed more.”** This was reported years later in La Presse on 12 July 1997 (my translation), when Villeneuve was leader of the Mouvement de libération nationale du Québec (MLNP).

6) On 17 May 1963, bombs explode in 10 letter boxes in Westmount. Sergeant-Major Walter Leja of the Canadian Army is gravely wounded while trying to disarm one of the bombs.

7) On 1 June 1963, 23 militants are arrested probably as a result of an FLQ informer, thought to be Jean-Jacques Lanciault. (Marc Laurendeau, 1974 at p. 191).

8) On 6 June 1963, the FLQ issues a communiqué taking responsibility for a number of bombings, but significantly adds its genuine regrets on the death of Pope John XXIII: **“His holiness the Pope John XXIII was a Pope of peace, of a just and equitable peace, where all exploitation would be banned”** The FLQ communiqué ends as usual: **“Independence or Death.”** (My translation, Marc Laurendeau, 1974 at p.57).

9) On 27 August 1963 three more militants are arrested, including Jacques Lanctôt, thus shutting down the FLQ network.

IV. The Third Stage - l'Armée de libération du Québec (ALQ) (26 September 1963 to 9 April 1964)

1) On 26 September 1963, the ALQ is formed by Robert Hudon (age 19), younger brother of Gabriel Hudon.

2) In October 1963, the first issue of *La Cognée*, the official clandestine organ of the FLQ, is published. (It would publish 66 issues before it closed in 1967.)

3) The ALQ carries out thefts, hold-ups, and robberies of arms and money for purposes of financing terrorism and what seemed at times their own high living. Hudon, a charismatic figure, is nevertheless known, by some members of the press, as “Robin des Banques”.

4) On 9 April 1964, after a bank hold-up at Mont-Rolland, six members of the group are arrested and sentenced. Robert Hudon is sentenced to 8 years in prison. (He is freed on parole in December 1967.)

5) On 9 May 1964, René Lévesque (a Minister in the Jean Lesage Cabinet in Quebec) in a report in *Le Devoir*, entitled “**Lévesque rejects federalism and sees for Quebec the status of an associate state**”, is quoted as saying before the students of Collège Sainte-Marie:

“Without real equality between the two nations in Canada, total independence will become inevitable.

“Guns and dynamite must not be used ... unless no other alternative is available.”

(My translation, *Le Devoir*, 11 May 1964).

Subsequently, in reply to criticism in the press, he said:

“Violence is inevitable in Quebec, but it is necessary to do everything humanly possible to strike it out, firstly and above all by profound reforms” (My translation, Louis Fournier, 1998 at p. 73).

V. The Fourth Stage - l'Armée Révolutionnaire du Québec (ARQ) (April to 29 August 1964)

1) In April 1964, the ARQ is founded by François Schirm (age 32), a Hungarian and former French Foreign Legionnaire. Schirm has a confused concept not only of Quebec's frustrations, but of its forests. He is a romantic and creates a training camp in the woods near Saint-Boniface-de-Shawinigan, Quebec.

“Travelling through the bush and practically virgin forests of Quebec, Schirm exclaimed, ‘What ideal country for underground war! Here is the perfect bushland for partisans! Nobody could hunt out the revolutionaries here!’” (Gustave Morf, 1970 at p. 53).

Schirm, of course, does not know of the harshness of the Canadian winter, that the Quebec farmers are unlikely to join a revolution, let alone a workers' revolution, and that support, if it is to come, has to be from youth in the cities, especially unemployed youth, partially employed youth and perennial students.

2) On 29 August 1964, Schirm, together with four other ARQ members, stages a robbery at International Firearms in Montreal, where two employees of the Company are killed – Leslie MacWilliams (age 56), shot by Edmond Guénette, and Alfred Pinisch (age 37), killed in a police cross-fire. Pinisch was a German immigrant with a wife and two children.

Morf describes the death of MacWilliams: **“What had happened? While Schirm was covering the sales clerk, Edmond had come in with his loaded gun. At the same time, the Vice-President of the company had arrived on the scene to see what was happening. Edmond pointed his gun at him. Thinking this was a bad joke on the part of a juvenile (Edmond is very small and looked younger than his age), MacWilliams asked him to please lower his gun. He had hardly finished the sentence when a shot put an end to his life. He**

was shot through the abdomen and died of internal hemorrhage.” (Gustave Morf, 1970 at p. 41).

La Cognée describes the death of Leslie MacWilliams, vice-president of International Firearms, without remorse:

“Leslie MacWilliams was the victim of his own stupidity. At the beginning of the attack, the chief commando presented himself unequivocally as a member of the revolutionary movement. The man should have wisely decided not to interfere. On the contrary, as a good Anglo-Saxon, he opposed the action of the commando. This latter therefore struck down the collaborator. Notice to amateurs!” (My translation, La Cognée, No. 19, September 1964).

3) The five ARQ members are arrested. Schirm and Edmond Guénette (age 20) are condemned to death; Gilles Brunet (age 28) and Cyriaque Delisle (age 26) are condemned to life imprisonment; and Marcel Tardif (age 22), to 20 years' imprisonment. Seven other young members are later arrested, including those in the training camp at Saint-Boniface. The seven are soon released and the ARQ ceases to exist.

4) On 15 January 1965, La Cognée the official clandestine voice of the FLQ, declares that **“our clergy is now dynamic and nationalistic.”** (My translation).

VI. The Fifth Stage - the statue of liberty and the railway bombings (1965)

1) In February 1965, massive demonstrations take place in the United States against the Vietnam War and the bombing of North Vietnam and in favour of the movement for civil rights for blacks. 265 persons are arrested in Alabama alone.

2) On 15 February 1965, Malcolm X is assassinated in New York. During the summer of 1965, riots in Watts, a suburb of Los Angeles, resulted in 4000 arrests and 34 deaths.

3) On 16 February 1965, Michèle Duclos is arrested by the FBI in New York, while delivering 30 sticks of dynamite from Montreal to the Black Liberation Front (BLF) in a plot to blow up the Statue of Liberty and other monuments. Three BLF members receive sentences of 10 years each and Duclos, a sentence of 5 years. It is later reduced to 3 months, she is released and returns to Montreal.

4) On 15 July 1965, seven FLQ members are arrested in a camp close to the La Macaza Army base near Mont-Laurier and the cell's activities are terminated.

5) On 2 and 22 August 1965, FLQ bombs blow up railway tracks. Fortunately, there are no injuries or fatalities.

VII. The Sixth Stage - bombings and strikes (August 1965 – March 1969)

1) In 1965, Charles Gagnon and Pierre Vallières secretly join the FLQ, while at the same time openly remaining as members of the Mouvement de Libération Populaire (MLP). They are able to change the orientation of the FLQ towards the labour movement and as a result, the bombings take place, for the most part, in connection with strikes. The number of bombings and the size of the bombs also increase markedly. (See Jean-François Cardin, 1990 at p. 22).

2) Vallières and Gagnon are not received with joy by everyone in the FLQ, because of their Marxism (La Cognée, October 1966).

3) On 5 May 1966, an FLQ bomb kills Mlle Thérèse Morin (age 64), a secretary at Grenade Shoe Co., during a CSN strike. The FLQ's original members, if distancing themselves from Vallières and Gagnon, nevertheless support the letter bomb which killed Miss Morin:

“We do not disapprove ‘Operation Grenade’ [...], which was a success from every point of view. The death of an old maid was due to the criminal block-headedness of her employers who did not react to a telephone warning.” (La Cagnée, No. 62, October 1966).

4) On 14 July 1966, FLQ member Jean Corbo (age 16) dies from an FLQ bomb he was depositing at Dominion Textile in Saint-Henri, Montreal, during a strike. Corbo, a Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf student, is the son of notary Nicola Corbo of a well-known Outremont family.

5) On 14 July 1966, Vallières and Gagnon, who are being sought by the Quebec police, are arrested in New York while picketing the United Nations. They are released on 13 January 1967 and are immediately arrested and taken to Canada and tried on various charges.

6) In 1967, there are numerous bombings by the FLQ, and in 1968 and 1969, there are considerable bombings and thefts. In 1969, 35 persons are injured, three seriously, including one baby.

7) On 24 July 1967, on the balcony of the Montreal City Hall, General DeGaulle, President of France, declares: **“Voilà ce que je suis venu vous dire, en ajoutant que j’emporte de cette réunion inouïe de Montréal un souvenir inoubliable. La France entière sait, voit, entend ce qui se passe ici et je puis vous dire qu’elle en vaudra mieux. Vive Montréal! Vive le Québec! Vive le Québec libre! ... Vive le Canada français! Et vive la France!”**

8) On 20 February 1970, Charles Gagnon is released from prison. Pierre Vallières is released three months later.

VIII. The Seventh Stage: the preparation for the Crisis (January 1970 – 5 October 1970)

1) At the beginning of 1970, three FLQ cells have been organized to conduct kidnappings. The first, the Liberation cell, is composed of Jacques Lanctôt, Jacques Cossette-

Trudel, Louise Lanctôt, Marc Carbonneau, Pierre Séguin and Nigel Hamer. The Chénier cell is composed of Paul and Jacques Rose, Francis Simard and Bernard Lortie. Finally, Robert Comeau, a 25-year-old history professor at UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal), forms the Viger Information Cell towards the end of May 1970.

2) On 26 February 1970, Jacques Lanctôt and Pierre Marcil are arrested in a suspicious rented truck, which contains a sawed-off gun and a basket, large enough to hold a grown man. Lanctôt has a press release in his pocket, announcing the kidnapping of Moshe Golan, the Israeli Commercial Consul in Montreal. The suspects are arraigned, released on bail and do not reappear.

3) The Caisse Populaire of the Université de Montréal is robbed of \$58,000. It is apparently a partially “inside job”. Eventually Jacques Lanctôt and his cell are found to be responsible.

4) In June 1970, Robert Comeau writes a manifesto for the FLQ (the second FLQ Manifesto), which he distributes to the media, who ignore it.

5) In June 1970, a new municipal party FRAP (Front d' Action Politique des Salariés de Montréal) is established, with the aim of defeating Mayor Jean Drapeau (described as representing the bourgeois establishment) in the coming Montreal election of 25 October 1970. FRAP is a left-wing party of “salariés”, hoping to gain control of the City of Montreal administration. FRAP is not originally violent or terrorist, but FLQ members infiltrate the membership (as they do many other left-wing organizations).

6) On 21 June 1970: \$28,000 (from the U de M Caisse Pop robbery) and leaflets are found in a cottage in Prévost, Quebec. The leaflets mention a plan to kidnap the American Consul General in Montreal, Harrison Burgess, and demand: a) the release of FLQ prisoners; b) the re-employment

of the Lapalme workers; c) \$500,000; and d) the publication of the Manifesto. Six persons were arrested. (The kidnapping, which was to take place on 4 July 1970, was thus aborted.)

7) On 24 June 1970, a letter bomb kills employee Jeanne d'Arc Saint-Germain (age 50) at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. Two other employees are injured. The FLQ issues a communiqué to the effect that they were responsible and that Ottawa was chosen, because Quebec was controlled by Ottawa and Ottawa in turn was controlled by Washington.

8) On 15 July 1970, Justice Minister Jérôme Choquette introduces a bill in the National Assembly requiring persons possessing dynamite in Quebec to obtain a permit from the Provincial Police.

9) On 15 August 1970, "Weekend Magazine" (in English) and "Perspectives" (in French) report that a Radio-Canada team under Pierre Nadeau met two masked FLQ members who were training with Palestinian commandos in northern Jordan. These terrorists (later identified as Normand Roy and Michel Lambert) declare they intend to return to Canada to practise selective assassination. They give their names as "Salem" and "Sélim" and admit to having taken part in 20 FLQ "incidents" until 1969, when they slipped out of Quebec.

"We want to orient our military tactics towards selective assassination," Sélim explains. "For too long the FLQ has been synonymous with bombs and useless violence. We intend to pick our targets so that the people who are responsible will pay."

"We are learning more how to kill than how to mobilize popular movements...."

"Our goal is the liberation of Quebec," Sélim adds. "...total political and economic independence from the American monster." (Weekend Magazine, 15 August 1970).

10) On 27 September 1970, the Comeau/Viger cell steals 450 sticks of dynamite.