

# TWO OPTIONS FOR A SOVEREIGN QUEBEC

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## I

Nationalisms emerging in liberal democracies have usually been liberal nationalisms. German nationalism arising against Weimar is the great and horrifying exception, and Unionist nationalism in Northern Ireland and some Republican nationalism both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are less paradigmatic but still counter-examples, as is the phenomenon of Le Pen. Moreover, some forms of Corsican and Basque nationalism also do not fit the liberal mold. It is crucial to see that in the case of Germany (the paradigm disconfirming instance) the circumstances were exceptional, and none of the other examples listed above, France aside, come from societies that are shining examples of liberal democracies. But Norwegian, Icelandic and Finnish nationalisms, when these people were struggling to gain independence, were liberal nationalisms, and the resulting nation-states are models of progressive liberal societies. These nationalisms were neither xenophobic nor exclusionist. They wanted to and did protect their national cultures, but they did not regard themselves as a chosen people with a manifest destiny. The same thing should be said for present day nationalisms arising in secure democratic societies. I refer here to Scottish, Welsh, Quebec, and Catalonian nationalism.

These peoples are all national minorities in larger, allegedly multination states where they have not been able to gain recognition as nations — as a people — of equal status, recognition that is required of a genuinely multination state. They are historical communities that have distinctive institutions and traditions. They have for a long time resided on a given territory that they see as their homeland, they have distinct cultures, and, in all but one instance (the Scots), they have, in contrast with the peoples around them, a distinct language. (It is instructive to remember the Scots once had one — Gaelic — before it was suppressed by the English conquerors as it was in Ireland as well.) These historical communities are in aspiration, if not yet in fact, political communities aiming at some form of self-governance over a chunk of the earth's surface. For a group to be a

nation, a considerable portion of its members must see themselves as members of a political community, and in doing so they will aspire to, if they have not already achieved it, some form of self-governance. In addition, for a group to be a nation or a people, there must be a mutual recognition of membership at least by its members — most of them must see themselves as Danish, Spanish, Quebecois, Walloons, Faeroeseans, Filipinos, and the like. And the other members of their society must as well recognize them as having such membership.

This is what it is for a group to be a nation. It is distinct from a state, namely, an institution that successfully claims a monopoly of *de facto* legitimate force in a particular historical territory. Nations frequently are, but they need not be, states (Nielsen 1998b). Consider, as nations that are not states, the Mohawk nation, the Black nation, or the Kurdish nation. They need not be states even in aspiration, but they must, to be a nation, see themselves as a political community seeking some form of political self-governance and some form of homeland, though it may be homeland they will have to share with other distinct peoples where there is a territorial overlap of peoples. Here is where the aim should be to form a genuine multination state — a state with nations as subunits in situations of equality. A nation or a people will want, if they are at all reasonable, to have either a nation-state of their own or to be part of a genuine multination state united in some form of cooperative federation or arrangement. The important thing is that they as a nation will have some form of self-governance and cultural recognition.

The liberal nationalism of a people aspiring to public recognition as a nation will be, as all nationalisms are, cultural as well as political, but it will not be, and cannot be, an ethnic nationalism defining membership in terms of descent and excluding others from membership even though they master the language of the nation, embrace its customs and traditions, accept its laws and political institutions, and reside in its territory (Nielsen 1996-97). Such an ethnic nationalism is exclusionist and

ethnocentric and is not acceptable in a liberal society, including, of course, a socialist society (Couture and Nielsen 1996). A liberal nationalism, by contrast, is not exclusionist or ethnocentric and does not see itself as a chosen people or a favored folk. But in seeing themselves as a people, as a nation, liberal nationalists will see themselves as having a distinct culture, and they will be concerned to preserve it and to see it flourish in a political community.

Quebec nationalism, like Catalanian, Flemish, Scottish, and Welsh nationalism, is such a liberal nationalism. It is a nationalism that does not exclude others and respects the distinctive rights of its English minority (a historical minority) to have English language schools and hospitals, and to use English in the courts and in the national assembly. Such a nationalism goes perfectly well with cosmopolitanism, liberalism, and socialism, with its firm commitment to internationalism (Nielsen forthcoming).

## II

It is not unlikely that in a few years' time Quebec will gain sovereignty either as a sovereign nation-state or as a nation in a genuinely multination state in some form of cooperative partnership with the English-speaking Canadian nation, but itself a sovereign nation nonetheless as an equal partner in a multination state. In such an eventuality, Canada and Quebec — the English-speaking Canadian nation and the Quebec nation — would be equal subunits in a multination state, each nation with extensive powers of self-governance. (There may be other nations as equal subunits as well, for instance, the First Nations and the Acadian nation.)

Since its nationalism is a liberal nationalism and the new sovereign entity will be a liberal democracy, Aboriginal peoples, anglophones, and allophones in Quebec will have nothing to fear from a sovereign Quebec. Indeed, depending on how Quebec develops, they might even gain from such a situation.

Assuming that some such situation will come to obtain, I want to discuss two ways of organizing social life in such a society. I speak of them in the context of Quebec, but they are, of course, possibilities for other liberal democracies as well. I only stress that given Quebec's situation they are particularly germane possibilities for Quebec. They are presently utopian, but perhaps will become feasible possibilities a few years down the road. They would, if instituted, enhance human flourishing for the citizens of Quebec. I speak, firstly, of an unconditional guaranteed basic income for all citizens and landed immigrants of Quebec and, secondly, of the establishment of market socialism. The first may be achievable in a progressive capitalist society; the second, even though market-oriented, will require a transition of

society from a capitalist one to a socialist one, by which I mean a society in which there is some form of public ownership and control of the means, or at least the major means, of production (Weisskopf 1992a).

In Quebec, after it emerges as a sovereign nation, a serious consideration of such presently utopian notions is apposite for a number of reasons. A new sovereign nation, in starting afresh either as a sovereign state or an equal partner in a multination state (though in both instances as part of a liberal ethos encompassing a constitutional democracy), has a little more *lebensraum* than an already deeply entrenched state. It is a good time, particularly when neoliberalism is working so badly as far as its effect on the lives of people is concerned to try — not incautiously, but still boldly — some new ways of arranging things. Also, the cultural soil of Quebec is somewhat more receptive to such ideas than the rest of North America. Its traditions are a bit more social democratic and Europe-oriented than that of its neighbors; it has somewhat stronger, more extensive, and slightly more radical labor unions; and it, like the rest of North America, is not a poor society: it is industrially and technologically developed, it has an educated population and well-developed political infrastructures; and it also has an intelligentsia that is more attuned to such ideas than the intelligentsia in the rest of North America tends to be. So perhaps in a sovereign Quebec we can, in the not too distant future, give such ideas a try. I shall now argue that this is something we should do.

## III

I will start with a consideration of unconditional guaranteed basic income for all adult citizens and landed immigrants of Quebec, as it would not require changes in the society so deep as those required by market socialism. A non-evasive look at the life and circumstances in the rich capitalist democracies, including Quebec, would incline one to favor the serious consideration of implementing *ugbi* (unconditional guaranteed basic income). In such societies there is a considerable amount of structural unemployment as well as very marginally and insecurely employed people. Often people are — and this is particularly true of women — employed in part-time jobs with no pensions at a very low wage. This situation, bearing in mind the way things are presently going with neoliberalism practically unchecked, is likely to get worse rather than better in spite of neoliberalism's newly found "social conscience." The short term, neoliberalism's suddenly discovered social credo or not, is not something to make one jump for joy. So, unless we are prepared to let people in considerable numbers starve on the streets, we need something like a welfare system. Yet it is widely recognized that the welfare system in the various capitalist states works badly even in the best of such

societies. And in some societies — the United States and Canada, for example — it, to put it crudely, stinks. People are paid, albeit badly paid, to remain unemployed. The welfare system continues the culture of poverty and reinforces the poverty trap. It results in a social structure with a huge social and economic gap between the rich and the poor — a gap that is increasing — with glaringly unequal life prospects of both the employed (“the deserving poor”) and the unemployed poor compared with that of the wealthy elites in the society. This deeply unjust situation is being exacerbated as people are more and more being pushed into unemployment or into marginal, insecure, poorly paid part-time employment.

To run the rotten system, moreover, a huge and expensive welfare bureaucracy — a bureaucracy that is inefficient and often corrupt — is needed. It is also a bureaucracy that is paternalist at best and functions intrusively as a parapolice force at worst. It results in a system where its so-called clients are degraded, demeaned, and kept in circumstances of idleness and poverty.

As structural unemployment grows and welfare expenses increase, the tax backlash and welfare backlash will grow. It is time carefully to consider replacing the welfare system with *ugbi*. For Quebec, this means moving from a welfare system to a system that, once institutionally in place and properly functioning, will pay a lifetime guaranteed basic income to all adult citizens and landed immigrants of Quebec unconditionally and on an individual basis without means test or work requirement. It is to be paid at the same rate to all adult citizens and landed immigrants by the state. The basic income should, and indeed must, for the scheme to work, be at a reasonable subsistence level — a level that would allow people to live decently but rather frugally. There would in such a circumstance be security and a decent life for people while still providing most of them with an incentive to take jobs at even a rather low wage level, that, hardly surprisingly, many businesses would find it attractive to make available. Where presently there are few jobs, there would be more jobs, and not make-work jobs either. But, for the worker, having a job would not be essential for her livelihood or the livelihood of the children she may have, but it would provide for some of those little extras, as Brecht once put it, that people want. A reasonable *ugbi* would provide the worker with security while giving her the possibility of working in a work situation that is not grossly unattractive and exploitative. She could avoid such work, if she wanted to, for she, with *ugbi* in place, would be in a position to refuse jobs and thus plainly unattractive jobs. And this would provide an incentive for employers to make the jobs they offer somewhat attractive. These jobs would not be like working at McDonald’s.

The rich elites will get *ugbi* as well as the most impoverished people in the society. And it is to be paid to individuals rather than households. Doing it this way would be particularly helpful to vulnerable women in abusive or otherwise unsatisfactory marriages and other forms of cohabitation. The basic income stipend is to be paid irrespective of any income from other sources. It is to be paid without requiring any present or past work performance or even a willingness to accept a job if it is offered. This has a consequence that some would regard as producing an unfair situation, in that some talented people with strong preferences for leisure over income could opt to surf, couch potato themselves, or spend their time listening to Buxtahude, Lenni Cohen, or Blues just as they please, for there is no requirement to work. *Ugbi* is unconditional.

Questions of fairness aside, something that is more problematical here than might seem at first sight, there is the practical problem that if *many* took the full-time leisure option, *ugbi* would plainly go down the tubes. But there is good evidence for the belief that, if work conditions are reasonably decent, the wish to be gainfully employed — to have some meaningful work — is too strong in most people for there to be a world, or even a numerous population, of full-time surfers or couch potatoes. We might, out of feelings of solidarity, resent such surfers and couch potatoes, and perhaps rightly so. Such free-riders in such a situation seem to be exploiting or at least taking advantage of those who work. Still, they, given that they are few, would do little or no harm. So there is no reason to get exercised about them. In a world where full employment is so difficult — perhaps impossible — to achieve, we should not act like Kant’s grandparents.

*Ugbi* would do something to lessen structural unemployment. It would take pressure off our more or less welfare states and pseudo-welfare states to create employment — often rather unreal employment — by using targeted wage subsidies, public sector work programs, or other active policies. It could do so because it makes it possible, indeed reasonable, under certain circumstances, for people to take jobs at well below a living wage. Without a minimum wage, as it no longer would be needed, both the private and the public sector would have the opportunity and incentive to create jobs that (a) are somewhat attractive, (b) have some point, and (c) make most people better off than they would be by simply staying home and relying solely on their *ugbi*, even if their jobs do not pay very much.

*Ugbi* would also help break the poverty cycle, and the endemic joblessness that goes with it, a cycle affecting whole generations of people in contemporary capitalist societies, people who grow up without any work skills and any reasonable expectation of a job. Without the work skills they cannot get a job, and

without a job they cannot gain the work skills. *Ugbi* would also enhance the lives of people by enabling them, if they wished, to drop out of the world of paid employment to pursue an education, start up a new career, start a business, care for children or elderly relatives, do political work, or to work for good causes. They could — and I don't mean this ironically — become full-time revolutionaries, something that might be as good for us as it is for Chiapas. These are things — or at least some of them — that are both beneficial to the individuals involved and to society.

Such a *ugbi* would not be so splendiferous as to encourage people to be free-riders, living high off the hog. With *ugbi* there is simply no possibility of living high off the hog. It still would enable people with pronounced preferences for leisure over income to refuse jobs, provided they were prepared to live rather frugally. This means that more people would be able to live as they like without worsening the lives of others. But, to repeat what I said earlier, it is a realistic assumption to make that most people would choose to work where work is on offer and where the work is not grossly unattractive. (It is not going to be completely unexploitative in any capitalist society, or even in emerging socialist societies.)

*Ugbi* will not fall like manna from heaven; it must be paid for out of tax revenues. If its adoption would increase people's income tax significantly, it is plainly dead in the water. However, it is quite possible that it would be less expensive than the present welfare system or any plausible modification of it. With *ugbi* we would be rid of the expensive welfare bureaucracy; *ugbi* would, by contrast, be simple and inexpensive to administer. Remember there would be nothing like a means test. But people in the higher income brackets would have most, in some instances perhaps all, of their *ugbi* clawed back in income taxes.

However, at present the bulk of the middle strata of society are very adverse to paying taxes and are in a mean-spirited mood. They might be unimpressed by arguments that *ugbi* might very well be less expensive than the welfare system, for they are out to abolish, or at least extensively dismantle, the welfare system itself. The right wing neoliberal agenda they favor goes in heavily for cuts in social spending. But, if that is done at all extensively, it will lead to increased crime, increased drug use and prostitution, an increase in aggressive public begging, and deteriorating social services (e.g., the public health care system in the societies that have them) and deteriorating infrastructures (highways, metros, etc.). It will also have disastrous effects on education. More money will be needed for more police and more prisons. And again the money needed will not fall like manna from heaven. Money — lots of money — coming out of taxes will be needed; the quality of life

will become increasingly more grim for, among others, the middle strata who are now so resentful at paying taxes. But perhaps after a stretch of this social hari kari — this world of *The Three Penny Opera* — the “middle class” will be a little more ready to listen to reason and will become ready to pay taxes, *perhaps* even somewhat increased taxes, for more useful purposes. (Remember that now we get rather poor value for our tax bucks, but with *ugbi* and other progressive policies in place this would cease to be so or at least not so extensively so.) Being decent and caring about people and acting in one's own self-interest would in such circumstances in standard cases ride tandem. *Ugbi* is practically feasible and humane, and it would modestly enhance the productive capacities of our societies. It is an option that a sovereign Quebec — and not only Quebec — should seriously consider.

#### IV

I now turn to market socialism. In the last decade, socialism has come to seem to many people to be a fantasy and capitalism in some form or other to be, if not eternal, the face of the future for as far as we can see. This confident assessment of things is premature, for capitalism is hurting a lot of people all over the world and sometimes very badly, and increasingly so. This situation obtains for all strata, aside from a small class of rich capitalist elites and their well-paid facilitators though the extent of the hurting, of course, varies. This is evident in the rich capitalist democracies and even more so in Third and Fourth World countries. Eventually people — or so we can reasonably hope and work to facilitate — may come to feel that enough is enough and to realize that this steady and cumulatively deep decline in their quality of life is unnecessary. They will come to suspect that it just isn't, as neoliberal ideology has it, the way things have to be if things are not to get even worse than they already are. It isn't just written into the human condition under conditions of modernity (Bourdieu 1998a and 1998b). And with this realization people may come in time with varying degrees of vigor to struggle against it and to be open to new options. It is here where market socialism, though not necessarily under that name, can be a real and valuable option.

Let us see how this goes. Western socialists have for a long time in their opposition to the Soviet Union made it plain that any acceptable socialism must be democratic. They have also shown how it could be democratic, how socialism extends democracy to the workplace and in doing so extends democracy. They have also shown how it is deeply committed to a radical egalitarianism (Wright 1994, 447-49 and Nielsen 1996a, 121-158). But what many reflective and knowledgeable people with egalitarian commitments are sceptical about is not that socialism, if it could be made to work as a tolerably efficient economic system, could be

democratic, but about whether it could in fact be an efficient way of organizing social life. Moreover, they also recognize, if they are at all knowledgeable, that socialism, no matter how genuine and well-intentioned, could not deliver on justice and equality or even in the long run on democracy if it is not efficient. Because it is widely believed that it cannot be efficient, socialism has come to seem to many people to be a non-starter. Even if great masses of people, out of their frustration with the capitalist order, were to go for it, that, not a few intelligentsia think, would be a mistake — another future of an illusion. The road is not from capitalism to socialism to communism, but from capitalism to capitalism. The most we can hope for against neoliberal excesses is a tamed social democratic capitalism with a somewhat human face.

Here, market socialism enters. Market socialists are (*pace* Bertell Ollman) socialists and are not settling for a social democratic compromise with capitalism (Ollman 1997).<sup>1</sup> Some very intelligent and well-informed

analytical Marxians, while remaining firm socialists, have worked out sophisticated models for a market socialism that could have application in the foreseeable future in societies that are now the rich capitalist democracies. (They, of course, could not remain capitalist and be market socialist societies.) They are at least arguably realistic models for a socialism that would be efficient and, as well, make it possible for us to achieve something reasonably approximating (a) equality of opportunity for self-realization and welfare, (b) equality of opportunity for political influence, and (c) equality of social status and social standing (Roemer 1994a and 1994b and Schweickart 1993).

John Roemer, perhaps the leading analytical Marxian economist, characterizes market socialism as “any of a variety of economic arrangements in which most goods, including labor, are distributed through the price system and the profits of firms, perhaps managed by workers or not, are distributed quite equally among the population” (Roemer 1994b, 456). He sees that a central, perhaps the central, question concerning market

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<sup>1</sup> Bertell Ollman in his “Market Justification in Capitalist and Marxist Socialist Societies” resolutely attacks root and branch all forms of market socialism. Socialism, he believes, is impossible with markets. Market socialism, he has it, mystifies the politics of class struggle. Retaining a market — any market at all — will interfere with the building of socialism and render large scale economic planning for the meeting of human needs impossible. The market, he believes, should not even be kept as a mechanism for allocating goods. “Leaving most market mystification in place, market socialism cannot be viewed as just another form of socialism, or even a compromise with capitalism. It is a surrender to capitalism.” Ollman is well aware that there are market socialists who regard themselves as genuine socialists and not as social democrats or supporters of social democracy, except sometimes tactically. But, as Ollman sees it, their good intentions notwithstanding, their theory is so intertwined with market society that they cannot be genuine socialists. “Market socialism” is an oxymoron. Moreover, their theories are utopian in the bad ways the Marxist tradition has criticized utopian theories for being. Marxist socialists will return the compliment by accusing Ollman of utopianism and Marxist Fundamentalism to boot. I think little will be accomplished by such rhetorical exercises in persuasive definition. I do not believe that Ollman has made a sound case against market socialism or even that he understands it properly. But he does have a strong case against market societies (and with that, of course, against capitalism) and he shows very well how pervasive and humanly destructive market societies with their market mode of thinking — what Erich Fromm called their market orientation — are and how this runs against human flourishing. What I believe Ollman does not see is that market socialism is not caught up, either directly or indirectly, in that; further, he does not realize that it does not reject but actually accepts central planning, rejecting only the administrative (command) allocation of goods as the standard (characteristic) way of allocating goods. What he fails to realize is that we can — and arguably should — have market allocations without having a market society as he characterizes it, without market mystification, and without making the existence of genuinely socialist persons — what Isaac Deutscher called socialist man — impossible, unlikely, or undesirable. (I am here conceiving of socialist persons just

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as Ollman and Deutscher will conceive of them.) Market mechanisms, as market socialists conceive of them, are mechanisms to efficiently allocate goods. Orienting production as socialists do to meet human needs, we need a device to allocate the various goods needed to satisfy those needs — genuine needs and not “needs” artificially created by capitalism with its market orientation. These market mechanisms are not the reified powers Ollman attributes to the market. For market socialists market mechanisms are, in Ollman’s metaphor, can openers and not meat grinders. They are tools to be used in fully socialist and indeed communist societies — full communism, if you will — as well as in capitalist societies, though, as Ollman well shows, they become something dehumanizing in capitalist societies. That is not due to their allocative use. It is one thing to use a can opener to open a can of beans; it is another thing to try to use it to open a bottle of champagne. The value of market mechanisms is that of an instrument — just as a can opener — that we control and that does not control us as markets do in market societies, i.e., the dear old capitalism we know and love. In stressing its usefulness purely as a tool, market socialists say something that (a) is true and (b) helps to give socialism a running chance in the societies in which we now live. But having said all this, and without taking any of it back, I would urge that Ollman’s essay be carefully studied by people interested in market socialism and indeed by anyone who seriously cares to think about the world in which she lives. Market socialism is becoming a dogma with those of us who are socialists with anything like an analytical intent. We tend to think that, among socialists, market socialism is something that only Neanderthals would question. And indeed I think it is the only socialist game in town. Ollman, to his credit, gives us some reasons for thinking twice. His account should not be just brushed aside as a bit of Marxist Fundamentalism. We market socialists, given the importance of the issue, should take to heart Cromwell’s “Think man, in the bowels of Christ, that you may be wrong” (Ollman 1997; see also Deutscher 1967). See here the debate, and most particularly the debate between David Schweickart and Bertell Ollman, over market socialism (Ollman 1998 and Weisskopf 1992a).

socialism is whether it can give a clear specification of a mechanism by which profits can be so distributed without unacceptable costs in efficiency. Moreover, and connectedly, it is also important to recognize that in a modern economy, innovation is essential if we are to have efficiency, and this requires — or so he believes — the discipline of the market. Without the competition provided by markets, both domestic and international, no business enterprise will be forced to innovate and the economy will stagnate. Hence socialism, if it is to be anything other than badly utopian, needs to be a market socialism. What needs to be brought into being is an economic mechanism under which technological innovation will take place, but in which a characteristically capitalist distribution of income will not result. We need carefully to consider whether competition between business enterprises — competition generating innovation — can be induced without a regime of private productive property in firms (Roemer 1994b, 460)?

Market socialists have given various models for how this might be achieved. (In addition to Roemer 1994a and 1994b and Schweickart 1992 and 1993 see Weisskopf 1992a and 1992b). Let me, to get this conception clearly but boldly before us, give a crude approximation of Roemer's model, a model which he recognizes will surely need to be fine tuned and perhaps in major ways changed as we think it through and consider how it could be applied in real life situations. Moreover, if we ever get into the situation where we could try it on for size, it is to be expected, as the social experiment goes on, that changes would have to be made. But I am claiming that it is some such model that should get on the agenda of a sovereign Quebec where a socialist option would be, at least down the line a bit, an option for Quebec.

Roemer's model involves creating two kinds of money in a market socialist society: *commodity* money (the money with which we are all familiar), used to purchase commodities for consumption, and *share* money, something Roemer calls coupons, used to purchase mutual funds that give their purchasers ownership rights in firms. It is essential that these two kinds of money not be convertible. So there is on his model no way of trading coupons for dollars, francs, pounds, and the like. There is to be an equal distribution of coupons. All citizens, that is, upon reaching the age of majority, are given their per capita share of the total coupon value of the productive property in the economy. With these coupons they can buy mutual funds from which they derive ownership rights. This entitles them to dividends from the profits of the firms and a right to vote for people on the board of directors of the firms in which they own shares. In such a market socialism, there is both a labor market and a stock market. Stocks, however, must be purchased in the form of mutual funds and can

be purchased only with coupons. There is no purchasing them with commodity money, e.g., dollars, pounds, francs, kroner. Coupons cannot be given away, but they can be sold for other coupons at their market coupon rate. But, to stress in repeating, shares and coupons are not transferable for commodity money. When a person dies, her shares and unspent coupons revert to the state for redistribution. The non-transferability and non-convertibility of coupons keep ownership from being concentrated. The people rich in commodity money cannot buy out the poor in commodity money. This, though still far from being perfectly egalitarian and still very distant from full communism, prevents the great concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few that is characteristic of capitalist societies. These great inequalities of wealth and power and the domination and control that go with them are the worst forms of inequality in our societies. And these great inequalities of wealth, so characteristic of capitalism, ensure that in a very fundamental sense our societies will be undemocratic no matter what constitutional forms we have and no matter how faithfully they are adhered to.<sup>2</sup>

Since stocks are sold for coupons and not for dollars or marks and the like, firms cannot directly raise money by selling stocks. Finance capital is raised through credit markets organized by state banks, which are in turn organized like the other public firms, i.e., they themselves have a market socialist organization. Such involvement by the state allows a certain amount of planning of the market similar to the planning in advanced capitalist countries. And it is a planning, in both cases, without direct political influence in the workings (the allocative functions) of the market characteristic of command economies. A market socialist, as Roemer makes plain and as Alec Nove did before him, should not reject central planning *tout court*, but she should reject command/administrative allocation systems, systems that were characteristic of Soviet-style economies. The two ideas are not identical, and it is only the latter that has been shown to fail. With such a market

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<sup>2</sup> After I had written these remarks, I thought of the work of John Rawls — work that I, like many others, greatly admire. That notwithstanding, it seems to me that Rawls's account does not come to grips with such problems and it is anything but clear that it has the resources to do so. He, for the most part, does ideal theory and I do not complain about that, but it is also an ideal theory that is not indifferent to real world conditions and real world problems. Rawls thinks that progressive forms of capitalism can (a) be just and (b) sustain democratic societies — that is, capitalism can be compatible with a democratic political order. It is hard to see how either (a) or (b) could be true if the above remarks in the text are on the mark. But do they not straight forwardly tell it like it is? I have tried to argue that they do, and it is hard to see how public reason, and attention to constitutional essentials, to constitutional design, and to the role of law will make any difference here.

socialist scheme, we have “relatively freely functioning market mechanisms along with a sustainable egalitarian distribution of property rights, a roughly equal distribution of profits and a significant planning capacity of the state over broad investment priorities” (Wright 1994, 448-49). This yields, where we also have a democracy, efficiency with at least an approximate justice and a rough equality and, as well, both a respect for autonomy and for an enhanced autonomy for all — in short, a realization of many of the traditional ideals of socialism as well as those in liberal social democracies.

I am not so innocent as to think that a Quebec government that would be immediately formed after sovereignty would, should, or indeed could, put market socialism or even *ugbi* on its agenda or even give either of them serious consideration. That is a pie in the sky. Market socialism, in particular, would, I would sadly surmise, be rejected out of hand. What I am saying is that as the failure of its more or less neoliberal programs becomes increasingly apparent to broad sectors of the population, a population somewhat more attuned to social democracy than the populations of the United States or English-speaking Canada, socialism and *ugbi*, if intelligently explained and firmly urged, might in time get a serious hearing. Here is a task for critical intellectuals in Quebec. And there are similar tasks for intellectuals elsewhere. In the immortal words of Adlai Stevenson: Eggheads of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your yokes.□

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