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Abstracts

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ABSTRACTS

Daniel FOURNIER : *Pourquoi la revanche des berceaux ? L'hypothèse de la sociabilité*

Until the middle of the century, the French Canadians maintained a very high level of fertility for a population living in an industrial country. This phenomenon has been called the “revenge of the cradles”. It has never been explained. The classical interpretations, based on the economy, religion or education, do not hold up to scientific examination. One can observe the historical co-occurrence of the power of the Church and very high birth rates without there being a causal link. Instead, the “overfertility” of French Canada appears to be a response to a certain type of sociability which is distinguished by the prevalence of extended family ties.

Jean-Pierre CHARLAND et Jacques SAINT-PIERRE : *Le pouvoir d'achat des travailleurs, 1929-1960 : quelques éléments d'évaluation*

A comparison of certain categories of workers remuneration with the consumer price index reveals different patterns of increases in purchasing power, from the 1930's through to the Quiet Revolution. The wages paid to employees more or less gave them the means to go beyond the “world of basic needs” and to attain that of “aspirations”. From 1930 on, these incomes were sufficiently high to enable them to acquire durable goods, a fact confirmed by several surveys on family budgets. Access to mass consumption appears to have been possible for large fractions of the working class from the 1940's on.

Paul-André TURCOTTE : *Sécularisation et modernité : les frères éducateurs et l'enseignement secondaire public, 1920-1970*

During the “interwar” years, religious brotherhoods launched a public secondary education program which made university curriculum accessible, then providing the skills needed for the French Canadian “reconquest” of the economy. At the same time, it gave meaning to a new form of nationalism, interwoven with religion and based on scientific and technical modernisation. In so doing, these teachers groups came into conflict with the classical colleges, a situation which lasted until the education system was reformed by the government in 1964. During the same period, they had to deal with secularisation to which they contributed, yet resisting it.

Albert FAUCHER : *De la durée des institutions*

Three Québec institutions celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in 1988 : Agropur, the Social Sciences Faculty of Laval University and La Laurentienne. For this occasion, as many history books

were written to tell the story of their birth, their growth and the circumstances surrounding their development : one by a Laval University sociologist, on Agropur ; one by an author-journalist, on La Laurentienne and, in the case of the book on the Laval Faculty, by a group of its professors. Following a survey of the contents and the making of the three books, we will show that the insertion of these institutions into the Québec time framework helps us to discover resemblances in their original motivations, in the conditions of their development and why not? in their future orientations. The author asks himself whether they are sufficiently aware of their common destiny, and why they would not give greater importance to "futurology".

Gilles PAQUET : *Hubert Guindon, hérisson*

Hubert Guindon analyzed better than anyone else the emergence of a new middle class in Québec and he made this hypothesis the central pillar of his analysis of Québec between 1955 and 1985. However, that vigorous and original line of thought does not hold up when it is stretched toward history or "futurology". The great difference between the way his work was received in French Québec and in English Canada can be explained by certain simplistic elements which surrounded his central hypothesis and which appealed to English Canada. This difference is equally the result of Guindon's "demystification" of the great epic that the Québec intelligentsia was in the process of living through.