

Quebec's Election - An Initial Balance Sheet

By [Richard Fidler](#)

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The results of the September 4 general election in Quebec produce mixed reactions among supporters of all the major parties.

The pro-sovereignty Parti Québécois becomes the government, and PQ leader Pauline Marois the first woman premier, but with only a minority of seats (54) in the 125-seat National Assembly and thus vulnerable to parliamentary defeat by the right-wing and federalist Liberals (PLQ) and Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ).

The PQ won more than half of its seats thanks to the division of the vote between the PLQ and the CAQ. The PQ share of the popular vote did not increase during the five-week campaign. To obtain only 32 per cent support running against one of the most unpopular governments in recent Quebec history, in the wake of the massive student upsurge of the “printemps érable,” is hardly a ringing endorsement.

The PQ will be unable to enact most of the major promises it made in order to attract votes or placate its more militant members. However, Marois was quick to tell student leaders that she will remove the Liberals' tuition fee increase by order-in-council, and will repeal the repressive Law 12 (formerly Bill 78) that effectively banned spontaneous demonstrations and threatened student associations with decertification – depending on agreement by the Liberals, who sponsored the law, or the CAQ, which voted for it!

The Liberals, while chastened by the defeat of their government and the personal defeat of Premier Jean Charest in Sherbrooke followed by his resignation, can congratulate themselves on winning 50 seats and 31 per cent of the popular vote, just 1 per cent behind the PQ and 3 or 4 points above their standing in pre-election polling. As usual, the PLQ retains its solid federalist base, especially in the 30 or so ridings with significant Anglophone and Allophone (immigrant) populations.

The Strength of the Right

The CAQ, a new right-wing party, won 27 per cent of the votes but elected only 19 members under the undemocratic first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting system. Few of its star candidates were elected. Founded by a former PQ cabinet minister François Legault and business magnate Charles Sirois, the CAQ had absorbed the populist neoliberal third party Action Démocratique du Québec (ADQ) and campaigned against sovereignty in the hope of replacing the Liberals as the hegemonic federalist party. Although it failed in this attempt, the CAQ retains its relatively solid *adéquiste* base and can look for future gains against the Liberals as new revelations of the Charest government's corrupt practices emerge in the Charbonneau Commission hearings, soon to resume.

Overall, the Quebec right scored a solid victory, the PLQ and CAQ winning close to 60 per

cent of the vote. Despite minor differences, both parties stand for rebalancing the budget and paying off the debt at the expense of working people; privatizing and dismantling public sector institutions and programs inherited from the Quiet Revolution; weakening the unions; and keeping Quebec firmly within the Canadian state and subject to neoliberal fiscal and monetary policies largely determined by Ottawa. As Pierre Beaudet notes in [Presse-toi-à gauche](#), Ottawa can be pleased with the election result; in addition to its reliable agent the PLQ it now has the CAQ as a “Plan B” party of federalist alternance to the Liberals if required. And this, with a voter participation rate of almost 75 per cent, the highest turnout since 1998.

Concentrated Left



Québec solidaire co-leaders Françoise David and Amir Khadir celebrate their victories.

Québec solidaire, the left-wing pro-independence party, managed to elect co-leader Françoise David in Montréal’s Gouin riding (electoral constituency), where she handily defeated a sitting PQ member, and to re-elect QS’s other co-leader Amir Khadir in neighbouring Mercier. The party’s 124 candidates – half of them women – increased its share of the province-wide vote to 6.03 per cent (263,233) from its 3.78 per cent (122,618) in the previous election, in 2008. This score was well below the 9 or 10 per cent it was getting in some pre-election polling, although in another three Montréal ridings QS scored well above 20 per cent of the vote, and in a dozen or so other ridings more than 10 per cent.

However, this left vote is concentrated in central Montréal and not in the regions. Moreover, with the partial exception of Laurier-Dorion, where QS candidate Andres Fonticella scored 23.34 per cent, QS support is weak in the non-Francophone communities. As discussed below, there was little evidence in the campaign that QS has established solid roots among the social movements, which for the most part either persisted in non-partisan abstention from elections or oriented opportunistically toward the PQ as the sovereigntist party best positioned to defeat the Liberals. But the QS campaign attracted thousands of new recruits; party membership now stands at 13,000, twice the number a year ago.

A fifth party, the pro-sovereignty Option nationale (ON), formed during the last year by former PQ MNA Jean-Martin Aussant, fielded 120 candidates but won only 1.9 per cent of the vote and failed to elect Aussant or any other candidate.^[1] However, it boasts 5,000 members, the majority of them under the age of 35. Both QS and ON have recruited heavily from the student upsurge this spring.

PQ Crisis Stalled – But For How Long?

Only a few months ago the Parti Québécois was struggling to surmount the existential crisis that was tearing it apart in the wake of the crushing defeat of the Bloc Québécois in the May 2011 federal election. A half-dozen PQ MNAs had defected from the party, and others were publicly speculating whether it had a future. The party’s membership was declining, especially among youth.

Since her election as leader in 2008, Marois had been courting the ADQ electorate around a neoliberal approach consistent with the party’s orientation since the 1980s, when it embraced free trade with the United States and later the “zero deficit” strategy. Marois

refused to commit to any schedule for holding another referendum on sovereignty, promising instead to seek “winning conditions” through “sovereigntist governance,” a gradualist tactic of pursuing exclusive Quebec jurisdiction over matters of language, culture and international representation in the hope that eventually popular frustration at Ottawa’s resistance would open the way to a referendum victory.

But early this year Marois, in an attempt to shore up morale within the party, agreed to shift the PQ toward a range of positions focused on reinforcing Québécois Francophone identity, and even adopted a proposal from some party militants to allow a “referendum on popular initiative” (RIP) on sovereignty if 15 per cent of the electorate signed a petition to that effect. And to reinforce the identity message, she parachuted a notorious Islamophobe, Djemila Benjabib, into Trois-Rivières, the riding once held throughout 32 years by Quebec’s infamous conservative nationalist premier Maurice Duplessis.^[2] (Benjabib was narrowly defeated by the sitting Liberal on September 4.)

Marois also attempted to appeal to the striking students in Quebec’s “printemps érable.” In the National Assembly she and all the PQ MNAs had sported the students’ red felt square (the carré rouge) on their lapels, to the immense irritation of Charest and his ministers. She promised to reverse the government’s tuition fee hike if elected, and to repeal Law 12. And she recruited a student leader, Léo Bureau-Blouin, the former president of the CEGEP (college) students’ association, as a PQ candidate. (He was elected.)

During the campaign, however, Marois made it clear that she adamantly opposed a key demand of many if not most of the striking students: free tuition. She played down the PQ promise to limit attendance at English-language CEGEPs to native English speakers (a proposal that Bureau-Blouin admitted was deeply unpopular among many Francophone students). And she declared that her government would not be bound by any RIP calling for a referendum on sovereignty. However, she stuck to her well-trodden identity issues, such as restricting Quebec citizenship to those with reasonable fluency in French (a position criticized by First Nations leaders), and adoption of a charter on laïcité (secularism) that, among other things, would ban the wearing of religious insignia such as the Muslim *hijab* or scarf by government and public services employees – with an exception for those who choose to wear a small Christian crucifix!

In fact, the PQ’s focus on exclusionary identity issues is the complement to the party’s neoliberalism and its reluctance to mount a fundamental challenge to the federal state, the mainstay of Canadian capitalism. Québec solidaire was founded by socialists, progressive activists and left-wing sovereigntists precisely in order to create an alternative to the PQ that could challenge neoliberalism in both the streets and the ballot boxes around a program that projects an inclusive “open secularism” and is “resolutely of the left, feminist, ecologist, altermondialiste, pacifist, democratic and sovereigntist.”^[3]

PQ Campaigns Against Québec Solidaire

A major concern of the PQ in this election was to prevent Québec solidaire from siphoning votes on its left flank, especially in Francophone working-class ridings on Montréal island where sovereigntist sympathies are highest. The PQ ran some of its strongest candidates against leading QS candidates. In Mercier, it sought to defeat Amir Khadir by nominating Jean Poirier, former president of the machinists union local fighting the closure of AVEOS, a company that handled Air Canada’s aircraft maintenance. In Sainte Marie-Saint Jacques the PQ ran Daniel Breton, a leading environmental activist and founder of the Parti Vert, the

Green party. (Breton was elected, but Manon Massé of QS came second with more than 25 per cent of the vote.) In Rosemont Jean-François Lisée, a well-known journalist and former adviser to Jacques Parizeau, ran successfully against François Saillant, a social housing advocate and prominent QS activist. Thus the PQ posed a major obstacle to Québec solidaire in this campaign – on top of the to-be-expected hostility of the Quebec mass media, which is basically monopolized by two big families of oligarchs, the Desmarais and Péladeaus.[\[4\]](#)

A particularly virulent campaign was waged against QS by the leaders of a small but influential group of *péquistes*, the [Syndicalistes et progressistes pour un Québec libre](#) (SPQ Libre). Its leaders, Pierre Dubuc and Marc Laviolette, published article after article in Dubuc's *L'aut'journal* and occasionally in the daily *Le Devoir* questioning QS's legitimacy as a sovereigntist party. And just in case this charge lacked credibility – as it does – they argued that if QS (and Option nationale) did support sovereignty they should be supporting the PQ and not fighting to replace it.

The appeal to close ranks behind the PQ had broad appeal, however, to many sovereignty supporters, aware that it was the only sovereigntist party with the resources and potential support – and status as the long-standing party of alternance – to dislodge the Liberals. An initial response to this pressure by QS co-leaders Khadir and David, published in the June 14 edition of *Le Devoir*, reflected the position taken by a QS convention in April 2011, which had rejected proposals for alliances with the PQ and Parti Vert following an extensive debate on the question[\[5\]](#) – a debate prompted by the fact that the undemocratic first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system, which results in the election of any candidate winning a plurality in a multi-candidate contest, discriminates against smaller parties. The QS co-spokespersons explained why QS did not view the PQ as a party of progressive social change, noting for example that it had taken Marois 11 weeks during the student upsurge to even come up with a party policy on tuition fee increases. And they pointed to the pro-capitalist record of PQ governments in the past. Québec solidaire, they proclaimed, stood for solidarity with the students then mobilizing in the streets and all those who supported them, and offered the perspective of another kind of government in the interests of the vast majority:

“The meaning to be given to the political awakening and social metamorphosis that is under way lies, in our opinion, in a massive rejection of a system controlled by a minority that never stops enriching itself on the backs of the 99 per cent. The political and economic elites, hand in hand, have produced a world of unprecedented inequality. They have also pushed the planet to its outermost limits....”

However, when an on-line petition urging the sovereigntist parties to negotiate a mutual non-aggression pact gathered more than 10,000 signatures, the QS leadership, in a formal statement,[\[6\]](#) retreated somewhat. They agreed to meet with a designated mediator to examine the possibilities. They did not categorically reject “a united front to govern with the Parti québécois,” while affirming that “it seems extremely difficult to us” for the reasons given in the June 14 article by David and Khadir. They suggested instead that “isolated and limited arrangements” be explored – a thinly veiled appeal to the PQ in particular that it agree not to oppose certain QS candidates in return for QS desistance in some ridings the PQ hoped to win – provided that each party undertake, if elected, to reform the electoral system to include, *inter alia*, some form of proportional representation as of the next general election; repeal of Law 12 and amnesty for those arrested and charged under it; abolition of the tuition fee increase and the healthcare fee imposed by the Liberals, higher taxes on the rich, etc. “Almost all of these points are already commitments by the parties”

concerned, QS maintained.

In the end, the PQ refused to negotiate with QS and the only agreement reached was with Option nationale: QS would not run against ON leader Aussant (he lost anyway) and ON would not run against David. It is worth noting that these manoeuvres by the QS leadership, which on their face ran counter to the decision of the April 2011 convention, were not endorsed by the party membership or even by its National Council, its governing body between conventions. The NC has not met for some years now. Important policy decisions are made vertically and unilaterally by co-spokespersons David and Khadir in collaboration with the dozen or so members of the QS National Coordinating Committee. The election experience should put the issue of party democracy back on the agenda in any QS balance sheet of the campaign.



Newly-elected PQ premier Pauline Marois campaigned (unsuccessfully) against Québec solidaire leader Françoise David in Gouin riding.

Predictably, the election result produced attacks on Québec solidaire (and ON) for splitting the sovereigntist vote. Within hours of the vote, [Pierre Dubuc listed](#) 22 ridings in which he said the votes of QS and ON, either separately or combined, deprived the PQ candidate of victory, thus depriving the PQ of a majority government with 76 seats. The arrogant (and mistaken) assumption, of course, is that the QS and ON supporters would have voted PQ if their own parties were not on the ballot! QS and ON could with similar logic argue that the PQ's presence on the ballot had deprived them of election in a number of ridings, too. The FPTP system is inherently unfair to minor parties and privileges larger, more established parties. Thus the PLQ and PQ took more seats than their share of the popular vote would warrant, while QS, with 6 per cent of the vote, took only 1.6 per cent of the seats. Asked why Québécois had denied her the majority she wanted, Marois told a [post-election press conference](#) that the two-party system was a thing of the past and that we were now in a multi-party environment. But she continues to be adamantly opposed to any reform of the electoral system that would reflect this reality. After all, the PQ can argue, without the FPTP rule we could now be facing a Liberal-CAQ coalition government!

However, the PQ has additional concerns in mind. As QS member Paul Cliche pointed out in [Presse-toi-à-gauche](#), the PQ program for 40 years called for proportional representation, but the party failed to enact it during the 18 years it has held office. And the PQ dropped the demand at its April 2011 convention, with Marois' support. "It's no secret," writes Cliche, "that the real reason the PQ blocks reform is to keep the progressive milieu, including QS supporters, captive as long as possible in order to retain its hegemony over the sovereigntist movement. Hence the appeals to vote strategically that come from all sides each election."

Friend or Foe?

While the PQ was eager to attack Québec solidaire, the QS leadership's quest for some sort of electoral alliance with the PQ illustrated a problem that became more evident as the campaign developed. QS leaders seemed uncertain as to whether the PQ was friend or foe. Françoise David, for example, sought to fend off the "strategic voting" assault on QS by stressing the left party's willingness to work with the PQ in the National Assembly - in support of "progressive" measures, of course. And in an [interview with Le Devoir](#) on the eve

of the election, David and co-leader Khadir said they hoped for a PQ minority government with a few QS MNAs holding “the balance of power,” pulling the PQ “toward the centre left.” And they even appeared to offer the PQ a blank cheque for their support over the next year.

“Québec solidaire,” wrote the reporter, summarizing their argument, “will count on ‘responsible and reasonable negotiations’ with the next government, dismissing any notion of bringing it down, if it is a minority, ‘within the coming year’. ‘It is irresponsible to try to overturn a government one month after the election!’ exclaims Françoise David.”

One wonders whether the QS leaders have thought through the implications of these statements. As one reader remarked to me, what if there is another showdown between the government and the students? A big public sector strike? A corruption scandal significantly involving the PQ?

Celebrating her personal victory on election night, David again repeated several times how eager she was to work with the new PQ government – as if QS, and not the PLQ or CAQ, now held the balance of power. And in a post-election scrum, David said that given the government’s minority status “everyone will have to put some water in their wine, including Québec solidaire.”

A quite different approach was followed by some QS supporters, who correctly differentiated their party from the neoliberal PQ. [Presse-toi-à-gauche](#) (PTàG), an on-line journal that generally reflects the views of the left in Québec solidaire, was exemplary in this regard, publishing many articles exposing how the Parti Québécois, over the years, had undermined the movement for national independence through its right-wing course. PTàG writers, such as Bernard Rioux, Paul Cliche, Pierre Mouterde, Pierre Beaudet and others, effectively answered the *péquistes* criticisms of QS and argued forcefully for QS to mount a more aggressive campaign in opposition to the PQ as well as the other capitalist parties. Moreover, an internal memorandum for QS election candidates, published on the party intranet, was quite frank in its cogent critique of the PQ:

“Everything we hate today about the Liberal party, the Parti québécois has already done: anti-democratic special laws, closure of debate in the National Assembly, increases in tuition fees, cuts in social programs, reduction in trade-union powers, privatization in healthcare, reform of social assistance, reduced taxes on the wealthiest, reduced business taxation, generous subsidies to Québec Inc. and participation in secret funding of political parties. Under the veneer of change lurks the same vision of the world as that of the Liberal party.”

QS Platform

The election platform published by Québec solidaire (including in [English](#)) demarked the party in the main from the PQ’s neoliberalism. The format – specific demands, addressed to current issues, that are (“responsibly”) realizable within a four-year mandate and within the provincial context – reflects the party’s approach to elections. It does not contest elections solely to make propaganda for its overall program, as do so many small leftist sects. QS seeks to elect members to the legislature with the goal of forming a government, an especially difficult challenge for a still-small party under the FPTP system, as we have noted. At a pre-election convention in April, QS delegates debated and selected which demands in the [party program](#) were especially pertinent to immediate issues and struggles, and thus should be highlighted in this campaign.

Unfortunately, for reasons that are unclear to me, the topics addressed were published in alphabetical order, following the French text: from Agriculture to Democratic Life (*Vie démocratique*), without prioritizing any. Thus “sovereignty” became just one of the topics, and not the first. Under this heading QS briefly explains its proposal for mobilizing popular support for sovereignty, and a mass commitment to fight for it, through organizing a massive public debate on Quebec’s political, social and constitutional future under the aegis of a Constituent Assembly in which, of course, QS would fight for an independent Quebec – although, the platform notes, the party does not preclude the possibility that the Assembly might opt for something less, like renewed federalism.

This apparent readiness to accept a democratic verdict of the Assembly, whatever the state form chosen, was seized on by PQ and ON supporters to question – unjustly – the QS commitment to a sovereign Quebec. Fortunately, a detailed four-page memorandum for QS candidates published on the party’s intranet^[7] explains the need for sovereignty, how Quebec independence offers a new framework in which to fight for progressive change, why it is necessary to build a mass base of support for independence, and effectively answers some of the key questions the candidates will face in this regard. And it notes that “since the Quebec people cannot deny to other peoples what they demand for themselves, Quebec’s sovereignty will be achieved in close partnership and collaboration with the indigenous nations. Their decisions and orientations, whatever they are, will be respected.”

A clearly anticapitalist alternative could only be posed realistically in the context of an independent Quebec state that could nationalize banking and finance, determine its international policy, have its own military defense force, and so on – all of these being federal jurisdictions. As the party’s [Plan Vert states](#) (p. 11), “for the time being, Quebec does not have mastery of all its economic levers because it is still stuck in the Canadian federation....” Outside the context of an independent Quebec, the platform lacks a key dimension of the party’s politics and does not indicate a clear break from subordination to Canadian and global capital. This is a deficiency of the QS program, and could not be compensated by the election platform based on that program.^[8]

And it leaves QS open to charges of naiveté at best – for example, the platform states that QS accepts the Quebec Finance ministry’s projection of economic prospects, overlooking the economic and social crisis only now starting to break over Quebec, to the inevitable disruption of those prospects – or of a slippage toward “social liberalism,” as a few left critics of QS argue.^[9]

Notwithstanding its deficiencies, the Québec solidaire campaign attracted interest and significant support from activists in a number of social movements. Six major ecology groups, in a [comparative evaluation](#) of the environmental commitments in the party platforms, ranked QS first with a score of 83 per cent, well ahead of the PVQ (Greens) at 42 per cent! The PQ scored 73 per cent, the Liberals 33 per cent and the CAQ came last with 31 per cent.

The major trade union centrals were officially neutral in the campaign, even the Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ) which has often endorsed the Parti Québécois and its federal pendant, the Bloc Québécois. (The FTQ is annoyed with the PQ for its support of Charest’s Law 33 banning the union hiring hall in the construction industry.) The CSN called on its members to vote for the “progressive” candidate with the best chance of defeating the Liberals and the CAQ – meaning, in most cases, the PQ. *L’aut’journal* [reported](#) that the FTQ’s Montréal regional council endorsed three QS candidates – trade union militants André

Frappier, Alexandre Leduc and Édith Laperle, but not Amir Khadir in Mercier! However, this support was not indicated on the [council's web site](#). The Montréal Central Council of the CSN [endorsed](#) David and Khadir, and called for a vote for QS candidates where it would not result in the election of a Liberal or CAQ candidate. The lack of union engagement with the Québec solidaire campaign underscored, once again, the failure of QS to organize and give direction to the many party members who are union militants.

And the Students?

Québec solidaire was the only party supporting free education from kindergarten to university. But leaders of this spring's massive student strike either placed their hopes in a victory for the PQ, which promised to reverse Charest's fees increase (while indexing future fee increases to the cost of living) or, in the case of the more militant wing of the movement, chose not to intervene in the election. And indeed, there was ample evidence that this extraordinary summer election [\[10\]](#) was part of Charest's strategy to break the student movement. He hoped to take advantage of any continuation of the strike to campaign as a champion of law and order. Alternatively, if the students ended the strike he could claim success for his hard line resistance to their demands.

The students were facing some difficult decisions. The government's Bill 78 (now Law 12), imposed in late May, made continuation of the strike illegal and threatened the student associations with decertification and heavy fines that would bankrupt them. On the other hand, it effectively blackmailed the students by offering them the possibility of completing their semester with full credit in late August and September if they ended the strike. More than 3,000 students arrested during the spring protests are facing serious criminal and civil charges and heavy fines if convicted. Many were unable to get summer jobs, and most are financially extremely vulnerable.

Moreover, there were signs that the movement was flagging, notwithstanding some impressive mass mobilizations on the 22nd of June, July and August. Most importantly, there was no sign that major new social forces – especially the unions – were prepared to mobilize to extend the strike movement into the broad “social strike” that was needed for victory.

Faced with these obstacles, two student associations – the FEUQ and the FECQ, representing many university and college students – opted to participate in the election campaign in an effort to defeat the Liberals and CAQ at all costs. Activists in both associations went door-to-door in targeted Liberal ridings to spread their message, and picketed Charest in his public appearances. FECQ leader Léo Bureau-Blouin agreed to run as a PQ candidate, although none of the associations endorsed any particular party.

The largest and most radical of the student groups, the CLASSE, after an intense discussion, rejected any intervention in the election campaign although an internal strategy document [\[11\]](#) that included a critical analysis of each party's positions found, in part, that Québec solidaire is “by far, the party that is most responsive to the demands of the students.” It noted that QS “proposes, *inter alia*, to establish free tuition and a wage for students during their first term in office,” adding “We could hardly ask for more.” But voting for QS could not suffice as a strategy for winning the current struggle, it concluded, since the party could not possibly become the government in this election. The CLASSE saw no option but to try to continue the strike, although it left the decision to its member associations.

Student assemblies held on university and college campuses during August, most of them poorly attended, voted in most cases to end the strike at least until September 4, following which many intend to meet again to consider strategy in light of the election results. The votes being held this week strongly favour a return to classes.

Premier-elect Marois' pledge on the day after the election to overturn the tuition fee increase was greeted by student leaders, although they warned about the threat posed by the Liberal-CAQ opposition. Even the CLASSE, the militant student coalition that led the way in Québec's *printemps érable*, is now referring to the strike movement in the past tense. "If the PQ yielded so quickly on the tuition fee increase, it is because there was an historic student movement," CLASSE co-spokesperson Jeanne Reynolds told the media following a meeting of its leadership on September 6. The CLASSE "had called for continuation of the strike. However, we note that the student associations voted instead for a return to class, and we respect their decisions." She expressed the hope that Marois would soon discuss with the CLASSE how to organize the summit on education the PQ had promised during the campaign.

The CLASSE is now organizing for a mass demonstration again on September 22. •

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Endnotes:

[1.](#) Aussant was from 2003 to 2005 vice-president of Morgan Stanley Capital International in London, a bank now being sued in the USA for its role in the sub primes crisis of 2008. The ON platform had parallels with the platforms of both the PQ and QS, especially the latter. It criticized the PQ for its reluctance to fight for sovereignty since the narrow defeat of the 1995 referendum.

[2.](#) Benjabib, a refugee from Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria, has authored [a number of books](#) urging such measures as a public ban on religious insignia such as the *hijab* or scarf worn by many Muslim women. She lives in Gatineau, and is employed by the federal government.

[3.](#) For background on Québec solidaire, see my blog [Life on the Left](#), and in particular "[Québec Solidaire: A Québécois Approach to Building a Broad Left Party](#)" and [part 2](#).

[4.](#) QS was excluded from the three one-on-one debates among party leaders sponsored by the private TV network TVA, owned by Péladeau's Quebecor Media. The only TV debate with a QS presence was Radio-Canada's, in which Françoise David represented QS and garnered much praise for her effective presentation of the party and its platform.

[5.](#) For details, see '[Beyond capitalism](#)'?

[6.](#) The full statement by the QS National Coordinating Committee is no longer available on-line. The QS web site publishes a [summary](#).

[7.](#) In all, QS published 13 such memoranda on its intranet. And on its public web site it published a detailed "[budgetary framework](#)" and a "[green plan](#)," the latter as a response in part to Charest's Plan Nord and its projection of rampant development of private mining

activity in northern and rural Quebec.

8. See [‘Beyond capitalism’? Québec solidaire launches debate on its program for social transformation](#).

9. See, for example, the many criticisms of the QS platform and program published by QS member Marc Bonhomme, a Marxist economist, on [his blog](#).

10. Under the parliamentary regime inherited from Britain, the government in Quebec may choose any date within a five-year mandate on which to hold a general election. September 4 is more than a year shy of the legal end of the Charest government’s term of office.

11. [“Document de réflexion sur la non-entrée d’automne 2012,”](#) by Louis-Philippe Véronneau and Émile Plourde-Lavoie, August 2012.

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