

# When Nationalist Frenzy Strikes...

Michael William

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Are you a victim of the following situations?

*More and more*, René Levesque<sup>1</sup> pops up in your dreams, even in your erotic fantasies, or,

Your husband (or wife) complains: “Ginette (or Pierre), you’ve been wearing that separatist T-shirt for the last four days, and it stinks. We’re doing laundry tomorrow. Can’t you put something else on?”

But wearing anything else makes you feel naked, and you can’t bear the shame.

If you’re suffering from experiences similar to these, you may want to seek the help of Nationalists Anonymous.

*Nationalists Anonymous* (NA) is a support group of former nationalists who have come together to deal with the problem of nationalism. In a world where upsurges of nationalism seem to be occurring everywhere, we believe it’s more urgent than ever to talk openly about — and to fight — this plague, which is responsible for wreaking such havoc in our personal lives.

At first, in many cases the nationalist believes that nationalism is good for him. Brandishing flags and other nationalist symbols, being proud to be Québécois (or American or Japanese or whatever) creates a feeling of power, an intense but usually short-lived euphoria. Submerging oneself in “the people,” grasping at a false sense of community appears to offer the nationalist an identity, the feeling that he’s a somebody. At the same time this enables him to avoid confronting what he has truly become.

Trying to regain that initial feeling of well-being, the nationalist has the tendency to resort increasingly to nationalism, and to up the dose. But as nationalism

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<sup>1</sup> René Lévesque: the chain-smoking, former talk-show host who led the separatist Parti

fails to identify and target the real enemies, since it doesn't respond to his genuine underlying needs and desires, the nationalist remains dissatisfied. His daily life, he can't avoid admitting, remains as banal as ever, while his relationship with "the people" continues to be distant and alienating. Disoriented, frustrated, afflicted by hallucinations, he frequently clings to the illusion that everything will be better come independence (even though similar scenarios throughout the world clearly demonstrate that the birth of the Nation has never solved our problems). Habitually placing people into categories of "us" and "them" according to their ethnic or national origins, in some extreme cases the increasingly stupefied nationalist ends up wallowing in a blatantly racist delirium.

As a result of indulging in nationalism on a regular basis, the critical faculties of the nationalist become blurred and dulled. Firm in his belief that "our" culture must be protected at all costs, the nationalist accepts, because it is "ours," all sorts of mediocrities and crap thrown at him by the forces of capital and the media. Smug, fatuous, incapable of any honest self-criticism, of envisaging a truly different way of life, he becomes the best champion of the status quo (when it's precisely "our" culture that needs in large part to be dismantled). At the same time, the confused and often neurotic nationalist succeeds in many cases in convincing himself that his culture differs from, or is even superior to, that of the Americans, the French, the Ontarians, the Germans etc., ignoring the simple truth that these societies all share the same fundamental values.

Ironically, he fervently believes in the great equalizers of contemporary culture: mass communication (rare are those who don't have a TV), and in the fundamental necessity of capital, industrialism and the State. Having accepted the basis of contemporary domination, he readily bows to its economic demands and hierarchies. Instead of rebelling against the economic sphere as such, against his role as a mere cog in a mega-machine beyond his control, he grovels before the dictates of "his" economy, the national economy. Passive, submissive, he's an easy target for myriad nationalist politicians, leaders and careerists on the right and the left who are on the prowl for cannon fodder for their pathetic racketeering.

Unable to recognize and appreciate the unique qualities of the people he encounters, the colourful tapestry which exists in each of us, he judges people primarily according to how they fit into the nationalist big picture. Instead of forming qualitatively different relationships with people, ones which are increasingly rich and profound, he mechanically throws in his lot with those who, far from friends, are people he doesn't even know!

Nationalism is pathetic. But if the nationalist needs help through this madness, and is usually in a sorry state, we mustn't pity him too much. These days national-

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Québécois to their first electoral win in 1976.

ism is no longer a joke! Throughout the world, it is becoming the reigning ideology, perhaps the most formidable obstacle to the birth of a new world.

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*Nationalists Anonymous* is at your disposal for any questions you may have regarding nationalism. Call us today, and become part of the NA group in your area (please consult your local directory). But in the final analysis, it is up to each and every nationalist to face his problem head-on and find the will to uproot it at the source.

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