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The Communist Party of Canada and the Third International

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) ostensibly was born in the summer of 1921 and applied for membership in the Communist International sometime shortly thereafter. It received its official acceptance letter from Otto W. Kuusinen early in 1922, or so the official history of the CPC, published in 1982, tells us.[1] The story, as in other countries, was far more complex than that simple rendering suggests.

The early years of World War I were a difficult time for Canadian socialists. The major socialist parties, the largely western-based Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) and the Ontario-centred Social Democratic Party (SDP), both opposed the war. The SDP, with a largely ethnic membership which included large numbers of Ukrainians (deemed enemy aliens by the Canadian state), almost disappeared in those years. In the face of state repression, which included internment and press censorship, the years from 1914 to 1916 were unpropitious for the growth of socialism in Canada.[2] The years from 1917 to 1919 witnessed a complete reversal of socialist fortunes as labour militancy and popular unrest combined to create the largest wave of industrial strife in Canadian history.[3] The political lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution, or rather the North American perception of those events, inspired a renewed revolutionary fervour and led to the emergence of new "communist" political formations.

A consideration of the periods of party history in Canada leads to a formulation which largely resembles the story elsewhere, although much of what occurred domestically in those years was quite particular to the CPC. There were six discernible periods up to the end of World War II: Origins, 1917-1921; Birth and Transition, 1921-1929; Third Period, 1929-1935; Popular Front, 1935-1939; Imperialist War and Illegality, 1939-1941; and War Against Fascism, 1941-1945. Between 1917 and 1921 various efforts were made by left-wing socialists to align themselves with the Bolsheviks and the Third International, but it was only in 1921 with the active help of the Comintern's Pan-American Bureau that the CPC was founded. The Party enjoyed limited success in the 1920s but was thrown into total disarray by the splits engendered by the demise of the Trotsky and the rise of Stalin. In Canada, as in the USA these fights led in fall 1928 to the expulsion of important leaders, including Maurice Spector, the only Canadian elected to a position on the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Over the next two years the entire leadership came under assault and with the exception of Tim Buck, almost none maintained their positions. The party was in total disarray by 1931 as the turn to the left and Bolshevization led to a rapid decline in membership, especially among the ethnic members. The arrest and prosecution of the CPC leadership in 1931 and the emergence of the Workers Unity League (WUL) and the National Unemployed Workers Association (NUWA), however, led to a rapid shift in party fortunes. From 1931 the party grew both during the third period and after the turn to the united front. Only for its brief period of illegality from 1939 to 1941 did party fortunes decline.

1. A Brief Historiography

There is no single satisfactory history of the CPC. In addition to the "official history" cited above, there are four major histories, three of which were written before the CPC deposited its own papers in the National Archives of Canada (NAC). William Rodney, a former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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[1] *Canada's Party of Socialism: History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1921-1976* (Toronto, 1982), pp. 14-22. See also Communist Party of Canada Papers, National Archives of Canada, vol. 8, file 15, Comintern to CPC, Moscow, 28 December 1921.

[2] The best account of the war years is probably Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montreal, 1981). See also A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919* (Toronto, 1977), and Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour* (Kingston, 1968).

[3] For details on industrial militancy see Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt", *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (1984), pp. 11-44 and Douglas Cruikshank and Gregory S. Kealey, "Strikes in Canada, 1890-1950", *Labour/ Le Travail*, 20 (1987), pp. 85-145.

Security Service, published the first of these in 1968. His *Soldiers of the International*[4] provides an account of the CPC only in its first decade, and the book, while solidly researched, is premised on cold war assumptions. Ivan Avakumovic, a political scientist, wrote a survey history of the party which, although it suffers in places from superficiality, is nevertheless a useful introduction.[5] In 1981, Ian Angus offered another view of the CPC in the 1920s. Written from a Trotskyist perspective, the book provides useful critiques of figures such as long-time Party Secretary Tim Buck but is too uncritical of the CPC before the attack on Trotsky.[6] The final contribution is the most recent, Norman Penner's *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond*.[7] Penner's book benefits from its use of the CPC Papers in Ottawa but it adds relatively little to our understanding of the Party.

Any new reconstruction of CPC history must be heavily based on three major archival deposits. The first is at the Public Archives of Ontario in Toronto and consists of all the material seized by the police for use in the successful prosecution under Section 98 of the Criminal Code (passed in 1919 in response to the Winnipeg General Strike) of the CPC leadership in 1931. This collection is quite rich in all types of CPC material including considerable correspondence from the entire country to party headquarters in Toronto.[8] The second collection is at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) and is the official collection of CPC papers deposited by the party itself. The collection is weak on the 1920s, rather predictably given the events described above. It does contain, however, some valuable early correspondence. Nevertheless it is strongest on published party materials and on official documents such as convention proceedings. There is an excellent finding aid that describes this collection in great detail.[9] The third collection is housed in the Rare Books Room at the University of Toronto Robarts Library and consists of the Robert Kenny Papers. Kenny, a long time party member, was an avid collector and his papers contain a mass of CPC materials unavailable elsewhere.

In addition to those three collections there are many collections of materials related to the CPC in various regional archives. Such collections generally include the papers of leading CPC activists, of labour unions in which the Party played a major role, and of various front organizations, especially the various ethnic organizations that played such a prominent role in CPC history. Particularly strong collections of this kind are held at the Université du Québec à Montréal Archives, at the NAC (includes the huge and very rich Finnish Organization of Canada papers,[10] as well as the papers of many individual party leaders), the Public Archives of Manitoba, and the Special Collections branch of the University of British Columbia Library in Vancouver.

As mentioned above the best collections of party documents in the sense of published proceedings, etc. is contained in the NAC collection. This material should be supplemented by that contained in the Kenny Papers at the University of Toronto. There is also a strong pamphlet collection at the University of Prince Edward Island Library in Charlottetown.[11]

In addition to the general works discussed earlier, there are also numerous biographical and autobiographical works. This literature splits easily into two obvious groupings. The first is the hagiographic materials published by the party over the years to celebrate heroic leaders and to inspire militants. The second is a more serious set of reminiscences which raise important questions about party history. The first

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[4] *Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1919-1929* (Toronto, 1968).

[5] *The Communist Party of Canada: A History* (Toronto, 1975).

[6] *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montreal, 1981).

[7] (Toronto, 1988).

[8] The fullest account of these trials is Lita-Rose Betcheman, *The Little Band, 1928-1932* (Toronto, 1983).

[9] Communist Party of Canada Papers, National Archives of Canada, MG28 IV 4, Finding Aid No. 1481.

[10] See Edward W. Laine (comp.), *On the Archival Heritage of the Finnish-Canadian Working-Class Movement: A Researcher's Guide and Inventory to the Finnish Organization of Canada Collection at the National Archives of Canada* (Turku, 1987).

[11] See Gregory S. Kealey, "Radical Pamphlets at the Library of the University of Prince Edward Island", *Labour/ Le Travail*, 25 (1990), pp. 199-200.

group of books includes the autobiographies of party leaders such as A.E. Smith and Tom McEwen, and biographies of Tim Buck, William Bennett, Annie Buller, Norman Bethune, Bella Hall Gauld, Mathew Popovich, and Slim Evans.[12] The second includes the autobiographies of John Stanton, Gerard Fortin, Mike Bosnich, and Peter Hunter, and the life histories of Tim Buck, George MacEachern, and Jack Scott.[13]

The major specialized bibliographic guides are both compiled by Peter Weinrich. First is his annotated guide to the writings of Tim Buck, the long-time leader of the CPC. Of most importance, however, is Weinrich's *Social Protest from the Left in Canada, 1870-1970, A Bibliography.* Arranged by year of publication with generous indexes, this volume is by far the best guide to left-wing Canadian books and pamphlets. For material published after 1970 see Douglas Vaisey (comp.), *The Labour Companion* and the annual updates that appear in the journal *Labour*.[14]

Additional useful material on the CPC was also compiled by the various Canadian police and security agencies over the years. Major security responsibilities lay with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) after its creation as a national police force in 1920. Before that date security responsibilities had been shared by a confusing array of governmental agencies including the Royal North West Mounted Police and the Dominion Police. For the period up to the creation of the RCMP, there are good records available in the National Archives. These records have had an interesting history of their own and were withdrawn from the NAC for almost a decade for so-called "security" reasons.[15]

Canada adopted new Access to Information legislation in the early 1980s and also created a new security agency to replace the thoroughly disgraced RCMP Security Service, which had been caught in an array of illegal activities in the 1970s. The new Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) has begun to deposit material in the NAC and must respond fully to access requests under the ATI legislation. While the process remains slow, the result has been an increasing flow of archival material dealing with state surveillance and penetration of the CPC.

In addition other federal state institutions, such as the military, took considerable interest in the activities of the CPC. Much of this material is also available at the NAC. Provincial and local police forces also engaged in active surveillance activities and some provincial police records are available in various archives across the country. Examples include the Ontario Provincial Police (Public Archives of Ontario, Toronto), the Alberta Provincial Police (Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton), and British Columbia Provincial Police (Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria).

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[12] Rev. A.E. Smith, *All My Life: An Autobiography* (Toronto, 1949); Tom McEwen, *The Forge Glows Red: An Autobiography* (Toronto, 1974); Oscar Ryan, *Tim Buck: A Conscience for Canada* (Toronto, 1975); Tom McEwen, *He Wrote for Us: The Story of Bill Bennett, Pioneer Socialist Journalist* (Vancouver, 1951); Louise Watson, *She Never was Afraid: The Biography of Annie Buller* (Toronto, 1976); Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon, *The Scalpel and the Sword: The Story of Dr. Norman Bethune* (Boston, 1952); Catherine Vance, *Not by Gods but by People: The Biography of Bella Hall Gauld* (Toronto, 1968); Peter Krawchuk, *Mathew Popovich: His Place in the History of Ukrainian Canadians* (Toronto, 1987); and Ben Swankey and Jean Evans Sheils, *Work and Wages, The Life and Times of Arthur H. (Slim) Evans* (Vancouver, 1977).

[13] John Stanton, *Never Say Die: The Life and Times of John Stanton, A Pioneer Labour Lawyer* (Ottawa, 1987); Gerard Fortin and Boyce Richardson, *Life of the Party* (Montreal, 1984); Milan (Mike) Bosnich, *One Man's War: Reflections of a Rough Diamond* (Toronto, 1989); Peter Hunter, *Which Side Are You On, Boys: Canadian Life on the Left* (Toronto, 1988); William Beeching and Phyllis Clarke (eds), *Yours in the Struggle: The Reminiscences of Tim Buck* (Toronto, 1977); David Frank and Don Macgillivray (eds.), *George MacEachern, an Autobiography: The Story of a Cape Breton Labour Radical* (Sydney, 1987); and Bryan Palmer (ed.), *Jack Scott: A Communist Life* (St John's, 1988).

[14] *A Selected Bibliography of Tim Buck, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada, 1922-1962* (Toronto, 1974); *Social Protest* (Toronto, 1982); Vaisey, *The Labour Companion: A Bibliography of Canadian Labour History Based on Materials Printed from 1950 to 1975* (Halifax, 1980).

[15] For this complicated history see Gregory S. Kealey, "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Public Archives of Canada, and Access to Information: A Curious Tale", *Labour/ Le Travail*, 21 (1988), pp. 199-226.

2. *Formation of the CPC*

As was the case in the United States, there were three distinct phases to the establishment of a Canadian Communist Party. The first involved underground Bolshevik-inspired activities in late 1918 and early 1919 about which we know little. A second stage involved Canadians adhering to the Third International through membership in the early Communist factions in the United States. The final phase came after the arrival of Caleb Harrison (Atwood), an American Communist representing the Comintern, who brought together members of the Communist Party of America, the United Communist Party of America, and a few left-wing members of the Socialist Party of Canada on 28 and 29 May 1921 to create the Communist Party of Canada.

An underground communist organization appeared in southern Ontario in late 1918 and early 1919. A series of leaflets were distributed under cover of darkness in a number of Ontario towns. A series of arrests and convictions for violations of various security provisions passed by Order-in-Council under the War Measures Act brought this activity to a halt. The individuals involved appear to have been drawn from the Socialist Party of North America, a small Ontario-based formation, from the language federation sections of the Social Democratic Party, and from the Union of Russian Revolutionary Workers.[16] Among those prosecuted and deported from Canada for participation in these events were Arthur Ewert, later prominent in the German KPD, and his companion, Lita Zaborowski.

To date the existing historical literature on communism in Canada has paid little attention to the Canadian involvement in the various United States-based CPs that pre-existed the first Comintern-imposed unification in May 1921. Indeed the literature remains somewhat confused about which Canadian groups and individuals affiliated with which US parties. The best account by William Rodney, focusses almost totally on Toronto and pays little attention to the radical ethnic groups.[17] This period merits additional research, especially now that police materials have become available to researchers.

The actual founding of the CPC took place at a unity meeting chaired by Comintern representative Caleb Harrison at a farm near Guelph, Ontario in May 1921. Twenty-two delegates assembled at the farm of Fred Farley and under the guidance of Comintern policy created a new, underground, illegal party. The conference lasted only one day and appears to have been free of the massive infighting that plagued the equivalent meeting in the United States at Woodstock, New York.

The invitation list for the meeting was dominated by Central Canada. There were no representatives from Quebec, let alone any French Canadians, none from the Atlantic provinces, and the west, which considered itself the centre of Canadian radicalism, was also relatively under-represented. In addition, there was no representation from the One Big Union, the centre of Canadian left-wing, industrial unionism, and only a hand-picked pair of Socialist Party of Canada members. The dominance of Toronto as the centre of party activity, evident from the start, would prove a sore point with both western and eastern Communists throughout the party's existence. The failure to involve french-speaking Quebecers was an even larger problem.

Opposition to the formation of a communist party came from various elements of the left. Needless to say the parts of the labour left, which defined itself largely in terms of the British Labour Party model and participated in various farmer-labour political alliances in the immediate post-war period were critical. More seriously, the One Big Union (OBU), a revolutionary industrial union movement, which had emerged out of western labour radicalism and estrangement from American Federation of Labor craft unionism, was a victim of early debates about interpreting Comintern policy. The debate about the OBU in Canada reflected to a considerable degree the debate about the IWW in the United States. The problem, however, for the emerging CPC was that the OBU was not opposed to political action and thus the split, premised on the analogy to the IWW, was an important early error.

Other groups which remained outside the young CPC included large parts of the Socialist Party of Canada, especially in British Columbia. Given the ideological prominence of the SPC in the labour revolt of 1919 and the stature the party thus enjoyed, this too was a serious difficulty for the CPC. Equally problema-

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[16] By far the best account of this early activity is Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 27-48.

[17] Rodney, *Soldiers of the International*, esp. pp. 28-40.

tic, however, was the exclusion of the Quebec french-speaking socialists led by Albert Saint-Martin.[18] While Saint-Martin initially took his group into the legal and open Workers Party after it was founded, he also applied to the Comintern in 1923 for direct membership for his group. This application was turned down.

3. Political, Legal, and Economic Context

The Communist Party of Canada initially had both an illegal, underground party structure and, after its provisional organizing meeting in December 1921 and its formal founding in February 1922, an open Workers Party. In April 1924 both parties were combined into a new and open Communist Party of Canada. While much was made by the Canadian police of the secret underground "Z" party, it appears to have played much less of a role in Canada than it did in the United States and hence the debate in Canada about its elimination caused far less turmoil than in the U.S.A.[19]

Thereafter the CPC appeared to enjoy a legal status, although the party was subject to continuous police penetration, surveillance, and harassment. In 1931 the Conservative Government of R.B. Bennett reversed this policy and prosecuted the party leadership under laws originally passed during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. Protests over the arrests and conviction of the party leadership furthered the party's popularity during the early years of the depression and the laws were repealed after the return to power of the Liberal Party under Mackenzie King in 1935. The CPC became illegal again in 1940 because of the Party's opposition to Canada's war with Germany which the CPC termed a war between imperialist powers. Many prominent communists were interned in 1939 and 1940 and were not released until the CPC decided to support the war effort after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.[20]

Politically Canada was a federal parliamentary democracy which allowed the CPC electoral access at three levels--municipal, provincial, and federal. In the 1920s the Party operated primarily through the Canadian Labour Party (CLP), initially a broad- based coalition party. While the early communists had rejected the CLP as reformist, the changing perspectives of the Third and Fourth CI Congresses led the CPC to join its WPC branches to the CLP in the provinces where it was active, namely British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. A limited success at best, this tactical alliance broke down because in some provinces labour and social democratic forces refused to take part in any co-operation with the CPC and in those where they did initially work together by the mid-1920s the non-communists either expelled the CPC members or left the CLP to the CPC.

After the Party reversed itself at its Sixth Convention in the summer of 1929, only straight-line Communist candidates were run. The party enjoyed its greatest electoral success at the municipal level, some success at the provincial level, and relatively little federally. The greatest electoral success, however, came in the years 1935-1939 and again from 1943-1945, the latter years under the name Labor-Progressive Party because of the illegal period at the beginning of World War II.

The Canadian economic context was generally dismal in the years between the wars. There was no particular booming 1920s in Canada and things worsened considerably in the Great Depression of the 1930s. Only World War II brought better economic times from the perspective of labour, owing of course to the extremely tight labour markets created by the labour needs of the war effort at home and abroad.

4. Composition of the Membership

Estimates of party size are difficult to come by. One published version suggests 650 in 1921, 4,500 in 1925,

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[18] See Claude Lariviere, *Albert Saint-Martin, militant d'avant-garde (1865-1947)* (Montreal, 1979), esp. pp. 123-40.

[19] Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 87-102.

[20] William and Kathleen Repka, *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War* (Vancouver, 1982).

3,000 in 1927, 2,900 in 1929, and a decline to 1,400 by 1931 at the depth of party in-fighting. After the prosecution of the CPC leadership the Party began to recover and had 5,500 members by 1934, 9,000 a year later, 15,000 by 1937, and 19,000 by 1946.[21]

In the early years the party membership was drawn largely from the Finnish and Ukrainian immigrant communities. The Finnish Organization of Canada and the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association provided the bulk of the party membership. Indeed at the height of the debates over Bolshevization it was estimated that Finns, Ukrainians, and Jews made up between 80 and 95 per cent of the total party membership. The rapid decline in members in the late 1920s and early 1930s represented the defection from party ranks of many of the Finns and Ukrainians who were unhappy with Bolshevization and with the heated leadership struggles of 1929, both during and after the Sixth Convention of the CPC. The role of the CPC in resisting the repressive measures of the Bennett Government in the early years of the Depression and their leadership in trade union struggles through the Workers Unity League restored the party's fortunes. Its growth in the 1930s and again during the second half of World War II spread its membership much more evenly through the Canadian population.

Leadership has not been the subject of much historical research after the takeover of the Party by Tim Buck in 1929. The rise of Buck and the demise of Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald has been chronicled in some detail by both William Rodney and Ian Angus, albeit from rather different perspectives.[22] Rodney, probably drawing on his access to early police documents, also contains some discussion of earlier leadership battles, although nothing nearly as significant as those of 1929. In general this is an area that needs additional research.

5. The National Question

In the Canadian context this topic resonates in three different albeit related ways: the debate about the Canadian nation in terms of its relationship with British and American Imperialism; the question of the Quebec nation and its relationship to Canada; and finally the whole issue of the relationship of the ethnic/immigrant groups within the structure of the Party.

The Party's attitude to Canada and Canada's relationship to its old imperial centre, the United Kingdom, and to its subsequent realignment into the orbit of the United State's rising world star, was the subject of considerable debate in the 1920s. This debate, however, like so many others, was shut down by the realignments necessitated by the rise of Stalinism in the Comintern. Thus interesting work on the question of Canada's world role and its changing relationship to Britain and to the United States was short-circuited by Comintern directive.[23] A new start was made at pursuing these questions again in 1935, but the illegal period and then the war put much of this work on hold. The Party would return to those questions after World War II and would then become much more nationalistic in the clearer international environment of opposition to American Imperialism. Indeed in the cultural realm the Party in the post-war period played an important role in coalescing artistic forces worried about the demise of Canadian culture in the face of American dominance of cultural industries.

The question of Quebec nationalism always caused the party great theoretical and organizational difficulties. In 1923 Albert Saint-Martin, the leader of Quebec's Socialist Party, applied directly for membership in the Comintern. This application was denied on the grounds that Canada was already represented through the CPC. This initial denial of the national aspirations of the French Canadian minority basically represented the CPC position until 1964 when it was decided to allow the formation of a separate

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[21] Numbers are drawn from Robert Comeau et Bernard Dionne, *Le droit de se taire: Histoire des communistes au Québec, de la Premiere Guerre mondiale à la Révolution tranquille* (Montreal, 1989), p. 496.

[22] Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 201-255; Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 136-158.

[23] On this question see Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 199-316; Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto, 1988), pp. 70-96; Penner, *The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 77-123; Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 147-158.

Quebec party. In 1965 the Parti Communiste du Québec was founded.

The CPC always enjoyed limited success in Quebec at best and what success there was involved few French Canadians. The Party's greatest strength was in Montreal's ethnic and immigrant community, especially among Jewish workers. Estimates on party membership in Quebec, with French Canadians in parentheses, are 80 (20) in 1930, 140 (40) in 1932, 500 (100) in 1936, 1,000 (200) in 1939, and 2,500 (500) in 1947.[24] (It should probably be noted that a major split on the national question took place in 1947 and the CPC never again enjoyed such a high degree of support among French Canadians.)[25]

In the 1920s the Party virtually ignored the Quebec question. Only after specific ECCI criticism in 1929 did the Party begin to rectify this problem, but it was only in the post-1935 period that much work began. The publication in 1937 of Stanley Ryerson's *Le reveil du Canada francais* was a first effort by the Party to see anything positive in Quebec nationalist traditions, which until then had tended to be associated totally with right-wing clerical strains.[26]

The relationship with ethnic/immigrant national organizations also proved difficult. In the Party's early years the Finnish Organization of Canada and the Ukrainian Farmer-Labour Temple Association provided the great majority of the Party's members and finances. Thus the decision by the Comintern's Orgburo to push Bolshevization proved extremely difficult and unpopular in Canada. At the CI Fifth Congress Tim Buck explained that the notion of organizing on the basis of factory nuclei made little sense in Canada given the nature of the country's economy and because fully 80% of CPC members did not speak English. When Piatnitsky remained unimpressed, the CPC delegates immediately swung their support to the ECCI position.[27]

Despite their apparent obeisance to the ECCI position the CPC in the following five years made at best limited efforts to eliminate organization on the basis of geographic area. Indeed when the MacDonald leadership came under heavy Comintern criticism in 1929 the failure to impose Bolshevization on the Finns and Ukrainians proved an important component in the assault. Thus in the internal Party struggles of 1929 the language groups were lined up in total support of the MacDonald leadership. The emergence of the Buck faction in control after MacDonald's surprising resignation left the Finns and Ukrainians in considerable disarray. The Comintern sent a representative to Canada in 1930 to promote Bolshevization and to heal the deep rifts that had emerged between the FOC and the UFLTA and the new Buck leadership. In addition various Ukrainian-Canadian leaders spent time in Moscow in 1930 and 1931 and on their return they reversed their earlier position and supported the reorganization of the party.[28]

While the language groups returned to the party fold in the early 1930s, they never again played as prominent a role in the party. Moreover, contradictions in the Soviet Union revolving around the treatment of Karelia, the Ukraine, and of Soviet Jewry were issues that periodically surfaced and created a legacy of

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[24] Comeau et Dionne, *Le droit de se taire*, p. 495. See also Bernard Gauvin, *Les communistes et la question nationale au Québec* (Montréal, 1981) and Andrée Levesque, *Virage à gauche interdit* (Montréal, 1984).

[25] On the split see Robert Comeau and Bernard Dionne, *Communists in Quebec, 1936-1956* (Montreal, 1982), pp. 51-71; Penner, *Canadian Left*, pp. 108-123.

[26] On Ryerson see my "Stanley Bréhaut Ryerson: intellectuel revolutionnaire canadien" and "Stanley Bréhaut Ryerson: historien marxiste" in Comeau et Dionne, *Le droit de se taire*, pp. 198-272. For a bibliography of Ryerson's work, see the original English-language version of the above in *Studies in Political Economy*, 9 (1982), pp. 103-171.

[27] Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 81-89. For a similar discussion, see Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia: The Formative Period* (2nd edition, New York, 1986), pp. 153-185.

[28] See John Kolasky, Prophets and Proletarians: Documents on the Rise and Decline of Ukrainian Communism in Canada (Edmonton, 1990), 117-156. On the Finns see the far less critical William Eklund, Builders of Canada: History of the Finnish Organization of Canada, 1911-1971 (Toronto, 1987). The best account of the in-party struggle in the 1929-1931 period is Angus, Canadian Bolsheviks, 289-330, but see also Rodney, Soldiers, 147-160.

questioning which returned with a vengeance in 1956.[29]

6. Relations with the Unions

The CPC's trade union work broadly followed the CI and RILU lead. Initially the early communists were quite derisive of trade union activity which they viewed as extremely limited. In the west this attitude was accentuated by the drive to break away from the AFL/TLC unions and to create a revolutionary industrial union center, namely the OBU. After considerable early courting, the CPC failed to recruit Winnipeg OBU leader Bob Russell, one of the main leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike, and thereafter they did everything they could to damage the OBU, including running a candidate against Russell in Winnipeg in 1923 and costing him election to the Manitoba provincial legislature by syphoning off enough left wing votes to eliminate his margin of victory. Russell's unforgivable error was his refusal to disband the dual unionist OBU and return to the AFL/TLC fold, as the CPC early 1920s line dictated.[30]

The CPC set up its primary labour work through a Canadian branch of the US-based Trade Union Education League. Canada became District 4, which was in turn split into a western and eastern division. Tim Buck, the Party's industrial organizer, became the major TUEL figure in Canada. Given that increased autonomy for Canadian unions from their US-based parents was one of the major planks of CPC trade-union work, it is not surprising that tension should develop between the CPC and the CPUSA on this subject. The irony of a TUEL structure in which Canada was only a division might speak strongly of internationalism (the Browder position in the debate) or it might suggest something more damaging about Canadian and United States Party relations and interests. As was generally the case in the early years of the Comintern a high degree of pragmatism was allowed to operate. For example, despite the injunction to work in the AFL/TLC unions, the west coast lumber workers who had been originally organized as part of the OBU were allowed to maintain their Lumber Workers Industrial Union as an independent and autonomous Canadian union.

The CPC's greatest strength in the 1920s lay in its support among lumber workers and coal miners. Owing to the geographical location of coal in Canada the miners were widely dispersed with one major militant grouping in the east in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia (District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America) and the other major group in the western coal fields of the Rocky Mountains which were split between the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia (District 18 of the UMWA). The history of trade unionism in these widely separated coal fields thus had its own particular development and timing. As militancy built in the east, culminating in the great struggles of 1922-1925, it had to some degree waned in the west where the defection to the OBU had led to serious defeats and the rebuilding of the Mine Workers Union of Canada proved difficult.[31]

The attempts to function within the TLC as a left opposition worked for the first few years of the Party's existence but by the late 1920s communists became the subject of expulsion from local city labour councils and from the TLC itself. Thus the turn away from united front strategy and tactics in 1928 and 1929 reflected the sad fact that in Canada the party had lost much of its position in the trade union movement over the decade. But it is also true that the CPC had entered a period in the mid-1920s when they devised a national strategy somewhat at odds with the American TUEL. The CPC had entered into a more nationalist phase and threw its support to the creation of the All Canadian Congress of Labour in 1927. Earlier in 1925 it had turned its back on the UMWA in Alberta and British Columbia and supported the creation of the Mine Workers Union of Canada after heavy-handed repression of the UMWA left by John L. Lewis. In December

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[29] On the Ukrainian question see John Kolasky, *The Shattered Illusion: The History of Pro-Communist Ukrainian Organizations in Canada* (Toronto, 1979) and Penner, *Canadian Communism*, pp. 277-283.

[30] For the history of the OBU see the hostile accounts by David Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg* (2nd edition, Montreal, 1990) and his *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union* (Toronto, 1978).

[31] The best study of the struggles in Cape Breton are David Frank, "The Cape Breton Coal Miners, 1917-1926" (Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1979). For the western miners, see Allen Seager, "A Proletariat in Wild Rose Country: The Alberta Coal Miners, 1905-1945" (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 1982).

1928 in anticipation of the direction in which the Comintern was moving the CPC also founded an Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers which consisted of breakaways from a number of international unions in the clothing sector.[32]

As part of the turn to "class against class" in December 1929 after a Comintern directive, the CPC decided to found the Workers Unity League as a revolutionary trade union centre. Impatient with the red baiting that they were experiencing again in the new ACCL, almost totally eliminated from the TLC, and in control of only the moribund shell of the once-promising Canadian Labor Party, the CPC decided to go it alone. The WUL was headed by Tom Ewen (later McEwen) replacing former Industrial Director and TUEL head Tim Buck, who had become party leader as a result of the 1929 split.

In effect the WUL was not really conceived at the Sixth Convention of the CPC in June 1929, as Norman Penner has argued, but only hinted at in the sense that there were vague notions that the Comintern was moving in that direction. It was not actually born until 13 December when the CPC Pol-Com created it after receipt of a strong letter from the RILU. It first appeared in public early in 1930 and lasted until the Ninth Plenum of the CPC in November 1935. After six years of building "revolutionary unions" the Party policy then again became working within the AFL/TLC structures. In the interim much had happened. Initially the disarray in the party that followed the Sixth Convention meant that little actual work was done. It was only in early 1931 that the WUL picked up momentum, which was increased dramatically after the arrest, conviction, and incarceration of the party leadership in late August 1931.[33] After a faltering start in 1931 and 1932, the WUL became the centre of CPC activities commencing in the summer of 1933 with its active role in major trade union struggles and the dramatic organizing of the unemployed, including the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935. There is a considerable debate in the existing historical literature about the WUL. For some historians it represents a period of exemplary trade union work, for others it represents a period of ultra-leftism that separated the party from the Canadian working class.[34] The most balanced view to date and by far the best researched work on the WUL, John Manley's unfortunately unpublished doctoral dissertation concludes:

> The WUL was different in its resilience, intransigence and anti-capitalist commitment, all inspiring qualities that contributed to the growth of the party -- and the left generally -- in the mid-1930s. If the WUL experience proved anything, however, it was that inspiration was not enough. There were no short-cuts to socialism.[35]

Organizing the unemployed proved to be one of the WUL's major successes. The unemployed were organized into a subset of the WUL, the National Unemployed Workers Association (NUWA). Some of the most important struggles of the third period revolved around organizing the unemployed including relief camp strikes and the on-to-Ottawa Trek. This story can not be told here but it was one crucial way in which

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[32] On CPC trade union policy in the 1920s see: Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 107-117; Avakumovic, *The CPC*, pp. 41-50; Penner, *Canadian Communism*, pp. 78-85; Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 103-143; and John Manley, "Communism and the Canadian Working Class during the Great Depression: The Workers' Unity League, 1929-1936" (Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1984). Manley's thesis is particularly strong on its ability to discern the beginnings of a Canadian strategy in the mid-1920s, see esp. pp. 62-93.

[33] On the arrests, prosecution, and conviction of the CPC leadership in 1931 see Lita-Rose Betcherman, The Little Band.

[34] Views on the Third Period include: Penner, *Canadian Left*, pp. 134-143; Penner, *Canadian Communism*, pp. 100-111; Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 147-160; Avakumovic, *CPC*, pp. 68-81; Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 273-288; and Manley, "Workers' Unity League".

[35] Manley, "Workers' Unity League", pp. 616.

the CPC caught the attention of the Canadian public in the early years of the Depression.[36]

Unlike the struggle that greeted the major change in line in 1929, the decision to end the third period, dissolve the WUL unions, and return to the ranks of the AFL/TLC unions was not publicly opposed with the one major exception of the leader of the Cape Breton miners, James B. McLachlan, who resigned in protest from the party rather than return his Amalgamated Mine Workers to the fold of the UMWA. (Similarly, the equally important shifts in Comintern policy in 1939 and 1941 went apparently unopposed within the Canadian leadership, although it is possible that further research will demonstrate that there was at least private debate among party leaders.)

The WUL-trained Communist organizers played crucial organizational roles in the emergence of the Congress of Industrial Organizations mass production unions in Canada. Such roles gave the party an unprecedented prominence in trade union circles but the combination of the 1939 reversal on the struggle against Fascism and then the full out support for the war effort after 1941, complete with attempts to suppress worker militancy, left the party in bad shape to cope with the rise of anti-communism in the post-war period. The Gouzenko affair, the subsequent Royal Commission and trials, the rise of the Cold War, and fierce anti-communist struggles within the labour movement, led to a rapid dilution of Communist trade union strength.[37]

7. Formation of Front Organizations

In addition to the various labour bodies such as the TUEL and the WUL and the unemployed organizations, the party had a similar series of organizations aimed at farmers. In the United Front period the major group was the Progressive Farmers Education League, founded in Alberta in 1925. In 1927 in line with the renewed emphasis on Canada the name was changed to the Canadian Farmers Education League (CFEL). Party members active in agriculture also took part in the various United Farmers movements in the Prairie provinces and despite Kresintern criticism also supported grain growers' co-operatives.[38] In the third period the CFEL was transformed into the Farmers' Unity League. The FUL enjoyed some early success especially around the issue of fighting against the foreclosure of mortgages, but was disbanded like the WUL when the third period came to a close. In its aftermath CPC members were urged to return to the mainstream farmers' movement and to work there.[39]

Undoubtedly the most prominent front organization of the interwar years, however, was the Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL). Founded in 1925 it was initially run by Florence Custance and after her illness and death it was subsequently placed under the lead of A.E. Smith in 1929, the CLDL gained massive support for the defence of civil liberties in the late 1920s and during the Great Depression. It grew particularly quickly in the aftermath of the arrest of the CPC leadership in August 1931. From 70

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[36] For accounts of unemployed organizing see Manley, "The Workers' Unity League", pp. 535-606; Lorne Brown, *When Freedom was Lost: The Unemployed, the Agitator, and the State* (Montreal, 1987); Victor Howard, *"We were the Salt of the Earth!" The On--to-Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riot* (Regina, 1985); and Ronald Liversedge, *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek* (Toronto, 1973); a particularly insightful local study is Patricia Schulz, *The East York Workers Association: A Response to the Great Depression* (Toronto, 1975).

[37] The literature on the cold war struggles is thin but for a start see Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour* (Toronto, 1973). For one of the most unseemly affairs see William Kaplan, *Everything that Floats: Pat Sullivan, Hal Banks, and the Seamen's Unions of Canada* (Toronto, 1987). On Gouzenko, see *Report of the Royal Commission to investigate the facts relating to ... the communication ... of secret and confidential information to agents of a foreign power* (Ottawa, 1946) and John Sawatsky, *Gouzenko: The Untold Story* (Toronto, 1984).

[38] Avakumovic, *The CPC*, pp. 38-42. See also his "The Communist Party of Canada and the Prairie Farmer: The Interwar Years", in David Bercuson (ed.), *Western Perspectives*, I (Toronto, 1974).

[39] Avakumovic, *The CPC*, pp. 81-85.

branches in Spring 1931 it expended to 350 by the summer of 1933. Membership went from 25,000 in spring 1932 to 43,000 in early 1934. It continued to exist until it was declared illegal along with the CPC itself on 4 June 1940.[40]

Founded in 1925 as a Canadian version of International Red Aid and the American International Labor Defense, it initially stemmed from the party's need to defend workers arrested in industrial conflicts. While it always fulfilled that part of its mandate, it also came to play two other crucial roles: first in the attack on the Bennett Government for its prosecution of the CPC leadership and in the campaign for the repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code and secondly in the defense of foreign-born workers against the menacing threat of deportation.[41]

The League was successful in freeing the CPC leaders in 1934 and in gaining an acquittal for A.E. Smith himself against Bennett-inspired sedition charges. It also managed to make Section 98 a major issue in the 1935 federal election campaign that saw the Liberals under Mackenzie King triumph over Bennett's Conservatives. King who had pledged his party to the repeal of Section 98 made good on his promise in 1936. The CLDL quickly became but a shell of its former self and for all intents and purposes did not function from 1937 to 1939. While Smith announced a full out attempt to try and defend the CPC after the outbreak of war and the passage of the Defense of Canada Act, the naming of the CLDL in the June 1940 Order-in-Council ended that hope by making it an illegal organization.

In the area of women's work the CPC initially set up a Women's Department under Florence Custance in 1922. Urged by the Comintern to set up a working-class women's organization the CPC women led by Custance joined the existing network of Women's Labour Leagues and subsequently expanded it, created a national framework, and took over its leadership. The death of Custance in 1929 and the disarray in the party after the Sixth Convention led to the demise of the WLLs when the new party leadership investigated the existing WLL network and decided that it consisted of little more than "housewives involved in reformist auxiliary work." To put them on a correct revolutionary footing the WLLs were then placed under the control of the WUL. Work during the third period revolved around the NUWA and the WUL itself.[42]

Joan Sangster, the leading authority on women and the CPC, argues strenuously that the popular front period was far more successful from the point of view of women party activists than the third period had been. Encouraged to take part in a wide array of women's activities party women made effective alliances:

> For Communist women, then, the Popular Front held out the possibility of constructing alliances with other socialists, addressing new varieties of women's issues, and developing innovative alternatives to bourgeois culture.[43]

After the short period of illegality women's work continued throughout the war much as before. Working through Housewives' Leagues and Associations they organized women around domestic issues including child care. With more emphasis on women's work the party recruited increasing numbers of women, some of whom in turn began to play more important leadership roles.

In the realm of international relations the CPC also sponsored and participated in a series of

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[40] On the CLDL see J. Petryshyn, "Class Conflict and Civil Liberties: The Origins and Activities of the Canadian Labor Defence League, 1925-1940", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 10 (1982), pp. 39-63 and his "A.E. Smith and the Canadian Labor Defence League" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1977). See also Smith's autobiography *All My Life*.

[41] On the political use of deportation see Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900-1935* (Ottawa, 1988).

[42] Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (Toronto, 1989), pp. 26-80.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

important organizations. Party members were influential in the founding of the Canadian Congress against War and Fascism which was founded in October 1934. It subsequently became the Canadian League against War and Fascism and in 1937 the Canadian League for Peace and Democracy. Unlike other front groups where the CPC often dominated these groups maintained a large number of non-communist intellectuals and social democratic politicians in positions of power. While the membership figures for such organizations are problematic at best, the League did claim at its high point in 1935 some 350,000 members.

The CPC also had a series of front groups around the Spanish Civil War, some of which overlapped with the above groups. The main groups in this area were the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy.[44]

The party also had a youth movement. The Young Communist League (YCL) became an important conveyor belt for the new party leaders after the demise of Jack MacDonald. Indeed much of the support for the Buck-Smith faction came from former YCL members who had been exposed to Comintern policy of the late 1920s via attendance at the Lenin School. A similar path was to be followed by most of the subsequent party leadership. In the Popular Front period the CPC threw its efforts into the Canadian Youth Congress which contained a cross-section of political activists of all stripes. While careful not to dominate, the YCL members played important roles in the life of the CYC.

In the 1930s the party also began to play a far more prominent role in the cultural life of Canada. Party intellectuals and writers were prominent in the founding of two important literary journals, *The Masses* and *New Frontier*. In addition there was an active left-wing theatre in Toronto and Vancouver focussed on the Progressive Arts Club.[45]

8. Relationship with Social Democratic, Nationalist, and other Mass Organizations

The CPC tried to work with other left political forces in the 1920s through the agency of the Canadian Labor Party. While this enjoyed limited success in some provinces, it was falling apart by the time the CPC turned its back on that tactic and entered into the sectarianism of the third period. All Social Democrats became Social Fascists and the attacks were frequently *ad hominem* and scurrilous. After the founding of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in July 1933, the lines between Canadian social democrats and Communists were clearly drawn. The third-period bitterness helped accentuate social democratic anti-communism which would prove disastrous to all left-wing forces during the Cold War. Needless to say the Social Democrats who were the primary targets of such attacks were not particularly friendly to the CPC's later overtures in the period from 1935 to 1939. On the other hand many younger CCFers were, especially around issues of specific trade union struggles and concerning the struggle against fascism.

The CPC attitude to nationalism was never clear. As we have noted, in the second half of the 1920s there was considerable flirtation with nationalist positions in the labour movement and a serious effort to think out the particularities of Canadian historical development. Such efforts disappeared during the third period only to return in the Popular Front as the CPC attempted to consider Canada and even to canvass the past for heroic Canadians. Such thinking about Quebec commenced in the late 1930s but did not advance very far.

9. Relationship with Comintern

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[44] On the Canadian role in the Spanish Civil War see: Victor Hoar, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: The Canadian Contingent in the Spanish Civil War* (Toronto, 1969); William G. Beeching, *Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-1939* (Regina, 1989); and Mary Biggar Peck, *Red Moon Over Spain: Canadian Media Reaction to the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Ottawa, 1988).

[45] See Dorothy Livesay, Left Hand, Right Hand (Erin, Ont., 1977) and Toby Ryan, Stage Left: Canadian Theatre in the 1930s (Toronto, 1981). For examples of this literary production see Richard Wright and Robin Endres (eds), Eight Men Speak and Other Plays from the Canadian Workers' Theatre (Toronto, 1976) and Donna Phillips (ed.), Voices of Discord (Toronto, 1978).

The CPC, or rather its leadership, like that of most other small parties, became almost totally subservient to the Comintern after its Stalinization. Before 1929 the CPC appeared to be capable on occasion of trying to develop independent positions and to engage in at least passive resistance to Comintern directives when they were perceived to run counter to obvious Canadian interest.

Aside from Maurice Spector, Canada's first and only ECCI member, it is not clear what relationship most Canadian leaders had to the Comintern. Clearly the Comintern appointments to Canada such as Charles Scott of the Pan-American Bureau had great influence both on the Canadian party and on the Comintern interpretation of Canadian events. Equally clear is the immense influence that the CPUSA played in Canadian affairs, as exemplified by the role Jack Johnstone played as advisor to Stewart Smith in the early 1930s while the Canadian leadership was incarcerated. Similarly when the Ukrainians defected en masse from the party after Jack MacDonald's demise as party leader, the compromise arrangement that brought the Ukrainians back in was engineered in 1930 by a CI representative, one Mykhailenko who stayed in Canada for six months.[46] A similar role was played by Kullervo Manner, a former leader of the Finnish CP, with regards to the Canadian Finns.[47]

10. Press

A discussion of the party's periodical publications necessitates a split into the early years, basically the 1920s, and a separate discussion of the 1930s in which the far greater influence of the party led to a flourishing press with many publications stemming from local and front organizations. The discussion here is limited to publications for which there are extant copies.[48]

In the 1920s the pre-Comintern approved CPCs, namely the Canadian Section of the United Communist Party of America, produced only one issue of *The Communist Bulletin* (Toronto, 1921). The underground CPC produced three papers in 1921 and early 1922, *The Communist* (Toronto, monthly, May-July 1921), *The Workers World* (Toronto, 17 August 1921), and *The Workers Guard* (Toronto, weekly, September 1921 - February 1922). With the formation of the legal Workers Party of Canada, the new weekly paper, *The Worker*, appeared. Although its title has varied, it has been publishing ever since. (It became *The Daily Clarion* on May Day 1936, *The Clarion* from June 1939 to July 1941, and *The Canadian Tribune* from 20 January 1940 on.)

The Party also published more specialized publications aimed at various groups. For labour there were *The Left Wing* (Toronto, 1924-1926) and then *The Canadian Labour Monthly* (Toronto, 1928-1929). For the Young Communist League there was *The Young Worker* (Toronto, 1924-1936) and later *The Advance* (Toronto, December 1936 to August 1937) and *The New Advance* (Toronto, 1938-1941?). For women workers there was, albeit for a very short time, *The Woman Worker* (Toronto, 1926-1929?), the organ of the Womens Labor Leagues. Finally, for farmers there was *The Furrow* (Saskatoon and Winnipeg, 1926-1935).

The degree of the Party's problems in Quebec is reflected in the paucity of the French-language press. The party produced no French paper in the 1920s and followed with only a short-lived paper in 1930-1931, *L'ouvrier canadien* of Montreal. It was only with the appearance of *Clarté* in February 1935, which lasted for four years, that the party could be said to have a respectable French-language press. It was raided by the Quebec police and shut down under the famous Padlock Law of the right-wing Quebec government led by Maurice Duplessis. After the Party began to support the war it published *La Victoire* in Montreal from 1941 to 1944.

The party's language federations also had important periodicals. Among the most important were the FOC's *Vapaus* (Sudbury, 1917-1974) and the series of papers and magazines published by the UFLTA.

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[46] Kolasky, *Prophets and Proletarians*, pp. 126-7.

[47] Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 308-10, and Aino Kuusinen, *The Rings of Destiny: Inside Soviet Russia from Lenin to Brezhnev* (New York, 1974), pp. 85-7.

[48] This discussion is based largely on Weinrich, *Social Protest*, pp. 399-436, but is augmented by Kolasky, *Prophets and Proletarians*.

Among these were *Ukrainski Robitnychi Visti* (Ukrainian Labour News, Winnipeg, 1919-1937), which was succeeded from 1937-1941 by *Narodna Hazeta* (Winnipeg). Other UFLTA publications included *Holos Robitnytsi* (Voice of the Workingwoman, Winnipeg, 1923-1924) and its successor, *Robitnytsia* (Workingwoman, Winnipeg, 1924-1937) and aimed at youth *Svit Molodi* (Youth's World, Winnipeg, 1927-1930) and *Boiova Molod* (Militant Youth, Winnipeg, 1930-1932). Finally for the rural adherents of the UFLTA was *Farmerske Zhyttia* (Farmers' Life, Winnipeg, 1925-1940).

Important Jewish publications were *Der Kampf* (Montreal, 1924-1939) and *Der Veg* (Toronto, 1939-1940). Smaller groups with their own papers included Croatians and Serbs, *Borba* (The Struggle, Toronto, 1930-1936) and then *Slobodno Misao* (Free Thought, Montreal and Toronto, 1936-1940) and *Pravda* (Justice, Toronto, 1937-1940); Czechs and Slovaks with *Robonicke Slovo* (Workers Word, Toronto, 1932-1936) and *Hlas L'udu* (Voice of the People, Toronto, 1936-1940); Hungarians with *Kanadai Magyar Munkas* (Canadian Hungarian Worker, Hamilton and Toronto, 1929-1967); Italians, *Il Lavatore* (Toronto, 1935-1938); Lithuanians, *Darbininku Zodis* (Workers World, Toronto, 1932-1936) and *Liaudies Balsas* (People's Voice, Toronto, 1936-1970); and, last but not least, Poles, *Glos Pracy* (Voice of Labour, Winnipeg and Toronto, 1932-1940) and *Kronika Tygodniowa* (Weekly Chronicle, Toronto, 1941).

In the 1930s party publications proliferated as various struggles increased in severity. *The Labor Defender*, the organ of the party's Canadian Labor Defense League, appeared from 1930-1935. Similarly, the party's prominent role in organizing the unorganized led to a number of papers, such as *The Unemployed Worker* (Vancouver, 1929-1932), *The BC Relief Camp Worker* (Vancouver, 1933-1935), and to local papers such as the *Toronto Unemployed Worker* (1930) and the *Unemployed Bulletin* (Calgary, 1931-1932).

Similarly the successes of the Workers Unity League in the early 1930s led to a series of papers related to the various WUL unions. The major paper of this type was *Workers Unity* (Toronto, 1931-1936). Papers of this type specific to union or locale were *The Steelworker and Miner* (Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1933-1951), the *BC Lumber Worker* (Vancouver, 1934-1938), and *The Searchlight* (Canadian Seamens Union, Montreal, 1937-1949). Examples related to specific struggles include *The Canadian Needle Worker* (Toronto, September-November 1930) and *The Lumber Worker* (Sudbury, September- December 1932).

Theoretical journals were not the party forte for most of this period but one early attempt was the *Communist Review* (Toronto, March 1934 - January 1935. During the illegal period in 1940 the underground party produced *Monthly Review* (Toronto, March 1940 - August 1940). Finally, the renamed Labor-Progressive Party initiated the most concerted of such efforts under the editorship of Stanley Ryerson in 1944. *National Affairs Monthly* (Toronto) appeared that year and published until the major party battles of 1956-57.

Similarly cultural publications took relatively little of the CPC's attention in the 1920s (with the exception of the language federations for whom cultural work was always crucial). As the Party grew in the 1930s it attracted growing numbers of students and cultural workers and began to show more interest in literature and theatre. The first important Canadian outlets for this work were *The Masses* (Toronto, 1932-1934) and *New Frontier* (Toronto, 1936-1937). While definitely not formal party publications these journals included the work of many young party intellectuals including Stanley Ryerson and Ted Allan and also the work of many rising Canadian creative writers including Leo Kennedy, Dorothy Livesay, and A.J.M. Smith.

11. Opposition Groups

The history of Canadian Trotskyism has received little scholarly attention. This fact is somewhat surprising given the prominence of Maurice Spector, the only Canadian elected to the ECCI, in the emergence of Trotskyism in North America. Spector, along with James Cannon, might be termed the fathers of the North American Trotskyist movement. The other major casualty of the leadership wars in the CPC at the end of the 1920s, Jack MacDonald, also eventually joined the Trotskyist movement. Nevertheless Canadian Trotskyism remained a small minority movement on the left, much despised by communists and social democrats alike.[49] Much more research needs to be done on this subject.

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[49] On Spector see Rodney, *Soldiers*, pp. 169-170; Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 87-88. See also the sketchy but useful Gary O'Brien, "Maurice Spector and the Origins of Canadian Trotskyism" (MA thesis, Carleton University, 1974), and Constance Ashton Myers, *The Prophet's Army: Trotskyism in America*.

The major English-language paper of the first Canadian Trotskyists was *The Vanguard* (Toronto, 1932-1936), organ of the International Left Opposition in Canada. It was followed one year later by *Robitnychi Visti* (Labor News, Toronto, 1933-1938), published by the Canadian Section of the Left Opposition, Fourth International. *The Vanguard* was succeeded in 1938 by *Socialist Action* (Toronto) which published until 1939 when it was suppressed under the Defence of Canada regulations, and was followed by a number of irregular underground issues.[50] The Fourth International also had a youth movement in Canada and its publications included *October Youth* (Toronto, 1933) and *Young Militant* (Toronto, 1933-1934).

While Trotskyism has received little attention in Canada, the history of the Communist Party (Opposition) has received almost none. The CP(O) in Canada was closely related to the American Party led by Jay Lovestone after his expulsion from the CPUSA for American exceptionalism. It had significant but small followings in Montreal and in Toronto, especially among Jewish garment workers. It lasted for about a decade, organized through participation in the US movement and through a Workers Education League in Montreal and through the Workers League of Canada in Toronto where they managed to produce at least one issue of *The Canadian Toiler*. Prominent members in Toronto included William Moriarty, a founding member of the CPC who died in 1936, and Fred Peel, the former editor of *The Workers Guard*, and in Montreal Israel Breslow, the editor of *Der Kampf*, Michael Buhay, until his rehabilitation in the CPC, and Kalmen Kaplansky, later prominent in the Canadian trade union movement and the ILO.[51]

12. Development of Communist Culture

On this point there has simply been inadequate research to say much at this point. It is clear that within the language federations there was an extraordinarily rich cultural experience which was deeply associated with communist politics. It is also clear that in the single industry communities where the CPC was strong, such as in Alberta and British Columbia coal mining towns, or in Cape Breton, or in Northern Ontario lumber and metal mining centers significant communist sub-cultures emerged. Of all these "Little Moscows" the most prominent was the Crows Nest Pass coal mining town of Blairmore, Alberta. In the early 1930s it elected a communist town government and renamed its main street after Tim Buck, the leader of the CPC. At the moment, however, it is hard to say much more than that about Blairmore or its equivalents across the country.[52]

Needless to say the celebration of May Day played a huge role in communist circles. Through the CPC and foreign-language press it would be relatively easy to build up a description and analysis of the development of such celebrations, but unfortunately it remains to be done.[53]

1928-1941 (Westport, 1977).

[50] On the Defence of Canada Regulations, see Ramsay Cook, "Canadian Freedom in Wartime, 1939-1945", in W.H. Heick and Roger Graham (eds), *His Own Man: Essays in Honour of A.R.M. Lower* (Montreal, 1974), pp. 37-53.

[51] On the CP(O) see Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, pp. 304-308, and Robert J. Alexander, *The Right Opposition: The Lovestoneites and the International Communist Opposition of the 1930s* (Westport, 1981), pp. 253-258. Clearly research is needed in the international materials of the CP(O) to consider the Canadian role at greater length. Alexander notes, for example, that Moriarty received a warm obituary notice in *Workers Age* (New York) from Heinrich Brandler, the leader of the International Communist Opposition.

[52] For discussions that suggest such a communist culture see such diverse works as Jim Tester (ed.), *Sports Pioneers: A History of the Finnish-Canadian Amateur Sports Federation 1906-1986* (Sudbury, 1986) and the appropriate sections of Laine, *On the Archival Heritage*, esp. pp. 155-199, 364-379.

[53] Even the annual report of the Department of Labour on *Labour Organization in Canada* (Ottawa, 1911-) gives capsule summaries of May Day events each year.

13. *Conclusion*

An overall estimation of the influence of a relatively small political party which enjoyed limited electoral success is difficult to make. For the moment I would simply advance the hypothesis that the CPC was far more important and influential in Canadian life in the interwar years than any historical writing to date in Canada has admitted. The documentation of such a claim must await further research and more space to tell the story in its various aspects.

In addition, far more work is needed to gain a proper assessment of the role of the Comintern in Canadian party life. While there can be no doubt about the crucial CI role in the Party's birth and in the years of crisis from 1928-31, the predominant view of absolute CI control, especially after 1928, seems overly mechanical. The more nuanced work of authors such as Manley suggest that we need to pay far more attention to the role of rank-and-file Communists in real struggles and rather less to the wrangles of the leadership. In other words what is needed is a social history of Canadian communism.