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# Canadian Socialism and the Origin of the Communist Party of Canada, 1900-1922

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CANADIAN SOCIALISM AND THE ORIGIN OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA, 1900-1922

CANADIAN SOCIALISM AND THE ORIGIN OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA, 1900-1922

By

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A Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between early Canadian socialist parties and the genesis of the Communist Party of Canada. It presents the argument that the Communist Party of Canada was formed by and therefore was the unity of the socialists of three socialist parties -- the Socialist Party of Canada, the Social Democratic Party of Canada and the Socialist Party of North America. The histories of these parties will be discussed, along with the One Big Union and various labour parties, to see how their ideologies and praxis were unable to mobilize workers and how this led to the acceptance of Bolshevism by Canadian socialists and workers.

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McMaster University  
September 1980

T. A. Kawecki

## PREFACE

The task of this thesis is to situate the genesis of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) in the development of the political expression(s) of the Canadian working class. In order to accomplish this task various different factors must be examined. Like other political phenomena, the CPC was the product of not one but a multitude of interrelated factors and conditions. This, however, does not mean that all factors must be treated equally and given equal weight; rather, through the process of analytical discourse, it is the responsibility of the author to emphasize some factors as primary. The sole criterion upon which rests the primacy of one factor over another is not its ability to totally explain a particular phenomenon, but instead its ability to further the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

In seeking then to further the understanding of the origins of the CPC, this thesis will focus primarily on a hereto neglected period of Canadian working class politics. The period is 1900 until 1922 and the history concerns the struggles of the early Canadian socialist parties. It is these struggles -- their successes and failures -- which will be treated as factors instrumental in bringing about a communist party in Canada in 1922. Consequently, the object of the thesis will be to link the early socialist parties with the CPC.

However, while a study of national factors is necessary, these factors are not sufficient to an understanding of the phenomena in which we are interested. How the CPC came about and the subsequent development of that party given its specific origin can and must be understood

according to other factors. One such other factor, while present in the thesis without being addressed directly, cannot be omitted without being explicitly referred to here, and this is the element of internationalism.

Those who built and entered the CPC subscribed to the universal communist goal of world revolution and the party itself belonged to the international communist movement. Due to the kind of communist movement that developed after the 1917 October Revolution, we are saying two things about internationalism and its relation to the origin of the CPC. Firstly, the CPC's development cannot be solely understood according to national factors which led to its establishment. This is because the CPC institutionally belonged to the communist movement which was represented by the Moscow based Third International and followed the directives issued by the International. Secondly, a discussion of the origins of the CPC must allow for the part played by a certain kind of internationalist 'feeling' among Canadian workers which led them to erect and join the communist party. This 'feeling' can be described as faith and hope in and the desire to pursue and belong to a movement dedicated to world wide revolution. In effect workers reasoned that perhaps while revolution would not occur in the near future in Canada, at least they belonged to a movement that was most importantly led by successful revolutionaries and was engaged in class struggle internationally. This desire to belong to a world wide revolutionary movement led many Canadian workers to become members of the party of communists in Canada.

It is important, finally, not to confuse this internationalist 'feeling' with naivete. It is understandable that the history of the Soviet Union and the Third International can lead one to treat the

revolutionary goals of the Bolsheviks with a degree of cynicism. However, we are dealing with the immediate international repercussions of the 1917 Russian revolution. And it should be understood that this revolution showed workers of the world that they could liberate themselves and take command of their lives. It was this kind of reaction to the Bolshevik revolution which led workers in Canada and around the world to adopt the ideology and praxis of the successful Bolshevik party as a model for struggle against capitalism in their homelands.

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Abbreviations used:

ACCL	All-Canadian Congress of Labour
AFL	American Federation of Labour
ALU	American Labour Union
BCFL	British Columbia Federation of Labour
BLP	British Labour Party
CFCS	Confederation of Finnish Canadian Socialists
CI	Communist or Third International
CLP	Canadian Labour Party
CPA	Communist Party of America
CPC	Communist Party of Canada
CPUS	Communist Party of the United States
CSF	Canadian Socialist Federation
CSL	Canadian Socialist League
DEC	Dominion Executive Committee (of the Socialist Party of Canada)
DLP	Dominion Labour Party
FLP	Federated Labour Party
FOC	Finnish Organization of Canada
FUSP	Federation of Ukrainian Socialist Parties
ILC	International Labour Council
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
LRC	Labour Representative Committee
OBU	One Big Union
OLP	Ontario Labour Party

PEC Provincial Executive Committee (of the Socialist Party of Canada)  
 PPP Provincial Progressive Party  
 RILU Red International of Labour Unions  
 RSPC Revolutionary Socialist Party of Canada  
 SDF Social Democratic Federation (of Britain)  
 SDPC Social Democratic Party of Canada  
 SLP Socialist Labour Party  
 SPA Socialist Party of America  
 SPBC Socialist Party of British Columbia  
 SPC Socialist Party of Canada  
 SPM Socialist Party of Manitoba  
 SPNA Socialist Party of North America  
 TLC Trades and Labour Congress of Canada  
 TLC preceded by the name of a city is an urban Trades and Labour Council  
 ULFTA Ukrainian Labour and Farmer Temple Association  
 ULTA Ukrainian Labour Temple Association  
 UMWA United Mine Workers of America  
 USLC Ukrainian Socialist League of Canada  
 USLP Ukrainian Socialist Labour Party  
 WFM Western Federation of Miners  
 WPC Workers' Party of Canada

## CHAPTER I

### PROBLEM AND CONCEPTS

#### I. Introduction

In 1963 Paul Fox wrote an essay entitled "Early Socialism in Canada". It covered the period from 1896 to 1922, ending with the year the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) surfaced illegally under the name of the Worker's Party of Canada (WPC). In the essay Fox disagreed with the famous historian of socialism, G. D. H. Cole, who had written that until 1914 there had been very little development of socialism in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Fox's reply was that there was little detailed study of the subject. Aiming to correct this he produced a "rudimentary survey" hoping to stimulate research and scholarship. In the seventeen years that have followed we can conclude that Fox has been ignored or followed up at a snail's pace. Consequently, important questions concerning Canadian socialism and Canadian communism -- two political expressions of the working class -- still stand unanswered.

The fundamentally significant question, and one this thesis will address, is the relationship between the Canadian communist party and the Canadian socialist parties. In Europe, specifically England, Germany, Austria, France and Italy, communist parties arose shortly after 1917. The immediate leadership and rank and file of these parties came from previously established socialist parties. This process also occurred in Canada with one major difference. In the European nations the transfer of party membership did not result in the liquidation of the socialist

parties; in Canada it did. The three Canadian socialist parties, the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), the Social Democratic Party of Canada (SDPC) and the Socialist Party of North America split and/or went en masse into the new communist party. By 1925, or one year after the CPC was legally put forward, not one socialist party remained standing. An explanation of this development requires an understanding of Canadian socialism and socialist parties along with their praxis and efficacy. It is from this understanding that the CPC emerges as not simply another working class party but as the unity of Canadian socialists.

Some historians and social scientists have dealt with Canadian socialism. However, they have not studied the successes, splits and efficacy of the socialist parties as a dialectical process which culminated in the CPC. Consequently, the specificity of the CPC, the fact it arose as the unity of the majority of the members of the three socialist parties, has been virtually ignored. For example, the stated object of Martin Robin's Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, is "to examine the origins, structures and ideology of radical politics and its relationship to organized labour in English-speaking Canada" between 1880 and 1930.<sup>2</sup> Yet, this study analytically never goes beyond treating the CPC as only one of several radical political expressions. The reason given for this is the CPC's weak relation to organized labour. To be sure, the relation was weak but it did exist in terms of labour support for Bolshevism and the CPC's agitation and involvement in labour unions. Like Robin, A. Ross McCormack examines socialism, syndicalism and reformism. His focal point is the "early western radical movement" and his study concludes in the year 1919.<sup>3</sup> When McCormack does mention the CPC it is only to instruct

the reader to look to Ivan Avakumovic and William Rodney for an analysis of the origin of the communist party.<sup>4</sup> However, these authors have an opposite emphasis from McCormack (and Robin). All of their primary research is concentrated on analyzing the history of the already established CPC. They both do include chapters on the roots or sources of Canadian communism but the discussions, aimed solely at providing a backdrop, are weak and at times historically inaccurate.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Norman Penner has written,

The Communist Party of Canada emerged out of the Canadian socialist movement on the basis of a conviction that the problems which had bedevilled the movement from its inception could be solved by the teachings of Lenin and by affiliation to the Communist International, whose main attraction was that it would be dominated by leading members of Lenin's own party.<sup>6</sup>

In essence, he has capsulized working class political development and its culmination in the CPC. However, this development is presented schematically. This is because Penner's purview extends from the 18th century to the 1970's. This thesis is concerned specifically with the period between 1900 and 1922. Therefore, it will elaborate on and provide details to Penner's outline.

During the period 1900-1922 the socialist movement went from a situation of initial unity, to schisms and then to a new unity. The first product of cohesion was the SPC. It was a sectarian and doctrinaire Marxist organization whose ideology was moulded by its isolation from the international socialist movement and by the fact that it operated in an area marked by intense capitalist development and exploitation, namely the Canadian west and, to a limited extent, the Canadian east.<sup>7</sup> Its ideological influence was American, specifically early DeLeonist which

held political action (electoral politics) over all other forms of class struggle, including the struggle for reforms.<sup>8</sup> This doctrine is known as impossiblism. Along with the Dominion Executive Committee's authoritarian attitude towards its locals which negated the possibility of changing the praxis of the party, this ideology alienated the Ontario locals and the European socialists. The latter were schooled in orthodox or pre-Bernsteinian social democracy which stood for reform in the short term and revolution in the long run. They were also already organized in language locals. Consequently, unable to resolve their differences with the SPC executive they broke away and, together with Ontario's SPC locals, established the SDPC. This party remained Marxist but it was a possibilist party. That is, unlike the SPC, it openly cooperated with unions, sought affiliation with the Second International, ran in municipal elections and maintained relations with the local labour parties. Finally, one Ontario SPC local, seeing what it believed to be the breakdown of party discipline in the east, charged the SPC with a lack of firm handedness and opted out. It called itself the Socialist Party of North America (SPNA) and its membership was instrumental in establishing the CPC.

The socialist movement was thus a divided one with three parties vying for the leadership of the working class. Consequently the workers' movement was strategically weakened. No dialogue existed among the parties and only an occasional argument (or slander) differentiating one party from another was heard in the party presses. This situation continued until the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution occurred and the period of intensified class struggle began in 1918. Then the SDPC renewed talk of

political unity under the banner of Bolshevism, the SPC moved beyond simple political action and the SPNA organized the founding convention of the Workers' Party of Canada (WPC). Except for the SPNA, the other two parties split. The SPNA and the majority factions of the SPC and the SDPC rejected both impossiblism and possiblism and accepted Bolshevism.

The object of this thesis is to discuss the three socialist parties and how they contributed to the formation of the CPC. This will entail an analysis of the parties' ideology and praxis. We will argue that the parties were unable to lead and unite the working class. Consequently, as class struggle intensified due to working class militancy and the state's use of coercion, workers and socialists sought a new ideology and model of a party. This was provided by the successful 1917 October Revolution which presented Bolshevism as the method of organizing the workers' struggle. Once the alternatives, the labour parties, the One Big Union (OBU) and, for a brief period, an OBU linked SPC which arose to replace the ineffective socialist praxis and/or parties, proved unable to provide leadership and struggle successfully on behalf of its memberships, then Bolshevism became an attractive, indeed necessary, alternative. Thus Bolshevism unified the socialists by gaining their adherence.

This thesis will present its argument in six chapters. Chapter one will discuss the theoretical concepts necessary to deal with the argument of socialist unity. These concepts are hegemony, ideology, social class and social crisis. Moreover we will add an analytical discussion concerning a specific problem which hindered working class unity, namely the skilled-unskilled stratification within the working class. Chapter two will deal with the nature of the SPC in its dominant period,

1903 to 1910. Chapter three will be concerned with the period 1910 to 1916. It will analyze the emergence and significance of the SDPC and the SPNA. Chapter four will concentrate on the post-1916 years when the SPC changed its praxis and the SDPC and SPNA were juridically liquidated as parties by Orders-in-Council. Chapter five will present the debate between the supporters and the socialist and other working class opponents of Bolshevism. The conclusion will follow.

## II. Hegemony

This thesis is a study of the unity of the political expression of the working class in Canada. Therefore firstly, an approach analytically capable of comprehending and presenting the dialectics of unity is required. Such an approach will be constructed from Antonio Gramsci's theoretical work on the party and hegemony. This will entail an elaboration of the theory with certain modifications which will add to it a more precise method of dealing with the Canadian context.

It is the object of the ruling class to rule and, as the bourgeois class, to continue to provide itself with a political and economic regime conducive to the accumulation of surplus value. In view of this Gramsci explains that there are two methods of rule the bourgeoisie can adopt: rule through hegemony and rule by coercion.<sup>10</sup> The latter method is necessary when the former has weakened and/or collapsed. This occurs when bourgeois ideology is no longer accepted because the people's system of beliefs has changed.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the ruling class loses its ideological legitimacy and is reduced to the "economic-corporate" level of governing.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, hegemony is a specific approach to political rule where the minority class in society, the bourgeoisie, must

co-opt other classes by gaining their consent. Hegemony, thus, is "political leadership based on the consent of the lead"; it is "a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class".<sup>13</sup> If successful, it ensured bourgeois political control and economic dominance. This is why Przeworski treats hegemony as the consent of the people to economic exploitation.<sup>14</sup> In this system of governing, coercion, as the alternative to consent, underlies and influences consent. Coercion forces people to consent because it threatens them with force and discipline as punishment if they do not accept the leadership of the bourgeoisie.<sup>15</sup> Therefore coercion is used indirectly in hegemonic development. It is superseded by methods which aggrandize consent. The methods are 'economic-corporate' concessions and the dissemination of appropriate values throughout society.<sup>16</sup> The former, according to Przeworski, constitutes the material base of the latter which aims at ideological hegemony and consent.<sup>17</sup>

We will discuss the significance of the material bases later with reference to social crises. At present we are concerned with the production of ideological hegemony through the dissemination of bourgeois ideology and how this relates to the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois ideology finds its expression both in the bourgeois state and civil society. As Gramsci writes in a passage worth reproducing in full:

every state is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great masses of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the

interest of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense: but, in reality a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end -- initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes.<sup>18</sup>

When Gramsci deals with 'private initiatives and activities' he is dealing with civil society. Elsewhere he refers to them as the "ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private'" as opposed to "'political society'" or the state.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the two realms are not easily separated when the question concerns ideological hegemony. Gramsci states:

it should be remarked that the general notion of State includes elements which need to be referred back to the notion of civil society (in the sense that one might say that state = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion).<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, since hegemony is consent gained through ideological dissemination both the state and civil society are responsible for this dissemination. The state is an institution which reproduces hegemony rather than first revealing itself as concretely a coercive apparatus. Like civil society, the state has its own corresponding superstructure in which function the intellectuals of the dominant group as "'deputies'" involved in exercising "social hegemony and political government".<sup>21</sup> In other words, as Gramsci observed while studying electoral democracy and the separation of powers, the bourgeois state itself produces a particular consent gaining ideology. This ideology reflects the state's democratic and egalitarian sounding constitution and the state thus becomes a political hegemonic agent.<sup>22</sup> Together with other ideologically productive bourgeois institutions, it is a component part of bourgeois hegemony which aggrandizes consent and allows the bourgeoisie to rule and accumulate surplus value.

In answer to bourgeois hegemony. Gramsci put forward a theory which stated the precondition of the socialist revolution rested upon the working class' establishment of their own hegemony.<sup>23</sup> This amounts to a counter hegemony for in every respect it is to mirror and respond in opposition to bourgeois ideology and bourgeois aggrandizement of consent. Counter hegemony, then, ideologically contests bourgeois hegemony. This contest and hegemonic development are carried on and constructed through a specific struggle Gramsci called the "war of position". It is a protracted and long struggle; it is based on strategy and eschews tactical confrontations.<sup>24</sup> Confrontation is the distinguishing characteristic of a different struggle, namely the "war of manoeuvre". It can be applied in an East European-type regime where the fight for the state occurs if there is a momentary social crisis.<sup>25</sup> But where bourgeois hegemony reigns no social crisis in and of itself can lead to social revolution. In the event of social crisis, before "subordinate classes" can advance, the ruling class can regain control quickly through its (non-coercive) "trained cadres" and institutions. If it must, the ruling class can make sacrifices and promises, but in the final analysis it retains its hold on political power.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, a decisive victory over capital requires that, through the praxis of position, the socialist movement methodically strips away consent from bourgeois hegemony. This praxis

subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the State's hegemony cannot be mobilized. But when, for one reason or another, these positions have lost their value and only the decisive positions are at stake, then one passes over to siege warfare; this is concentrated, difficult, and requires exceptional qualities of patience and inventiveness.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, once the counter hegemony reaches a point where its further social and political expansion can no longer be afforded by the state, then the war of manoeuvre or tactical confrontation is used. But the possibility of the war of manoeuvre is contingent upon the efficacy of the war of position and socialist hegemony.

The battle ground for socialist hegemony is the superstructure in civil society and the state. Until the unity or hegemony based on traditional or bourgeois hegemony is broken, wrote Gramsci, "it is impossible for the new forces to arrive at a consciousness of their own independent personality".<sup>28</sup> Essentially the task of the war of position is to wean the working class (and other classes) away from bourgeois ideology and hegemony and bring it under socialist hegemony. As Gramsci states: "every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily a pedagogic relationship".<sup>29</sup> This pedagogic function falls primarily on the shoulders of the intellectuals of the working class. By intellectuals Gramsci potentially includes everyone, but he specifically considers intellectuals as those individuals who socially define their function as intellectual work. There are two categories of intellectuals: "organic", or those produced by every social class, and "traditional", or intellectuals by profession.<sup>30</sup>

The first task of the organic working class intellectuals is to articulate the class' everyday life in terms of the class struggle and socialist ideology. But there is a second dialectic which involves all organic intellectuals. This is their struggle with the traditional intellectuals. Gramsci writes:

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer 'ideologically' the traditional

intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals.<sup>31</sup>

This development of organic intellectuals takes place in and requires a political party since it is the party which is best suited to be the organizing and leading force of the counter-hegemony. It is through the party that intellectuals work for the counter hegemony, as Gramsci states:

The political party, for all groups, is precisely the mechanism which carries out in civil society the same function as the state carries out, more synthetically over a larger scale, in political society. In other words it is responsible for welding together the organic intellectuals of a given group -- the dominant one -- and the traditional intellectuals. The party carries out this function in strict dependence on its basic function, which is that of elaborating its own component parts...and of turning them into qualified political intellectuals, leaders and organizers of all the activities and functions inherent in the organic development of an integral society, both civic and political.... An intellectual who joins the political party of a particular social group is merged with the organic intellectuals of the group itself, and is linked tightly with the group.<sup>32</sup>

Before we proceed with an analysis of the party, we must understand that Gramsci has presented two concurrent arguments. One concerning the object of the party, the second related to the specific function of organic intellectuals within the party. The latter is a dominant theme in Gramsci's discussion of intellectuals and an explanation is warranted before the party can be examined.

By traditional intellectuals Gramsci meant the people of letters science as well as ecclesiastic intellectuals. The sine qua non quality which distinguishes them from organic intellectuals is their seeming classless appearance. This appearance emerges because these intellectuals precede the formation of new classes. Consequently they seem to represent

tradition ("uninterrupted historical continuity"), the nation and the people; and they present themselves "as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group".<sup>33</sup> But, just as the 'classless' idealist philosopher Croce had his links with bourgeois senators, so too traditional intellectuals are linked into the dominant class.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, because of who they are and what they appear to be, they legitimate bourgeois rule by imbuing the hegemony with a more profound ideology, one ostensibly rooted in tradition. On one hand, this is why they are sought to be incorporated into the ranks of the intellectuals of a rising class. And, on the other hand, this is why the ideological struggle against them is required, and is part and parcel of the war of position.

To fight this war Gramsci argued for a political party best suited for building and leading a hegemony in the class struggle. Such a party is based on three elements: 1) "a mass element...whose participation takes the form of discipline and loyalty"; 2) a leadership which is a cohesive element with "centralizing and disciplinary powers"; and, 3) an element of contact which maintains and ensures physical, moral and intellectual linkages between the first two elements.<sup>35</sup> The third element is necessary to save the party from degenerating into a bureaucratic organization. This is done by preserving "organic continuity" which is a method of allowing for leadership and rank and file contact.<sup>36</sup> It is important for two reasons. One, "leadership develops within the people dialectically", and it requires an avenue of ascent.<sup>37</sup> Second, the war of position demands ideological struggle against and the conquest and assimilation of traditional intellectuals. Since this is contingent upon the working class' production of its own intellectuals, they will also require an

avenue of ascent. Once elevated to a higher level in the party, the intellectuals articulate and explain the day to day life of the working class in terms of the class struggle through socialist ideology. This is conducive to hegemonic development because it bridges the gap between intellectuals and the people and the party/hegemony leadership and the people.

This party then works to develop a counter hegemony by studying the 'relations of forces' in society and by articulating its conception of reality through ideology. The 'relation of forces' is nothing other than the historical development of a particular society broken up into levels of analysis. This is a dialectical approach which presupposes an understanding of objectives social conditions and the superstructure so that the party can be a subjective actor influencing social development by leading the class struggle. The 'relation of forces' is composed of three levels.<sup>38</sup>

1. The study of the "development of the material forces of production", the social classes they call into being and "the degree of realism and practicability of the various ideologies". This is to determine whether conditions of social change exist in the society.

2. An analysis of the development of "the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organization attained by the various social classes".

This is itself divided into three levels "of collective political consciousness". The first is "the economic-corporate level", where 'economism' exists in only a strata of a class, i.e.: tradesmen in the working class. In the second level we reach the consciousness of class

solidarity, but still at the level of economism where at best the political expression (of the working class) is to participate in "the existing fundamental structures". Lastly there is not only a political phase, but one of hegemony. Here ideologies come into conflict until one or "a single combination" which best explains what is and what ought to be, prevails and creates "the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups". This is the dawn of hegemony.

3. The last level is the relation of military forces which has its own two stages: A) the military level proper -- in the "technical military sense"; and, B) the "politico-military" level, i.e.: the nation state suppressing another nation's struggle for independence. (Our discussion will not pursue an inquiry into this level of analysis).

### III. Gramsci and the Working Class in Canada

Gramsci developed his concept of the party and hegemony in view of the experience of class struggle in Europe and specifically Italy. Therefore, immediately we can argue that Gramsci's model can be used to reveal any differences in the class struggle in Canada and Europe. To reject the theory because of its reliance on a concrete European example would be to prejudge as unique not only Gramsci, but the development of working class politics in Canada without attempting to study the pre-supposed uniqueness in view of class struggle elsewhere. On the other hand, the use of the theory does not mean it can be applied to Canadian problems without modification. In light of the peculiarities of the Canadian context, some of the theory's analytical levels must be highlighted over others.

The concept of counter-hegemony presupposes the existence of a

single party or a cooperative ensemble of parties of the working class struggling in the war of position and building the hegemony by intervening and influencing the development of the relations of force. However, in the Canadian situation we cannot historically proceed from the same level of analysis. Rather we must study hegemony with a view to asking whether, first of all, any party managed to unite and receive the support of the working class, for there can be no intra-class hegemony led by workers if their leadership is fragmented and scattered throughout different proletarian parties.

The achievement of a counter hegemony for Gramsci was dependent upon resolving the 'Southern Question' through the union of the working class in Northern Italy with the peasantry of Southern Italy under the leadership of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). However, in Canada the working class was politically disunited because its political expressions, the socialist parties, refused to cooperate and were at odds with each other. Disunity ensured political working class weakness and it alienated workers from workers' parties to the Liberal Party. What was necessary in Canada, then, was the unification of the socialist parties and a combined effort to break the relationships between workers and bourgeois hegemony. Counter hegemony and the war of position will thus be treated as the goal of a revolutionary socialist party while socialist unity is treated as the necessary pre-requisite of the war of position. This does not require a major revision of the concept of hegemony, only the recognition of the first level of analysis of the 'relation of forces'. It is this level that stresses the study of a particular society and its specificity.

We have discussed intellectuals at some length and have seen how integral they were to the attainment of hegemony. Canadian socialist parties were by no means without their intellectuals, but their work was qualitatively different than what Gramsci had in mind. They did not pursue a course of ideological struggle aimed at assimilating traditional intellectuals. Nor did they produce a class analysis of Canadian society. Instead they laboured at reproducing Marxist postulates and elaborating their significance always at the abstract level of analysis. Still, they were organic working class intellectuals who fulfilled the social function as demanded of intellectuals. Consequently, as Penner observed, the socialist movement established Marxist ideas on Canadian soil even before the appearance of social democracy as represented by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and later the New Democratic Party.<sup>39</sup>

However, we are forced to recognize the weakness of the intellectuals. Since their function is inherent in their ideological work, and not in their origin, they must be viewed as working class propagandists. Nothing perjorative is implied by this term. It is strictly used as an analytical category designed to differentiate between the praxis of organic intellectuals and others who organically and otherwise approximate the functions of the organic intellectuals.

It is understood, then, that organic intellectuals develop, formulate and popularize ideology whereas propagandists take this ideology and, without developing it further or modifying it in view of concrete situations, popularize its doctrines and tenets. Using this concept of propagandist we will be able to see how the socialist intellectuals failed to gain significant consent while at the same time spreading and implanting Marxism in Canada.

We have dealt with hegemony as consent attained through ideological struggle -- the war of position. But we must indicate what this means in terms of concrete action, for ideological struggle is not simply confined to argument in the realm of ideas. It is also argument through concrete practice and example, as in the struggle for reforms, in order to prove the need for revolution. Hence we will speak of a Marxian praxis as the culmination of reflection and action which is dialectically related and operates in tandem as such. Therefore Marxian praxis is more than simply practice. It is practice based on a set of ideological elaborations which are themselves based or deduced from history and if possible from previous praxis.

#### IV. Ideology

Marxist literature is weak in defining ideology. The reason for this is the presence of three understandings of ideology. They are "1) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; 2) a system of illusory beliefs -- false ideas or false consciousness -- which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; and 3) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas".<sup>40</sup> Consequently, rather than embroil ourselves in a discussion whose limits are beyond this thesis, our definition of ideology will rely on Clifford Geertz's theory:

Geertz writes that ideologies emerge containing sources of information and principles according to which social and individual relations can be organized.<sup>41</sup> This is presented through "symbolic formulation", or ideological language.<sup>42</sup> The symbols are conceptualizations of social reality which for Geertz is a changing social reality. Their formulation is brought about through the continual matching of the symbols with the

dialectics of the ongoing social process.<sup>43</sup> Therefore Geertz concludes that ideologies are "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience".<sup>44</sup> But, before being applied, this theory requires a critical evaluation of its view of the relationship between ideology and social class and ideology and social crisis or 'problematic social reality'.

#### V. Social Class

Throughout Geertz's theory there is no explanation of the class character or class formulation and attraction of a particular ideology. Geertz begins his discussion by stating ideologies emerge "where institutionalized guides for behaviour, thought or feeling are weak or absent", and when opinions and rules of social life fall into question.<sup>45</sup> In this situation of social crisis and disequilibrium, social strain is apprehended and sensed on an individual level causing a state of personal strain to emerge.<sup>46</sup> The importance of the ideology is that it provides the individual with information, explanations of social events and guides for behaviour. Indeed, ideology appears as a cohesive element. But it does not attract individuals qua individuals into a 'collective conscience'. According to Geertz, it attracts instead individuals who play particular roles in society. Hence, the 'collective conscience' is composed of people or groups who are defined by the social role they occupy and who articulate and/or respond to a given ideology.

In this manner Geertz has provided for a certain structured movement of people towards ideologies. However, role is not an adequate representative of social relations and social structure. It is defined according to status and the societal norms attached to that status. This

criteria is taken from the cultural fabric of society which is produced and exists at the superstructural level. Consequently, role is a normative phenomenon and it conceals the social relations of a society. Yet these relations must be understood in order to deal with bourgeois hegemony, counter hegemony and the socialist parties. The latter, for example, arose out of and appealed directly to one class, the wage-labourers, against the interests of another class, the bourgeoisie. In this case, ideology confronts us as a class product aimed at class appeal and class mobilization, or what Geertz calls 'collective conscience'. Therefore, ideology requires a class conception of society.

A basic Marxist characterization of classes will be sufficient for the tasks of this thesis.<sup>47</sup> Marx himself did not formulate a systematic theory of class. Nevertheless, within his political economy there exists a method of defining social classes. This definition relies upon understanding one's relationship to the means of production as the determinant factor of class membership. Therefore, the two major classes are the bourgeois or capitalist class which owns the means of production and purchases the labour power of others; and the working class, or wage labourers, who own only their labour power and have no course of subsistence other than to exchange this capacity to labour in return for a wage. The relationship between the two classes is based on inter-dependence, but it is not a mutually beneficial relationship. Rather, it is marked by the economic exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie. Fundamentally, then, it is an antagonistic relationship and it is presented as such in working class ideology. The third major class is the petite-bourgeoisie. In our study it will be considered as solely the traditional

as opposed to the modern petite-bourgeoisie. This class is composed of independent commodity producers such as farmers, fishermen and craftsmen. These producers own their means of subsistence and operate it themselves or with the aid of their family members. Marx and Engels wrote that, by virtue of its struggle against the bourgeoisie, the petite-bourgeoisie is interested only in preserving its present position. Therefore, they considered it conservative and even reactionary.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, our understanding of the term working class will encompass two strata, the skilled and the unskilled. The term labour will also be employed in order to distinguish the skilled from the unskilled. When we are dealing with labour, specifically the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC), we are dealing with skilled workers organized in craft unions.<sup>49</sup> These workers were in the main Anglo-Saxons as was the majority of unskilled workers. The difference ethnically is that the non-Anglo-Saxons were in the main represented in unskilled job categories. The more important difference between the strata refers to organization.

The skilled workers enjoyed a privileged position among the working class because of their ability to control the passing on of skills. The skills themselves are not necessarily complex and endemic to technologically advancing and capital intensive industry. Indeed, the uneven development of capitalist industry gave rise to the machinist and mechanic while permitting the existence of polishers, hewers and rollers. The skill of the latter three rested upon physical strength, stamina and experience, the latter which could be acquired in a relatively short period of time. Polishing, hewing and rolling ceased to be skills when they were unable to compete with mechanization. These particular craftsmen

lost their higher wages and prestige and became either part of the newly arising semi-skilled stratum, part of the unskilled workers, or they became unemployed.

Therefore, the higher remuneration and status of the skilled was not contingent upon the complexity and difficulty of the craft's tasks and duties. Rather, these benefits were found in the ability of the crafts to remain organized and to maintain what amounted to a controlled, or indeed artificial, number of skilled workers who were thus less dependent on the dictates of the capitalist labour market than were the unorganized.

However, the preservation of a controlled scarcity of skilled workers also presupposed the existence and reproduction of a non-organized and unskilled stratum of workers. Skilled labour's economic struggle, then, encompassed an added dimension of struggle against the unorganized by not organizing and excluding them from membership in the TLC.

At the same time, the craft unions' position vis a vis capital was conciliatory and deliberate. It aimed to identify a community of interest and a socio-national partnership with the bourgeoisie. This is one reason why the conservative business unionism of Samuel Gompers, the head of the American Federation of Labour (AFL), was accepted by a significant portion of the TLC. Labour knew that its economic arrangement survived due to the grace of capital and it sought to legitimate and perpetuate this condition.

It is important to point out and identify this skilled-unskilled stratification in the working class because we will be dealing with political and economic organizations of the two strata which claimed to

speak for the entire working class.

## VI. Social Crisis

Geertz's concept of ideology is part of a theory of political development where societies move from traditional to modern states of affairs. The movement is seen as social crisis because traditional values break down. This process in turn generates ideologies as alternative principles of social behaviour. The question just yet is not what caused the social crisis, for the problem is more fundamental. Geertz's definition of ideology must be moved into the modern, industrial capitalist, society. In this context the definition serves its function, but its theoretical accoutrements must be critically discussed.

Each social class in capitalist society, according to Gramsci, develops its own ideology. This development is part and parcel of the evolution of a social class and, while affected by social crisis, the crisis is not a catalyst for the origin of an ideology. The only crisis situation for which this does not hold true is the transition from one epoch to another, as in the transformation from feudal to capitalist society. Here, social crisis generates ideologies indirectly, by virtue of producing previously non-existent classes.<sup>50</sup>

Given this, what Geertz refers to as the collapse of traditionally accepted values, can be understood as the breakdown of bourgeois hegemony. Consequently, social crisis is considered a situation capable of calling hegemony into question. This is evidenced by the growing popularity of anti-hegemonic ideologies among many suffering from the strain of social crisis. The many that we are concerned with belong to the working class; hence, we are interested in the social crises which affect this class.

We have already pointed out the transition from feudalism to capitalism in terms of a social crisis. It is an important and relevant social crisis if we were studying the making of the Canadian working class. However, by 1900, when our thesis begins its argument, capitalism was already in existence in Canada. The capitalist labour market had gained sophistication by the 1870's. This meant social organization of capitalist society had reached such a level that there existed a demand for labour, a source of labour supply and a method of retaining wage workers in the market.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Teeple has argued that as early as the 1820's the Canadian ruling class had created a capitalist labour market but insufficient industry to utilize the market.<sup>52</sup> Therefore we must examine other crises which have the potential of weakening bourgeois hegemony.

The first crisis is the result of the intensification of labour exploitation. There are two methods of creating and accumulating surplus value. One is to extend the work day or surplus labour-time beyond necessary labour-time or beyond the work time during which labourers reproduce their means of subsistence. The surplus value produced by these means is "absolute surplus value" and it constitutes the least developed or sweat shop form of exploitation.<sup>53</sup> However, the success of this method is limited by the pure exhaustion of labour and factory act legislation which sets legal hours of employment of men, women, and children. This legislation was late in coming in Canada, but by 1908 factory acts were standard in all provinces except Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.<sup>54</sup>

The second method of acquiring surplus value is called "relative surplus value" and it is based on increasing the productiveness of labour

so as "to shorten the labour time necessary for the production of a commodity".<sup>55</sup> This is done by intensifying labour productivity through a co-operative division of labour, called manufacturing, where tradesmen form "a productive mechanism whose parts are human beings".<sup>56</sup> The problem is that physical stress on limbs limits the labourers' ability to work steadily at a quick pace. Here the quest for surplus value finds its solution in the machine and technological innovation which can easily be integrated into this system of production thus replacing workers and speeding up production. This is the beginning of industrial capitalism. In Canada industrial capitalism came to dominate the economy between 1890 and 1920 and it transformed the shape of society to fit its growing needs.

The second form of social crisis we will examine is the fluctuations of the capitalist market. The 1900 to 1925 period was highly unstable. In the first decade of the century the economy rose and fell every two years. The decade began with an economic boom which lasted till 1903. This was followed by an economic recession from 1904 to 1905. The years 1906 and 1907 brought the prosperity of a flourishing economy which the 1908 depression ended. The economy grew again between 1910 and 1913 but the relocation of British capital into the profitable British war industry led to the 1913 to 1915 depression.<sup>57</sup> The lack of capital investment was so acute the Canadian state was forced to invest into the economy. Its war contracts, coupled with the amount of enlisted and conscripted workers, provided work opportunities for the remaining workers. Once the war contracts were terminated a new depression set in at the conclusion of the war. This was a particularly dangerous situation for the state since soldiers had returned from war and could not find employment

in the country for which they had fought.

A second economic destabilizing force was inflation. A major inflationary period began in 1916 when the cost of living rose 8 per cent. In 1917 it rose again by 18 per cent and by  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent again in 1918.<sup>58</sup> In Winnipeg alone the cost of living rose 83 per cent over the course of the war; wages, on the other hand, increased by 16 per cent.<sup>59</sup>

The intensification of exploitation through technological innovation and the mercurial character of the capitalist market affected both the skilled and the unskilled. The primary impact was felt by a lowering of workers' standards of living. This in turn led workers to question or withdraw their consent from bourgeois hegemony. This is because hegemony exists on a material base. Przeworski writes: "There must always exist at any time a level of wage increase which is minimally necessary to reproduce consent".<sup>60</sup> However, since no capitalist society can guarantee uninterrupted economic growth and/or a constant or proportional increase in wages, Przeworski continues:

Consent to the existing social relations is always tentative. The 'end of ideology' is never possible: no social order is given once and for all. The consent to capitalism is permanently conditional; there exist material limits beyond which it will not be granted, and beyond these limits there may be crises.<sup>61</sup>

The crises, then, are dialectical; the socio-economic crisis of the wage earner is the crisis of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie.

One response of the working class to the social crises is to organize itself to defend its standard of living. A second response to unfulfilled demands and threatened interests takes the form of strikes. Strikes are motivated by the struggle over wages and by the crafts' struggle against the new industrial factory order. An example of the

latter tendency in Southern Ontario is presented in Category B of Table 1.

Let us first examine the struggle of the craftsmen. They were in the main immigrants from Britain and have been treated as "moderate in outlook".<sup>62</sup> This is a very broad generalization. It is also inaccurate because it fails to understand industrial capitalism and mechanization, their effects on work categories and the subsequent social repercussions. Economically and politically moderate craftsmen are found where there is job security; where modern technology is eliminating crafts we have radicalized and politicized craftsmen. Moreover, there is a need to appreciate the effect of other social crises on skilled workers. In this respect, unionization did not always provide immunity from these social crises as in some crafts unemployment reached highs of 90 per cent.<sup>63</sup>

However, it is important that we not make the craft versus mechanization confrontation the national norm. The high levels of immigration brought in a surplus of unskilled workers which had a constricting affect on the development of capital intensive industry.<sup>64</sup> Labour intensive industries were no where more apparent than in the peripheries, specifically the west. Here owners of capital "sought to compete with the advantaged manufacturing establishments in Central Canada by increased exploitation of their workers".<sup>65</sup>

Although people of different ethnicity did go west, industry's most preferred recruit was always one from a semi-feudal country such as China, Japan or Eastern, Central and Southern Europe.<sup>66</sup> Since no developed tradition of unionism existed there, capital found that these immigrants were more defenseless and easier to exploit. Nevertheless, the barely human level of life did not escape reaction.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the west was

TABLE I

Strike Issues in Southern Ontario

	<u>Number of Strikes</u>
Category A	
for higher earnings	212
against wage reductions	28
Category B	
for recognition of union	32
defense of trade union	73
sympathetic strikes	14
apprenticeship control	12
objection to new system of work	20
change in the conditions of work	22
Category C	
for shorter hours	58
adjustments of procedures of wage payment	8
Category D	
objection to employment of particular persons, usually supervisors	18

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Source: Labour Gazette, 1901-1914, compilations by Craig Heron and Brian Palmer, "Through the Prism of the Strike: Industrial Conflict in Southern Ontario, 1901-1914", Canadian Historical Review, LVIII, no. 4 (Dec. 1977), 443.

wracked by enormous strikes, i.e.: the two year long Vancouver Island coal miners strike from 1912 to 1914, the Winnipeg strikes of 1918 and 1919, and the 1919 Drunheller strike. The number of strikes in the western peripheries was so great that in 1917 British Columbia and Alberta stood first and second in days lost through strikes; Winnipeg was a close third.<sup>68</sup>

The prevalence of social crises demands that a certain level of wage increase be provided to maintain working class consent. This, of course, is not always possible nor does capital agreeably approach wage increases. The result is the crisis of consent and bourgeois hegemony. But it is not the end of bourgeois rule. Rather it is a period when socialist ideology can position itself deeper within the working class, thus gaining consent and building its hegemony.

#### VII. Note on Data Collection

The method of collecting data for this thesis is based upon a study of primary and secondary sources. Generally, the study of the 1900 to 1922 period of Canadian socialist and working class history through primary material is not seriously hampered by the lack of collected publications and newspapers. If and when particular issues and publications are not obtainable, secondary sources can be called upon to fill the void.

The newspapers of the SPC are the most completely collected papers of any Canadian socialist party. The SDPC's first and second newspapers, Cotton's Weekly and the Canadian Forward, have also been well compiled. This has not been the case with the party's third newspaper,

The Social Democrat. It has not been collected beyond its first issue dated December 31, 1918. This, however, is not as significant a problem as it appears. By mid-1918 the SDPC was a fragmented and repressed party due to the Orders-in-Council of that year. All of its non-Anglo-Saxon federations, branches and locals were illegal and operated underground. Only the minority English element was permitted to exist legally. Therefore, while the ideological debates concerning Bolshevism are sorely missed, if they were available they would not be representative of the entire SDPC and its factions. The debates over Bolshevism among Finns, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.,...on the other hand, are available to only those with the appropriate language skills. Nevertheless, research into secondary sources such as memoirs, recollections, histories of ethnic groups, etc.,...is capable of uncovering the issues over which the sections of the SDPC split and/or joined the WPC. Finally, the entire SPNA's newspaper has been impossible to acquire. Only two editions of the paper are in existence. In this case, the publications of Tim Buck, a one time SPNA member, have proven useful to a degree, as has information gleaned from a variety of sources both primary and secondary.

Other primary sources include Trades and Labour Council and OBU newspapers. The major Council newspapers contain not only information concerning labour and the working class, but also articles by and about socialists. They are the B.C. Federationist (Vancouver), The Voice (Winnipeg), and the OBU Bulletin. Others, such as the Industrial Banner (Toronto) and The Searchlight (Calgary) are used as well. Data has also been gathered from the government publication Labour Organization in Canada (1911 and 1930) and the Robert S. Kenny Collection.<sup>69</sup>

Secondary sources include: published recollections by socialists and communists, historical and interpretative works about and by the socialist, labour and working class movements. In these sources are included the use of Masters of Arts Theses. The most important and extensively used thesis is G. R. F. Troop's "Socialism in Canada" which was written in 1922. Like Troop's thesis, the others are historical, almost chronological, tracts. They suffer from a lack of critical analysis, poor or non-existent definitions of terms and at times historical inaccuracies. In no thesis is an attempt made to link the socialist parties to the CPC although Canadian socialism and communism are discussed. Consequently, where possible and necessary, the theses are used to provide or verify historical data.

## NOTES

1. G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought: Vol. III, The Second International 1889-1914 (London: Macmillan 1956), part II, p. 819 in Paul W. Fox, "Early Socialism in Canada", in J. M. Aitchison, ed., The Political Process in Canada Essays in Honour of R. MacGregor Dawson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 79, fn. 1.
2. Martin Robbin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930 (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University Press, 1968), p. 1.
3. A. Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. ix.
4. McCormack, Reformers, p. 168. See Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975) and, William Rodney, Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1919-1929 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).
5. For example, Avakumovic writes that the SPC's "dislike of gradual reforms..." made them "unwilling to devote much effort to electioneering.. " Avakumovic, The Communist Party, p. 3. However, the SPC saw the elections as the open road to capturing the state and/or educating workers. It therefore ran candidates and some were victorious, i.e.: J. H. Hawthornthwaite and Parker Williams.
6. Norman Penner, The Canadian Left A Critical Analysis (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1977), p. 78.
7. On the latter see David Frank and Nolan Reilly, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes, 1899-1916", Labour/Le Travailleur, 4, no. 4 (1979), 85-113.
8. Daniel De Leon was the leading Marxist in the United States prior to the 20th century. He was an influential doctrinaire Marxist and the authoritarian leader of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). Until 1895 he held that working class emancipation could only be accomplished through the electoral political process. In 1895, he turned to syndicalism combined with political action which immediately caused splits within the SLP. Nevertheless, many socialists still held to the pre-1895 DeLeonist socialist ideology -- which is termed impossibilism (see fn. 9). This was the ideology which the SPC espoused. See McCormack, Reformers, pp. 20-21.

9. McCormack provides a basic definition of impossibilism. He writes the doctrine is based on three propositions: 1) capitalism cannot be reformed and the reformation of capitalism is not part of the class struggle; 2) trade unions have no short or long term benefits for any workers; and 3) "class conscious political action" is the means of destroying the rule of capital and replacing it with socialism. McCormack, Reformers, p. 54.
10. Antonio Gramsci, Notes on Italian History in Selections from the Prison Notebooks (hereafter cited as PN), edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffery Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 57.
11. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, pp. 275-276.
12. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 210. Carl Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism (London: Pluto Press, Ltd., 1976), p. 41. "Economic-corporate" was understood by Gramsci to be a narrow economic consensus and/or economic self-interest. Gramsci, The Modern Prince, PN, p. 181; and see Boggs, Gramsci's Marxism, p. 73.
13. Thomas R. Bates, "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony", Journal of the History of Ideas, XXXVI, no. 2 (April-May 1975), 352. See also Gwyn A. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation", Journal of the History of Ideas, XXI, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1960), 587.
14. Adam Przeworski, "Material Bases of Consent: Economics and Politics in a Hegemonic System", (Nov. 1978), p. 5. forthcoming in Political Power and Social Theory, 1 (1979).
15. Ibid., pp. 48-49.
16. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 168 and p. 161.
17. Przeworski, "Material Bases of Consent", p. 5 and p. 23.
18. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 258.
19. Gramsci, The Intellectuals, PN, p. 12.
20. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, pp. 262-263.
21. Gramsci, The Intellectuals, PN, p. 12.
22. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 246; see also Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", New Left Review, no. 100 (Nov. 1976 - Jan. 1977), pp. 28-29.
23. Gramsci, Notes on Italian History, PN, p. 57.
24. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 238.

25. Idem.
26. Ibid., p. 210. In Canada, in 1919, organized labour (the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada) were granted such minimal concessions as representation on "the Soldiers Civil Re-establishment Commission, the Research Committee on Industrial Fatigue, The Advisory Council of the Employment Service and the short-lived Board of Commerce". Panitch underscores the hegemonic importance of this as co-optation but recognizes the class collaboration policy of the Congress. Leo Panitch, "Corporatism in Canada", Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review, no. 1. (Spring, 1979), pp. 61-62. In this case the state paid an inexpensive price for hegemony. The bodies opened to labour were far from important and hardly significant.
27. Gramsci, State and Civil Society, PN, p. 239.
28. Gramsci, The Modern Prince, PN, p. 136.
29. Gramsci, The Study of Philosophy, PN, p. 350.
30. Gramsci, The Intellectuals, PN, pp. 5-9.
31. Ibid., p. 10.
32. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
33. Ibid., p. 7.
34. Ibid., p. 8.
35. Gramsci, The Modern Prince, PN, pp. 152-153.
36. Ibid., p. 196.
37. C. Marzani, translator and annotator, The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci (New York: Cameron Associates, 1957), p. 31.
38. Gramsci, The Modern Prince, PN, pp. 180-183.
39. Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 76.
40. Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 55.
41. Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System", in David E. Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent (New York: The Free Press, 1964) p. 63.
42. Ibid., p. 56.
43. Ibid., p. 61.
44. Ibid., p. 63.

45. Ibid., p. 64.
46. Ibid., p. 63.
47. It is important to mention that the conception of social class is an issue of debate among Marxist theorists. See, for example, the works of T. B. Bottomore, Claus Offe, Nicos Poulantzas, Adam Przeworski, E. P. Thompson and Erik Olin Wright. For an example of the application of the characteristic of social class we intend to use, see Leo A. Johnson, "The Development of Class in Canada in the Twentieth Century", in Garry Teeple, editor, Capitalism and the National Question in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 141-183.
48. Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, edited by Samuel H. Beer (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 20. This thesis will not pursue an analysis of the ideology of the petite-bourgeoisie primarily because we are interested in working class ideology. Moreover, petite-bourgeois ideology made little contact with the socialist parties. It was not discussed to a great extent by socialists nor did they attempt to collaborate with petit-bourgeois movements such as the farmers' movement.
49. Throughout this thesis TLC will represent the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada. The letters TLC preceded by the name of a city, i.e. The Vancouver TLC, represent the Trades and Labour Council of a city.
50. Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy in Marx and Engels, Basic Writings in Politics and Philosophy, edited by Lewis S. Feuer (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 43-44.
51. According to Pentland, these are the three component parts of a capitalist labour market. M. C. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 25, no. 4 (Nov. 1959), 455-456.
52. Gary Teeple, "Land, Labour and Capital in pre-Confederation Canada", in Gary Teeple, editor, Capitalism and the National Question in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 60.
53. Karl Marx, Capital, Volume I (New York: International Publishers, 1975), p. 315 and p. 265). A. Ross McCormack, Reformers, p. 8.
54. The Voice, Jan. 30, 1914; McCormack, Reformers, p. 8.
55. K. Marx, Capital Volume I, p. 314.
56. Ibid., pp. 336-338. A. Ferguson stated it most accurately: "Manufacturers, ... prosper most where the mind is least consulted, and where the workshop may ... be considered as an engine, the parts of

- which are men". A. Ferguson, l.c., p. 280 as cited in ibid., 361-362.
57. Data taken from Craig Heron and Brian Palmer, "Through the Prism of the Strike: Industrial Conflict in Southern Ontario, 1901-1914", Canadian Historical Review, LVIII, no. 4 (Dec. 1977), 425; Martin Robin, "British Columbia, The Company Province", in Martin Robin, ed., Canadian Provincial Politics, The Party Systems of the Ten Provinces, second edition (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1978), p. 43.
  58. David J. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978), p. 22.
  59. Robert Craig Brown and Ramsey Cook, Canada 1896-1921 A Nation Transformed (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 309.
  60. Przeworski, "Material Bases of Consent", p. 21.
  61. Ibid., p. 20 and p. 5.
  62. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 12.
  63. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 22.
  64. Johnson, "The Development of Class in Canada", in Teeple, ed., p. 169.
  65. Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 32.
  66. See Donald Avery, "Canadian Immigration Policy and the 'Foreign' Navy, 1896-1914", Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1972.
  67. For a general account of life for the western working class see Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, chapter one, pp. 1-28. The chapter is fittingly entitled 'The Fight for Survival'. For the authoritative account of life in mining, logging and railway camps from 1903-1914, see E. W. Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972).
  68. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 22.
  69. The collection was donated by Mr. Kenny who was a member of the CPC and who during the course of his life collected printed material from documents to leaflets by or about working class parties. The two major pieces we shall use are the never published three chapters of "A Short History of The Communist Party in Canada" (author unknown) and the (original and) "Earliest Known Surviving Minutes of the CPC/WPC" taken by Florence Custance of the Provisional Organization Committee of the 'Z' party.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

#### I. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to obtain an understanding of the SPC by analyzing its ideology and praxis. In this manner we will seek to provide the background for the discussion of the future splits within the SPC. Consequently, this chapter sets itself a twofold task. First, we will look at how and why impossiblist socialists were able to initially unite socialist groups in Canada. Second, we will study the SPC's ideology, the social and political environment from which it sprang, the kind of tactics it was translated into and the consequences it led to. Proceeding in this manner we will be able to see that impossiblist ideology was not conducive to working class unity because it fostered sectarianism. Therefore, it lacked the virtues of conciliation and compromise so necessary to gain the consent of followers.

This chapter is organized into eight sections. Section two will deal with the formation of the SPC and the fact that differences between impossiblists and possibilists were never resolved. The ideology of impossiblism and its doctrinal interpretation of Marxism will be the concern of the third section. Section four will analyse the socio-political and intellectual roots of impossiblist ideology. Section five will take into account the limits to working class unity under the SPC. This will be followed by a discussion of the relation between the SPC and the labour movement in the sixth section. The gains and failures of

the SPC will be the subject of section seven. The conclusion will follow.

## II. The Socialist Party of Canada

Socialist party politics in Canada began with Daniel DeLeon's American based Socialist Labour Party (SLP). This party had existed in Ontario since 1894. In 1898 it extended itself west when one of its Ontario members, a Canadian Pacific Railroad worker named Arthur Spencer, was transferred to Vancouver. Once in Vancouver Spencer not only established an SLP local, but he was also instrumental in organizing the SLP's economic arm, the Socialist Trades and Labour Alliance.<sup>1</sup> The SLP's three chief characteristics were: an interest "in the study and purification of Socialist thought", a hatred of craft unions, and DeLeon's type of leadership which demanded absolute obedience.<sup>2</sup> All of these traits were destined to reappear in the SPC.

By the spring of 1900, without ever having achieved prominence in Vancouver, let alone Canada, the SLP was reduced in size and influence by a split within its ranks.<sup>3</sup> The dissenting socialists, mostly union men and Vancouver TLC members, formed the United Socialist Labour Party (USLP).<sup>4</sup> They had found it unreasonable to support DeLeon's war on trade unions and, owing to his undemocratic manner of rule, they were unable to change the praxis of the SLP. Like their American counterpart, the Socialist Party of America (SPA), the USLP cooperated with unions and treated the struggle for reforms as important.<sup>5</sup>

The Canadian Socialist League (CSL) also welcomed those socialists who had abandoned the SLP. Organized in Toronto in 1896, the CSL boasted its own paper, the Citizen and Country, and sixty locals by 1901.<sup>6</sup> Of

the three parties, it was the most reform oriented displaying "a mild and palatable Christian Socialism".<sup>7</sup> Like the USLP it worked with unions which, one author claims, accounted for the CSL's high membership.<sup>8</sup>

In 1901, the two possibilist parties, the USLP and the CSL, a possibilist group of socialists who had recently broken away from the SLP over the question of reforms and members of the SLP met in British Columbia at what became the first provincial socialist convention.<sup>9</sup> According to McCormack, the convention was also attended by "delegates" from Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo and the interior of the province.<sup>10</sup> The result was the establishment of the Socialist Party of British Columbia (SPBC). The platform it adopted was that of the SPA which stressed both long term or revolutionary goals and immediate, short term or reform oriented demands.<sup>11</sup>

The immediate result of the possibilist -- impossibilist fusion was dissent. It was so internally destabilizing that R. Parameter Pettipiece, at the time editor of the socialist labour paper, The Lardeau Eagle, publically pleaded for members to maintain party unity and fight for their demands at a future convention.<sup>12</sup> This plea, however, had little effect on certain revolutionaries, namely the Nanaimo section of the SPBC. They left the party in the spring of 1902 and founded their own party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Canada (RSPC) later that same year.<sup>13</sup>

The first task the SPBC set itself was to bring the impossibilists back into the fold. Debates were conducted during the summer of 1902 with Ernest Burns representing the SPBC and E. T. Kingsley representing the RSPC. Both men were an example of the influx of Marxist ideas immigrants to British Columbia had brought. Burns was from England where he had been

a member of the British impossibilist party, the Social Democratic Federation.<sup>14</sup> Since coming to Canada he had become a spokesperson for possibilism. Kingsley was an American impossibilist propagandist who had been hired by the Nanaimo socialists to conduct a lecture tour even before the founding convention of the SPBC.<sup>15</sup> He was so well received that the RSPC asked him to remain indefinitely and he quickly became their leader and the leading spokesperson for impossibilism in British Columbia.<sup>16</sup>

The debate between Burns and Kingsley concerned the inclusion into the party platform of the commitment to struggle for reforms as well as revolution.<sup>17</sup> This was a confrontation between two socialist ideologies which was not resolved at the time, nor for a long time to come. The union of the RSPC and the SPBC did come about, but it was more a reaction to events outside of the debates than a product of conciliatory bargaining. First, in the spring of 1902 labour and reform minded representatives formed the Provincial Progressive Party (PPP).<sup>18</sup> Immediately the RSPC and the SPBC, with help from Eugene Debs of the SPA, launched a concerted effort to prevent the non-revolutionary PPP's development and growth.<sup>19</sup> However, all socialists knew they had to settle their differences and become one unified socialist party in order to effectively undermine the PPP. Otherwise, split into two camps, the socialists were weakened and would always permit a reform oriented working class party to emerge and seek the support of the workers. Secondly, the RSPC gained more credibility and a wider acceptance when J. H. Hawthornthwaite, an independent Nanaimo labour MLA, joined the party in 1902.<sup>20</sup> Thirdly, also in 1902, the RSPC nominated Parker Williams, an unknown coal miner, to contest a by-election in Newcastle. He managed to poll 40 per cent of the vote although every coal

company in the area supported their candidate W. W. B. McInnes.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, impossibilist praxis came to represent the very real possibility of electoral success and possibilists, as well as impossibilists, firmly believed in the electoral road to political power.

These three events combined to sway the SPBC membership to fall into line behind the RSPC. At the October 1902 SPBC and RSPC convention a united party emerged retaining the name the Socialist Party of British Columbia.<sup>22</sup> At this convention the new SPBC also unanimously adopted a five point program presented by the RSPC. The program called for 1) a quick transition from capitalism to socialism; 2) democratic management of industry by the working class; 3) production for use and not profit; 4) when in office, the SPBC stated, it would support legislation which would "aid the working class in their struggle against capitalism"; and, 5) when dealing with "public affairs placed in its hands" the party would always "promote the interests of the working class alone".<sup>23</sup>

This was an impossibilist program and not simply by virtue of the fact that it was presented by the RSPC. The fundamental feature of impossibilism was its total dedication to solely revolutionary praxis. Any inclination towards reform oriented praxis was considered non-revolutionary and therefore non-socialist. The first three points of the RSPC's program are consistent with this revolutionary tendency. However, the last two points indicate a pursuit of reforms which ameliorate but do not abolish the condition of wage labour. This contradiction in the impossibilist program does not reflect a possibilist input. Rather it reflects the contradictory praxis of Canadian impossibilism, one where the party was decidedly against reforms yet choose to run candidates in

elections. Once elected, the minority socialist candidates were compelled to work for legislative reforms which benefited the workers but contravened the expressed praxis of the party. This was a course of action impossibilism constantly followed without ever coming to terms with it ideologically.

After the SPBC and RSPC fused, Kingsley began to exert his impossibilist influence in the party. At the 1903 convention it was apparent that Kingsley's prominence was growing. The convention decided that the SPBC opposed "'palliatives'", immediate demands, and the raising of the price of wage labour -- or essentially union work. Instead the party indicated its task was to break the fetters of wage labour.<sup>24</sup>

But the consolidation of power was not an easy matter in the early years of the SPBC, even after Kingsley had replaced Pettipiece as editor of the Western Clarion in September 1903.<sup>25</sup> Despite a strong sectarian tendency within the SPBC, one that would permit only individuals with the knowledge of the science of socialism to join, socialist parties from across Canada affiliated to the SPBC.<sup>26</sup> By no means were these organizations homogeneous entities. The South East Kootenay Labour Party, for example, contained a majority pro-SPBC faction, which opted for affiliation, and a moderate, possibilist faction that did not break away and instead joined the SPBC as part of the Kootenay Labour Party.<sup>27</sup> Another party, the Socialist Party of Manitoba (SPM), was very possibilist oriented. Formed in Winnipeg in 1902, its platform contained seven reform demands, the most radical being the nationalization of monopolies.<sup>28</sup> In its column in the Winnipeg TLC paper The Voice, the SPM claimed it was part of the Second International although it had never officially affiliated.<sup>29</sup>

This last point was totally out of character with the SPBC (and later the SPC). While arguing there was a need to be "in line with the international movement", the SPBC rejected the International's invitation to join without ever elaborating on its decisions.<sup>30</sup> Elsewhere, the largest provincial organization of the CSL, the Ontario Socialist League, accepted the SPBC platform in 1904 in defiance of their secretary who refused to hold a referendum on affiliation.<sup>31</sup>

In 1905, socialists in British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, who were in favour of the SPBC program, all proposed the formation of a Canadian socialist party with headquarters in Vancouver.<sup>32</sup> Grudgingly the SPBC accepted the title the Socialist Party of Canada and set itself at the head of a socialist movement divided between possibilists and impossibilists.<sup>33</sup> Therefore it is incorrect to claim, as does McCormack, that at the 1902 convention the impossibilists had won.<sup>34</sup> Instead, possibilist theories were accepted temporarily because of the impossibilist electoral successes and therefore impossibilists rose to command the SPBC. But their leading role was dependent upon consolidating their intra-party leadership by developing an acceptance for impossibilism, a difficult task even without the addition of new socialist members. This in turn was contingent upon effective leadership where, because of impossibilism's refutation of immediate demands, nothing short of a socialist revolution could be considered a success. The impossibilists had measured and cut the rope that was to hang them. The SPC would not achieve socialism, nor would impossibilism permit it to grow significantly. The reason why is to be sought in the SPC's ideology and tactics.

### III. The Impossiblist Ideology

The barrier to tightening the unity of the SPBC was the uncompromising and overpowering manner impossiblists used when dealing with all possibilists. This inability to compromise is the first aspect of the impossiblists ideology to be noted. As long as Pettipiece edited the Western Clarion, possibilist elements of the old USLP and CSL could be heard making references to unions.<sup>35</sup> A year and a half after Pettipiece's departure as editor in 1903, a certain "Proletary" pointed out that union struggles generally result in failures. He concluded with the official SPC position: the socialist movement was solely a political movement and working class invincibility lay in the political realm alone.<sup>36</sup> The impossiblists also made no effort to appease the religiously oriented CSL members. In the early years letters arguing the compatibility of Christianity and socialism appeared in the party press.<sup>37</sup> Starting with an article identifying the church as an institution favouring and promulgating capitalism, the SPC's position became militantly anti-religious.<sup>38</sup> Its ideological doctrine prevented it from taking a stand similar to that of the European socialist parties who left religion to the private discretion of the individual party member.<sup>39</sup>

Two years after Kingsley replaced Pettipiece as editor of the Western Clarion, a more uniform impossiblist line became evident. In two articles concerning the history of the SPC the impossiblists indicated they were responsible for the SPC's revolutionary character.<sup>40</sup> They wrote:

Nanaimo may be appropriately termed the spring from which the SPC first drew its inspiration and life force. The movement had previously been a confused dream.<sup>41</sup>

The SPC's refusal to compromise was based on its doctrinal

interpretation of Marxism. It was according to this ideology that the SPC refused to cooperate with other labour parties such as the local reform oriented independent labour parties, the ILPs. In attacking the reformers the SPC was both establishing and propagating its ideological position. The charges it hurled against the ILP were that it made compromises and was responsible for inconsistent and opportunistic statements designed only to gain popularity.<sup>42</sup> In this manner, the SPC eschewed any connection with "moderate" or reform oriented socialism. Indeed "moderate" socialism was rejected as socialism altogether; either one was an impossibilist socialist or not a socialist at all.

In order to understand this uncompromising character of the SPC, its concept of socialism must be examined. The party used the term socialism in a dual manner. On one hand socialism was understood as an analytical materialist science concerned with studying the evolution of society.<sup>43</sup> It was a powerful and all encompassing ideology which explained everything from economic exploitation and class struggle to crime and the lack of production of Canadian culture.<sup>44</sup> This ideology could justifiably be called the source of the SPC's vast optimism for it was used to argue not the need to make revolution but the inevitability of revolution. The argument was based on a mechanical understanding of the logic of capitalist development. It stated that capitalism would collapse when the social condition of the working class deteriorated. As one SPC propagandist, A. P. Chew, wrote: "there is nothing like hunger and economic necessity in general to bring about revolutions".<sup>45</sup> Consequently, The Voice characterized the SPC local of Winnipeg as "150 dogmatic Marxist propagandists awaiting the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system".<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, socialism meant the subsequent social order which would replace capitalism. However, impossibilist rigidity forbade the SPC from explaining what this would entail save for workers' control of industry and an abstract economic and political notion of freedom. One reason for this is that since the SPC possessed only an abstract and schematic critique of capitalism, it could not conceive of socialist society as anything more than liberation in the abstract. No direct statement on the state, class structures, the family, or agrarian or industrial industry in socialist society in Canada could be made since no concrete analysis of Canadian capitalist society had been undertaken by SPC propagandists. The second reason for the party's abstract and shallow notion of socialism was based on its desire to avoid confusing the need for revolutionary change with the demands of the reformers (demands such as abolition of child labour, better working condition, etc....). Reforms, which would continually prove to be the source of the party's contradiction and weakness, were rejected as barriers to revolution. Given the ideology of impossibilism, reforms which would better the condition of the working class would be considered counter-revolutionary since revolutions occurred only when conditions deteriorated. This is why Steeves writes that the party was actually afraid that the pursuit of reforms would obscure the struggle for a socialist revolution.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, the SPC insisted that its object was not the "relief of pain" but the elimination of the "disease".<sup>48</sup> And, while appealing to reform oriented socialists, it reasoned, that if "palliatives" were all one wanted, the best method of acquiring them was to seek the abolition of capitalism because, to gain appeasement, the ruling class would grant concessions.<sup>49</sup>

A logical consequence of this second usage of the concept of socialism was the SPC's fetish for capturing the state through electoral means. Members of the party believed the exploitative capitalist order existed through state fiat. As one article stated:

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reigns of government, all the powers of the state will be used to protect and defend their property rights in the means of wealth production and their control of the product of labour.<sup>50</sup>

The party did not concern itself with distinguishing between what is the government and the state. Instead it maintained the simple view of the state as an institution endemic to human society. The SPC did not see the state in capitalist society as a capitalist state but as an institution which represented the interests of whichever class was in control of it. Therefore, it was not to be abolished, or smashed and replaced by a workers' state. Rather it was to be taken over and used in the interests of workers. As the SPC manifesto pointed out: "by means of the state the workers have been held in subjection, and by means of the state they shall be emancipated".<sup>51</sup> Moreover, along with a politically naive view of the state, the SPC maintained an equally naive approach to the take over of the state. It believed workers were oppressed by the state because they misguidedly elected their class enemies to government. Rather than alienate their political power, argued the SPC, if workers elected their true representatives, socialism could be realized through an electoral capture of the state.<sup>52</sup> Implicit in this notion of take over was the idea that the electoral process was objective and without obstruction permitted another class to electorally expell the capitalist class from control of the state. This idea, which the superstructure of the state projects, was instrumental in committing the SPC to an electoral praxis.<sup>53</sup>

This, however, did not mean the transition from capitalism to socialism would necessarily be peaceful, as Hawthornthwaite argued in a pre-election speech.<sup>54</sup> Nor is Grimson correct in claiming that violence was the method advanced by the SPC.<sup>55</sup> The SPC saw both the vote and arms as a means of acquiring power but it insisted that legal means of acquiring power were by far primary. Violent struggle -- "the use of a shillalah" -- was only proposed if and when the besieged ruling class would retaliate by withdrawing the right to vote or by using force.<sup>56</sup>

#### IV. The Roots of Impossibilist Ideology

Traditionally the source and logic of the impossibilist ideology is explained by referring to the poor working and living conditions in primary industry communities. However useful such explanations are, they give only part of the picture. To fully comprehend the anti-reform and purely revolutionary character of impossibilism, its socio-political and intellectual basis must be examined.

British Columbia, at the turn of the century, was indeed a "company province".<sup>57</sup> It was here that the provincial government granted railroad concessions and land to its friends, and where capitalists were never without friends in government. As Steeves has written:

Those who lined their pockets and waxed pat used their willing partners in government to ensure that labour was to have every obstacle placed in its way to uniting in its own interest and that profits should not be cut by onerous legislation protecting the working class.<sup>58</sup>

In some cases capitalists decided to represent themselves in government as when the coal mine, railroad and newspaper owner James Dunsmuir became premier in 1899 to 1903 and was later appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the province.<sup>59</sup> Such politics led to further

misery and exploitation of the working class and to tremendous differences in power and wealth between the classes. The idea that the state defends and legislates only in capital's interest was thus conditioned by the socio-political situation of the working class in its communities. Consequently, the point was to capture the state. To reform it was an impossibility (from whence the term impossiblism). Other than revolutionary struggle not much else mattered, least of all craft unions. For example between 1898 and 1902 Ralph Smith, the Nanaimo Miners' local delegate, was president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, (the TLC).<sup>60</sup> The position was one of substantial power within the labour movement, but the miners ignored this and with it the work the TLC could do on their behalf. They severed all contact with the TLC by rejecting Smith as their delegate to the TLC's 1902 Berlin Convention which forced him to resign from the presidency.<sup>61</sup> Then the miners withdrew from the TLC and joined the industrial and socialist oriented Western Federation of Miners (WFM). Smith, an opponent of socialism, resigned as the union's secretary.<sup>62</sup>

Impossiblism, then, came to be articulated by and found adherents among the politically and economically oppressed working class. Impossiblism developed as a working class ideology because after it was inspired by the SLP and the British Social Democratic Federation, it was not met by an authoritative and substantial challenge. There are two reasons for this. It was isolated from the world socialist movement, represented by the second International. Therefore, Canadian socialists were not privy to the intellectual debates of the International.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, Canadian socialists never conducted an analysis of the specifics of Canadian society. Consequently, until impossiblism had concretely shown its

inability to bring about revolution, no good reason for rejecting its principles existed. This is because, save for some orators, propagandists and editors, there were no intellectuals in the entire Canadian socialist movement.<sup>64</sup> To be sure, there were two socialists who had been plumbers and who had acquired a university education. One, W. W. Lefeaux, had studied law and was an assistant to the defense counsel at the Winnipeg post-general strike trials. The other was J. G. Morgan who ran the University of British Columbia bookstore and who had earned two degrees, a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts.<sup>65</sup> However, neither contributed a Marxist analysis of Canadian society. The SPC itself maintained an anti-intellectual bias.<sup>66</sup> This bias only allowed workers to teach themselves Marxism, philosophy, history, etc. ... without ever letting them exceed the level of propagandist. Consequently, self-educated (or university educated) workers never utilized Marxism as an analytical tool. Instead Marxism remained a set of rigid laws only to be continually repeated.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, since the party maintained a doctrine of the inevitable collapse of capitalism, it saw little need to study society.

#### V. Obstacles to Hegemonic Expansion

The SPC translated its ideology into a tactical approach without ever studying the "relations of force". Subsequently the abstractness of its conceptualizations repeated themselves in its platform. As Troop observed:

Save for the party name there is no indication in the platform that it has anything to do with Canadian conditions. It would apply equally well to economic conditions in Portugal or Peru.<sup>68</sup>

Their constitution followed in the same vein. It listed its aims and

objects as a) to educate by teaching the economic foundations of society; and, b) to build a political organization to obtain "collective ownership and control of wealth production and distribution".<sup>69</sup> The education was designed to show the workers how and why they were being exploited. Then they were to work for and vote for the party.<sup>70</sup> To vote was very important because the SPC saw their way clear to power only through electoral politics which was in keeping with its insistence that it was strictly a political organization.

However, electoral politics were constricted by level of extended suffrage and the electoral laws. By 1898, both provincially and federally, suffrage did not apply to women, Asians, Eskimos, and native Indians. In Quebec and Nova Scotia property qualification established in 1867 further excluded voters. Lastly, in local areas the payment of a poll tax and/or a certain length of residence was required before voting eligibility was conferred.<sup>71</sup> The latter condition cost the SPC votes because the seasonal character of the lumber and construction industries and the generally fluctuating nature of the economy forced workers to move about from one job site to another. The party openly complained that many of its members were transient workers who were consequently unable to vote.<sup>72</sup> In situations where a stable work force lived, William Irvine observed that constituencies were organized in a manner as to ensure labour had an unheard minority voice.<sup>73</sup> The immigrant worker and the vote were also not taken into account. Immigrants could only vote after a three year waiting period. Many did not vote because they were simply 'guest workers', or they were forced to leave Canada because of depressed labour markets. If they remained in Canada and became public charges they were deported.<sup>74</sup>

Further obstacles to socialist success in electoral politics included the expensive candidates' election deposit of \$200 (except in Ontario and \$100 in British Columbia).<sup>75</sup> It had first been enacted in 1872 to "discourage frivolous candidates" and those seeking to be paid not to run by a serious candidate. The cost of the deposit was \$50 and not even the winner was refunded the deposit. In 1874 the law was amended to return the deposit to the victor. By 1882 it cost \$200 (in cash) to run and the victor and all those with over one half of the winner's vote received a refund.<sup>76</sup> And so it stood in 1905 when the SPC complained that the deposit law was clearly designed against them. The loss of a deposit, lamented W. E. Hardenburg, "often cripples propaganda work for months afterwards".<sup>77</sup> In 1903 the Western Socialist was forced to suspend publication because of financial difficulties.<sup>78</sup> These difficulties were the direct result of the loss of six deposits out of nine. The Toronto SPC local was equally hard hit losing all of its five deposits.<sup>79</sup>

If and when SPC candidates did win election, namely J. H. Hawthornthwaite (Nanaimo) and Parker Williams (Newcastle), they did not promote the party's position on reforms publically. Rather they continually proved the unsoundness of the SPC's anti-reform policy. Elected on impossibilist/SPC tickets they could not simply sit in the legislature and demand socialism. Moreover, the party platform contained two points which referred to SPC members in office and their duty to the working class. Thus, the MLA's logically pursued labour reforms through legislation to the degree that "there was little to differentiate the socialist representatives from those of any other energetic labour group".<sup>80</sup> This is why they found no difficulty co-operating with W. Davidson, the labour MLA from Slokan.<sup>81</sup>

Although upon being elected to the Alberta legislature in 1909, Charles O'Brien, the leading impossibilist from the East Kootenay Labour Party which had affiliated with the SPC, said his election "would accomplish nothing", reforms were to be had in British Columbia.<sup>82</sup> Led by Hawthornthwaite, the SPC-labour group won the eight-hour day Smelter Bill; the Trades Union Act (freeing the union of any responsibility to pay for damages caused by a strike); the Coal Mines Act (a 'safety' law calling for competency papers and exams which were designed to exclude Chinese underground miners ostensibly because they were inexperienced); the Candidates Deposit Bill (lowering the deposit from \$200 to \$100; and others.<sup>83</sup>

Organized labour in British Columbia only had praise for Hawthornthwaite's and Williams' work in Victoria.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the SPC, maintained two conflicting views. On one hand, an editorial stated the socialist minority was "a powerful factor" because it exposed the

incompetence and impotency of the political hacks of capitalism that are boosted into public office through the credulity and ignorance of the electorate.<sup>85</sup>

On the other hand, it stated the MLA's work was "for the amelioration of the conditions of the working class".<sup>86</sup> To be sure, a claim could be put forward that this was the argument of the possibilist faction of the SPC who did not break away until a month after this article appeared.<sup>87</sup> However, in 1908 the Western Clarion carried two months of reports of the struggles their representatives were engaged in.<sup>88</sup> The reports were uncritical and never considered the ideological significance of the MLA's work.

In short, the MLAs were a problem for the party as much as the

party's ideology was a problem for the MLAs. The MLAs were instrumental in bringing about legislative reforms, but the party was unable to use their achievements as proof of the efficacy of the SPC without contradicting their impossibilism. As a result the party platform was shortened by the exclusion of the two last points. Dropping points four and five, which dealt with legislation advancing the welfare of workers and the SPC's conduct when placed in public office, severed the formal connection between the MLA's work and the party's praxis.<sup>89</sup>

The desire to avoid reform oriented praxis along with the refusal to assume an active role in social change, the lack of intellectuals and the failure of propagandists to articulate everyday life as part and parcel of the class struggle prevented the SPC from furthering the development of class consciousness. According to its ideology, class consciousness was attained through learning. Once learned it was to be transformed into practice at the polling station during elections. The SPC did not believe that class consciousness developed through struggles for reforms or workers' daily needs.<sup>90</sup> This in turn, hindered the party's ability to mobilize labour by collaborating with or joining forces with and leading the organized labour movement. Many opportunities, from aiding in the establishment of unions, popularizing union work, struggling with the labour movement over particular issues, etc. ..., presented themselves to the SPC. And the party could have proven its worth by deed while entrenching itself within the working class.

An ideal issue, one close to labour's heart since 1897, was municipal elections.<sup>91</sup> Without an organized electoral machine, labour either nominated its own people and hoped for the best or established a

Labour Representation League to only contest these elections.<sup>92</sup> However, the SPC would not lend itself to the pursuit of municipal power because it took municipal ownership to be a reformist and not a revolutionary goal. Furthermore, since workers elsewhere had been elected to municipal governments and were in the same position as workers in Canada, the SPC stated it "declines to make its fight upon these issues of doubtful efficacy, and demands the complete abolition of wage slavery".<sup>93</sup>

In this case, the party failed to understand the political validity of the municipality. It claimed the matters city council dealt with were "purely bourgeois".<sup>94</sup> This was far from true. Before 1900 municipalities undertook limited responsibility for the poor, plus they passed early workmen's compensation legislation. After 1900 these programs were expanded along with the establishment of "'voluntary' welfare organizations".<sup>95</sup> Moreover, socialists in the city council could deliver cheaper hydro and gas because this was within council's legal purview.<sup>96</sup> It must be remembered, however, that for a party which believed the chance for revolution increased when social conditions deteriorated, the struggle for municipal reforms was tantamount to counter-revolutionary activity.

In contrast to working with labour and in order to fit with its ideology, the SPC sought to secure itself as the officially endorsed political arm of the labour movement. In face of never having participated in the day to day class struggle, that is the struggle for the workers immediate interests, the SPC justified its demands for support by reminding workers that it was guided by the principles of scientific socialism. Thus it offered to play the role of leadership in the political sphere leaving labour officials supreme in the economic realm.

The closest the SPC came to achieving this was at the TLC's 1906 Victoria convention. There, Pettipiece, representing the Vancouver TLC opposed the creation of a new labour party, and called for the acceptance of the SPC and its principles.<sup>97</sup> He was supported by eastern TLC officials, James Simpson and Frank Sherman, who argued that local autonomy should be granted to local TLCs so they may choose to support either the SPC or the ILP depending on which party had its chapter the area.<sup>98</sup> The convention agreed with the need for political action. But it thought labour's interest would be best served through a Canadian Labour Party (CLP) composed of provincial labour parties staffed by union delegates.<sup>99</sup> This spelled a defeat for the SPC's plans of unity, something which excited conservative labourites the likes of D. J. O'Donoghue and Liberals and Tories in British Columbia, who thought the CLP would weaken the SPC.<sup>100</sup> Some, like Simpson, tried to insist on the SPC but his motion to have the Ontario CLP adopt the SPC's platform was resoundly defeated.<sup>101</sup> British Columbia socialists, on the other hand, took over the CLP in their province, and declared their support for the SPC, thus destroying the new labour party.<sup>102</sup>

According to Robin, the TLC did not support the SPC because socialism was novel, successful only in British Columbia and it "had been carried on a wave of industrial unionism" which stood opposed to the craft oriented TLC.<sup>103</sup> But there is a more poignant reason, namely: the TLC could not justify endorsing a party which believed unionism and socialism had nothing in common. One Western Clarion statement put it this way: "'oil and water would mix as readily as unionism and socialism'".<sup>104</sup> Even Hawthornthwaite agreed that, besides obtaining a better wage, unions were generally ineffectual.<sup>105</sup>

This position flowed from the SPC's view of the class struggle in which it found no place for unions. It assumed the class struggle was "'waged over the matter of labour as merchandise, and not over its price'".<sup>106</sup> Hence a union or a strike could not be part of the class struggle. Indeed, the strike as a weapon was declared bankrupt because it only fetched more food, shelter and clothing whereas to abolish wage slavery meant to "strike at the ballot box".<sup>107</sup> This is why workers were constantly told of the ineffectiveness of striking and the logic of voting. Finally, unions were also considered as part of the capitalist system. Kingsley stated they were "'reactionary products of the present competitive system'".<sup>108</sup> He treated them as simply another traders' organization intent on agitating for reforms.<sup>109</sup> More importantly, Kinglsey indicated that the socialist movement must stand against these organizations when he wrote: "...in the labour unions of today are the statesmen of tomorrow. To 'smash the unions' is to transform them into statesmen, and if need be, into soldiers."<sup>110</sup>

Nevertheless, despite this hostile impossibilist outlook, the SPC enjoyed good relations with unions. These were in the main pro-socialist and anti-American Federation of Labour (AFL) industrial unions but TLC affiliated bodies also supported the SPC. In 1903, while still the SPBC, the party was endorsed by, among others, the industrial American Labour Union (ALU) and the WFM, along with the Vancouver TLC.<sup>111</sup> Immediately after the 1906 TLC convention, the "'Progressive Unions of British Columbia'" -- the WFM, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), Vancouver Bartenders, Industrial Union, etc. ... -- held their convention and endorsed the SPC as their party.<sup>112</sup> This was also after a Western Clarion

article stated there was no difference between craft and industrial unions, since both only sought a higher wage.<sup>113</sup> However, many of the industrial unions were syndicalist in character and hence had an apocalyptic view of capitalism which was similar to that of the SPC. Moreover, the SPC was in tandem with these unions when it opposed the AFL calling it the "'American Fossilization of Labour'", and like the unions it liked to think of itself as representing the working class and not a small portion of craft workers.<sup>114</sup> Both also agreed that socialism was a "comprehensive solution" and that unions were reform-seeking organizations who could therefore have no common platform with the SPC.<sup>115</sup>

It is not surprising, then, to find an overlapping membership between these unions and the SPC. This was especially true in Vancouver. One statistic stated that two-thirds of organized workers in British Columbia were in the SPC.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, members of the SPC rose to prominent position in the unions.<sup>117</sup> When the British Columbia Federation of Labour (BCFL) was formed as a link between local councils and the TLC, three socialists were elected to the executive.<sup>118</sup>

This relationship, however, did not lead to the full acceptance of the SPC by the unions. The major reason for this was that the SPC neither supported nor opposed the relation between itself and the unions. It did not seek to use its members who were also union members to further its entrenchment among craft and industrially organized workers. More to the point, the SPC ignored the significance of party-union members because, as in the case of the MLA's, this again was a contradiction between ideology and practice. In the early days of the party, before the imposibilists consolidated their hold, the slogan was: "Join the union of your craft. Join the party of your class".<sup>119</sup> Later a confusing position

was put forward. It was said that for a person to be a socialist and a unionist was good, "but he cannot function in both capacities at the same time. To 'join the union of your craft and the political party of your class' is a good formula". This contradiction was not resolved or clarified.

#### VI. The Socialist Party of Canada and Labour

As in the case of any working class party, the SPC's capacity to bring about unity rested in its ability to lead organized workers. The opportunities for organizing unions or making incursions into their executives or rank and file were plentiful in the west. The union movement there was only beginning to spring up in the face of the western economic boom.<sup>121</sup> In turn the SPC gained its recruits from workers affected by the boom. Geographically, its social bases became the Crow's Nest Pass, Vancouver Island, Vancouver and to a lesser degree Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton.<sup>122</sup> Beyond this it was never able to extend itself for impossibilists simply had no room for conciliation and believed compromise was treachery.

Yet a cooperative and flexible approach was vital if the SPC wanted to deal with the TLC and extend its influence. For, even if the SPC had been ideologically open to craft unions, it would still need to fight a strong foe in Gompertist trade union ideology which was dominant within the TLC. The TLC in principle was an autonomous organization which became committed to working with the International Unions namely -- the AFL.<sup>123</sup> The AFL was led by Samuel Gompers who, ex-cathedra, decreed that socialists were "quack politicians".<sup>124</sup> For fear of being liquidated by capitalists and the bourgeois state because of union radicalness, Gompers

presented the AFL with a tactic it has more or less followed faithfully until today. According to him, the union movement was to seek reforms and not revolution. It was to abstain from entering the political arena and instead its object was to support its friends and punish its enemies -- who were to be found in the non-worker parties in politics. In 1902 an AFL organizer named John Flett was elected to the TLC's presidency and technically Gomerism was adopted.<sup>125</sup> From then on the TLC rejected the need for a purely Canadian federation of labour and national unions.<sup>126</sup>

The AFL found the TLC an easy mark. What protests there were against AFL-TLC collaboration came from the western unions after 1902.<sup>127</sup> Otherwise, the TLC's affiliates accepted reformism. To be sure, it was a reformism, much like the AFL's, that sought to secure, legitimate and integrate craft unions into existing society. This in turn meant that bourgeois rule was not strongly threatened and the ruling class only needed to grant minor concessions to maintain its hegemony.

The TLC's idea of making headway was to have both the Catholic or Protestant churches endorse the AFL's principles.<sup>128</sup> "Clergymen, magistrates and prominent citizens..." were welcomed at the Regina Labour Party's meetings and this, the labourites claimed, resulted in "valuable educational work".<sup>129</sup> Labour papers popularized the idea that only commodities bearing a union label should be purchased. The hope was that through consumerism workers would force non-union shops to accept unionization. In conjunction with this the Industrial Banner tried to convince merchants that it was really in their interest to support the trade unions.<sup>130</sup> On the political level the TLC believed in action through lobbying legislatures. The socialists claimed that this (along with union

work) led to nothing important.<sup>131</sup> In return Industrial Banner would print the fruit of a labour victory (i.e. an eight-hour day victory by a union) and cynically asked what the socialists had accomplished.<sup>132</sup>

However, Gomerism in Canada should not be overestimated and, although socialist, a workers' party prepared to cooperate and compromise could have made headway within the TLC. Gompers' anti-party doctrine was not accepted by the numerous unionists in Canada who had gone through the British union experience. This experience had taught them the need for a labour party. All of the TLC's attempts to establish a CLP testify to that. Indeed, the TLC thought itself co-equal in autonomy and power with the TLC of Great Britain (as well as with the AFL).<sup>133</sup> Moreover, Gompers' turn from a socialist position to one of business unionism had left many socialists still within labour's ranks. Their influence on American labour allowed socialists in Canada to enter the executives of their unions and sit as delegates to the annual TLC conventions where they promoted the SPC.<sup>134</sup>

Unfortunately, the unavoidable problem was the SPC's ideological position. John T. Mortimer, an outspoken impossibilist, wrote: "a successful union has no use for the Socialist movement. What conditions the union does not condition the revolutionary movement". He added that the best place to propagate socialism was among the workers outside the union, or "amongst the debris of one (union) that has been smashed in its fight with capital."<sup>135</sup> Consequently, the TLC, which had sought political action as early as 1902, was forced to reject the SPC and establish its own labour parties across the provinces.<sup>136</sup> Some SPC members, like W. M. Stebbings, preferred this situation of labour parties competing with the

SPC for working class support and thus dividing the political expression of the class. He defended the party's self-imposed isolationist or what is known as a sectarian program when he said: "it not only prevents fusion but gives you a platform which is in no danger of collapsing".<sup>137</sup> Others, notably Pettipiece, J. H. McVety, the possibilists and those with connections in the unions, saw only failure in not being able to politically intervene in the development of the union movement.

This failure led to the widening of the chasm between the party and the unions. Left unto itself the TLC produced a dramatically reformist CLP which was devoid of a solid class character. Along with religion, one's class background was not a relevant criteria for membership. Businessmen and merchants were welcome alongside unionized or non-unionized wage labourers. The object of the party reflected this class composition. It stated the party's task was to emancipate labour and create a "brotherhood of men".<sup>138</sup> Moreover, the CLP made no mention of working with the SPC. In Saskatchewan, for example, the labour movement, dissatisfied with the infighting between socialists and labourites, reacted by forming the People's Political Association of Canada.<sup>139</sup> Thus it openly rejected the socialist party and attempted to provide a forum where socialists and labourite could co-operate under the banner of reformist labour politics. Even the pro-SPC Vancouver TLC admitted that a labour party is necessary since the "SPC has refused to cater to trade union ideas and prejudices".<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, in reaction to the TLC's reformist labour politics, the pro-SPC Vancouver TLC threw its support behind the SPC rather than the British Columbia labour party and the Alberta TLC adopted the SPC platform refusing to establish its own labour party.<sup>141</sup>

## VII. The Failure of the Socialist Party of Canada to Extend

The SPC's inability to develop a leadership capable of mobilizing organized labour polarized and weakened the working class' political potential. On one hand stood impossibilism, on the other hand stood reformism and in the middle were those who saw no future in either extreme. While the CLPs floundered, two influential figures, Pettipiece and Puttee, who recognized the need for conciliation, searched for a logical and compatible solution. At a Winnipeg TLC meeting in 1909, Puttee argued for the union and cooperation of socialist and labour to "inspire confidence and attract that greater body of workers who stand aloof". But the impossibilists would not compromise. Two of them, Houghton and Hoop, argued incessantly that the SPC was all that the labour movement and the working class needed. Unable to be silenced, the meeting adjourned without accomplishing anything.<sup>142</sup> Less than a year later the Manitoba Labour Party (MLP) emerged and Puttee's hand in it was evident.<sup>143</sup>

Otherwise the SPC showed some signs of growth in Manitoba and Ontario, where in 1905 James Simpson was elected to the board of education.<sup>144</sup> A local of 17 new members, 40 in good standing and 90 enrolled, was reported in Dawson, Yukon Territory and a Montreal German Workingman's Club was on the verge of affiliating.<sup>145</sup> After what appeared to be a good start in Nova Scotia, silence ensued. In 1909 the SPC organizer for the area, Wilfred Grimble, wrote about organizing in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; unfortunately he launched into a political economy lesson and provided no information on SPC locals in the east.<sup>146</sup>

The SPC did not establish a formidable base in the east, although in the spring of 1910 it attracted the ILP of Nova Scotia which voted to

dissolve and join the SPC.<sup>147</sup> Part of the reason for the lack of support was that electorally the SPC was limited in efficacy by the enfranchisement qualifications which existed in Nova Scotia. The party also suffered from the disdain it displayed toward unions which had developed in the coal industry. According to Bercuson, Nova Scotia workers were militant but before 1919 they were not radical.<sup>148</sup> Radicalism was slow to develop because workers were isolated in mining towns with no injection of new ideas from outside; (in 1903 three quarters of miners in Nova Scotia were Canadian born).<sup>149</sup> This is to be contrasted with western Canada and specifically British Columbia where, as Steeves writes, socialism "was enriched by a stream of immigrants from Britain, Scotland and continental Europe where Marxism was a vital force".<sup>150</sup>

If the SPC made no headway in Quebec and had only small gains in the Maritimes, its major accomplishments were in British Columbia. In the 1907 provincial election it has amassed 7,000 votes. In the process Hawthornthwaite and Williams were re-elected and the Liberal Party was outpolled by the SPC outside of Victoria and Vancouver. Two years later the SPC increased its total vote to 11,000 and displaced the Liberal Party as the official opposition.<sup>151</sup>

Generally it is difficult to assess the specific number of party members or the circulation of its press.<sup>152</sup> Troop writes that before the war the Western Clarion's circulation reached 6,000. Fox claims an estimate of 3,000 members when the SPC was at its peak.<sup>153</sup> Unfortunately he does not indicate the date of this peak. Since the party's fortunes were in a state of vacillation and since its most glorious years lasted only until 1910, we are assigned to accept Fox's figure as pertaining to

the pre-1910 years.

#### VIII. Conclusion

The SPC's failure to form a counter-hegemonic leadership is directly related to its ideology. Impossiblism, by definition, is an ideology which faithfully relies on a mechanical and deterministic view of history. It eschews reform measures for fear that they will forestall the inevitable collapse of capitalism. The only solution is perceived as political action through the vote and the tool of liberation is the state.

Impossibilists entered into the SPBC not because they had resolved their differences with the possibilists, but because compelling external differences with the possibilists, but because compelling external circumstances led the socialists to fuse. From the beginning they did not use conciliation when dealing with possibilists and trade union activists inside or outside the party. Isolated from international socialist developments, minus a cadre of intellectuals and conditioned by the socio-economic and socio-political environment of their regions, the impossibilists translated abstract Marxism into simple, rigid tactics. Fearing the deflection of energies from the struggle for revolution, reforms and anything approximating reforms, such as union activity or economic action, were avoided and fervently attacked. Thus, through the medium of impossiblism the spirit of the pre-1900 SLP lived on in the SPC. Like the former, the SPC studied and taught Marxism, rejected unions and demanded unquestioned acceptance of its leadership.

Although the party was committed primarily to the war of position through the dissemination of its ideology, it was unable to direct this war with any degree of efficacy. This is because it was unable to develop

the prerequisite and necessary hegemony which is based on the consent of the lead. The industrial unions that threw their support behind the SPC did so according to the impossibilists' dictates. Except for the passing of some mitigating legislation by Hawthornthwaite and Williams, which was not in keeping with SPC policy, the unions did not gain anything in return. The TLC refused to endorse a party that rejected unions and, beyond approbation, the SPC sought no further contact. Consequently, the TLC saw the only solution to political representation in the development of its own party organizations. In either case the working class suffered. The labour parties were non revolutionary, overly reformist and therefore passive; the SPC was revolutionary, cataclysmically so during provincial and federal elections, and therefore it promoted passivity.

The SPC itself was unable to meet the criteria of a hegemonic party. Its mass element was limited and did not expand greatly. The leadership did occupy a strong localized position (Vancouver), too local actually as we will argue in the next chapter. But it was the element of contact between the head of the party and the rank and file that was lacking. Impossibilists came to dominate the positions of leadership and impossibilist propagandists reproduced Marxist tenets but did not argue the day to day life of the working class in terms of the class struggle. Therefore, only a limited link between the leadership, the mass element and the workers was established. Thus, alienation replaced expanding consolidation, passivity replaced action and diffusion replaced hegemony.

As we shall see, the SPC did form what could be construed prima facie as a hegemonic leadership over non-British socialist immigrants and their organizations. However, the entrance and speedy exodus of these

immigrants (and others) attest to the inability of the SPC's leadership and ideology to inspire consent. The decline of the SPC's influence as a workers' party in the political sphere and the parties that arose to replace it will be the subject of the ensuing chapter.

## NOTES

1. Martin Robin, Radical Politics (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1968), p. 34; A. R. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in British Columbia", B.C. Studies, no. 21 (Spring 1974), pp. 7-8; Robert H. Babcock, Gompers in Canada, A Study in American Continentalism before the First World War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 61.
2. Colin D. Grimson, "The Communist Party of Canada, 1922-1946" (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1966), p. 5; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 34; McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", pp. 8-9.
3. William Bennett, Builders of British Columbia (Vancouver, n.d.), p. 135; Jack Williams, The Story of Unions in Canada (Canada: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1975), p. 100; Industrial Banner, Jan., 1903. The SLP did not disappear completely. However, it remained an "inconsequential, though noisy, sect." McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 9. To be sure, no reference was ever made to the party in the SPC or labour press.
4. Paul A. Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour and Boag Foundation, 1967), p. 31.
5. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialism Movement", pp. 9-10; Bennett explicitly refers to them as possibilists, Builders, p. 139.
6. G. R. F. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1922), p. 11.
7. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 34. See also McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 11 and Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 11.
8. Babcock, Gompers in Canada, p. 60.
9. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 40.
10. A. Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Movement 1899-1919 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 24. However, this convention is poorly documented in the socialist press and is equally poorly discussed by McCormack (and Robin). It is never clear what organizations the delegates represented, or how they were chosen if they did not belong to any of the socialist parties. This is all the more problematic because Nanaimo would soon emerge as the locus of impossibilism. Yet it is totally unknown whether the SLP, at this point the only Canadian

Canadian impossibilist party, was or had been present in Nanaimo.

It is impossible to speculate that, the delegates came from local Independent Labour parties or union bodies. To be sure, only possibilist socialists cooperated with unions. Hence the delegates would tend to be possibilists which is to be expected of all delegates except those from Nanaimo. This is because the Nanaimo socialists/delegates formed the impossibilist party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of Canada (RSPC) shortly after the 1901 convention which had united British Columbia socialists under the banner of the Socialist Party of British Columbia (SPBC). To understand why impossibilism was so strong in Nanaimo is to recognize that, at the turn of the century, Nanaimo miners were in a state of transition. Politically they were dissatisfied with purely reform oriented independent labour politics. Consequently they turned to impossibilist socialism which addressed the miserable conditions of the mining communities by arguing that the root of all their problems was capitalism and that liberation rested in the abolition of capitalism. Organizationally the workers opted out of the TLC and joined the industrial union, the Western Federation of Miners. We will have occasion to deal with this transition later in the chapter. At the moment this renders a plausible explanation of the origin of the delegates some of whom would form the early nucleus of impossibilism in Canada.

11. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 41.
12. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", pp. 13-14.
13. McCormack, Reformers, p. 26.
14. Ibid., p. 19.
15. Ibid., p. 26; McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 15. Kingsley had been a miner until a mining accident resulted in the amputation of his legs. During his convalescence he read Marx's work and later joined the SLP. He accepted DeLeon's interpretation of Marxism and stood by the leader during the SLP's split in the United States when the so-called "'kangaroos'" left and formed the SPA. The Kingsley-DeLeon disagreement and fall out occurred when DeLeon began to look to syndicalism, a shift in orientation that was to lead him to the Industrial Workers of the World. Kingsley could not accept this approach and he left the party. As McCormack points out, Kingsley's socialism "was that of the pre-1900 SLP". Reformers, p. 26 and "The Emergence of the Socialism Movement", p. 15.
16. McCormack, Reformers, p. 26.
17. Ibid., p. 30.
18. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 19.
19. Robin, Radical Politics, pp. 58-59.

20. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 18. When Ralph Smith left his provincial seat to run federally in 1900, J. H. Hawthornthwaite contested the by-election as a Liberal-Labour Party candidate and won. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 42. He did not run as a Provincial Progressive Party member since the party did not exist at this early date (Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 13). Nor did he or Smith run and win as Independent Labour Party members as some claim. Paul W. Fox, "Early Socialism in Canada", in J. H. Aitchison, The Political Process in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 87, and J. M. McMenemy, "Lion in a Den of Daniels: A Study of Sam Lawrence, Labour in Politics" (M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, 1965), p. 28.
21. Western Clarion, Jan. 12, 1907. The Clarion incorrectly reports that Williams won the 1902 by-election. In fact he lost, but in 1903 he was victorious and joined Hawthornthwaite in the provincial legislature. See Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 13 and McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 18.
22. Robin claims that the representatives of fourteen different organizations were present, Radical Politics, p. 41. He never attempts to name the groups and it is highly unlikely that fourteen different political organizations took part in the convention, unless unions like the WFM sent their delegates.
23. Ibid., pp. 41-42; Ronald G. Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in British Columbia, 1893-1933" (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1943), p. 15; McCormack, Reformers, p. 20; The Voice, Oct. 17, 1902.
24. Bennett, Builders, p. 139. Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 16.
25. Western Clarion, Sept. 11, 1903.
26. McCormack, Reformers, p. 30. See also Western Socialist, April 10, 1903.
27. Western Socialist, May 12, 1903.
28. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 39; The Voice, Nov. 14, 1902.
29. The Voice, Nov. 21, 1902 and Feb. 6, 1903.
30. Western Clarion, Jan. 12, 1907; Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 40. According to Bennett, the SPBC was in touch with the International in 1904 through Ben Bakes of the Vancouver TLC, who was a fraternal delegate to the International. Bennett, Builders, p. 139. After his this both direct and indirect contact through delegates was not continued.

31. Western Clarion, Dec. 2, 1905. According to Robin, the fact that the SPBC had two candidates elected to the legislature in 1903 made the party's ideology attractive to the Ontario Socialists. Radical Politics, p. 36.
32. The Voice, Jan. 13, 1905, and Western Clarion, Feb. 4, 1905.
33. McCormack, Reformers, p. 53.
34. McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 21. He suggests that with the re-election of J. H. Hawthornthwaite and with Parker Williams' election in 1903 impossiblism became "vindicated". Ibid., p. 26.
35. The Western Clarion was the SPC's major organ. Its minor forums included the SPC column in The Voice, which was in impossiblist hands, and later Cotton's Weekly appeared after its owner, manager and editor William Ulric Cotton joined the party in January 1909. See Cotton's Weekly, Jan. 21, 1909.
36. Western Clarion, Dec. 15, 1906.
37. See the Western Socialist, Apr. 24, 1903, and the Western Clarion, June 11, 1903.
38. See Western Socialist, May 1, 1903.
39. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 34.
40. Western Clarion, Dec. 2, 1905.
41. Western Clarion, Apr. 14, 1906.
42. Western Clarion, May 23, 1908; Western Clarion, Dec. 16, 1908. The Voice, Oct. 23, 1908. When on his tour of Canada, Kier Hardie, the famous British ILP MP, denounced the impossiblists, J. T. Mortimer of the SPC responded with "go home ... Canadian Socialism is much too modern for you". B.C. Trades Unionist and Union Label Bulletin, Nov., 1908.
43. The Voice, Oct. 20, 1905.
44. See the Western Clarion, Apr. 13, 1907. Western Clarion, Dec. 8, 1906. The Voice, Aug. 9, 1907.
45. The Voice, Feb. 25, 1910. See also Western Clarion, Aug. 20, 1910, and McCormack, Reformers, p. 55.
46. The Voice, Dec. 28, 1906 as cited in Chisick, "The Origins and Development of the Marxist Socialist Movement in Winnipeg, 1900-1915", (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), p. 7.

47. Dorothy G. Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel: Ernest E. Winch and His Times (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1960), p. 27.
48. Cotton's Weekly, May 13, 1909. See also Cotton's Weekly, Sept. 16, 1909.
49. Western Clarion, Jan. 26, 1909 in McCormack, Reformers, p. 55.
50. Western Clarion, Jan. 7, 1907 as cited in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 37.
51. Manifesto of the SPC, Third Edition (Vancouver n.d.) as cited in McCormack, Reformers, p. 57.
52. See Western Clarion, Feb. 4, 1905.
53. In this respect, Tim Buck makes a grave mistake when he writes "they had a supercilious attitude toward parliament and provincial legislatures..." Thirty Years 1922-1952 (Toronto: Progress Books, 1952), p. 15. Similarly Avakumovic erroneously states the SPC spent but little time on elections. Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975), p. 3. Fox likewise errs with his extreme claim that the SPC was against participating in politics. "Early Socialism in Canada", in Aitchison, ed., p. 94. Robin's argument should also be examined. He writes that the SPC used elections to measure the "'level of class consciousness'" (Radical Politics, p. 97) or what is electorally known as voter support. By putting forward this truism in the realm of electoral party politics, Robin fails to appreciate the SPC's ambitions.
54. See Western Clarion, Aug. 18, 1906 in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 58.
55. Grimson, "Communist Party of Canada", p. 8.
56. Western Clarion, Aug. 13, 1904. See Cotton's Weekly, Sept. 2, 1909; Cotton's Weekly, June 2, 1910 in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 30.
57. See Martin Robin, The Rush for Spoils The Company Province 1871-1933 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972).
58. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, pp. 11-12.
59. Robin, Rush for Spoils, p. 74.
60. Paul A. Phillips, "The National Policy and the Development of the Western Canadian Labour Movement", in A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen, editors, Prairie Perspectives 2 Selected Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conferences, 1970, 1971 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1973), p. 50.
61. Martin Robin, "The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and Political Action: 1898-1908", Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations, 22, no. 2 (1967), 197; Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 37.

62. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 77.
63. Norman Penner, The Canadian Left A Critical Analysis (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1977), p. 44.
64. Ibid., p. 41. Since Penner wrote this a case against him has been mounted by J. Donald Wilson (with Jorgan Dahlia) which is pertinent to the issue and is worthy of investigation. The author argues that Penner is incorrect. According to him intellectuals did exist in the workers' movement and they were to be found in the foreign language locals (of the SPC and SDPC), "Introduction", Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada, 10, no. 2 (1978), 4.

However, the evidence to substantiate this is all rather weak. Chisick does report that the Polish intelligentsia went into its left wing groups in Canada, "The Origins and Development", p. 55. Wilson, in another article, points to two Finnish intellectuals, A. B. Makela, who apparently made his mark on the SPC, SDPC and CPC, and Matti Kurikka, who was editor-in-chief of Finland's largest working class daily, Tyomies (The Worker) and who was forced to flee to Canada from Czarist persecution, "Matti Kurikka and A. B. Makela: Socialist Thought Among Finns in Canada, 1900-1932", Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada, 10, no. 2 (1978), 15.

The problem is Wilson never defines the term intellectual (as a social role, or otherwise) and he simply takes the presence of intellectuals to mean intellectual activity. Referring to Donald Avery's study we can see that the Finns did possess socialist intellectuals who spread Marxism in their communities, 'Dangerous Foreigners' Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart Limited, 1979), p. 62. Nevertheless, the important question is whether any concrete analysis of the situation was undertaken by these 'old country intellectuals'. If this did occur it did not get beyond the immigrant communities and into the English language socialist press. But there is good reason to believe that nothing of the kind took place and here the disproving information is supplied by Wilson himself. Kurikka was, firstly, a utopian socialist and thus, secondly, he saw Sointula, an isolated Finnish community in British Columbia where he lived and died in 1915, as a truly socialist enclave. Makela criticised Kurikka's utopian socialism and the pseudo socialism of Sointula. He wrote articles for the Finnish press in Canada and the United States, but he was never a leading spokesperson in the SDPC or CPC (or the SPC. How his influence was felt is not explained). Later in his life he travelled to Soviet Karelia, but returned to Canada and lived out his life on Malcolm Island employed as a lightkeeper, writing but never joining a political organization, Wilson, "Matti Kurikka", pp. 14-15 and 17. Needless to say, in such circumstances he was physically removed from the class struggle and in a good position to compose his memoirs, but not make analytical contributions regarding the struggle. This brings us back to the validity of Penner's argument.

65. Fox, "Early Socialism in Canada", p. 91.
66. McCormack, Reformers, p. 69.
67. See Penner, The Canadian Left, pp. 42-44.
68. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 24.
69. Constitution of the Socialist Party of Canada, Robert Kenny Collection, coll. no. 179, box 17, University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (UTL, TF in subsequent citation).
70. One member, who later joined the CPC, made this cynical remark: "... we saw little hope for the early attainment of socialism until we had lifted the understanding of the proletariat and the dirt farmer to our level". Tom McEwen, Forge Glows Red, From Blacksmith to Revolutionary (Toronto: Progress Books, 1974), p. 87.
71. Information taken from Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons; Representation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 223-224; Goran Therborn, "The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy", New Left Review, no. 103 (May-June 1977), p. 12. Robin argues that labour (especially in the east) had found that by throwing its support behind the Liberals or Conservatives provided them with concessions and positions on committees for the elites in the movement. Such leading figures as D. J. O'Donoghue, Charles March, H. B. Witton, etc. ... were coopted and placed under the bourgeois hegemonic umbrella. Martin Robin, "The Working Class and the Transition to Capitalist Democracy in Canada", Dalhousie Review, 47, no. 3 (Autumn 1967), 326-27.
72. Socialist Party of Canada Membership Card, Robert Kenny Collection, coll. 179, box 17, Ut, Tf.
73. Irvine believed this caused direct action to develop. Thus, he proposed the corporatist solution of group government. William Irvine, The Farmers in Politics (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1976), p. 81.
74. Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 12.
75. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 55.
76. Ward, Canadian House of Commons, pp. 155-156.
77. Western Clarion, Feb. 4, 1905. W. E. Hardenburg, "Socialism in Canada", New Review, Feb. 22, 1913 cited in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 55.
78. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 15.
79. The Voice, Dec. 16, 1904.

80. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 25.
81. Davidson was elected as an independent labour candidate and later became a socialist while in the Legislature. Western Wage Earner, Aug. 1909. It is interesting that the Western Clarion makes no mention of this.
82. As cited in Tim Buck, Our Fight for Canada Selected Writings (1923-1959) (Toronto: Progress Publishers, 1959), p. 23.
83. Western Clarion, Mar. 30, 1907; Western Clarion, Jan. 12, 1907.
84. See the B.C. Trades Unionist, Mar., 1908; Western Wage Earner, Mar., 1909.
85. Western Clarion, Feb. 10, 1906.
86. Western Clarion, Mar. 16, 1907.
87. We will deal with this split and other secessions in Chapter 3.
88. See Western Clarion, February and March, 1908.
89. Compare the platform in Western Socialist, Apr. 24, 1903 and later in Western Clarion, Nov. 3, 1906. Therefore, Troop is partially correct when he states the SPC never took responsibility for its MLAs, but he attributes this to the general party line of making socialists and neglecting "all practical application of its doctrine". Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 26. As we have seen, the issue is more complex.
90. Jacob Penner, "Recollections of the Early Socialist Movement in Winnipeg", Marxist Quarterly (Summer, 1962), p. 28.
91. See The Voice, Dec. 24, 1897/ and the Industrial Banner, Dec., 1899.
92. The Voice, Nov. 14, 1902.
93. Western Clarion, Dec. 29, 1906; see also Western Clarion, Nov. 24, 1906.
94. Western Clarion, Nov. 21, 1908 in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 57.
95. For a more detailed presentation see Andrew Armitage, Social Welfare in Canada Ideals and Realities (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), pp. 213-214.
96. See the argument for running in municipal elections by E. H. Thomas in The (Milwaukee) Vanguard reprinted in Western Clarion, Nov. 24, 1906.

97. The Voice, Sept. 28, 1906.
98. Robin, "The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and Political Action", pp. 208-209.
99. Industrial Banner, Oct. 1906.
100. See his very conservative statement in The Voice, Oct. 26, 1906. Robin, Rush for Spoils, pp. 101-102.
101. Robin, "The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and Political Action", pp. 208-209.
102. The take over was engineered under the aegis of proportional democratic representation. A motion calling for proportional representation to be given to delegates from the nine radical interior unions. It was argued that the unions had paid much more to send delegates, hence they should have a greater say. The motion was adopted. Perhaps the other delegates did not realize the consequences because this now allowed a minority of socialists to hold a 'democratic' majority voice over the actual majority. See ibid., pp. 206-207.
103. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 69.
104. Western Clarion, Aug. 14, 1909 as cited in Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 27.
105. Western Clarion, Aug. 18, 1906.
106. Western Clarion., Aug. 13, 1904.
107. Western Clarion, Apr. 10, 1903.
108. Statement attributed to E. T. Kingsley as cited in McCormack, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement", p. 22.
109. Western Clarion editorial reprinted in The Trades Unionist, Apr. 1908. Statements such as this should have made Pettipiece, who wanted the SPC and the unions to work together and who served as the TLC's western organizer while in the SPC, recoil in horror and respond accordingly. In the same issue he did point out the need for unions and asked what other "traders' organization" finances the party. But he still thought the SPC line was technically correct. With the editorship of the Clarion in the hands of two passionate trade union critics (Kingsley and, from 1908-1913, D. G. McKenzie, McCormack Reformers, pp. 55-56) this line would not change for some time.
110. Western Clarion, July 15, 1905 and March 3, 1906 as cited in McCormack, Reformers, p. 56.

111. Western Clarion, May 16, 1903. Just prior to this the SPBC had spoken positively of the socialist ALU (Western Clarion, May 1, 1903). This is evidence of possibilist and/or editor Pettipiece's influence which would still be strong in the party at this time.
112. Western Clarion, Nov. 3, 1906.
113. Western Clarion, Mar. 3, 1906.
114. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 36. See Cotton's Weekly, Oct. 26, 1910.
115. Western Wage Earner, Aug., 1909.
116. The Voice, Dec. 28, 1906.
117. Bennett, Builders, pp. 140-141.
118. J. C. Watters (who had run for the SPBC in 1903 in Victoria) was president; Pettipiece was the general secretary; and, the fourth vice-president was Jas. H. McVety. Western Wage Earner, June, 1910.
119. Western Socialist, Apr. 10, 1903.
120. Western Clarion, Dec. 1, 1906.
121. In reaction to the 1903 strikes many union locals were formed (Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 41-42) and between 1903-1911 the establishment of union locals in the west outpaced the east by almost 70 per cent, Phillips, "The National Policy", in Rasporich and Klassen, eds., p. 51.
122. McCormack, Reformers, pp. 61-63.
123. Stuart M. Jamieson, Industrial Relations in Canada, second edition (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, Ltd., 1973), p. 17.
124. The Voice, July 31, 1908.
125. Constitutional amendments were made and unions thought by the delegates to be of "questionable reputation", such as the Knights of Labour and independent national unions, were excluded. Proceedings of the 8th annual session of the TLC, 1902, p. 8 in Robin, "The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and Political Action", p. 194. Only in situations where no international union existed could a national union be represented in the Congress. Industrial Banner, Oct. 1902.
126. It was thought that since capital was international, so should be unions. Industrial Banner, Oct. 1909.

127. See Western Wage Earner, Apr. 1910.
128. Industrial Banner, Dec. 1910.
129. Industrial Banner, Apr. 1908.
130. The arguments were: union men are skilled; they work better, which means higher profits, (Industrial Banner, Oct. 1904); and the most important argument stated that if a unionist's pay is reduced by, for example, 25 cents, the merchant will also lose because the worker now has 25 cents less to spend (Industrial Banner, Feb. 1903); see also Industrial Banner, May, 1909). Of course, this is to be expected from a paper who's idea of socialism was co-operative production for a benevolent market, Industrial Banner, Jan. 1903. Unfortunately the SPC did not differentiate between this type of conservative unionism and industrial unionism and opposed them both.
131. Western Socialist, Apr. 10, 1903.
132. Industrial Banner, May, 1906; Industrial Banner, Jan. 1908.
133. Industrial Banner, Oct. 1902.
134. Norman Penner, "International Unions and the Canadian Left", in Craig Heron, editor, Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada Essays from the Marxist Institute of Toronto (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, n.d.), p. 188. Robin writes that no serious attempts were made to reconcile the "fending political factions" (SPC-unionists) in the TLC before 1914. Thus the socialists continued to propagate socialism within the TLC. "The Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and Political Action", p. 214.
135. Western Clarion, Mar. 3, 1906.
136. Industrial Banner, May, 1902.
137. The Voice, Apr. 10, 1908 as cited in McCormack, Reformers, p. 68.
138. Industrial Banner, Nov., 1907.
139. Saskatchewan Labour's Realm, June 19, 1908.
140. However, it indicated that it was not an easy matter to establish a labour party and it thought it best to stand by the SPC for the time being. The B.C. Trades Unionist and Union Label Bulletin, Dec., 1908.
141. Western Clarion, Dec. 21, 1907.
142. The Voice, Feb. 12, 1909. Pettipiece argued for the same but the meetings he proposed, at which union-SPC co-operation was to be discussed, were simply never held. See The Voice, Oct. 16, 1908; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 91.

143. Its platform was reformist to the point of containing a single tax proposal which asked that land rather than industry and its products be taxed, (we shall discuss the single tax doctrine and its proponent, Fred Dixon, in the next chapter). The second demand was for an eight-hour day and a six-day week as "a general policy of reducing the working hours in keeping with the increased productiveness of machinery". The Voice, May 13, 1910.
144. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 17-18.
145. Western Clarion, Jan. 27, 1906.
146. Western Clarion, June 26, 1909.
147. The Voice, June 3, 1910 in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 48.
148. By militant Bercuson means to signify engaged in economic struggles and radical denotes concerned with extreme change. D. J. Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier: 1897-1919", Canadian Historical Review, LVIII, no. 2 (June 1977), 158.
149. Ibid., p. 174. After the One Big Union and the CPC had been formed and had entered the area, the workers political movement, represented by the CPC, joined the union movement, specifically in District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The CPC helped defeat the OBU and keep District 26 in the UMWA, which was in accordance with its tactic of infiltrating AFL unions and winning them over to the Communist Red International of Labour Unions. See The Worker, Sept. 6, 1924; Peter Warrion, "The Challenge of the One Big Union Movement in Canada, 1919-1921", (M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1971), pp. 106-107.
150. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 13.
151. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 42 and p. 48.
152. Only once did it publicly lament the falling sales of its paper and rather than being introspective and critical it blamed "the apathetic workingman" for a lack of support, Western Clarion, July 13, 1907. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 26.
153. Fox, "Early Socialism in Canada", in Aitchison, ed., p. 94.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FRAGMENTED CONDITION OF CANADIAN SOCIALISM

#### I. Introduction

In 1906 a socialist named R. MacDonald wrote: "'a split [in the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC)] would be the salvation of socialism in Canada'".<sup>1</sup> By 1910 more than one split had occurred, but they provided no salvation for socialism. Instead the splits weakened the socialist movement to such a degree that no socialist party was able to exercise its leadership over labour or the working class despite a general weakening of bourgeois hegemony during the years 1910 to 1916. Consequently, the events of this period left labour with no option but to undertake political action on its own behalf.

In the preceding chapter we dealt with the ideology of the SPC and the hegemony it failed to develop. The dominant impossibilist tendency in the party was shown to be responsible for this. Now we will begin first by analyzing the splits that befell this party. They will be understood as the rejection of the SPC's impossibilism. In the case of the Social Democratic Party of Canada (SDPC), this impossibilism was replaced by possibilism. The Socialist Party of North America (SPNA), on the other hand, turned to a more rigid impossibilist approach in its attempt to lead workers. However, it is important to recognize that these splits did not develop simply due to ideological disagreements. In a socialist party organized along democratic lines, where the general membership debates and popularity decides party policy, ideological disagreements

can be discussed and resolved without the breaking of ranks. But the SPC suffered from a weakness in its element of contact. The leadership refused to include reform oriented praxis into the party program and, furthermore, it refused to discuss the matter with its possibilist mass element. Therefore, it will be argued that the leadership of the SPC directly brought about the secessions by failing to maintain the consent of the lead.

The second object of this chapter is to discuss the ideology, praxis and development of the SDPC and the SPNA as well as the SPC after the splits. We will argue that the fragmentation of the SPC, the appearance of two new socialist parties and the parties' inability to co-operate and agree on reform and revolution presented socialism as a disunited and weak alternative for labour and the working class to support. Moreover, along with the new parties' retention of elements of impossiblism, this prevented the parties from being able to lead the workers.

This chapter is divided into ten sections. The second section will address the various explanations for the splits in the SPC. The third section will discuss the first split of 1907 as one that foreshadowed the divisions to come. The splits which followed will be the subject of section four. The next four sections will discuss the SPC, the SPNA and the SDPC in that order. In each case the object will be to analyze the ideology, praxis and organization of each party. Section nine will discuss labour's reasons for and attempts at organizing their own labour parties. The conclusion will follow.

## II. Explanations of the Splits

There has been a variety of reasons put forward to account for the fragmentation of the SPC. The weakest of these arguments belongs to Grantham who begins with the inaccurate observation that only non-British locals of the SPC broke away. The reasons for this, he claims, are the non-British socialists' ignorance of Marxism, democracy and their failure to educate themselves to as high a level as that attained by British and British Columbian socialists.<sup>2</sup> However, as the upcoming discussion will bear out, non-British socialists were possibilists and far from ignorant of Marxism, they understood the meaning of intra party democracy and strived to ensure its existence within the SDPC and, finally, they possessed propagandists equal to those of the SPC. A second explanation of the splits is presented by Grimson. He relegates the cause of the secessions to "just another manifestation of the east-west struggle in Canada", and thus fails to recognize that participation in the fragmentation crossed regional cleavage lines.<sup>3</sup> Finally, McCormack posits three factors of disunity. They are the lack of reform-oriented demands in the SPC's platform; the SPC's antagonistic attitude towards unions; and, the SPC's localized Vancouver leadership which would grant no autonomy to the non-British locals while refusing to promote the non-British leaders to the SPC executive.<sup>4</sup> The weakness of this approach is that it does not differentiate between the crucial and secondary reasons for the splits. The latter concerns a leadership which was not responsive to the popular demands of its mass element; and the former refers to ideological disagreements.

### III. The First Split

The first split in the SPC occurred in May of 1907 and it foreshadowed the divisions and breaks which were to follow. It was precipitated by the suspension of Ernest Burns. According to Mortimer and Kingsley, when Burns organized a private lecture for a socialist lecturer named W. T. Mills he violated a party decision against accepting Mills as a speaker.<sup>5</sup> This called for disciplinary action against Burns which necessarily was harsh. This is because only two forms of discipline could be meted out by the party -- expulsion or suspension. These methods were at the disposal of every local but could be appealed to the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) and then even to the Dominion Executive Committee (DEC) at the annual national SPC convention.<sup>6</sup> The problem in Burns' local was that many of its members served on the British Columbia PEC which also served as the DEC and the latter did not call national conventions. Discipline against Burns, a possibilist, was then sure to be finite with the only recourse being the futility of appeal. But to rid the party of one of its founders was no easy matter for possibilism also had many supporters in the local. Therefore, after the first vote had ended 25-25 against the Burns' suspension, a slight of hand measure was used to circumvent the mandatory two-thirds majority before discipline was dispensed. One week after the first vote and late after many voting members had retired from the meeting, Burns and some others were suspended.<sup>7</sup>

The suspended members established themselves as the Social Democratic Party of Canada and they immediately wrote an explanatory and open letter to The Voice. The letter, signed by (Mrs.) Bertha M. Burns,

charged that socialists inside and outside of the SPC were displeased with the party because it had shown a lack of progress and growth in Vancouver. The socialists' "sincere conviction" was that this was "the result of faults of organization and mistaken tactics . . . ." Specifically they pointed to: 1) negative propaganda; 2) the "unnecessary" union policy which was oblivious of unions as organs responsible for developing class consciousness; 3) the domination of power by the provincial executive; and 4) a sectarian and undemocratic approach to speakers. The letter added that the reason the SPC's share of the vote had dropped was because of the SPC's impossiblist praxis.<sup>8</sup>

The SPC never accepted the criticism nor did it re-examine itself in view of the charges. It issued two responses to the SDPC's statements without addressing the main issues the SDPC had raised. The Western Clarion's first reply was brief and it indicated the SPC was interested not in accumulating votes but in proselytizing and thereby making socialists.<sup>9</sup>

The second, longer and more revealing reply appeared two years later on the anniversary of the split. Addressed to the SDPC from the SPC it stated: 1) the SPC was a party of principles, not interested in vote catching; 2) the SPC did not believe in immediate reforms, but, through the work of its MLAs, it took what reforms it could; 3) it said the SDPC was suspect because a "single taxer" had publicly agreed with its actions; and lastly, 4) it defended the leadership by claiming the SDPC was jealous of some party members "who by virtue of superior intelligence enjoy some prominence in that party".<sup>10</sup>

#### IV. The Subsequent Splits

McCormack writes that the SPC was slow to incorporate non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants into the party.<sup>11</sup> This changed dramatically in 1907 because of two reasons. First, the 1907 suspensions were a purge of possibilists and only after the purge, and not during the 1902 SPBC-RSPC convention, did the impossibilists gain control of the party. With an ideologically like minded leadership, the SPC now felt confident enough to expand itself, even among possibilist non-Anglo-Saxon socialists, without losing the reins of power to the possibilists. Secondly, as a means of undercutting the SDPC's development, the SPC found it necessary to expand itself and incorporate more members into its mass element. This reasoning by the SPC leaders, however, was flawed. The impossibilist leadership would only feel confident if and when it alone dominated the party by overrepresenting impossibilist delegates on the DEC or the PECs. This hold on leadership could only exist at the expense of intra-party democracy and the element of contact between the leadership and the mass element. This meant that affiliating socialists would lose their leaders and find themselves totally under the impossibilist executive. And this occurred when Ukrainian, Jewish, Polish, Russian, German, Latvian and Finnish socialists were organized into SPC language locals in late 1907.<sup>12</sup> But the SPC did not take into account the fact that these socialists had already been organized in parties and educational clubs with their own well established leaders. Consequently new SPC members in Manitoba refused to part with their own well established leaders and, unable to secure hearings from the Manitoba PEC, they bolted the party.

In 1908 a second SDPC, which included Jacob Penner, was formed in Winnipeg independent of the British Columbia SDPC. According to Penner, a minority left the SPC after debates on policy had become "acrimonious".<sup>13</sup> Very little is known about this rupture and the labour or socialist press did not deal with it.

The next separation involved the Ukrainian Socialist League of Canada (USLC). As early as November, 1907 it had asked for federated status within the SPC which, it claimed, would allow it to unify "Ukrainian socialist forces in Canada in matters purely Ukrainian" and to "supervise" its "agitation and publications in the Ukrainian language".<sup>14</sup> The SPC, however, feared a semi-autonomous column with its own chiefship within the party and it rejected the USLC's proposal.

With organizational problems still unresolved, the USLC nevertheless entered the SPC and became the Federation of Ukrainian Socialist Parties (FUSP) in October 1909. Unable to agree on organization it broke away four months later. The SPC charged that the "personal strife of individuals" caused the fracture.<sup>15</sup> But, as Stechishin argued, the split occurred because of the DEC's desire to dominate the socialists by refusing to recognize their leadership and its functions. He concluded the Ukrainian socialists would remain "'aggressive'" in their "'revolutionism'" because "the courage to renounce the autocrats of [the] SPC was at present the most revolutionary action that could be expected".<sup>16</sup> At their Edmonton Convention of August 1910, the FUSP voted 24-2 to join the newly forming SDPC in Winnipeg.<sup>17</sup> It changed its name to the Ukrainian Social Democratic Federation and in 1915 it renamed itself the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party of Canada (USDPC).

The Confederation of Finnish Canadian Socialists (CFCS) which wanted to conduct its educational work in Finnish and "to allow for a united Finnish voice within the party", encountered the same difficulties as did the FUSP.<sup>18</sup> The difference is these difficulties were part of the entire Ontario socialists' struggle against the SPC leadership.<sup>19</sup> In 1909 the Toronto Finnish SPC local confronted the DEC by taking a positive stand on municipal politics and reform demands.<sup>20</sup> Two months later a Toronto local along with Finnish, German, Jewish and Lettish locals in Ontario passed a resolution in favour of joining the Second International.<sup>21</sup> The DEC replied that affiliation was prohibited because the International was reformist and made compromises with capitalism by virtue of admitting the British Labour Party and the possibilist French Socialist Party.<sup>22</sup> That same year the DEC expelled the Toronto local.<sup>23</sup> This was meant to be an exemplary display of the leadership's power but it did not stem the opposition to the DEC. The following year the Ontario SPC protested the DEC's act of expulsion and called for a referendum and a dominion convention to debate the expulsion.<sup>24</sup> However only more expulsions followed.<sup>25</sup> There is only circumstantial evidence but the argument can be made that the expelled were the CFLS since almost one year before the Ontario socialists split of 1911 the Finns had already joined and left the Manitoba SDPC and were forming the Canadian Socialist Federation (CSF).<sup>26</sup>

The Voice accused the Vancouver SPC leadership of being dictatorial and predicted that the Ontario socialists who had remained to fight for changes within the SPC's ranks would not be reconciled.<sup>27</sup> In May of 1911, a majority of Ontario socialists left the SPC and joined

the CSF. Unlike the SPC, the Federation recognized the need for economic action and reforms. The reform demands, it claimed, were ideologically justified in view of the work the socialist British Columbia MLAs were involved in. Moreover, a reform orientation was said to be able to offset the growth of the Ontario ILP by appealing to possibilists. Organizationally, the CSF moved to delimit the power of the executive when it decided "to give the rank and file of the socialist membership as much power as possible and to give the Executive Committee as little power as possible".<sup>28</sup> In December of 1911 the CSF, the SDPC (B.C.) and SDPC (Manitoba) met and united their forces.<sup>29</sup>

The split in the SPC of Manitoba had a catalyst which shattered the increasingly fragile and receding contact between, on one hand, labour and SPC locals and, on the other hand, the DEC and the Manitoba PEC. Tension was reported in the party over the DEC's decision not to affiliate with the International. The Voice did not agree with this but it wrote:

The SPC, although not a very powerful or well rooted organization, is still the only political organization of the workers' which is entitled to rank and be considered as a Dominion organization.<sup>30</sup>

The SPC, however, did not build on labour's positive attitude towards it. It rejected Turnoch's, Puttee's and SPC member Hoop's pleas for electoral co-operation with unions and indicated it would run its own candidates against the Workmen's Municipal League and the Manitoba Labour Party (MLP).<sup>31</sup> This it did in the July 1910 provincial elections when the SPC candidate W. S. Cummings with 99 ballots in his favour split the vote in Winnipeg Centre. Consequently, the Conservative Taylor, with 2014 voters, defeated the popular labour endorsed "single taxer" Fred

Dixon who had 1934 ballots cast his way.<sup>32</sup> The SPC, which had publicly stated it was determined to hurt Dixon, took full responsibility and wrote:

The poor working plugs could not see through the Labour Party's scheme and got mad at the socialists and voted for their masters again in all three constituencies [in which the SPC ran]".<sup>33</sup>

The result was that the party lost labour's support and The Voice went so far as to call it an enemy of the labour movement.<sup>34</sup>

Rather than remain in the SPC, the Ruthenian, German, Jewish and Lettish locals in Manitoba decided by a vote of 37-3 to withdraw.<sup>35</sup> The reasons they cited were a lack of a constructive policy and "democratic management" of party affairs. They also criticized the SPC's tactics and its relation to the International to reforms, unions and municipal affairs. Lastly, the locals indicated that, in the final analysis, the determining element was the constant refusal of a chance for a fair hearing that caused them to break away.<sup>36</sup>

While these splits pitted possibilists against impossibilists, local 24 of Toronto, led by Moses Baritz, turned the tables and stated the SPC was a reformist and not a revolutionary party. The local's nine-point "Toronto Resolution" attributed the reformist orientation of the party to people who, with no knowledge of Marxism, had been allowed to become members and to the SPC MLA's engagement in reformist practice.<sup>37</sup> The point that forced the split was the local's belief that the DEC was weak and not able to lead the party.

When dissension occurred in Ontario, Baritz charged that party discipline had been ignored.<sup>38</sup> He demanded a Dominion convention to

address the weakness of the party and to expel the labour-reform oriented Pettipiece and the MLAs.<sup>39</sup> The DEC refused without openly addressing the issues raised by the "Toronto Resolution". Consequently, the Toronto local left the party and in early 1911 it became the Socialist Party of North America (SPNA).

#### V. The Parties

The two new parties, the SDPC and the SPNA, now set about establishing themselves. Their major concern was to avoid repeating their predecessors' ideological, tactical and organizational faults. Had they been successful they would have left behind the primitive and essentially utopian level of Canadian socialism which needed to shed its impossibilism, for as one socialist argued, possibilist tactics were outdated and the point was to go forward.<sup>40</sup> Progress, however, was marred by the inability of the parties to transcend the ideology and praxis of the SPC. The few clean breaks they made were either too extreme or were weighed down by possibilist concepts left unchanged. The SPC's response to the new situation of Canadian socialism was to increase its sectarianism. Hence it was not able to unite and lead the working class.

#### VI. The Socialist Party of Canada

After the splits the Western Clarion wrote that the successions were good for the party.<sup>41</sup> The only change the party instituted was the setting up of oral exams to test the Marxism of new members.<sup>42</sup> The impossibilists were convinced that this was necessary to build a hard working party that was well schooled in Marxism.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, this along with the departure of possibilists, was responsible for the increased

sectarianism of the party.

The loss of the possibilists included the withdrawal of such influential and important people as editor Urry of The Fort William Wage Earner, labour leaders McVety and Pettipiece who now thought the SPC could no longer mobilize the workers, and the dentist and propagandist W. J. Curry.<sup>44</sup> Others, like James Simpson, a member of the TLC and the Toronto TLC, were expelled and went over to the SDPC.<sup>45</sup>

The party also lost Cotton and his newspaper to the SDPC in 1911.<sup>46</sup> However, the biggest blow came when it lost its MLAs. O'Brien's tenure expired when he was defeated in the 1913 Alberta elections.<sup>47</sup> He remained an impossibilist and went to the eastern United States where he was interned in Rochester during the American 'red scare' and the Palmer Raids. Hawthornthwaite on the other hand, proved to be an embarrassment. He claimed to have resigned because of disagreements with his Nanaimo local over "tactics, propaganda and . . . unionism".<sup>48</sup> The Nanaimo local expelled him for "'insubordination'" and for collaboration with the Conservative Party which ostensibly netted him a sizeable profit from the sale of real estate to coal mining enterprises.<sup>49</sup> Although labour was turned against Hawthornthwaite, the PEC reversed the Nanaimo decision and it expelled the local. At the 1911 Provincial Convention the PEC readmitted Nanaimo to the party only to oust it later that day. Finally, the local split and one third of its members joined the SDPC.<sup>50</sup>

Jack Place replaced Hawthornthwaite and with Williams he contested the 1911 provincial election. Upon winning they immediately joined the SDPC.<sup>51</sup> The SPC called Williams ". . . a decent plug, but no socialist", and both MLAs were expelled from the party.<sup>52</sup> In 1916 the

SDPC lost the MLAs when they entered the Liberal party.<sup>53</sup> To the BCFL it meant a loss of a direct input into the legislative process and the two Liberals were condemned as bourgeois candidates not worthy of labour's vote.<sup>54</sup> No socialists were elected in place of Place and Williams and labour began to doubt the efficacy of the socialist parties.

Among its losses the SPC suffered the withdrawal of financial support by the Winnipeg TLC and its column was removed from The Voice.<sup>55</sup> Still the party continued to maintain an anti-reform and anti-union position in the Western Clarion. Consequently industrial and craft unions openly criticized the party and the SPC lost support. The B.C. Federationist, for example, charged that the decline of the party was "due to the recognition by the people of the untrustworthiness of the SPC".<sup>56</sup> Endorsement for the SPC did come from District 18 of the UMWA. However, this support was rather limited since District 18 was dissatisfied with the rigid impossibilism of the party and hence was not united in its approbation.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, the party clung to its tactical formula of education and its apocalyptic belief that capitalism would destroy itself. When unemployment was growing in 1911, the SPC said its "duty" was to "stir up the revolt lying dormant in the minds of these unemployed social outcasts".<sup>58</sup> The unemployed were considered the most likely to join the party since they had suffered the ills of capitalism and therefore were more receptive to socialist ideology. For example, the party claimed it was difficult to radicalize or educate women because they were not as oppressed by capitalism as were men. As Ruth Lestor wrote:

. . . the attitude of the SPC regarding women is in the main correct. Capitalism must grind them lower still

before they are moulded in the texture of the army of the right . . . . The female slaves are not yet risen to the height of their male comrades in misery. Until they do so they are a drag and a fetter to our advance.<sup>59</sup>

It was this kind of reasoning which led the party to believe that the more oppressed a person, the more interested he/she would be in socialism.

The consequences of such thinking left the SPC without an understanding of its role in the class struggle. Beyond its pedagogical crusade it did not know the meaning of leadership, as this statement indicates:

There is no doubt that the working class is looking for someone to lead them out of the desert, but it cannot be done. They must realize that their emancipation must be accomplished by themselves . . . .<sup>60</sup>

This attitude not only failed to find support but it seriously challenged the very existence of the party, if we consider the party as the leader of the working class in the class struggle.

When the party suffered severe defeat at the polls, the tactic of education did not change and only success in terms of propaganda work was announced.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, no amount of ideological justification could hide the decline of party membership and support. In 1912, for example, the Western Clarion, was on the wane because of financial woes caused by the splits.<sup>62</sup> In that same year even the SPC admitted it was going through a period of "stagnation".<sup>63</sup>

But one year later Pritchard wrote:

. . . the SPC was never in better condition than at the present time. Of course we mean in quality, not necessarily quantity, for we admit that a certain amount of the 'quantity' portion of the SPC has migrated at various times to the SDPC.<sup>64</sup>

Yet it was this impossiblist quality which was responsible for the

limited quantity and by 1916 party membership had declined even more due to ideological disagreements and factionalism.<sup>65</sup>

## VII. The Socialist Party of North America

The SPNA was said to have been "most in accord with Lenin's teachings" because it followed his dictum of going to the masses and fighting for their concerns.<sup>66</sup> However, the praises bestowed upon it by Maurice Spector and Tim Buck were written after the formation of the Workers' Party of Canada (WPC). It appears that because the entire SPNA entered the WPC, the tendency was to present the SPNA as the Canadian precursor to the Leninist party while the parties that hesitated and split before joining the WPC were treated as qualitatively inferior. In this section we will argue that the SPNA was a sectarian party which was more in agreement with the SPC than with Leninism.

The party was begun by seven ex-SPC members and it remained a small doctrinaire and sectarian organization, according to Buck.<sup>67</sup> Elsewhere Buck states the SPNA did not try to extend itself throughout North America but it did call for united transnational action by the working class. Thus, he admits its name was "pretentious".<sup>68</sup> At no time did the SPNA exceed four branches: one in Toronto, its headquarters; Guelph, composed of Lorne Cunningham plus 6 others; Berlin, with a handful led by Vernon Smith; and, Hamilton, which collapsed.<sup>69</sup>

In its early days it was led by a British immigrant named Moses Baritz, "a man of scholarship and a recognized musical authority".<sup>70</sup> In Britain he had been a conservative who joined the impossibilist Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) and became a known agitator around the

world.<sup>71</sup> As the London agent for American socialist writings, Baritz travelled to North America frequently.<sup>72</sup> While in Canada he served the SPC as its Ontario and Maritimes organizer and in 1910 he tried to stave off the splits in the SPC by touring and lecturing on behalf of the party.<sup>73</sup>

Baritz was a dedicated impossibilist and therefore he came to hate the SPC because unlike the SPGB, it had "to condone all political dodgers like Hawthornthwaite, Williams, O'Brien and Pettipiece".<sup>74</sup> Under his leadership the SPNA made two innovations. All new members were obliged to pass a test on three fundamentals of Marxism -- dialectical materialism, surplus value, and the class struggle -- before being admitted. Furthermore, it was imperative that they be members of a union or employed where a union could be organized.<sup>75</sup> The second change was a de-emphasis on education which was replaced with propaganda work within the unions.<sup>76</sup> Buck later claimed this meant the party believed that:

. . . to fight for the idea of socialism you must go where working people are, and you must integrate the ideas of socialism, of Marxism, with their daily activities and the things they want to fight for.<sup>77</sup>

He added this was necessary to "mobilize and rally the working people", to "advance the struggle on an ascending scale".<sup>78</sup>

However, the SPNA was opposed to the struggle for reforms. It entered the ranks of labour because it held no illusions of capitalism's self-demise and believed the working class had to be organized politically in order to abolish private property by seizing control "of the ready made state machinery".<sup>79</sup> But, without a program of reforms, the party could only offer itself as the sole revolutionary organization capable of teaching the working class. This strategy, like the impossibilism of

the SPC, found a very limited amount of support within labour's ranks. This weakness, along with the SPNA's sectarian determination "to wage war against all other political parties, whether allegedly labour or avowedly capitalist", proved to be the fetters on the development of party-working class and labour relations.<sup>80</sup>

#### VIII. The Social Democratic Party of Canada

The SDPC was to become the most successful socialist party. In 1913 its membership doubled and the party outnumbered the SPC everywhere except perhaps in B.C.<sup>81</sup> It replaced the SPC as the dominant socialist party in Crow's Nest Pass, Manitoba and Ontario; and inroads into SPC strongholds were made in New Westminster, North Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo.<sup>82</sup>

Its emphasis on praxis rather than theoretical discussions led Buck to state that the SDPC was closer to Marxism than the SPC.<sup>83</sup> The party's numerical strength resulted from its conciliatory nature and its involvement with reforms in co-operation with labour organizations. However, the party fell short of unifying the working class politically. The reasons for its failure lie in its inability to move beyond the narrow tactics of simple education and electoral politics; and, secondly, because it sought to tie itself only to organized labour but failed to lead it. (We will discuss the limits of the party's social base in the following chapter under the heading of entrenchment).

The SDPC's lists of charges against the SPC were also the principles upon which the party built. Different ideas on organization were presented, but the issue was to avoid the dictatorship of the leadership and over centralization.<sup>84</sup> Armed with this slogan:

Workers of all countries unite, trust no leaders who  
 have not proven themselves worthy of your confidence,  
 you have nothing<sup>85</sup> to lose but your chains, you have  
 a world to gain,

the SDPC became a "loose federation" of locals.<sup>86</sup> In this organizational formation the locals enjoyed more power than the leadership and the locals became responsible for developing a mass element. They were granted control of policy and the choosing of electoral candidates; and agreement among only three locals was needed before a referendum could be asked for and granted.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, relations among the locals were not close.<sup>88</sup> But disagreement over praxis did not result in mass dissent and expulsions or suspensions.

Constitutionally weak as the dominion and provincial executives were, they commanded the attention of three branches, the Ukrainian, Finnish and Russian, and numerous Jewish, Lettish, Polish, German, British and Quebec-based French-Canadian locals. The responsibility of leadership rested with ethnically mixed executives which had a disproportionate representation of British ethnics.<sup>89</sup> However, too great an emphasis on ethnicity produces a distorted view of the development of the SDPC and later its fracture when a majority of the British ethnics in the leadership split over the question of entering into the WPC. The distortion occurs when an ethnic cleavage is implied because, on the background of a party whose membership was mostly composed of European immigrants, the leadership is seen only in terms of being in British hands.<sup>90</sup> This is to miss the point that, with minor exceptions, a more dominant unity was to be found in the socialists' convictions and that the split over affiliation to the Third International was caused by ideological, and not ethnic cleavages. Moreover, it is not true that every "public leader"

was an Anglo-Saxon, as Bercuson stresses.<sup>91</sup> Individuals, such as J. W. Ahlquist (also written Ahlqvist), Stechishin, and Penner, were leaders and, by definition, they were public figures. Some leaders, like Beech, Rigg and Simpson, stood out because, barring few, all candidates for political office were Anglo-Saxons. But this was not an issue which caused disagreement or disunity in the party.

The entire SDPC subscribed to what it called "the scientific basis of socialism", which resembled the SPNA's entrance exam. The three points were: 1) the Marxist theory of value; 2) the materialist or determinist concept of history; and, 3) the class struggle.<sup>92</sup> These three points were never elaborated and were only repeated in an uninventive and doctrinaire manner. Like the SPNA, the party made no advances in ideological discourse. The difference was the accommodation and presence of a "broad range" of socialists in the party which allowed for flexibility and essentially a plurality of similar ideological tendencies.<sup>93</sup> The first of these was impossibilism, which was, espoused by H. Martin, the party's first national secretary. He argued reforms were "at their best, but a makeshift, merely patching up, prolonging the system", and he did not see the sale of labour power as part of the class struggle.<sup>94</sup> T. Edwin Smith, a party theorist, was another impossibilist who held an ideological position very similar to the one expounded by the SPC. When he commented on the economic depression of 1913-1915 he said the possibility of "emancipation" increased when social conditions worsened.<sup>95</sup>

The second tendency called for the necessity of revolution through the "agitation" for "immediate demands" which were supposed to rouse

the slumbering energies of the working class in pointing out shortcomings of the bourgeois reforms and in uniting the entire working class in a resistless (sic) movement for the realization of these immediate demands.<sup>96</sup>

Its adherents were both British and European socialists. The latter had learned Marxism in parties which belonged to the Second International. Hence, before coming to Canada these socialists had been exposed to arguments on revolution and the need for reforms.

Working with the second tendency was a third group of socialists who put most of their emphasis on reforms and rarely mentioned revolution. Its major figures were John Queen, R. A. Rigg and James Simpson. The first, while an SDPC candidate in municipal elections, was "more familiar with the writings of J. S. Mill, than Marx".<sup>97</sup> Rigg said he was a socialist first and a trades unionist second but The Voice indicated the opposite was true.<sup>98</sup> Simpson, who along with two others was the head of the Christian Socialist Fellowship, is called a labourite and not a socialist by Buck.<sup>99</sup> More precisely, he was a socialist who became a labourite. Even while enthusiastic about the SDPC he claimed it was imperative to build a British type labour party.<sup>100</sup> The three socialists were the SDPC's link to the labour movement and they, along with their tendency, were the SDPC's most labour oriented members who would push for and build a labour party in due time.

Nevertheless, although the SDPC wavered on the degree of reforms, the leadership functioned through co-operation, flexibility and a conviction that the essence of socialism was the "'collective ownership of the things collectively used'".<sup>101</sup> Consequently, the praxis and platforms of the SDPC were not identical to those of the SPC (and the SPNA). The SDPC espoused a "program of maximum and minimum demands" which

stated: the object of the SDPC was to educate the working class, organize it in support of the party, capture the state and change capitalist property "into the collective property of the working class".<sup>102</sup> Like the SPC, the SDPC "did not formulate a distinctive party position on current political questions".<sup>103</sup> But it supported "any measure that will tend to better conditions under capitalism, such as: 1) the reduction of the hours of labour; 2) the elimination of child labour; 3) universal adult suffrage without distinction of sex or regard to property qualifications; and, 4) the initiative, referendum and the right of recall".<sup>109</sup> And, while Jack Place and Parker Williams were SDPC MLAs, their work was an extension of this program and not a contradiction of it.

On the other hand, the SDP held the same view of political action as did the SPC. It believed the state could be captured either through electoral or non-electoral -- that is, revolutionary -- means. But revolution was qualified in two ways: it would not necessarily be violent and it was possible only if the working class was first educated to a level of class consciousness.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, socialism would come, the party argued, when social conditions had developed to the appropriate (but never specified) level and when the workers were prepared to establish socialism. Since the first facet was pre-determined and independent of the latter, it was the backdrop against which education became, in the words of the SDPC, "the greatest need of the hour".<sup>106</sup> As one of the party's slogans stated: "The working class needs jolting out of its apathy; its false gods need to be destroyed".<sup>107</sup> Otherwise, argued the SDPC, there was little hope of revolution because of "the ignorance and superstition of the people".<sup>108</sup> Once the ignorant had been enlightened,

the major element of their praxis was to vote for the SDPC.

The party did recognize that the class struggle emanates from "economic antagonisms" or what is the struggle over the sale of labour power.<sup>109</sup> But, according to the SDPC, while capitalism could vary from country to country, the only road to emancipation was still predicated upon the electoral seizure of the state.<sup>110</sup> Thus the socialists continued the SPC tradition of educating and contesting a few constituencies. Socialist successes elsewhere inspired them to "lock out the masters" by capturing political power and the party entered into municipal elections "in order to accustom comrades to political activity and for propaganda purposes".<sup>111</sup>

The SDPC ran candidates at all political levels in major cities and even in such SPC strongholds as Nanaimo. But, while this praxis ensured that the reform tendency in the party would not be alienated by party policy, there were few electoral successes to be had. Cotton's Weekly acknowledged that the electoral laws limited the party's electoral success, but it thought the solution was to run more candidates.<sup>112</sup>

Cotton himself wrote that, to attain a majority in the legislatures, at least 50 subscriptions must be held in each riding.<sup>113</sup> However, this type of prostelytizing praxis was as unsuccessful for the SDPC as it was for the SPC. If the SDPC had investigated the possibilities of success through electoral politics it would have found the party was subject to the same restrictions which confronted the SPC. Moreover, there was also the use of corruption against SDPC candidates. In this respect three cases of corruption were well publicized. In the first case free liquor and intimidation had been used to sabotage the Timiskaming

elections.<sup>114</sup> Secondly, in the 1915 Manitoba provincial elections, Beech lost by 250 votes; 271 were rejected and 431 were counted as spoiled.<sup>115</sup> The SDPC MLA R. A. Rigg exposed the fraudulent manipulation behind the defeat. Together with the independent MLA Dixon, he called for a legislative investigation but the Attorney-General refused to undertake such an investigation.<sup>116</sup> Thirdly corruption was so evident in Winnipeg that, when A. A. Heaps complained wrong-doing was responsible for his defeat in the municipal elections, Judge Meyers ruled that ballot stuffing, double voting for mayor and bribery had occurred. Consequently, the court appointed a by-election and Heaps was elected to city council as the representative for Ward Five.<sup>117</sup> However, the SDPC did not discuss these events publicly, much less analyze them, and it remained committed to electoral praxis.

Unlike the other parties, the SDPC did have a conception of hegemony. From its earliest beginnings it had argued for the need for an organization of "the farmers, the wage earners and the little shopkeepers into a political party of their own".<sup>118</sup> Moreover, the SPC had a positive idea of leadership in terms of building hegemony. The party recognized that labour parties in Canada were established by and composed of workers who were not socialists themselves but who were dissatisfied with the bourgeois parties.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, rather than fight against a labour party, the SDPC stated it would be "actively in the forefront" of the new party's "propaganda work".<sup>120</sup> It eschewed the SPC's deterministic belief that the ILPs would become revolutionary as industrialization marched on. Instead the SDPC wanted to ensure a socialist leadership above or parallel to the ILP leadership and in constant contact with the ILP's

social bases.

In order not to jeopardize its relations with different ethnic and labour groups, the SDPC treated issues in a critical but conciliatory manner. Thus, the alienation of sections of the party through ideological disputes was avoided. The reform organizations and party tendencies that sympathized with them, could be fitted into the party's scheme of class struggle because possibilism was a more flexible ideology than was impossibilism. Therefore, the party pointed out that the former supported Co-operative Union of Canada would not achieve socialism. But at the same time it praised the Union for working to lower prices.<sup>121</sup> The SDPC also decided religion was a private concern while it noted that religion obstructed the realization of "justice".<sup>122</sup> Lastly, through a referendum vote, Simpson was elected to represent Canada at the 1914 Vienna congress of the Second International scheduled for August. It was not held, however, because of the outbreak of the war and Simpson, already en route to the congress, was turned back.<sup>123</sup>

Most importantly, the social democrats gained support and acceptance from organized labour and its press. This is because far from the impossibilist approach, the SDPC showed respect for what unionists held in high esteem. Furthermore, although it considered trade unions to be limited in efficacy, the SDPC considered them necessary and stated "the place of the union man is in the ranks of the SDPC".<sup>124</sup> Considering its commitment to reforms, electoral politics and hegemony, this was a good start for the development of the counter-hegemony. However, it was not actualized because the party failed to successfully exercise its concept of leadership over the labour movement which left the way open for the

unions themselves to dictate the character of the party's struggle and of its campaigns.

This is not totally true in B.C. where, as a socialist faction, the SDPC was influential in the BCFL.<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, in Ontario, where support for the party was weaker among labour delegates, the SDPC was obliged to follow a path of highlighting reforms and seeking TLC and ILP endorsement.<sup>126</sup> In Winnipeg the party also exercised a limited amount of leadership and either fell into or out of agreement with organized labour.

Consequently smooth relations between the party and the unions were not necessarily the norm. In 1913 in Vancouver, the SDPC held a convention with labour unions to nominate candidates to contest municipal elections. However, when Charles Mattinson, the president of the Machinists' Union, was chosen to run for alderperson, it was discovered that he was not a party member. A vote of 44-27 vetoed his election and the convention concluded without anyone nominated to represent the SDPC and/or labour in the upcoming municipal elections.<sup>127</sup>

Compromise with labour parties was also limited by the SDPC's dedication to its revolutionary constitution. Its constitution stated the SDPC would not unite with another party which did not recognize "the class struggle and abolition of the wage system".<sup>128</sup> Hence, no collaboration took place with the ILP of Port Arthur and Fort William and in 1913 the party refused to work with the Winnipeg Labour Representation Committee (LRC).<sup>129</sup> The LRC was an electoral labour organization established to nominate and endorse labour oriented candidates in co-operation with other parties. The lack of agreement with such an important labour

organization was not without its consequences. The LRC predicted the party would not elect its nominated candidates if the LRC did not officially endorse the candidates.<sup>130</sup> The LRC felt this confident because everytime it had endorsed Dixon, Ripp and Queen they were elected provincially in Manitoba.<sup>131</sup> This, along with the results of the 1914 Manitoba provincial elections, in which only Rigg of the SDPC was elected, demonstrated the need for labour co-operation and support if electoral politics were to prove effective for the SDPC. This left the party torn between conviction and necessity and the LRC stood between the SDPC and labour support until the Winnipeg TLC formed its own party.

#### IX. The Consequences of the Splits

The 1910-1916 period was a critical one for organized labour. It was marked by the general weakening of bourgeois hegemony due to unrelied social crisis. This led to labour's radicalization which was to culminate in its own independent political expression. Labour's reaction to strike out politically on its own was just as much an attack on the bourgeois state as it was a rejection of the socialist parties. The labour leadership was confused by the splits but it recognized the weak state of the parties. Moreover, the parties were unable to resolve their differences and to convince the labour leadership of their viability. Therefore, despite having advanced to the level of participating in the structure of bourgeois electoral politics, labour refused to consent to a socialist leadership.

Beginning in approximately 1912, bourgeois hegemony was severely shaken. The hegemony could only exist if it provided a material basis

of consent. This was possible, however, if economic fluctuations and the social repercussions caused by the fluctuations were kept to a minimum thus affecting the least amount of workers at any particular time. As long as the economy expanded more than it contracted and the consequences of expansion were mitigated through economic struggle, bourgeois hegemony could exist. But, in 1912-1913, Canada entered into economic turmoil that would be with it until 1920 and the hegemony was weakened considerably. This, and the condition of socialism, accounted for the autonomy of labour from both bourgeois and socialist leadership.

The initial economic crisis was precipitated by the withdrawal of capital from the Canadian economy. While American investment was generally inactive, British and European funds were relocated into profitable militarization which was booming in Europe in view of the outbreak of the 1912-1914 Balkan wars. Canadian finance capital was provided to the government and it was invested in the production of steel and electrical equipment and war contracts. However, this could not replace the departed capital and unemployment along with war profiteering hurt and incensed the working class.<sup>132</sup> In 1914, with mining and construction camps closed, the unemployed flocked to Vancouver and the B.C. Federationist estimated that sixty per cent of "able-bodied workers" were unemployed; it also indicated this was a conservative estimate.<sup>133</sup> Unemployment continued although 600,000 men enlisted after Canada entered the First World War.<sup>134</sup> In 1915 real wages fell and a shortage of commodities became prevalent.<sup>135</sup> One of the first reactions to the high cost of living was the rapid growth of unionism, especially in the west.<sup>136</sup> The social disequilibrium had an unnerving effect on the working class

and the Industrial Banner stated: "That things can much longer endure on their present basis is not only inconceivable but impossible".<sup>137</sup>

In British Columbia, labour established a committee to interview the SDPC and the SPC and reach a consensus on joint action with labour.<sup>138</sup> The report rejected co-operation with either socialist party and indicated a labour party was the only feasible choice of action.<sup>139</sup> One week later the Vancouver TLC formed its LRC to electorally support candidates and educate labour.<sup>140</sup>

This did not mean labour opposed socialism; on the contrary, it was swinging towards socialism. The British Columbia Federation of Labour (BCFL) endorsed socialism and was convinced that only a socialist regime was a viable alternative to capitalism.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, a resolution adopted at the TLC Convention of 1913 stated "all officials and members of the TLC of Canada be requested to inform themselves of the commodity theory of labour power and also of the theory of value".<sup>142</sup> However, labour's idea of socialism was opposed to impossibilism. Labour was convinced that unions were anti-capitalist organs and that capitalism would not collapse simply under its own weight.<sup>143</sup> Hence labour was motivated to engage in direct political action and to make history rather than to remain passive and accept an apocalyptic view of capitalism as did the impossibilists. Politicized and confident after a demonstration of its solidarity during the two year long Vancouver Island coal miners' strike and by labour organizer Tom Uphill's mayoral victory in Fernie, the Vancouver TLC nominated six candidates to contest the 1915 British Columbia provincial election.<sup>144</sup> Although the election was postponed the initiative was important.<sup>145</sup>

Nevertheless, despite strong union support, the establishment of a national or provincial labour provincial labour parties was put off until 1917.<sup>146</sup> The lack of necessary consensus to erect a labour party in British Columbia was caused by the socialist factions in the BCFL and by the scarcity of funds during the period of depression.<sup>147</sup> By 1915 the labour movement nationally was stronger and it displayed a marked independence from the SPC, the Liberals and the Conservatives.<sup>148</sup> At meetings where unionists discussed political action, SPC members downplayed their party membership and some SPC members in the BCFL, like A. S. Wells, openly called for labour to independently enter politics.<sup>149</sup> Elsewhere, labour parties were still only in the planning stages.

Of all the parties, the SDPC recognized that the weakness of the socialist alternative was caused by divisions among the socialist parties.<sup>150</sup> Along with organized labour and workers, one of whom had written "it is well to unite the entire working class even without complete agreement on policy or general conformity in economic belief . . .",<sup>151</sup> the SDPC sought to provide workers with a united socialist party.<sup>152</sup> But a unified movement, which the SDPC had hoped to lead, was denied because the SPC's sectarianism and an imagined monopoly on scientific socialism would not consent to compromise and unity.<sup>153</sup> At no time was the SPNA party to the debates on unity, nor was it ever asked to unite with the other two socialist parties. Its role in unity did not take form until later.

J. Kavanagh of the SPC saw the probability of the BCFL forming an ILP type party. But he thought if only the BCFL would adopt the SPC's principles and support the SPC, the development of an ILP would be staved

off.<sup>154</sup> The SDPC did not share such naive illusions. From the outset (1907) it expressed a desire to reunite and work for the working class with the SPC.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the SDPC began trying to collaborate with the SPC. Cotton's Weekly printed the SPC's manifesto and called on workers to join or vote for "a socialist" party.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, to a limited extent, the SDPC had dealings with the SPC when it supported SPC candidates like Victor R. Midgley in Victoria; and, along with the SPC, it participated in the defense of Savva Federenko.<sup>157</sup>

However, the SPC would have none of the SDPC's advance. When Cotton's Weekly expressed its sympathy over the Western Clarion's economic problems, Pritchard responded with "To the devil with your sympathy".<sup>158</sup> Generally, the SPC frequently referred to social democrats as "reformers, cheap politicians, liars, embeciles and crooks".<sup>159</sup> With its hold on science and truth, it saw itself as the only socialist party. Finally the SPC hoped the SDPC would lose its small amount of socialism making the SDPC just another "spoils party" thus facilitating the SPC's socialist propoganda work.<sup>160</sup>

Consequently, when representatives of the two parties met in May, 1914 at the Empress Theatre in Vancouver to debate unity, the sectarianism of the SPC prevented unity between the parties. Pritchard, representing the SPC, reached the conclusion that the SDPC "advocates reform and thereby reveals its capitalist tendencies".<sup>161</sup> The SDPC, on the other hand, pointed out that, because of their MLAs, the SPC was as reformist as the SDPC.<sup>162</sup> But the question of the SPC MLAs and reforms was an unresolved contradiction of the SPC's program and it would never serve as grounds for unity with the SDPC.

Troop attributes the failure of unity to the SPC's demand that all social democrats submit to its leadership and program.<sup>163</sup> But the SDPC also offered a compromise which would cost the SPC too much considering the latter's ideological position. Even the SDPC admitted that compromise was "a curse" if one thought they held a correct ideological position.<sup>164</sup> The SDPC agreed to deal with the "freaks and fakirs" the SPC accused it of having. But this was contingent upon the SPC's rejection of the ultra dogmatics who according to the SDPC "would make it a stench in the nostrils of all decent revolutionaries" if they were permitted into the new socialist party.<sup>165</sup> The SPC did not accept such an arrangement for two reasons. Its DEC would not be in total command, and secondly, if the SPC agreed to terms with the SDPC it would mean the SPC was forced to admit to being as reformist as the SDPC had ceaselessly accused it of being.<sup>166</sup>

Only the SPNA admired and supported the SPC's rigid impossibilist stand and it in turn asked to affiliate to the party.<sup>271</sup> ~~Nothing came of this and the parties maintained their distance from each other.~~

The SDPC-SPC quarrels gave increasing substance to the view "that no matter what their doctrines, socialists are a disagreeable lot to get along with and had better be left alone".<sup>167</sup> The quarrels also conclusively indicated that socialism would remain weak and that unity would not take place in the near future. Meanwhile, the socialist parties failed to lead the labour movement although two socialists, J. L. Walters and James Simpson, were elected to the presidency and vice-presidency of the TLC in 1914.<sup>168</sup>

## X. Conclusion

The significance of the 1910-1916 period rests in the general weakening of the socialist movement. Its fragmentation into three parties, and their retention of certain impossiblist features, debilitated the establishment of leadership over the labour movement or the working class. At a period in labour's history, when bourgeois hegemony was weakening, the ineffectiveness of the socialist parties conditioned labour to seek its own political expression.

The decade opened with the fragmentation of the socialist movement. The splits were caused by the leadership of the SPC. The impossiblist leadership came into conflict with possibilists because it would not permit hierarchical and bilateral contact to exist. As a result the party lost vast amounts of its mass element. Still, it held fast to its ideology, became vigilantly sectarian and consequently the SPC lost its influence in the labour movement.

The SPNA's leadership was modeled on a stronger version of the SPC's executive and the party was also impossiblist and sectarian. Through its membership tests it sought a quality mass element but the party did not expand greatly. This is because the SPNA was severely handicapped without a program which addressed the immediate problems of the working class and sought to alleviate these problems through reform oriented action. Hence, the SPNA found itself with limited support from the working class.

The leadership of the SDPC held the allegiance of its membership because of its cooperative and conciliatory character. But, with the language locals in command of a substantial amount of power, the party's

leadership was neither centralized nor strong and the language locals tended to be introverted. Despite this weakness, unlike the other two parties, the SDPC did allow for a mass membership and contact with that membership. Its other weakness stemmed from exclusively following the path of education and electoral politics as the means of struggling for reforms and revolution. Nevertheless, it was the possibilist ideology which attracted workers by offering them relief from the repercussions of social crisis. However, despite a pro-union orientation, the party was unable to become the endorsed political arm of the labour movement.

Relations between the socialist parties were minimal, at best, and discussions between them left a definite impression: unity, like the revolution, would not occur in the near future. The SDPC was willing to unite but the sectarianism of the SPC would not allow unity to occur.

Meanwhile, as the development of productive forces stood amidst an economic crisis, labour was refused economic concessions by the bourgeoisie. This withdrawal of the material basis of consent to bourgeois hegemony led the labour movement to move from economic struggle to the verge of forming labour parties and participating in the electoral process. But, as bourgeois hegemony weakened, the socialist parties were unable to become the parties of the labour movement. Once conscription was imposed in 1917, labour had been prodded by their final incentive and it formed its own parties under the leadership of the TLC.

The most critical period for the working class now awaited novice labour parties and the socialist parties and it would nearly destroy the socialist movement.

## NOTES

1. Labour Leader, Oct. 5, 1906 and Sept. 18, 1908 as cited in A. Ross McCormack, "British Working-Class Immigrants and Canadian Radicalism: The Case of Arthur Puttee", Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada, X, no. 2 (1978), 31.
2. Ronald G. Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in British Columbia, 1893-1933", (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1943), pp. 76-77.
3. Colin D. Grimson, "The Communist Party of Canada, 1922-1946", (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1966), p. 6.
4. McCormack, Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 71-74.
5. The Voice, May 10, 1907.
6. Constitution of the SPC, Robert S. Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 17, UTL, TF.
7. The Voice, May 10, 1907. Dorothy G. Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel: Ernest E. Winch and His Times (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1960), p. 27.  
  
Paul A. Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour and the Boag Foundation, 1967), p. 47.
8. The Voice, May 10, 1907. In 1903 the SPC gained 5000 votes; in 1906 the total fell to 4792 votes. Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 47.
9. Western Clarion, May 18, 1907.
10. The Voice, May 7, 1909.  
The 'single tax' was a doctrine which stipulated that the problem of capitalism was not private property but the monopolistic ownership of land and land speculation. Therefore, single taxers called for no taxes on workers, farmers and manufacturers and only a single tax on land ownership and speculation.

Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1968), p. 33.

11. McCormack, Reformers, pp. 65-66.
12. The Voice, Oct. 18, 1907.
13. Jacob Penner, "Recollections of the Early Socialist Movement in Winnipeg", Marxist Quarterly (Summer 1962), p. 29. This party is not to be confused with the SDPC of British Columbia or the SDPC formed in 1910 to which the Penner group affiliated.
14. Western Clarion, Nov. 16, 1907. Western Clarion, Apr. 9, 1910.
15. Western Clarion, Oct. 1, 1910.
16. The Voice, Oct. 14, 1910 as cited in Chisick, "The Origins and Development", p. 8.
17. Western Clarion, Sept. 3, 1910.
18. J. Donald Wilson, "The Finnish Organization of Canada, The 'Language Barrier' and the Assimilation Process", Canadian Ethnic Studies/Ethniques au Canada, IX, no. 2 (1977), 106.
19. The exception to this were the B. C. Finns who had cast their lot with Burn's SDPC. Western Clarion, Apr. 16, 1910 in McCormack, Reformers, p. 74.
20. The Voice, Apr. 30, 1909.
21. G. R. F. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1922), pp. 42-43; The Voice, Aug. 27, 1909.
22. The Voice, Aug. 2, 1909 in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 41 and p. 43; Norman Penner, The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1977), p. 45.
23. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 43.
24. Ibid., p. 43.
25. The Voice, Aug. 12, 1910.
26. See Robin, Radical Politics, p. 113.
27. The Voice, Aug. 12, 1910.
28. Cotton's Weekly, May 4, 1911.
29. Cotton's Weekly, July 20, 1911.
30. The Voice, Aug. 27, 1909.

31. The Voice, Feb. 11, 1909.  
Ernest Chisick, "The Origins and Development of the Marxist Socialist Movement in Winnipeg, 1900-1915", (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), p. 77.
32. The Voice, July 15, 1910.
33. The Voice, July 29, 1910. See Also The Voice, July 8, 1910.
34. The Voice, July 8, 1910.
35. The Voice, Aug. 26, 1910.
36. Western Clarion, Aug. 20, 1910; The Voice, Aug. 12, 1910.
37. Western Clarion, Dec. 17, 1910.
38. Western Clarion, Dec. 31, 1910 in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 79.
39. Western Clarion, Dec. 17, 1910.
40. The Voice, Oct. 7, 1910.
41. Western Clarion, March 29, 1913.
42. Western Clarion, Dec. 17, 1910.
43. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 5, 1912; Western Clarion, Apr. 8, 1911.
44. The Voice, July 10, 1914; McCormack, Reformers, p. 74; Western Clarion, Dec. 24, 1910.

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45. The Voice, Apr. 14, 1911.  
Jack Williams, The Story of Unions in Canada (Canada: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1975), pp. 105-106.
46. Cotton's Weekly, May 4, 1911; Cotton's Weekly, Sept. 14, 1911.
47. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 53.
48. Western Clarion, May 6, 1911.
49. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 51; Western Clarion, Feb. 17, 1912.
50. B. C. Federationist, Feb. 20, 1912.  
Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 51.
51. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 52; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 43.
52. Editorial, Western Clarion, n.d., as cited in Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 18.

53. Of the two MLAs only Williams' critique of the socialist party is recorded, but it is directed solely at the SPC. While claiming he was not renouncing the "Socialist party's" theories and was only attempting to effectively oppose the Conservative Bowser government, he stated the party's "uncompromising attitude is . . . not satisfactory, and particularly so when that attitude has been such a weapon in the upbuilding of the Conservative party". Williams also honestly admitted that he and Hawthornthwaite were partially responsible because rather than attack the Conservatives they constantly opposed the Liberals. The Voice, Mar. 3, 1916. Hawthornthwaite had a concept of polarization which benefitted the Tories and hurt the Liberals. He sought to constantly oppose the latter in order to clarify the class struggle. If successful, he hoped this would produce only two obvious choices: a workers' party and the party of the bourgeoisie. Martin Robin, The Rush for Spoils: The Company Province 1871-1933 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 93. What Williams did after Hawthornthwaite resigned and how he acted in the Legislature as an SPC MLA remain unanswered questions.
54. B. C. Federationist, July 7, 1916.
55. See The Voice, Feb. 20, 1914.
56. B. C. Federationist, Sept. 29, 1916. The Western Clarion's only reply was: "The B. C. Federationist is no worse (nor better) than the usual labour sheet". Western Clarion, Oct. 1916.
57. B. C. Federationist, Feb. 20, 1914.
58. Western Clarion, Dec. 16, 1911.
59. Western Clarion, July, 1911.
60. Western Clarion, July, 1915.
61. See Western Clarion, Oct. 1916; Western Clarion, Jan. 1917.
62. See Western Clarion, July, 1911; Western Clarion, Jan. 20, 1912.
63. Western Clarion, July 13, 1912.
64. Western Clarion, May 24, 1913.
65. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 64.
66. Maurice Spector, "The Constituent Convention of the Workers Party of Canada" (Toronto, Feb. 1922), Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF.

67. Cotton's Weekly, June 4, 1914.  
William Beeching and Dr. Phillis Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle Reminiscences of Tim Buck (Toronto: NC Press, 1977), p. 89. Buck became a member of the SPNA in 1915.
68. Tim Buck, Lenin and Canada (Toronto: Progress Books, 1970), p. 14.
69. Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 54.
70. Robert Barltrop, The Monument: The Story of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (London: Pluto Press, 1975), pp. 41-42.
71. Ibid., pp. 41-42.
72. Ibid., p. 42 and p. 56.
73. Industrial Banner, Jan. 1911; Western Clarion, Sept. 10, 1910; Western Clarion, Sept. 24, 1910.
74. Western Clarion, Dec. 31, 1910.
75. Ibid.; Tim Buck, Thirty Years 1922-1952 (Toronto: Progress Books, 1952), pp. 16-17; Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 54.  
In 1916 the SPNA adopted a new constitution which included probation and a regular New Members Class for applicants for membership.  
Buck, Lenin and Canada, p. 14.
76. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 114.
77. Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 54; see also Buck, Thirty Years, p. 16.
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78. Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 89.
79. Marxian Socialist, July 1918.
80. Ibid.
81. Industrial Banner, Nov. 21, 1913.  
From July 1, 1913 to Dec. 31, 1913 its membership in good standing was recorded as:

<u>Province</u>	<u>members</u>	<u>locals</u>
B. C.	1142	29
Alta.	294	26
Sask.	167	10
Ont.	2714	60
Man.	249	10; with
Ukrainian locals scattered throughout the province and the city of Winnipeg.		

Que. four locals in Montreal and Cowansville  
Maritimes no locals

Source: Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 19, 1914; see also Cotton's Weekly,  
Oct. 16, 1913.

Not included in this report is the CFCS which constituted 64 locals and 3062 members in March, 1914. The following year, however, its numbers had decreased to 1867. Wilson, "The Finnish Organization", p. 107.

82. McCormack, Reformers, p. 74; Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 7, 1912.
83. Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 42.
84. See the Western Clarion, 20, 1911; The Voice, Jan. 29, 1915.
85. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 30, 1913.
86. McCormack, Reformers, p. 93.
87. Cotton's Weekly, June 4, 1914.
88. McCormack, Reformers, p. 93.
89. Buck, n.d. in Chisick, "The Origins and Development", p. 73.
90. For example, David J. Bercuson commits this error in Fools and Wise Men (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978), p. 42.
91. David J. Bercuson, "Labour Radicalism and the Western Industrial Frontier: 1897-1919", Canadian Historical Review, LVIII no. 2 (June 1977), 165-166.

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92. Cotton's Weekly, June 4, 1914.
93. McCormack, Reformers, p. 93.
94. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 30, 1913. See also Cotton's Weekly, July 13, 1911; Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 14, 1912; The Canadian Forward, Nov. 11, 1916.
95. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 5, 1914.
96. The Voice, Oct. 1, 1915.
97. The Voice, Oct. 1, 1915.  
Gloria Queen-Hughes, "Interview with Gloria Queen-Hughes", Alexander B. McKillop, "Citizen and Socialist: The Ethos of Political Winnipeg, 1919-1935", (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1970), p. 109.
98. The Voice, Aug. 11, 1911; The Voice, Nov. 14, 1913.

99. Industrial Banner, May 1, 1914.  
Beeching and Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle, p. 42.
100. J. Simpson, interviewed in the British Labour Leader in The Voice, July 7, 1911.
101. The Voice, June 14, 1912.  
Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 28.  
Grimson, "The Communist Party of Canada", p. 11.
102. Maurice Spector, "The Constituent Convention", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF.  
Cotton's Weekly, Aug. 7, 1913.
103. Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 48.
104. Cotton's Weekly, Aug. 7, 1913; The Voice, Oct. 28, 1910.
105. The Voice, Nov. 26, 1915; The Canadian Forward, Nov. 11, 1916.
106. The Voice, Jan. 15, 1915.
107. The Voice, June 25, 1915.
108. The Voice, Jan. 15, 1915.
109. Cotton's Weekly, Jan. 1, 1914.
110. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 26, 1914.
111. See Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 12, 1914; Cotton's Weekly, Oct. 2, 1913; The Voice, July 16, 1915; Cotton's Weekly, July 3, 1913.
112. Cotton's Weekly, Jan 23, 1913. This logic rested on his claim that the Election deposite in Ontario was only two dollars. Ibid.
113. This is not confirmed by Norman Ward in The Canadian House of Commons: Representation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963). Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 7, 1912.
114. Industrial Banner, July 17, 1914.
115. The Voice, Aug. 13, 1915.
116. The Voice, Jan. 14, 1916; The Voice, Jan. 21, 1916.
117. The Voice, Jan. 12, 1917; The Voice, Mar. 1917.  
The Voice, May 25, 1917.
118. The Voice, Aug. 4, 1911.
119. The Canadian Forward, Apr. 24, 1917.

120. The Canadian Forward, Oct. 28, 1916. See also Ian Macpherson, "The Origins of the Canadian Co-operative Movement, 1900-1914", The Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, (1972), p. 214.
121. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 26, 1914.
122. Cotton's Weekly, Feb. 27, 1913.
123. Industrial Banner, July 24, 1914; B. C. Federationist, July 31, 1914; Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 64; Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 54. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 51.
124. Cotton's Weekly, Mar. 5, 1914; Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 7, 1912; Cotton's Weekly, July 31, 1913.
125. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 65.
126. See Industrial Banner, Jan. 9, 1914.
127. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 17, 1913. B. C. Federationist, Dec. 19, 1913; B. C. Federationist, Nov. 28, 1913.
128. The Canadian Forward, Dec. 2, 1916.
129. Cotton's Weekly, Nov. 14, 1912. Chisick, "The Origins and Development", pp. 100-101.
130. The Voice, July 10, 1914 in Chisick, "The Origins and Development", pp. 112-113.
131. See The Voice, Dec. 9, 1910; The Voice, July 9, 1915; The Voice, Jan. 5, 1917.
132. Peter Warrian, "The Challenge of the One Big Union Movement in Canada, 1919-1921 (M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1971), pp. 18-20; see also W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 329 in Chisick, "The Origins and Development", p. 95.
- H. A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, Their Development and Functioning (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1948), pp. 167-168.
133. B. C. Federationist, Aug. 14, 1914; B. C. Federationist, Apr. 17, 1914.
134. Bercuson, Fools and Wise Men, p. 59.
135. Bercuson, Fools and Wise Men, p. 58; Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners' European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in

Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), p. 70.  
See the Industrial Banner, Oct. 13, 1916.

136. See the B. C. Federationist, June 14, 1912; The Voice, June 26, 1914.
137. Industrial Banner, n.d., as cited in The Voice, Feb. 20, 1914.
138. B. C. Federationist, Nov. 14, 1913.
139. B. C. Federationist, Dec. 19, 1913.
140. B. C. Federationist, Dec. 26, 1913; see also Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 62.
141. It was defined as the "transference of the ownership of industry from corporate hands to public control". B. C. Federationist, Apr. 23, 1915; see also B. C. Federationist, Mar. 20, 1912.
142. As cited in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 52-53.
143. The Voice, July 12, 1912; The Voice, Apr. 16, 1915.
144. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 13, 1914; B. C. Federationist, Apr. 20, 1912; B. C. Federationist, Mar. 27, 1914; B. C. Federationist, Aug. 23, 1913; B. C. Federationist, Jan. 22, 1915.
144. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 13, 1914; B. C. Federationist, Apr. 20, 1912; B. C. Federationist, Mar. 27, 1914; B. C. Federationist, Aug. 23, 1913; B. C. Federationist, Jan. 22, 1915.
145. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 62; B. C. Federationist, Feb. 19, 1915.
146. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 26, 1915; Industrial Banner, Nov. 3, 1916.
146. B. C. Federationist, Sept. 1, 1916.
147. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 62 and p. 65; B. C. Federationist, Feb. 25, 1916.
148. See the B. C. Federationist, Apr. 9, 1915.
149. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 9, 1915; B. C. Federationist, Oct. 6, 1916.
150. The SDPC saw this same weakness in the British socialist movement and thought that, in order to be recognized and command the attention of the working class, it too should unite into one party. Cotton's Weekly, Aug. 7, 1913.
151. The Voice, Feb. 20, 1914.

152. The Voice, Apr. 4, 1913 as cited in Chisick, "The Origins and Development", p. 102.
153. The Voice, Sept. 10, 1909.
154. B. C. Federationist, Aug. 17, 1912.
155. The Voice, May 10, 1907.  
The 1913 Annual Convention of the B.C. SDPC decided against seeking union with the SPC "believing that when developments on the industrial and political fields require such sombination of forces it will automatically take place . . ." Cotton's Weekly, June 12, 1913. This was the result of fruitless talk which had resulted in no bridges between the two parties. However, less than one year later Burns and Pritchard publicly debated merging. See the Western Clarion, Feb. 1916.
156. Cotton's Weekly, Sept. 14, 1911; Cotton's Weekly, Oct. 9, 1913.
157. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 20, 1912.  
Federenko was a Russian organizer wanted for the murder of a Tsarist police agent whom he apparently killed while escaping arrest. If apprehended and returned into Tsarist hands he would have been executed. He fled to Canada where combined labour and socialist pressure prevented the Canadian government from returning him to the Russian authorities. See Industrial Banner, Nov. 1910; Chisick, "The Origins and Development", p. 87. Besides the joint SPC-SDPC (and others) campaign, Phillips also claims the SDPC joined with the SPC and other organizations, including the IWW, to form the Miners' Liberation League to free incarcerated striking Vancouver Island workers. No Power Greater, p. 60. However, the SPC did not openly support the strike. Although Kavanagh, who belonged to the Vancouver local, visited the Island and wrote a pamphlet on the strike, it appears only the Nanaimo SPC local sided with the SDPC and others and openly supported the strike, (see Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 49).
158. Western Clarion, June 1915 as cited in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 95.
159. Western Clarion, Sept. 1915; The Voice, Aug. 29, 1910; see also Western Clarion, Nov. 18, 1911; Western Clarion, Apr. 11, 1914; Western Clarion, July, 1915.
160. Western Clarion, Sept. 1915.
161. For no apparent reason, except perhaps that it was too sensitive to print earlier, the SPC press ran the story two years later. Western Clarion, Feb. 1916.
162. Cotton's Weekly, Apr. 10, 1913.

163. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 54.
164. The Voice, Mar. 5, 1915; Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement", p. 103; Western Clarion, Apr. 7, 1917.
165. Cotton's Weekly, Apr. 10, 1913.
166. See Cotton's Weekly, June 4, 1914.
167. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 48.
168. Ibid., p. 36.

## CHAPTER IV

### I. Introduction

The object of this chapter is to analyze the failure of the socialist parties to recognize the development of a period of intensified class struggle and their failure to adjust their praxis to encompass direct action struggle or non-electoral politics. Direct action at this time was espoused by many workers and it was a direction they took in an attempt to secure their demands. Opposition to direct action was then opposition to the radical industrial union movement in the TLC/AFL labour unions. Moreover, this movement still agreed with electoral praxis, but it felt that in the urgent times of the late 1910's urgent measures such as the general strike and not political action were needed to effectively obtain reforms. Consequently, if a socialist party adopted direct action praxis it could entrench itself within the industrial union movement from where it could attempt to educate, unite and lead the working class. This kind of a change in praxis presupposes a commitment to the war of maneuver. This war is based on the mobilization of workers for quick action against the state under the leadership of a working class party whose aim is the abolition of class society.

Using this understanding of socialist praxis within a condition of intensified class struggle we can summarize the purpose of this chapter to be a discussion of the failure of the socialist parties to lead the working class.

The chapter will argue that, despite losses of members and cadres to the newly formed labour parties, the labour parties did not attract enough workers and did not affect enough supporters of the socialist parties to spell the end of the socialist parties.

In the case of the Socialist Party of North America and the Social Democratic Party of Canada, it was their shallow level of entrenchment among the working class which allowed for state repressive measures to eliminate the former and drive the bulk of the latter underground. The Socialist Party of Canada was not outlawed and it entrenched itself in the British Columbia labour movement to the extent that its members helped inaugurate and assumed leadership positions within the One Big Union (OBU). Although the SPC was entrenched within the British Columbia Federation of Labour (BCFL) and the OBU, the reason for its failure to mobilize and lead workers is to be found in its ideology. It is here that, despite the acceptance of the strike as a weapon to be used by the working class, impossibilism still defined leadership of the working class and only in electoral terms. Hence, when confronted with a situation of intensified class struggle, as in the case of the Winnipeg General Strike and other sympathetic strikes, the SPC was unable to lead. Instead, along with the labour movement's leaders, it contributed to the defensive and law abiding character of the struggle. Consequently, the argument of this chapter is presented in thirteen sections. Sections two to five will discuss how the weakening of bourgeois hegemony and the inability of socialists to appeal to the labour movement led to the establishment of labour's own political parties. Sections six, seven and eight will analyze the effect of the state's repressive Orders-in-

Council on the socialist parties. Sections nine to twelve will discuss the SPC and its failure to lead the working class. The conclusion will follow.

## II. The Weakening of Bourgeois Hegemony

By 1916, the war and the war industry had absorbed many of the unemployed. Consequently, a labour shortage ensued. In response to this, "enemy aliens", who had been interned under Orders-in-Council in 1915, were contracted out by the state to work in rail, steel and armaments industries.<sup>1</sup> However, bourgeois hegemony, already weakened by its inability to deal effectively with the pre- and early war-time economic crisis, did not enjoy a respite. Nor was it able to use the brief opportunity of 'full employment' to regain labour's consent.

Labour was dissatisfied with its conditions of work and the level of wages, and aware that the armies of the unemployed were not present to act as a depressant on its demands -- at least not until the war veterans began returning en masse. Consequently, there was an increase in strike activity in 1916 (see Table I). Strike action escalated and intensified when labour's economic gains steadily deteriorated in the face of growing inflation, which made its appearance in 1918. Between 1918 and 1919 real wages fell to a lower level than they had been twenty years earlier and the cost of living doubled.<sup>2</sup> No economic concessions were granted and instead the state responded with coercion. On October 11, 1917, through an Order-in-Council, it imposed penalties for striking.<sup>3</sup> The strikes continued undaunted and indeed were fuelled by the aggravated situation the conclusion of the war inaugurated. Industry slowed down, war-time contracts were terminated, troops returned

Table 1: Number of strikes and lockouts, employers and workers involved and time loss,

Strikes and lockouts in existence during year, all industries					
Year	Number beginning during the year	Number of strikes and lockouts	Number of employers	Number of workers involved	Time Loss In man working days
1925	86	87	497	28,949	1,193,281
1924	64	70	435	34,310	1,295,054
1923	77	86	450	34,261	671,750
1922	89	104	732	43,775	1,528,661
1921	159	168	1,208	28,257	1,048,914
1920	310	322	1,374	60,327	799,524
1910	332	336	1,967	148,915	3,400,942
1918	228	230	782	79,743	647,942
1917	158	160	758	50,255	1,123,515
1916	118	120	332	26,538	236,814
1915	62	63	120	11,305	95,042
1914	58	63	261	9,717	490,850
1913	143	152	1,077	40,519	1,036,254
1912	179	181	1,321	42,860	1,135,786
1911	99	100	533	29,285	1,821,084
1910	94	94	101	22,203	731,324
1900	88	88	90	18,114	880,663
1908	72	72	76	26,071	703,571
1907	183	183	188	34,060	520,142
1906	149	149	150	23,382	378,276
1905	95	96	332	12,513	246,138
1904	103	103	591	11,420	192,890
1903	171	175	1,124	38,408	858,959
1902	124	125	532	12,709	203,301
1901	97	99	285	24,089	737,808

Source: K. A. H. Buckley and M. C. Urquhart, Historical Statistics of Canada (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1965). Table D426-430, p. 107.

to face unemployment while employers laid off workers and/or attempted to roll back their wages.<sup>4</sup> In 1919 the District Ledger reported one-third of western miners were unemployed and as late as mid-1921 the B.C. Federationist still considered unemployment a serious problem.<sup>5</sup>

The ruling class thus steadily lost the material means by which to regain labour's consent. Moreover, in early 1917 the state established a National Service Board whose object was to register labour.<sup>6</sup> Although the Order-in-Council presupposed conscription, the TLC's only protest and demand concerned the appointment of a labour representative to the Board.<sup>7</sup> Then, on May 18, 1917, Prime Minister Borden lost Quebec and many labour leaders when he imposed conscription.<sup>8</sup> The ruling class made an effort to politically appease the incensed TLC by appointing Gideon Robertson to the Senate and then to the Cabinet as the Minister of Labour. The selection of Robertson, a staunch conservative executive in the Order of Railway Telegraphers and a virtual unknown within the labour movement, was not a redeeming act.<sup>9</sup>

Only now did Watters, president of the TLC, seriously protest and the Industrial Banner indicated the working class would not accept conscription quietly.<sup>10</sup> This brought the conservative labour element more in line with radical labour quarters who had earlier seen and felt coercion replacing bourgeois hegemony. As the B.C. Federationist wrote, since capitalism had ceased to progress and could not satisfy human needs, it therefore became "more and more necessary each day to fall back upon the club and gun for the governmental support required".<sup>11</sup>

### III. World War One, Labour and the Socialist Parties

As Avakumovic writes, none of the three socialist parties organized "a systematic campaign against Canadian involvement" in the war. Nor did they concern themselves with "what the Canadian labour movement should do in time of war".<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, "a significant section of the AFL and TLC bureaucracy especially in Ontario" did not mobilize unions "to fight conscription, war profiteering, inflation and the attack on labour's rights".<sup>13</sup> Thus, while opposition to the war existed in Quebec and within labour's ranks, no organization stepped forward to lead this opposition.

This did not mean that the socialist parties avoided discussing the issue of the war. The problem was that they defined the war as an occurrence insignificant to the worker. As Lefeaux of the SPC wrote: "The war is neither right nor wrong; it is simply of no interest to the worker".<sup>14</sup> This meant the impossibilist ideology and the praxis of education were to continue undaunted amidst such SPC slogans as "Universal militarization is the last hope of capitalism".<sup>15</sup>

In an attempt to appeal to anti-militarists, trade-unionists, socialists and Christians, the SDPC subtitled The Canadian Forward the "Only Organ of Democracy and anti-militarism in Canada."<sup>16</sup> The SDPC understood the war as a capitalist struggle for markets and, while war was considered part and parcel of capitalism, it was nevertheless of no interest to the workers.<sup>17</sup> Like the SPC, the SDPC found the war an occasion for education and its manifesto stated the war was "an opportune time of getting a large measure of knowledge as to your true position in society."<sup>18</sup>

Their ideological and tactical approaches to the war and conscription did not boost the sagging images of the socialist parties. Nor did it unite the anti-conscription movement with the socialists, as Steeves claims.<sup>19</sup> There are three reasons which account for this.

1) The history of the socialist movement, with all its splits, lack of success, undeveloped and weak links with the labour movement indicated that the socialists were not effective leaders in the struggle for social change. 2) The labour movement became divided in its opposition to the war when a chauvinist British segment emerged within labour's ranks. This particular split did not occur along regional cleavage lines for the chauvinism existed in the Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto TLCs. 3) That section of labour which was opposed to conscription could not be satisfied with the passive attitude the socialists displayed. They were more indirect towards action and not education.

Consequently, the SPC was reduced to "a skeleton organization".<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the SDPC which had expressed concern over the war's effect on party unity, was also shaken by the war.<sup>21</sup> Its position on the war offended some British chauvinists like Rigg, who wanted to help the "empire" with material assistance and it caused the party to lose some of its English-speaking members.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the already weak political links between the SDPC and the Winnipeg TLC were seriously set back. The Voice disagreed with the position presented in the SDPC's 1914 manifesto which asked "to refrain from lending any assistance in the carrying on of the war in Europe."<sup>23</sup> The Voice argued the cause of the war was Prussian militarism, which was to be defeated, and it had this to say about the war:

Of all the countries engaged in the struggle, the British worker is the only one who has the right of refusal as to whether he will go or will not fight. The workers of the other nations involved are, willy nilly, on the firing line . . . ."24

This chauvinistically sounding, albeit confusing and inconclusive, statement was supplemented by a tendency within labour which claimed that labour had an interest in the "national spirit".<sup>25</sup> For example, it argued the purchasing of Victory Bonds was beneficial to workers because revenue from Victory Bonds sales was invested and this provided employment. It did not seem apparent to this labour tendency that the object of this employment was the murder of workers and peasants. How much less apparent it then must have been to realize that the working class itself could halt military production and spare its own lives.

The TLCs were not all in agreement on how to struggle against conscription and an east-west division developed over approaches to the struggle. Labour in both the east and the west opposed conscription and agreed that the war was caused by the undemocratic dictates of power concentrated in few hands.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, eastern labour suggested independent political action by labour aimed against conscription.<sup>28</sup> Its slogan, originally expressed by the SDPC, stated: "If we conscript our youth, we must conscript our wealth."<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the western unions argued for the use of a general strike and street demonstrations to arrest the implementation of forced military service.<sup>30</sup>

The TLC's dislike of the western unions' newly espoused general strike weapon was undaunted. At the TLC's 1917 convention in Ottawa, the west's strike proposal was called "unpatriotic" and it was defeated by a vote of 134 to 101.<sup>31</sup> The TLC's only concession to the west at

the Ottawa convention was to sanction political action by labour in cooperation with the socialist parties.<sup>22</sup> This cooperation was limited and ineffective. For the moment, it encouraged labour to immediately build its own political parties and the argument over the general strike weapon was put off for one year.

At the same time, despite the claims of Warrrian,<sup>33</sup> the conscription issue was more than simply a rupture in bourgeois-labour relations. It also accounted for both labour's final break with the socialist parties and some unprecedented autonomous action by the TLC. In early 1917 both Gompers and the TLC opposed conscription and stood "by the voluntary principle".<sup>34</sup> When Gompers openly supported Borden's introduction of conscription to the extent of speaking in Parliament and promoting war bonds the TLC did not follow suit. Moreover, it entered into the political arena. This was a move Gompers attacked because he feared the national labour party would become socialist.<sup>35</sup>

Gompers' concern was unfounded. It is true that the TLC now recognized the socialist parties as "'a legitimate arm of the labour movement'".<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, when Borden announced the conscription law, the labour movement set about organizing its own national labour party along with provincial parties under labour's leadership. Thus the socialists were excluded from leading the labour movement although they were asked by labour to integrally affiliate with the new party.<sup>37</sup> However, the labour parties were plagued by disorganization which indeed withdrew support from the socialist parties but without uniting the working class or providing effective political leadership.

#### IV. The Labour Parties

The Canadian Labour Party (CLP), as it was to be named, was to serve as the political arm of the TLC. It was to be organized as "a confederation of political and labour groups" modeled after the British Labour Party.<sup>38</sup> Called for in 1917, it was late in coming. The TLC again launched it in 1918 and endorsed it one more time in 1920.<sup>39</sup>

The delay is attributed to the political and economic split in the labour movement. The former was caused by the presence of a competing model of a political party which became world famous after the Russian Revolution.<sup>40</sup> The latter resulted in 1918 when western labour, which eventually supported the OBU, demanded direct or non-electoral action be endorsed by the TLC while eastern labour stood by political action. This meant that the labour movement was not in agreement on its approach to the economic arena. Politically, the movement was destined to operate solely on the provincial labour party level until the CLP was established in mid-1921.

While some provincial labour parties arose at different times, and while some labour candidates were elected provincially, the parties provided little effective political leadership. During most of the 1917-1920 period of intensified class struggle the labour parties were concerned with establishing themselves as presentable electoral bodies. Ontario labour was still calling for a provincial section to the as yet not established CLP as late as July 1919.<sup>41</sup> Only in March 1919, when Ontario labour endorsed the Ontario ILP, did Ontario labour gain a political arm.<sup>42</sup> In the provincial election in that year twelve labour candidates were elected, but the Ontario ILP then surrendered to the

UFO's leadership and failed to effectively represent labour interests while in the legislative.

In Manitoba the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) grew weary of endorsing SDPC candidates and the Winnipeg TLC argued for a new party, one representing "labour, agriculture and the ordinary men of commerce and the professions".<sup>43</sup> But in 1918, the Dominion Labour Party (DLP), the party of the Winnipeg TLC, appeared briefly only to quickly disappear. The Western Labour News at first offered the government ban on public meetings as an excuse, but in 1920 it agreed the DLP was suffering from disorganization.<sup>44</sup> In 1920, after a joint nominating convention with the Ex-Soldiers' and Sailors' Labour Party, the DLP won eleven seats.<sup>45</sup> The United Farmers of Manitoba (UFM) had elected eight members but no cooperation existed between the UFM and the DLP. While labour claimed to have formed an "entente" with the UFM, the Winnipeg General Strike had caused a chasm between the two movements and "they remained distinct and even hostile to one another".<sup>46</sup>

The DLP was a weak labour party. Its contribution to the advancement of labour legislation was barely significant and, moreover, it failed to gain the adherence of the entire Manitoba labour movement. While the DLP faced competition from the SPC and the communist Workers Alliance, the year it recorded its electoral victories another party, the Manitoba ILP, was formed in Winnipeg.<sup>47</sup> The following year its prominent member, J. S. Woodsworth, was elected to Parliament with a solid majority vote.<sup>48</sup>

The BCFL had advocated independent political action before the TLC's support for labour parties and it was moved by the conscription

issue to enter into the political field prior to the formation of the Federated Labour Party.<sup>49</sup> Once the FLP was officially formed on February 1st, 1918, it quickly drew the political activists of the BCFL into the party. Less than three months after its establishment, the FLP reported branches throughout the province and two thousand members in the Vancouver local alone.<sup>76</sup> The BCFL's militant political activism lent itself to immediate mobilization of labour members under the new party's banner. It spared the FLP the birth pains of confusion and disorganization and made it the first labour party to be established permanently. Its executive was composed of experienced political activists like Hawthornthwaite, Trotter, Kingsley, Pettiprece, Curry and McInnis.<sup>51</sup> However, the majority of the FLP leadership had been in the SPC, where they had learned the tactic of education and this became the FLP's praxis.<sup>52</sup> With two educational organizations now present in the province, the FLP and SPC continued to lack the ability to unite or lead the working class.

Elsewhere, labour parties of less significant proportions also sprang up and also contributed no leadership or alternative. On November 3rd, 1917 a labour party local was formed in Quebec with the help of the SDPC.<sup>53</sup> On November 9th, 1917 a CLP branch in Saskatchewan was organized, but the dominating agrarian character of the province dictated that if political action was to be successful, labour must work with the farmer's movement. This new party, called the Farmer-Labour Party, electorally challenged power only in 1925.<sup>54</sup> In Alberta, the Dominion Labour Party of Calgary and Edmonton was able to develop because the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) electorally cooperated with the labourites.<sup>55</sup>

## V. The Social Democratic Party of Canada and the Labour Parties

The SDPC's initial reaction to the TLC's support for labour parties was to provide labour parties with a socialist leadership without liquidating the SDPC. To realize this the SDPC attempted to procure labour's confidence during the 1917 federal election. In the process, the party violated one of its constitutional edicts concerning collaboration with a body which did not recognize the class struggle. Rather than oppose a Liberal party supported labour candidate running in Temiskaming, it cooperated and sympathized with him.<sup>56</sup>

Labour remained adamantly optimistic that its political expression, emerging, as it were, from the already organized union movement, could be successfully realized without aid from the SDPC. So strong was labour's belief in its potential that labour now asked the SDPC to support the DLP.<sup>57</sup> The SDPC, which had expressed satisfaction over the establishment of an Ontario section of the CLP because it meant a "stronger working class political organization", showed its democratic character by initiating an all-party debate concerning its relation to the DLP. The three alternatives to be discussed were: a) should the party merge with the DLP and lose its identity; b) should the party continue its socialist propaganda meetings; or c) should the party affiliate with the labour party without the loss of its identity or locals.<sup>58</sup> Each position had its spokespersons, but the least popular choice was the first one and a solid majority refused to liquidate the party.<sup>59</sup>

The debate was never publicly concluded and the SDPC did not formally adopt any of the alternatives. Consequently, James Simpson, who had hoped the party would join the CLP, left the SDPC while a Berlin

(/Kitchener) local split away calling the SDPC reformist for even considering joining a labour party.<sup>60</sup> In B.C. another influential labour leader, Ernest Winch, went to the SPC which he claimed was not as "sloppy in its thinking" as was the SDPC.<sup>61</sup> Shortly thereafter, also in British Columbia, the entire section of the SDPC ceased to exist when it merged with the FLP.<sup>62</sup> In Manitoba the DLP entered the field calling on trade unionists, socialist members and working class bodies to join with it and fight for labour's demands.<sup>63</sup> This appeal did not fall on deaf ears and a Jewish socialist labour party, the Paolei Zion, agreed to the DLP's leadership.<sup>64</sup> Individually, Fred Tipping was one of the first to leave the Manitoba section of the party and he was quickly followed by the labourites Rigg and Queen.<sup>65</sup>

Those who remained in the SDPC continued "spreading a knowledge of the principles of socialism".<sup>66</sup> They laboured at selling the Canadian Forward and teaching their class through their three tier educational system, composed of a Socialist Sunday school, a Young socialists' federation for children and an English language night school complete with lectures on socialism and Canadian history for adults.<sup>67</sup>

## VI. Repression and the Socialist Parties

The SDPC's educational praxis came to an end when it was driven underground by two Orders-in-Council on September 25th, 1918. The first Order, PC 2384, branded the SDPC and thirteen organizations as "unlawful associations".<sup>68</sup> A second Order, PC 2381, suppressed the German, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Estonian, Ruthenian, Hungarian, Turkish, Finnish, Croatian and Latvian press; only the Jewish, Italian and Scandinavian newspapers escaped repression.<sup>69</sup>

These orders were enacted after Borden had hired C. A. Cahan, a wealthy Montreal lawyer who was privy to British intelligence reports, to investigate IWW and socialist activity in Canada.<sup>70</sup> Cahan interviewed "businessmen, 'respectable' labour leaders, police officials in both Canada and the United States, and various members of the immigrant community in Canada."<sup>71</sup> His reports indicated a conspiracy existed among the Russian, Ukrainian and Finnish working class which had been "saturated" with Bolshevik doctrines. Consequently, all meetings in these languages were forbidden.<sup>72</sup>

Curiously, what came to be known as the "Red Scare", did not juridically affect the SPNA immediately. As for the SPC, only the Western Clarion was banned. It appears this occurred because the investigation of and reaction to the non-Anglo-Saxon socialist "peril" preceded the inquiry into Anglo-Saxon socialist activity.

While the Western Labour News protested the Orders were not in accordance with "British law", on November 13th, 1918 the SDPC was "legalized" and the Finnish SDPC and the SPNA joined the ranks of the unlawful.<sup>73</sup> The recognition of a lawful Anglo-Saxon section of the SDPC was of little consolation since the majority of the party's federated mass element remained illegal. Even when some socialist groups, i.e., Finns and Ukrainians, re-emerged in cultural organizations, the legally existing SDPC was unable to re-establish the party.

Many of the Orders-in-Council were repealed on April 2nd, 1919,<sup>74</sup> but this did not facilitate a re-emergence of the socialist parties. On one hand, the state did not relinquish its use of the repressive War Measures Act until long after the conclusion of the war. Its

justification rested on the pretext that Bulgaria and Turkey had not signed an armistice agreement with Canada.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, for example, enemies of the state, interned in 1915, still sat in concentration camps until the camps were closed on March 10th, 1920.<sup>76</sup> By the same token, any Canadian communist party would be illegal until 1924. On the other hand, the socialists wondered aloud whether to re-build their parties or to opt for a different model of the socialist party. The different model and with it an alternate ideology and praxis would soon arrive in the form of Bolshevism.

Meanwhile covert socialist activity became precarious and difficult. The Orders-in-Council were the state's attempt to destroy any possibility of the development of a socialist opposition. The seriousness of the Orders became apparent when the coercive arm of the state began arresting socialists. The first to fall was the entire Russian Workers' Club (27 members), who, the RNWMP claimed, was inciting the non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants. They were threatened with deportation to Kolchak's Siberia until a defence struggle by labour and socialists saved them. For fourteen of them, being saved meant spending eighteen months in jail.<sup>77</sup> Other arrests included, Bainbridge, the national secretary of the SDPC and the editor of the Canadian Forward; the editor of a Russian socialist newspaper, Michael Charitinoff, who, for being in possession of "prohibited literature", received three years and a \$1,000 fine; and seven men in Sault Ste. Marie who were fined \$16,700 for belonging to the illegal SDPC.<sup>78</sup>

The illegality of the SPNA and the SDPC and the appearance of labour parties made socialist party work within the union movement very

difficult if not impossible. Moreover, unless socialists were already in positions of authority in the municipal, district or provincial labour councils, a condition which developed only in British Columbia, it was the labour leaders who were apt to dominate. This meant that an outlawed socialist party's membership remnants--the leaders and the rank-and-file--could only exist in a united, and therefore hopefully effective, condition, or at least attempt to weather the Red Scare more or less intact, if the party had been able to create its own extra-party organizations, or if it had co-opted and/or infiltrated certain organizations at the executive level. The organizations are not only other political parties and the labour movement, but they also include industrial unions. Entrenched within such integuments, socialists could continue their work, on obviously a more limited scale, but in structures, oftentimes considered 'fronts', through which their ideology and praxis could reach and mobilize the working class. Therefore, each party's reaction to the repressive measures was governed by the character and magnitude of leadership it had been able to establish over labour and the working class.

#### VII. The Failure of the Socialist Party of North America

The SPNA did not achieve leadership of the working class to a significant degree. Once the party became illegal it had no alternative formation(s) in which to submerge itself and continue its praxis. Its relation with the TLC and the Ontario labour leadership was rather strained due to SPNA's attempts to educate labour by attacking labour's stated political positions in the Industrial Banner in order to harness the workers'

electoral potentials.<sup>79</sup> The SPNA could also not submerge itself into the Ontario ILP, since its position was one of no compromise and continual struggle against reformist as well as bourgeois political parties. Finally, the SPNA displayed no ambition to organize workers into unions since, according to impossibilism, unions were reformist organs.

Therefore, no alternative organization was available to accommodate a clandestine SPNA and once the party was outlawed it ceased to exist. Some of its members, namely, Buck, left Canada for the United States to build the foundation for the future CPC within one of the two American communist parties.<sup>80</sup>

#### VIII. The Liquidation of the Social Democratic Party of Canada

The SDPC became illegal de jure, but not de facto. Its resilient character resided in its entrenchment in cultural-socialist groups who simply changed their names to stress the cultural factor and thus they became organizations exempt from the repressive Orders-in-Council.

After being linked to the Bolsheviks through correspondence and the support they displayed for the Russian Revolution, the Finnish SDP changed its name to the Finnish Organization of Canada (FOC).<sup>81</sup> Their leading public figure and secretary, Ahlquist, now on behalf of the 'new' organization, asked the state to invalidate the Order-in-Council with respect to the FOC, in order to permit it the right to "conduct activities" in the Finnish language. According to FOC's constitution, the activities entailed a) helping to assimilate Finns--to Canadianize them; b) advancing their standard of living; and c) developing their "mental faculties". Cahan agreed and in the spring of 1919 the legal FOC emerged. It immediately became involved in the organization of

cooperative restaurants and it helped form an IWW lumber workers' local in the camps of the Port Arthur region.<sup>82</sup>

The Ukrainian SDP also provided a lesson in survival. The pre- and early war-time economic condition and the interment of many of its members in 1915 were instrumental in stripping away the party's membership.<sup>83</sup> The Orders-in-Council were the final blow. The socialists dissolved the Ukrainian SDP and formed the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association (ULTA) which served as a legal umbrella for the socialists.<sup>84</sup> Like the FOC, the ULTA, which was also a Ukrainian community, labour and socialist organization, asked the state to lift the ban on Ukrainian publications, claiming that many of its members could only read Ukrainian. In March of 1919 the Robitnychi Visty (the Ukrainian Labour News) made its appearance and the ULTA, led by John Boychuk and Popovich, became a "propaganda machine".<sup>85</sup>

However, simply because the FOC, ULTA and SDPC were granted legal license did not mean their activities continued without a loss in efficacy as Rodney and Yuzyk argue.<sup>86</sup> It is true the cultural organizations all allowed for a certain socialist--leadership and rank-and-file--cohesiveness. But the SDPC was never a very unified and centrally directed party, and now it lost its organizational ability to exert even a modicum of leadership. Consequently, the remnants of the SDPC existed in isolation from each other and, on a more limited scale, they continued their propaganda work in their respective communities. Whoever was concerned about their isolation from the labour movement, like the Paolei Zion and various individuals, entered into the labour parties. Otherwise, the social democrats waited for the establishment of the GPC, and, to be sure,

the pre-1918 SDPC did not continue nor did it re-emerge.

The SDPC's decline and removal from active work among the working class is directly attributable to its mistake of dedicating itself as strongly as it did to cooperating with and leading the organized labour movement. It appears that this position is taken from the German social-democratic party's influential theorist, Karl Kautsky. The Canadian Forward stated his argument was that a socialist movement must establish a "firm root" in the "mass of trade unions" before it can be successful in its aspirations.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, for the SDPC this tactic proved fruitless in its relation to the labour movement. However, 'firm root' or entrenchment within the working class could have been achieved had the SDPC attempted to organize the non-unionized working class. Moreover, entrenchment in such a social class base would have mitigated the extent of repression, fragmentation and isolation which befell the party.

There are two reasons why the SDPC could have been an organ which could have successfully organized workers into unions. As we have already seen, the SDPC displayed a cooperative and positive attitude towards unions. Secondly, while the SDPC's proselytizing and electoral approach remained its usual activity, the party recognized strikes as a part of the class struggle, and from 1911 to 1913 it was infatuated with industrial unionism and the ideology of the IWW. The SDPC claimed the two tactics of socialism were political and industrial struggle and it added the former was their preserve and the latter belonged to the IWW.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the SDPC believed that collaboration with the

syndicalists would produce revolution in the very near future.<sup>89</sup>

However, syndicalism and industrial unionism were not shared by all SDPC members. It was rather a contentious issue which was hotly debated in the party before all reference to it ceased. The anti-syndicalist change was led by Martin, the impossibilist secretary of the party who equated syndicalism with sabotage and argued there was no place for it in the party.<sup>90</sup> This drew an immediate response from a South Porcupine socialist who pointed out that the SDPC should organize an industrial union front as the possibilist Socialist Party of America had done.<sup>91</sup> The debate was concluded and won by a tendency committed to solely political electoral action. An article representing this tendency argued the general strike was not an effective weapon because it hinged on a waiting game between workers and the bourgeoisie and the latter could always outwait the former.<sup>92</sup> This was a non-offensive understanding of the general strike, one where the ruling class would not be attacked, defeated or deposed. Consequently, with the general strike weapon defined as unsuccessful by the SDPC, the party concentrated on educating workers. As the Canadian Forward wrote:

Reading Socialist literature, listening to lectures and chatting with friends are very pleasant and all very well, but more than these are required of a good socialist. He must do something towards making more socialists, such as getting subscribers to the Canadian Forward.<sup>93</sup>

In 1918 both political and industrial methods of struggle were endorsed by the SDPC.<sup>96</sup> The expansion of SDPC praxis, however, came too late for the party to build and entrench itself within industrial unions. It had been guided for too long by an ideology which called for the infiltration of labour organizations and education directed at electoral

politics. This allowed for a limited level of entrenchment and when the party was declared illegal it could not continue to operate from under the aegis of the labour movement. The party still maintained a weak and fragmented existence under the protective cover of cultural organizations where it was indeed entrenched. But for all intents and purposes it was a defeated party whose members would soon become a receptive audience for Bolshevik ideology.

#### IX. The Socialist Party of Canada and the Problem of Socialist Leadership

The SPC did not suffer the fate reserved for the SDPC. It was spared by the Orders-in-Council which outlawed only its press, the Western Clarion. The SPC then resorted to making its ideology public through first the Red Flag and then The Indicator when the former attracted the censor's eye. However damaging a blow it was for a party which treated its press as an educational medium, the reason for its failure to lead the working class and its virtual elimination in the early 1920's is to be sought in the SPC's commitment to impossibilist ideology.

As we argued in Chapter III, by 1916 the SPC appeared to be on its deathbed, but, starting in 1918, it again began to rise to prominence. It withstood the challenge of the Federated Labour Party (established in 1918) and the effects of repression and it made a dramatic return to the forefront of the class struggle. The SPC was able to accomplish this because, while labour rejected the SPC politically, the SPC's new, post-1910 leadership, became entrenched in the BCFL and later the OBU. Moreover, the party moved away from its impossibilism enough to accommodate a positive view of strike action within the impossibilist concept of the class struggle. The change in ideology placed it in tandem with Canadian

industrial unionist ideology that was emerging among the working classes of the western provinces.

#### X. The Federated Labour Party

In 1917 the BCFL complained labour's lot had not improved in twenty years and hence independent political action was necessary. But, it added, "each labour organization seems to be waiting for the other to start something. How about it?"<sup>97</sup> At its Revelstoke convention McVety said:

Reluctantly, we have to admit the SPC is no longer a factor in the political life of the province, despite the correctness of its platform . . . .<sup>98</sup>

As the threat of conscription bore down on labour in British Columbia, it sought political action through a labour party.<sup>99</sup> At the eighth annual convention of the BCFL, in 1918, a labour party under the name of the Federated Labour Party was finally established.<sup>100</sup> The only opposition against forming a labour party came from some SPC and SDPC members in the BCFL but they were outnumbered 82 to 11, with 15 abstentions.<sup>101</sup> The new party divided opinion within the SPC as prestigious labourites and socialists like Kingsley, McVety, Pettipiece and Hawthornthwaite entered the FLP's ranks.<sup>102</sup> Kingsley became the president of the Vancouver branch and Hawthornthwaite became the FLP's first MLA.<sup>103</sup> However, Hawthornthwaite was soon replaced by Sam Gutherie when he was expelled from the party for criticizing the Bolshevik Revolution and the Winnipeg General Strike.<sup>104</sup>

Once established the FLP sought to fight for labour legislation and "the collective ownership and democratic operation of the measured wealth production".<sup>105</sup> However, although the party was close to the

OBU Workers' Council, it maintained an ideological affinity for the international (AFL-TLC) unions.<sup>106</sup> Pettipiece and Kingsley opposed the OBU on the grounds that it "would undermine existing union strength or sidetrack more effective political efforts".<sup>107</sup> During the Winnipeg Strike Kingsley, who clearly had not changed ideologically, was quoted as saying:

When I find a great mass of workers asking a handfull of masters for favours, I get right down on my marrow-bones and pray they won't get 'em.<sup>108</sup>

This was not a popular position to hold in a province in which the labour movement had shifted its orientation from craft to industrial organization and direct action. Thus, the FLP was unable to exercise leadership over labour in British Columbia and the SPC's influence in the BCFL continued to increase undaunted.

#### XI. Labour and the Socialist Party of Canada

The re-emergence of the SPC closely paralleled and reflected the uprising of the Western labour unions. The unions' rebellion was directed at the TLC which now, considering the backdrop of worsening economic conditions and intensified class struggle, appeared in its most conservative form. To be sure, the TLC did endorse political action in 1917, as a result of the weakening of bourgeois hegemony. That weakening was reproduced tenfold in the west and western labour believed the TLC ought to endorse direct action as a method of struggling for demands. When the TLC refused to endorse direct action it lost its leadership over western labour unions.

Industrial unionism and the general strike were not new to western labour nor to labour in British Columbia. As early as 1911, at the first

annual convention of the BCFL, industrial unionism was endorsed and the general strike was proposed.<sup>109</sup> These were thought to be necessary weapons to establish a united front in opposition to the centralization of capital.<sup>110</sup> The TLC maintained its leadership when it appeared the west at the TLC's 1911 Calgary Conference by endorsing noncraft organization.<sup>111</sup> But one year later it "emasculated" the endorsement at the national convention which was held in the east and hence eastern delegates were over-represented.<sup>112</sup> The issue remained contentious, but was not raised again because the BCFL was going through a period when it believed concessions were available only by action in the political arena.<sup>113</sup>

In 1917 the leadership of the TLC did not oppose the state's national plan to register labour. The decision was taken without consulting the TLC's vice-president, Mr. Watchman, who was also the voice of western labour on the TLC executive.<sup>114</sup> If it appeared then that the west was being ignored, the 1918 Quebec convention proved this to be correct. At this convention the BCFL was joined by the Edmonton and Winnipeg TLCs, who also supported the general strike and industrial unionization.<sup>115</sup> As one of the Winnipeg TLC resolutions stated "The craft unions have fulfilled their function -- they must now give place to Union by Industry."<sup>116</sup>

To add to the already volatile situation, just prior to the TLC's Quebec convention Albert 'Ginger' Goodwin, a draft evader who was a well known union organizer and socialist, was shot to death by a police officer.<sup>117</sup> To labour, "the Goodwin shooting symbolized . . . the accumulated bitterness of long suffering indignities and deprivations of job

insecurity and war-profiteering."<sup>118</sup> When western delegates went to the Quebec convention they had but one aim, to "put some bite into the trade union movement" so it would effectively redress long standing social grievances.<sup>119</sup> However, western proposals concerning unionization, strikes and the withdrawal of Canadian Troops from Russia, "were swept aside by the preponderance of eastern votes."<sup>120</sup> Moreover, electoral scruples were bent somewhat when, according to the B.C. Federationist, there were less voting delegates present than there were ballots cast in the election of David Rees to the TLC executive.<sup>121</sup> The two other western union men also failed in their bid for executive seats. Watters was defeated 195 to 155 and Tom Moore became the president, while P.M. Draper easily won over Russell and assumed the position of secretary-treasurer.<sup>122</sup>

This did not result in the west's withdrawal from the TLC but for the time being it caused unresolvable alienation. The BCFL charged that the west had not received a fair hearing and that the AFL was "government-owned and corporation-ruled".<sup>123</sup> Consequently, western labour now set about preparing itself for its Western Labour Conference (WLC) to be held in the new year. At the WLC the west hoped to regroup and present itself as a unified voting block at the following TLC convention.<sup>124</sup>

It was at the WLC and at the 1919 BCFL convention that the SPC made its presence felt. Phillips has written:

the SPC, in its period decline and in the face of direct suppression, abandoned the traditional political process for a form of direct action . . . .<sup>125</sup>

This is only partially correct because, while the SPC's impossibilist concept of class struggle was broadened, electoral political action was

never abandoned. Nevertheless, the shift in perception could only help the new SPC in leading the insurgent labour movement. This leadership would last all too briefly and would become politically paralyzed in the face of intensified class struggle.

Until 1917 the SPC believed that unions did not improve the situation of the working class hence, the party could have no ambition to organize the unorganized. Then, in mid-1917, the first change of the SPC's position on unions became apparent. Hatred for trade unions was replaced with this observation:

The trade union as a weapon is useful because it enables the worker to move en mass. That it can only aid the worker in maintaining a decent standard of living needs no demonstration.<sup>126</sup>

Speaking specifically to the skilled, it said unions were necessary if workers were to stave off the threat of replacements by machine technology.<sup>127</sup> According to the SPC the threat continued because craft unions were ineffective organs unable to defend their members. Therefore, the SPC argued, mechanization would be one of the factors which would lead the working class to combine into "'One Big Union'".<sup>128</sup>

To be sure, this is not the first time the SPC had dealt with the social process only to sit back passively and not act upon it. But, when Pritchard wrote the socialist can and must act "as a member of the trade union" in order to point out the errors and weaknesses of the union leadership to the rank-and-file, it became apparent that the SPC could become committed to more than educational and electoral praxis.<sup>129</sup> On one hand, there was the party's concession to economistic class struggle as a class educating experience.<sup>130</sup> The concession was important since prior to this only socialist teaching could educate the working

class. On the other hand, the SPC was still only interested in building an organized social base to serve as its electoral support base. Unfortunately, this presupposed a praxis of education at the expense of leading the working class.

The introduction of the 1918 Orders-in-Council appears to be the major factor behind the division of SPC members over political and direct action as early as 1918. This is because the implementation of the Orders had left many in the SPC doubting the validity of the political and therefore constitutional approach.<sup>131</sup> Consequently the party kept one foot in each form of struggle, political and direct, by expanding the meaning of the political approach.

The politics of the working class are comprised within the confines of the class struggle, and, conversely, the class struggle is necessarily waged within the political field. By this statement we do not imply that the political action of the working class must be limited within the bounds of constitutional convention or of parliamentary procedure, or that the means employed in waging the class struggle must everywhere be the same.<sup>132</sup>

Simultaneously, socialist leadership was defined out of existence when the SPC submitted that workers will choose spontaneously and independent of the SPC the method of struggle. As the Western Clarion wrote:

For one country it may be the ballot, in another the mass strike, in a third, insurrection. These matters will be determined and dictated by the exigencies of time and place.<sup>133</sup>

By avoiding the responsibility for choosing a tactic and thus leading workers, the SPC tacitly continued its educational and electoral praxis.<sup>134</sup>

Nevertheless, the major figures in the SPC, in British Columbia were or became union leaders and "set out to weld labour radicalism to the SPC".<sup>135</sup> In 1918, after eight dedicated years, Pettipiece left the

B.C. Federationist to work on a city daily as a linotype operator. Wells, already the secretary-treasurer of the BCFL, replaced him as manager of the Federationist.<sup>136</sup> One year later Wells defeated Pritchard and was re-elected as one secretary-treasurer of the BCFL and Midgley, already the secretary of the Vancouver TLC, became the other secretary-treasurer of the BCFL.<sup>137</sup> Finally, Kavanagh was elected to the presidency of the BCFL after having been the vice-president of the Vancouver TLC.<sup>138</sup>

So great was the domination by socialists and the prevalence of their political-industrial approach ideology that it affected the ideology of the FLP. When the labour party had been formed, its "reformist 'labourism'" had attracted the craft unions.<sup>139</sup> However, as the call for industrial unionism became louder and two-thirds of the BCFL, voted in favour of using the general strike, the FLP seriously began losing its union support.<sup>140</sup> Consequently, it changed its position and agreed there was a need for industrial organization.<sup>141</sup> But this did not halt the party's decline. On one hand, those who did not support the general strike rejected the FLP's new position and the FLP's leadership. These trades suffered a loss of political representation, but would make their presence felt later in the struggle against the industrial OBU. For the moment, the FLP suffered a greater loss in terms of support. On the other hand, the FLP did not gain pro-industrial union support. Indeed, it was totally by-passed by the insurgents.

It was the SPC who now commanded labour's attention. Not long after the TLC conference in Quebec, Pritchard, Kavanagh, Midgley, Knight, Johns and Russell began pushing for a Western Labour Conference.<sup>142</sup> The

WLC was to be held early in 1919 in Calgary and, in order to save on expenses, the BCFL decided to hold its annual convention in Calgary as well.<sup>143</sup> This would permit the SPC, entrenched as it was within the BCFL, to be present at the WLC. As the BCFL's Calgary convention drew near, "every effort was made by the provincial executive of the SPC to ensure the selection of socialist delegates by the various labour bodies to be represented".<sup>144</sup>

The BCFL convention was the SPC's first triumph. It was led by Pritchard who argued for the "complete rejection of the political pressure group technique in favour of the wholesale adoption of the use of economic power."<sup>145</sup> And the OBU was proposed to replace the "obsolete" craft unions which the SPC said, only divided the working class.<sup>146</sup>

The second victory for the SPC was the WLC and the establishment of the OBU. The WLC was attended by 239 delegates, 78 from B.C., 89 from Alberta, 46 from Manitoba, 17 from Saskatchewan and 2 from Ontario. R. J. Tallon was elected its president and Midgley its secretary. Otherwise Kavanagh chaired the resolutions committee and Johns was the chairperson of the policy committee. In brief, except for Tallon, all of the leaders were "prominent radicals".<sup>147</sup> Among its important resolutions, the WLC "recognized the ascendancy of the SPC in the Western Labour movement".<sup>148</sup> Moreover, it called for industrial unions and for 1) the 6-hour day; 2) freedom of speech and the release of political prisoners ('enemy aliens'); 3) an end to "restrictions on working class organizations"; 4) the "withdrawal of allied troops from Russia"; and 5) the "defeat of allied attempts 'to overthrow the Soviet administration in Russia or Germany'". It added, that if the five demands were not met,

the WLC was prepared to call a general strike which would commence on June 1st, 1919.<sup>149</sup> Finally, the WLC elected five SPC members--Pritchard, Midgley, Johns, Knight and Taylor--to conduct a referendum on the OBU.<sup>150</sup> In the final analysis, as The Red Flag wrote, both socialists and labourites decided to form the OBU in opposition to the AFL.<sup>151</sup> The OBU was formally established on June 11th, 1919 in Calgary, and it awaited AFL-TLC deserters as well as previously unorganized workers.

### XIII. The Socialist Party of Canada and the Sympathetic Strikes of 1919

The arrival of the SPC's entrenchment and its mobilization of workers through the OBU notwithstanding, the Winnipeg General Strike and the sympathetic strikes represent the failure of the SPC to lead the working class. As Lipton has written, the Winnipeg General Strike "was a great step forward, and a great opportunity lost".<sup>152</sup>

The object is not to belittle the strike itself. It was as R. Cooper later called it,

an actual protest against the superficially inflated cost of necessities of life without a corresponding rise in the wages of the workers.<sup>153</sup>

Although defeated, the Winnipeg General Strike is recognized as one of Canadian labour's major struggles for trade union rights.<sup>154</sup> However, while a situation of intensified class struggle existed, of which the Winnipeg strike was an important part, the SPC was unable to lead the working class in the overthrow of the state (the war of maneuver) nor was it able to gain working class consent to the SPC's leadership (the war of position). The major reason for the SPC's failure to lead is that the party had no concept of leadership and during the strikes of 1919 it was content to offer itself as an educational and electoral

organization. As Pritchard, an SPC and OBU leader and propagandist, wrote: "Only fools try to make revolutions, wise men conform to them".<sup>155</sup> The party also had no concept of the general strike as anything more than action pursued in order to gain economic concessions and build electoral support for the SPC. In other words, the SPC's notion of the general strike was part of the praxis of the war of position and not the war of maneuver. Therefore, the sympathetic strikes in which the SPC and/or OBU were involved never exceed economic demands and were never granted economic concessions. In the case of the Winnipeg General Strike the SPC was not even in a position to lead workers because it was not as well entrenched in the Winnipeg TLC as it was in the BCFL. This weakness allowed a reform-oriented labour leadership to assume command and ensure that the strike would be law-abiding and not a threat to capitalism.

Traditionally, if a labour leadership is conservative, it tends to lull its membership to passivity. This occurs unless there is a working class party which has support among the workers and can mobilize and lead them. However, the SPNA and the SDPC were both outlawed and the SPC had replaced its sectarianism with cooperation but only to enhance its electoral position.

A. P. Chew, an SPC propagandist in Winnipeg wrote: "strikes . . . are essentially a reformist and not a revolutionary activity". He did display an historical appreciation for the strike weapon as the working class' method of everyday struggle with capitalism. However, rather than give the strike a political or war of maneuver quality and direction, he concluded with the SPC's well known position, that since the state can crush strikes, the workers need political weapons, namely, the electorally committed SPC.<sup>156</sup>

Chew's statement illustrates that 1) the SPC had no concept of a general strike as an offensive syndicalist weapon; and 2) that the SPC had not relinquished its hold on electoral politics as the working class' only revolutionary weapon. This was also evident during the Winnipeg Strike of 1919. When the state sided with the anti-strike forces, The Red Flag reported that this was the ultimate accomplishment of the strike. It was said to be proof that the state was not neutral and this in turn was to educate the working class to take up political action.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, the SPC stated that the objective of the OBU would be to educate workers about the electoral road to social change.<sup>158</sup>

It was because the SPC conducted a narrow war of position that its leadership could not materialize within or become a nexus to the Winnipeg strike. Instead, the party remained peripheral to the intensified class struggle in Winnipeg. Just how peripheral the SPC was to the struggle was revealed when the socialists, and the OBU, expressed surprise over the launching of the Winnipeg General Strike as if it was an explosion or anomaly in labour praxis.<sup>159</sup> However, as Rea has written, to view the strike as "the release of pent-up resentment held in check by the war" is to ignore the 1918 strikes and the fact that both in 1918 and 1919 the subject of the general strike was discussed by the Western labour movement.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, in 1919 a government inquiry into the causes of the strike did find that low wages, high prices and wartime profiteering were to blame.<sup>161</sup> The critical point is that the origin of these causes can be traced back to the social crisis of 1917 which had weakened bourgeois hegemony and had forced labour to defend itself politically from the attack on its hard-won standard of living.

To be surprised by the Winnipeg Strike is tantamount to social blindness on the part of a revolutionary party. Economic labour struggle began on an intensified scale in 1918 when the number of strikes more than doubled.<sup>162</sup> Even in Toronto, the Canadian Forward reported a "Strike Tornado".<sup>163</sup> But while Toronto labour rebelled, it was in Western Canada, the SPC's locus of predominance, that the social crisis was more damaging and labour's response was more drastic. As early as May 1918 a General Strike in Winnipeg was forecast as "possible" by the B.C. Federationist.<sup>164</sup>

The failure of the ruling class to satisfy basic labour demands within strained economic conditions severely weakened bourgeois hegemony and allowed dissatisfaction to permeate all levels of labour. Concomitantly, the TLC's failure or, indeed, refusal, to permit western labour adequate representation and hearing, nullified the TLC and its political action organs as the mechanisms and forums for western labour's action. This dialectic in Winnipeg produced a synthesis which became clearly discernible in 1918 and manifested itself as the Winnipeg General Strike one year later.

On May 2, 1918, "the dress rehearsal" for the 1919 strike was held. It consisted of a confrontation between civic workers and the Winnipeg municipal administration. City council finally reacted with an anti-strike by-law denying civic workers the right to strike. Consequently, the civic employees struck with some support from unions who joined the walkout. Most of the civic workers' demands were met, albeit through moderate concessions. The second explosion concerned the newly-formed Metal Trades Council which was "initiated by the railway shop

unions" and which aimed to unionize and gain union recognition for shop workers. The Winnipeg TLC threw its support behind the metal trades with seven of eight workers favouring the use of the general strike to back the Metal Trades Council's demands. However, no action was taken much to the displeasure of R. B. Russell who was an SPC and OBU executive member in Winnipeg where he was also the Secretary of the Metal Trades Council.<sup>165</sup>

Russell, meanwhile, had no conception of the general strike save for the simple withdrawal of labour while fighting for economic concessions. As a member of the SPC, a party which approached the Winnipeg Strike in terms of drawing new recruits and new blood to support it electorally, he and other party members were peripheral to the struggle. On the other hand, Russell and other OBU leaders were no less peripheral. This is because the OBU was barely arising during the Winnipeg Strike. For example, the OBU's constituent convention was taking place in Calgary two weeks into the Winnipeg General Strike.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, it was only at the end of 1919 that a significant number of OBU locals were established and only then did the OBU appear as a formidable organization with about 50,000 workers behind it. Therefore, the OBU lacked the necessary membership to be of any consequence during the Winnipeg Strike.

With its approach to strikes and given its level of entrenchment in the Winnipeg TLC, it is no wonder that, except for Russell, no other SPC (or OBU) member was elected to the Central Committee (of 15) of of the Central Strike Committee (of 300 union delegates).<sup>167</sup> Consequently, with the leadership of the strike in labour's hands only one revolutionary act, which physically and symbolically opposed the ruling class politically, was carried out. It was not the calling of the strike, because the

withdrawal of labour is the prelude to non-electoral political action. The Winnipeg General Strike never exceeded this level of prelude and it remained a defensive struggle, a waiting match which tried the ruling class' patience. The political act, was the issuing of the "Permission by Authority of the Strike Committee" signs on milk and bread delivery wagons. Unfortunately, while the revolutionary act rested in the insurgents' command of capital, it was not intended as a revolutionary act. To be sure, these essential services were continued by labour's permission, but the signs were meant to publicly identify the workers as duly employed and not scabs and strikebreakers.<sup>168</sup> The action, of course, was not appreciated in this intended light by the ruling class. As Norman Penner writes about Prime Minister Meighen's reaction:

The idea that a worker would need authorization from the Strike Committee to perform essential services, constituted in his mind the revolutionary usurpation of power.<sup>169</sup>

However, once the Strike Committee (and the Strike) became heavily besieged by attacks by the bourgeois press against the "Permission" signs, the Strike Committee withdrew the controversial posters. Backing down in the face of heated opposition set the tempo for the remainder of the strike. It also revealed the praxis which emerged from a reform oriented labour movement. Labour's realty was to the objectivity of bourgeois justice. Its plan was to draw attention to the plight brought upon it by the social crisis and to obtain the necessary concessions from the bourgeois to alleviate its social condition.

Throughout the entire strike, the Strike Committee attempted to cloak the class struggle and class demands in the garment of constitutional legitimacy. This presupposed that the Committee wanted to

establish a dialogue with capital in order to bargain for a better price for its members. In response to the Citizens' Committee of 1000, whose class background was bourgeois and who claimed to be the representative of law and order, labour indicated its action was constitutionally justified and, therefore, the action was the praxis of law and order.<sup>170</sup> Labour's slogan became "Our Cause is Just" and it argued that "If the workers must starve it may as well be now as later. This is the reason behind the General Strike."<sup>171</sup>

Moreover, labour based much of its legitimacy on the "Terms of the Allies". These "Terms" were written during the post-World War I peace talks and they had been signed by the national Allied leaders: George of Great Britain; Wilson of the United States, Clemenceau of France, Hughes of Australia, Borden of Canada, and Orlando of Italy. Among the many "Terms" were those which applied to labour, i.e., the right of labour associations to exist, the right to a living wage, collective bargaining and an eight-hour day.<sup>172</sup>

Since the "Terms" were explicit, the Strike Committee found it best to wait until bourgeois justice was administered by the bourgeoisie. Concomitantly, the Strike Committee knew that the strikers must obey the law in order to avoid provoking the bourgeoisie and to disprove its presses' claim that Winnipeg was the sight of chaos and Bolshevism. In this regard, the leadership of the Strike became the unconscious administrators of bourgeois law, who insisted on obedience to constitutional authority and sent the police back to work to enforce the jurisprudence of bourgeois society. When intimidating thugs appeared on Winnipeg streets, the Strike Committee issued many directives, one of which read

"Keep cool--Do nothing, we've got them beat".<sup>173</sup> While this was the source of urban peace, it was also the basis for labour's defensive action even when it came to defending their arrested leaders.

It is true that Lefeaux reported that if the arrested strike leaders were not released a new general strike was planned for September 17, 1919. But the men were released before the strike date despite being charged with seditious conspiracy and seditious libel and after having their bail increased unconditionally.<sup>174</sup> Consequently, this pacified labour to the extent that it did not propose to organize a defense campaign along radical lines. Instead, cultural and juridical vistas were attempted. Kavanagh was sent to England to secure the aid of British labour to defend the arrested leaders in Canada.<sup>175</sup> And, when Russell received a two-year sentence for his part in the Strike, labour appealed the decision to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.<sup>176</sup>

While the strikers defended themselves by appealing to bourgeois justice the ruling class was apprehensive about the rise of the OBU. Consequently the ruling class blamed the OBU for the Winnipeg Strike although, as Senator Gideon Robertson, the Minister of Labour, said, the OBU had not been formed in time to have a direct effect on the strike.<sup>177</sup> This is why Masters writes: "One cannot escape the conviction that the real prisoner in the dock was the OBU . . . ."<sup>178</sup> In terms of re-establishing bourgeois order and hegemony, the state's attack on the OBU, rather than the Winnipeg TLC, proved to be a devious stroke. The Strike and the TLC's opposition to it had split labour in Winnipeg. After the Strike the Winnipeg TLC organizationally and ideologically broke into

two camps: the Winnipeg Central Labour Council of the OBU and the re-organized TLC, which was a part of the Labour and Citizens' League which had replaced the Citizens' Committee.<sup>179</sup> By naming the prime culprit of the Strike the OBU, the state could descend upon all of Winnipeg labour without totally alienating it when using methods supposedly foreign to bourgeois justice. Thus, while Bray and the Strike Committee insisted they were "defenders of constitutional government and methods . . .", and while Premier Norris of Manitoba said he believed them the Royal North Western Mounted Police charged crowds of strikers with weapons drawn.<sup>180</sup> This brought such responses from labour as "Kaizerism in Canada";<sup>181</sup> it also brought the conclusion of the strike.

In the short run, the attack on the OBU, along with the arrest of the strike leaders, did in fact alienate labour. The Winnipeg example of the consequences of bolting bourgeois hegemony rather than staying within the fold, which for labour was structurally the TLC, was not appreciated immediately by Winnipeg, Western and indeed Eastern labour. Labour's return to the TLC, or what may be called the solidification of the Canadian working class defeat, would be a rather protracted struggle. It would feature the working class in opposition to the repressive 'trinity' of capital, the state and the AFL/TLC. The latter would operate through its western remnants to whom the state had made its early appeal in the manner in which it had handled the Winnipeg General Strike and the OBU. Indeed, the locus of origin of the combined anti-OBU forces occurred within the throes of the Strike. The removal of several important OBU (/SPC) leaders from the class struggle, through detention and imprisonment was their first victory over the OBU.

The reason that the immediate defeat of the working class did not follow the defeat of the Winnipeg Strike is because the Strike had sympathetic support among mostly Western labour. Moreover, the arrest of the Strike leaders enraged all of Canadian labour including the Toronto TLC.<sup>182</sup> The backlash of solidarity, however, must be viewed in historical perspective. The Toronto TLC and much of Ontario-based labour had no affinity for the OBU. The Toronto TLC did demand the immediate release of the Strike Committee members, but only after the Toronto Metal Trades Council began debating the possibility of organizing a national general strike.<sup>183</sup> Rather than categorically renounce the strike, as the (national) TLC had done, the Toronto TLC sought to be agreeable to the TLC, (the state and capital) while quelling and appeasing the radical sections of its own organization. But it was impossible to appease the Toronto Metal Workers and all 12,000 of them went out on a sympathetic strike.<sup>184</sup> Meanwhile in the west, the Winnipeg Strike had evoked the greatest response and found the greatest solidarity. In that part of the country the opposition to the repressive 'trinity' survived the longest. While the opposition did not eschew electoral and legal means to political power, its most visible act is seen in the many general strikes in cities such as Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Edmonton, Calgary and Saskatoon.<sup>185</sup>

However, these strikes were never more than sympathetic and they never exceeded the demand for economic concessions. The Vancouver TLC's sympathetic general strike demands can be taken as typifying the demands other strikers put forward. They were: 1) the reinstatement of Winnipeg's postal workers and the settlement of their grievances; 2) the

granting of the right of collective bargaining; 3) pensions for soldiers; 4) a lump sum of \$200 for serving overseas; 5) national abattoirs and the end of food hoarding; and 6) the six-hour day in industries where unemployment was high.<sup>186</sup>

Moreover, the economic strike opposition dissipated and ended in defeat. The question then is why did this opposition dissipate and end? To be sure, coercion was used, but here we are also looking into the sympathetic strikes which dissolved themselves. The Vancouver General Strike is an example. It ended de jure on July 4, 1919, after 28 days, and after having accomplished little and still voicing the demand for the release of the imprisoned Woodsworth and Pritchard.<sup>187</sup> The reason for this is to be found in the logic of the development which culminated in strike activity. Why labour chose the weapon of the general strike is more complex than why it chose to form its own political parties; however, the reasoning follows the same line. In the case of the labour parties, labour sought its own independent and hopefully effective electoral instrument. Thus, it categorically opposed bourgeois parties and bourgeois hegemony and shunned the leadership of the socialist parties. When these parties floundered in their attempts to become functional, or when they became operational but ineffectual, they were left by the wayside by an impatient and militant working class. When the TLC was lacking in democracy and proclivity to direct action, militant western labour was forced to act through another vista -- the general strike. Furthermore, the linkages, activists, committees and councils which operationalized the general strike were all in labour's hands. Although there was a socialist-labour overlap in British Columbia, the

formation and character of the strikes were identical across the west. This is because there was no socialist party entrenched within labour which displayed a modicum of extra-electoral leadership. Moreover, there was no socialist/revolutionary organization that was national in scope of entrenchment and unified to the degree that it was able to not just give the strike action an element of political leadership but also political leadership on a national--even (western) regional--scale. Without this element labour relied on its own indigenous leadership. However, its ideology and praxis was predicated upon the constantly disproven ideal which stipulated political action--the capture of the state --would be conducted along electoral lines set by the ruling class. Meanwhile, economic action--the organized withdrawal of labour power--would be concerned solely with securing immediate, reformist demands. Whereas in the past the SPC had not been in tandem with labour on the latter point, now they were both in agreement on both positions although divided on whether labour parties or the SPC would contest elections with labour's endorsement and support.

In the final analysis, the SPC failed to lead the working class during the period of strikes. The SPC, was only capable of conducting a limited-electoral-war of position without the necessary organizational and ideological tools to bring about socialism electorally or otherwise. Even when the SPC did entrench itself among workers, the praxis it conducted in accordance with its recalcitrant impossiblist ideology, left it constantly on the peripheries of labour's struggles. While consequently impossiblism proved itself unable to lead the workers, the general strike weapon was "discredited by the failure of the OBU and the disaster

at Winnipeg".<sup>188</sup> The next result was working class disillusionment. Many workers withdrew to passivity while others reflected upon the need for a party to lead the working class to secure its liberation.<sup>189</sup> The latter would soon turn to the new and successful vista opened by Bolshevik ideology and praxis.

### XIII. Conclusion

The intensified class struggle--had revealed the weaknesses of the socialist parties. The weaknesses were tested and they proved responsible for the failures of the parties. The parties had withstood labour's inauguration of its own independent parties. The labour parties had caused defections among socialists and limited the socialists' electoral support base, but the labour parties were disorganized and took an excessive amount of time to become established. Between the severe weakening of bourgeois hegemony and the dawn of functioning labour parties, there was militancy and a lack of labour leadership. This still gave the socialists an opportunity to extend its leadership, however, repression, the lack of entrenchment, and the parties' ideologies did not permit the socialist parties to assume the leadership of the working class.

Repression was the bourgeoisie's coercive response to real and imagined social opposition to its regime. Nevertheless, repression, in and of itself, did not liquidate the socialist movement. Each party reacted and was affected differently. In each case their strengths and weaknesses became apparent.

The SPNA was pronounced illegal and thus it was defeated. The SDPC was also outlawed but its Ukrainian and Finnish branches survived

by reorganizing at least part of their activities under the aegis of their cultural institutions. Nevertheless, both the SPNA and the SDPC were removed from the forefront of the class struggle. The SPNA had been the weakest; not entrenched and with no alternative social structures to fall back on, it perished. The members of at least two of its locals, one in Guelph, the other in Toronto, continued to meet secretly. Otherwise, its members, like Buck, moved to the United States and worked within the Canadian branches of either of the two American communist parties. The SDPC's entrenchment was revealed as limited to ethnic communities, and so the party fragmented into functionally autonomous, isolated, and impotent pockets which would in the future form the membership of the communist party.

The SDPC's entrenchment and with it the leadership over cultural organizations was clearly not enough to save the party from repression. Like the SPNA and pre-1917 SPC, the SDPC had eschewed any interest in organizing the masses of unorganized workers. It sought labour endorsement instead of building and entrenching itself among the working class.

The SPC, on the other hand, had partially avoided repressive measures and had entrenched itself within British Columbia labour. Consequently, when labour exhibited a proclivity towards direct action, the SPC was integrally tied to and was at the helm of this tendency. Thus, it was able to establish and assume the leadership of the OBU. Unfortunately, the ideology of the SPC/OBU had not developed beyond possibilist electoral politics and the SPC/OBU was unable to lead the working class.

The general lack of political leadership and the contribution to

defensive action by the SPC, allowed labour leaders to emerge and take command. These leaders attempted to guide the workers' struggle but within the bourgeois constitution because this leadership had faith in bourgeois justice. Consequently, the leadership was conservative which resulted in only the withdrawal of labour power.

This history, which we have arrested at approximately mid-1919, became a lesson to Canadian workers, and, as such, history provided an invaluable pedagogical lesson. Due to their defeats and failures, the ideology and praxis of the SPNA, SDPC, SPC and the OBU became questioned by socialists and workers alike. The year of intensified class struggle was now almost over and alternative ideologies would soon be called in to provide explanations and new models of praxis.

## NOTES

1. Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), pp. 69-70; Tim Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution (Toronto: Progress Books, 1967), p. 79; "A Short History of the Communist Party of Canada", Robert S. Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, p. 17.

This was done after the state had indicated detained prisoners of war would work in industrial sectors where they would not "'be unduly in competition with Canadian labour'". An example stated: they would clean up "national parks of dead or fallen leaves". Edmonton Bulletin, Oct. 29, 1914 in Helen Potrebenko, No Streets of Gold: A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1977), p. 107.

Of course, this was simply a facade to appease labour, for, if the 'aliens' were so bold as to resist the condition of forced labour, which was indeed in competition with Canadian labour, then they would be deported. Anne B. Woywitka, "Drumheller Strike of 1919," Alberta Historical Review, 21, no. 1 (Winter, 1973), 4.

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7. Ryan, Tim Buck, pp. 50-51; Robin, "Registration", p. 103.
8. Ibid., p. 106 and p. 118.

9. D. J. Bercuson, "The Winnipeg General Strike, Collective Bargaining, and The One Big Union Issue", Canadian Historical Review, LI, no. 2 (June, 1970), 167; Warrian, "The Challenge of The One Big Union", p. 45.
10. Robin, "Registration", p. 106; Industrial Banner, June 8, 1917;
11. B. C. Federationist, June 16, 1916; see also Western Labour News, Dec. 27, 1918.
12. Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), pp. 6-7.
13. Norman Penner, "International Unions and the Canadian Left", in Craig Heron, Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada. Essays from the Marxist Institute of Toronto (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, n.d.), p. 191.
14. Western Clarion, June 1915 in Dorothy G. Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel: Ernest E. Winch and his Times (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1960), p. 29.
15. The Voice, June 22, 1917.
16. Canadian Forward, Jan. 10, 1918.
17. The SDPC 1915 Manifesto in Troop, "Socialism in Canada," pp. 60-61. See also Cotton's Weekly, Aug. 20, 1914; The Voice, Oct. 9, 1914, Oct. 16, 1914, Apr. 2, 1915; Canadian Forward, Dec. 2, 1916.
18. Ibid., p. 61.
19. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 34.
20. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 62.
21. The Voice, Dec. 18, 1914 in Ernest Chisick, "The Origins and Development of the Marxist Socialist Movement in Winnipeg, 1900-1915", (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), p. 115, fn. no. 1.
22. The Voice, Aug. 24, 1914 in ibid., pp. 116-117. See Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 60-65. Troop is in error when he implies that all English speaking leaders and the "moderates" left the party, (ibid.). On one hand, Isaac Bainbridge remained and he became the national secretary after Martin had ostensibly gone to fight in the war, (see Western Clarion, Sept. 1915). On the other hand, the choice of the word "moderate" is unfortunate. There is nothing moderate about supporting the imperialistic ambitions of the bourgeoisie. For this reason we are obliged to employ the term chauvinist when discussing labourers who supported the Allies war effort.

23. The Voice, Sept. 25, 1914;
24. Ibid..
25. The Voice, Feb. 5, 1915.
26. The Voice, Nov. 2, 1917.
27. See B. C. Federationist, Jan. 14, Apr. 28, June 30, Aug. 18, 1916; and Ryan, Tim Buck, p. 50. B. C. Federationist, Aug. 7, 1914; Industrial Banner, Apr. 27, 1917.
28. Industrial Banner, Dec. 7, 1917; Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 67-68.
29. Industrial Banner, July 6, 1917. For the SDPC's first use of the slogan, see Canadian Forward, Dec. 2, 1916.
30. B. C. Federationist, June 22, 1917; Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the TLC, 1917, pp. 141-142 in Warrrian, "The Challenge of the One Big Union", p. 41.
31. Warrrian, "The Challenge of the One Big Union", p. 42.
32. Idem.
33. Ibid., p. 40.
34. Industrial Banner, July 6, 1917.
35. Canadian Forward, May 10, 1918.
36. Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1968), p. 158.
37. Idem.
38. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 90.
39. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 19, 1918; Industrial Banner, Sept. 24, 1920.
40. N. Penner, "International Unions", in Heron, p. 191.
41. Industrial Banner, July 11, 1919.
42. Industrial Banner, Feb. 21, Mar. 7, 1919.
43. See The Voice, Oct. 26, 1917; The Voice, Nov. 16, 1917; and also The Voice, June 15, 1917.
44. Western Labour News, Nov. 1, 1918; Western Labour News, Dec. 10, 1920; and see Western Labour News, Oct. 29, 1920.

45. Western Labour News, Oct. 3, 1919.
46. Western Labour News, July 30, 1920; W. L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 274.
47. W. L. Morton, Manitoba, A History, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 373.
48. J. S. Woodsworth gained 3,592 votes more than his closest opponent. One Big Union Bulletin, Dec. 8, 1921. Hereafter cited as OBU Bulletin.
49. See B. C. Federationist, Oct. 12, Oct. 19, Dec. 17, Dec. 28, 1917.
50. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 13, 1918 in Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 71; see also B. C. Federationist, Feb. 15, Feb. 22, 1918.
51. See B. C. Federationist, Feb. 8, Mar. 1, Mar. 15, 1918; B. C. Federationist, Feb. 20, 1919.
52. B. C. Federationist, Aug. 29, 1919.
53. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 68.
54. Morton, The Progressive Party, p. 244.
55. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 200; Morton, The Progressive Party, p. 274.
56. Industrial Banner, Nov. 16, 1917.
57. Canadian Forward, Feb. 24, 1918; Industrial Banner, Mar. 29, 1918.
58. Canadian Forward, Feb. 24, 1918.
59. For the first alternative see Canadian Forward, May 10, 1918; for the second alternative see Canadian Forward, Mar. 24 and Apr. 10, 1918; for the last alternative see Canadian Forward, May 10, 1918.
60. Canadian Forward, May 24, 1918.
61. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 11, 1918 in Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 29.
62. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 29.
63. The Voice, Mar. 1, 1918.
64. Western Labour News, Aug. 9, 1918.

65. Western Labour News, June 25, 1920. Queen, however, did not remain long with the DLP. He opted out and helped form the Manitoba ILP only to leave it in order to engage in politics as an independent labourite. See Alexander B. McKillop, "Citizen and Socialist: The Ethos of Political Winnipeg, 1919-1935", (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1970), p. 111.
66. The Voice, Oct. 8, 1915; Industrial Banner, Apr. 6, 1917.
67. Canadian Forward, Nov. 10, 1917; Canadian Forward, Feb. 10, 1918; The Voice, Nov. 24, 1916; The Voice, Apr. 4, 1912; Cotton's Weekly, Jan. 16, 1913; Chisick, "The Origins and Development", pp. 59-60.
68. The other organizations were the:  
 Industrial Workers of the World  
 Russian Social Democratic Party  
 Russian Revolutionary Group  
 Russian Social Revolutionists  
 Russian Workers Union  
 Ukrainian Revolutionary Group  
 Ukrainian Social Democratic Party  
 Socialist Labour Party  
 Group of Social Democrats of Bolshevik  
 Group of Social Democrats of Anarchists  
 Workers International Industrial Union  
 Chinese Nationalists League  
 Chinese Labour Association  
 Source: Western Clarion, Oct. 15, 1918; Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 77-78.
69. Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 75.
70. William Rodney, Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada, 1919-1929 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 17.
71. Sir Robert Borden Papers, 56656, G. M. Cahan to Borden, July 20, 1918 in Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 75.
72. Western Clarion, Oct. 15, 1918; Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 75.
73. Western Labour News, Oct. 11, 1918; Western Labour News, Oct. 18, 1918; Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 80-81.
74. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 82; J. Donald Wilson, "The Finnish Organization of Canada, The 'Language Barrier', and the Assimilation Process", Canadian Ethnic Studies, IX, no. 2 (1977), 114.
75. Potrebenko, No Streets of Gold, p. 144.
76. Ibid., p. 144 and p. 161.

77. William Bennett, Builders of British Columbia (Vancouver, n.d.), p. 142; Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', pp. 79-80.
78. Ryan, Tim Buck, pp. 59-60; Canadian Forward, Sept. 24, 1917; Industrial Banner, May 31, 1918; Western Labour News, Nov. 22, 1918; Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 73 and p. 76; Ryan, Tim Buck, p. 70. For other arrests of socialists see the QBU Bulletin, Nov. 13, 1920.
79. Marxian Socialist, July, 1918.
80. "Short History of the CPC", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, Chapter 2, p. 3.
81. Canada, Dept. of the Secretary of State, Office of the Chief Press Censor, Ottawa, Oct. 5, 1918, R. S. Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 67, UTL, TF.
82. Industrial Banner, Mar. 28, 1919; Wilson, "The Finnish Organization", pp. 107-109 and pp. 113-114; Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 79.
83. Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 71.
84. Paul Yuzyk, The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), pp. 98-99; Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', pp. 120-121; Rodney, Soldiers, p. 18.
85. Vera Lysenko, Men in Sheepskin Coats (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 120; Yuzyk, The Ukrainians, p. 99.
86. Rodney, Soldiers, p. 18; Yuzyk, The Ukrainians, p. 99.
87. Canadian Forward, Nov. 24, 1917. That Kautsky became a revisionist of Marxism -- in Lenin's words a "renegade" -- is of no consequence here. His influence on the SDPC was important with respect to the trade union movement, and never extended far beyond that. Most notably, the SDPC never adopted the evolutionary, as opposed to revolutionary, road to socialism he espoused.
88. Cotton's Weekly, Feb. 16. Mar. 2, May 25, 1911.
89. Cotton's Weekly, Feb. 13, 1913.
90. Cotton's Weekly, Apr. 3, 1913.
91. Cotton's Weekly, Apr. 17, 1913.
92. Cotton's Weekly, June 26, 1913.
93. Canadian Forward, Nov. 10, 1917.
94. Cotton's Weekly, Jan. 9, 1913.

95. Cotton's Weekly, Feb. 13, 1913.
96. Canadian Forward, Feb. 10, 1918.
97. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 2, 1917.
98. B. C. Federationist, Feb. 2, 1917 as cited in Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 67.
99. B. C. Federationist, Apr. 20, 1917.
100. Canadian Forward, Feb. 24, 1918.
101. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 70. The Voice claimed that 10 socialists voted against the new party. The Voice, Feb. 1, 1918; see also Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 36.
102. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 37; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 149.
103. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 37; Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 70.
104. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 89; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 199; Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 72.
105. Canadian Forward, Feb. 24, 1918.
106. Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 89-90.
107. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978), p. 123.
108. B. C. Federationist, June 6, 1919 as cited in Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 52.
109. OBU Bulletin, Nov. 8, 1919; B. C. Federationist, Nov. 18, 1911.
110. B. C. Federationist, Nov. 18, 1911.
111. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 31, 1919.
112. Paul A. Phillips, "The National Policy and the Development of the Western Canadian Labour Movement", in A. W. Rasporich and H. G. Klassen, editors, Prairie Perspectives 2 Selected Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference, 1970, 1971 (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1973), p. 51. According to the B. C. Federationist, the emasculation was accomplished after the AFL's opposition to the TLC's 1911 endorsement of industrial organization. See B. C. Federationist, Oct. 31, 1919.

113. Phillips, "The National Policy", in Rasporich and Klassen, eds., p. 51; see also B. C. Federationist, Sept. 19, 1913.
114. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 67.
115. It was reported that 92 per cent of the Winnipeg TLC had voted for the adoption of the general strike weapon. Western Labour News, Oct. 25, 1918. See also Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 122.
116. Canadian Forward, Sept. 10, 1918.
117. In his defence the officer said he had come upon an armed suspect - Goodwin - in a wooded area after sundown. To be sure, Goodwin was in possession of a weapon. It was a small calibre rifle he used to kill small game to feed himself as he hid in the woods avoiding the draft and the police. B. C. Federationist, Aug. 2, 1918.
118. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 39.
119. Ibid., p. 47.
120. D. C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 31.
121. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 4, 1918 in Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 75. Rees was from Fernie, British Columbia but he was unpopular among western delegates because he represented the Union of Mine Workers of America whose union secretary, Billy Green and its president, J. P. White, were both (USA) Democratic Party members and hence the union was known as class collaborationist. See Western Clarion, Aug. 1917.
122. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 75; Jack Williams, The Story of Unions in Canada (Canada: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1975), p. 113.
123. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 31, 1919.
124. B. C. Federationist, Oct. 31, 1919; Western Labour News, Nov. 29, 1918.
125. Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 85-86. McCormack has written that Pritchard and Russell led the SPC to direct action after the failure of the SPC became evident. (A. Ross McCormack, "Arthur Puttée and the Liberal Party: 1899-1904", Canadian Historical Review, LI, No. 2 (June 1970), p. 27). However, we would do well to remember that without a number of SPC members strategically placed within the labour movement, the SPC could have been led, but it could not have led the direct action movement.
126. Western Clarion, July, 1917.
127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.
129. Western Clarion, Aug. 1917.
130. Ibid.
131. Western Labour News, Jan 24, 1919 in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", pp. 84-85.
132. The SPC Manifesto, 1918, Winnipeg Trials Crown Exhibit 98, in Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 84.
133. Idem.
134. See Western Clarion, Jan. 1918.
135. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 75.
136. B. C. Federationist, May 31, 1918.
137. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, p. 106.
138. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 78; B.C. Federationist, Mar. 14, 1919.
139. Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 85-86.
140. Ibid., p. 78.
141. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 14, 1919.
142. Gerald Friesen, "'Yours in Revolt' The Socialist Party of Canada and the Western Canadian Labour Movement ", Labour/Le Travailleur, Journal of Canadian Labour Studies, I (1976), p. 140.
143. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 48.
144. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 91.
145. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 78.
146. B. C. Federationist, Mar. 28, 1919.
147. Phillips, No Power Greater, pp. 78-79.
148. Friesen, "'Yours in Revolt'", p. 144.
149. Western Labour Conference, Proceedings, pp. 24, 33, in Charles Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959 (Montreal: Canadian Social Publications, 1966), pp. 188-189.
150. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 93; Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, p. 219.

151. Red Flag, Aug. 30, 1919.
152. Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, p. 216.
153. OBU Bulletin, Aug. 23, 1919.
154. Norman Penner, "Introduction", in Norman Penner, ed. Winnipeg, 1919, second edition (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1975), p. x.
155. Pritchard, 1919, as quoted by Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen, n. p.
156. A. P. Chew in Western Labour News, July 11, 1919.
157. Red Flag, June 21, 1919.
158. Red Flag, June 21, 1919.
159. Red Flag, Aug. 30, 1919.
160. J. E. Rea, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1973), p. 3.
161. Ibid., p. 13.
162. In 1917 there were 160 strikes whereas in 1918 there were 230 strikes. Labour Canada, Strikes and Lockouts in Canada 1977 (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1978), p. 12.
163. Canadian Forward, July 10, 1918.
164. B. C. Federationist, May 10, 1918.
165. The preceding information was taken from: Kenneth McNaught and D. J. Bercuson, The Winnipeg General Strike: 1919 (Don Mills, Ontario, Longman Canada, 1974), pp. 15-19; and, Western Labour News, Aug. 2, 12, 16, 1918.
166. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, pp. 49-50.
167. See Western Labour News, May 19, 1919; Penner, ed., Winnipeg 1919, p. 62.
168. Warran, "The Challenge of the One Big Union", p. 74.
169. Penner, "Introduction", in Penner, ed., Winnipeg 1919, p. xviii.
170. Western Labour News, June 17, 1919.
171. Western Labour News (Special Strike Edition), May 17, 1919.
172. Western Labour News, May 23, 1919; A. E. Smith, All My Life (Toronto: Progress Books, 1977), pp. 47-48. For a list of 'Terms'

which applied to labour, see "Peace Table Terms Support Strikers", in Penner, ed., Winnipeg 1919, p. 40.

173. Western Labour News, June 17, 1919.
174. B. C. Federationist, Sept. 5, 1919; Western Labour News, July 21, 1919; Western Labour News, Sept. 12, 1919; B. C. Federationist, Sept. 12, 1919.
175. H. A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, Their Development and Functioning (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1948), pp. 322-323.
176. The Committee indicated that it did not interfere in the affairs of Canadian criminal courts. W. W. Lefeaux, Winnipeg -- London -- Moscow (Winnipeg: Canadian Workers' Defense League, 1921), p. 8.
177. Red Flag, May 31, 1919. See also Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 80; Rea, The Winnipeg General Strike, p. 13; Robin, Radical Politics, p. 181.
178. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike, p. 133.
179. Morton, Manitoba, p. 372.
180. Toronto Star, June 4, 1919 in Rea, The Winnipeg General Strike, p. 69.
181. Western Labour News, June 23, 1919.
182. Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, p. 199.
183. Idem.
184. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 99.
185. See B. C. Federationist, June 6, 1919; Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, p. 94; Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 81.
186. B. C. Federationist, May 30, 1919.
187. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 81.
188. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 114.
189. "A Short History of the CPC", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, p. 24.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BEGINNING OF CANADIAN COMMUNISM

#### I. Introduction

In the last chapter we saw the inability of the socialist parties to lead the working class. In Chapter III we dealt with the condition of fragmentation and the uncompromising and disunited relationships among the parties. Thus we saw the inability of one party to unite the socialist parties and lead the working class. Our task now is to return to this discussion of unity.

The Russian revolution and Bolshevik ideology, in and of themselves, did not bring forth the Canadian communist party. To understand this is to come to grips with the class struggle in Canada in an attempt to situate Bolshevism in its locus in the struggle not only as an alternative but as the unity of Canadian socialist parties. We have already seen how the lack of socialist leadership led to the birth of labour parties, and how the TLC's refusal to hear out and appease western labour led to the formation of the OBU. Finally we have also seen the repression of the Socialist Party of North America and the Social Democratic Party of Canada and how the Socialist Party of Canada re-emerged entrenched in the OBU. The labour parties, the OBU and the SPC were alternatives to the past socialist failures. When the working class entered the period of intensified class struggle in 1919 the labour parties were not yet organized or well established and the leadership of the working class rested with the TLC and the OBU/SPC. The working class'

defeat is seen to indicate the failure of the OBU's and SPC's praxis. The labour parties would meet with the same fate and consequently all of the alternatives would be discredited failures. It was at this point, in late 1921 and early 1922, that Bolshevism, aided by a now more informed working class than in 1917 and a relaxation of repression, made its appearance drawing support from and uniting socialists and activists who sought an effective organization through which to struggle.

Therefore, we will argue that, its prestige notwithstanding and although at first warmly received, Bolshevism in Canada faced barriers to organizations. The barriers were a lack of information concerning Bolshevism, the lack of an organized Bolshevik nucleus, repression and the existence of alternative organs which attracted working class support. The latter is the most important for once the alternatives faltered then their supporters looked to Bolshevism. Through a study of ideological debates, we can account for the splits and demise of Canadian socialism and how and why Bolshevism unified and replaced it.

In order to accomplish this, we must first come to terms with the arguments by Canadian scholars concerning the origin of the communist party. That is the purpose of the first section. Section II will answer the question why, despite the reaction by the Canadian working class, the communist party arose under an assumed name as late as 1922. Sections III and IV will continue this line of inquiry examining the responses of the workers and the socialist parties to Bolshevism and concluding with a brief look at repression and an early attempt to form an illegal communist party. Sections V, VI, and VIII, will deal with the alternatives -- the labour parties, the OBU and the SPC in that order. Our object will

be to analyse the successes and failures of each organization and their ideological debates over Bolshevism. In this manner we will see the reasons behind the failures and defections to Bolshevism. Section VIII will discuss the character of the Workers Party of Canada while section IX will discuss international communist linkages. The conclusion will follow.

## II. Considerations on the Formation of the Communist Party

All the explanations for the advent of the CPC can be presented as five theses. They must be discussed independently for clarity's sake before this chapter can proceed.

1) The first argument is plagued by theoretical and historical inaccuracies. Morton has written:

The European Social Democratic movement was to give rise to a local Communist Party, which was to represent a hard core of unassimilated aliens and unrelieved social discontent.<sup>1</sup>

Why the SDPC is considered European is never clear. Not only was the party Canadian, but many of its members became proletarianized in Canada and, although they articulated their condition in their native languages -- the languages they knew best -- they articulated a phenomenon in and of the Canadian context. It is precisely in the non-English working class language press, as well as the English working class and labour press, that we find the expression of Canadian working class culture. Therefore the claim that the SDPC formed the CPC is inaccurate yet consistent if one believes that communism is foreign culturally, ideologically and ethnically to Canada. This is why, according to Morton, the CPC represents specifically 'unassimilated aliens'. But how non-Anglo-Saxon and therefore foreign is the CPC when we look at some party

members? Names like Buck, MacDonald, Kerwin, Fillmore, Wallace, MacLachlan, Ross, Kavanagh, Smith, Wells, etc., are anything if not Anglo-Saxon. To be sure, individually Finns, Ukrainians or Jews outnumbered Anglo-Saxons, but what is at issue here is that Morton's explanation cannot accommodate Anglo-Saxons in the communist party. The reason for this, and the analytical source of his error, as well as the error of others who fall into this framework, is that Morton ascribes to ethnicity characteristics it simply does not possess.

2) The weakness of the second explanation of the presence of a communist party in Canada relates to the linking of Bolshevik ideology directly to the ideologies of the Canadian socialist parties. Grimson errs when he points to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the One Big Union (OBU) as the backbone of the CPC. He adds that the ideological bases of the WPC/CPC were the SDPC, due to its emphasis on daily struggle, and the SPC who, among other things, eschewed the notion of a spontaneous workers' revolution thus making both parties ideologically akin to Bolshevism.<sup>2</sup> However, the IWW and OBU did not accept Bolshevik praxis. Those who agreed with Bolshevism rejected the failure-ridden SDPC ideology. Finally, the entire ideology of the SPC was inconsistent with membership in the CPC. In particular, the SPC and CPC disagreed on the question of spontaneity and the revolution. Since the SPC only had a concept of education and not leadership, it supported spontaneity by default. In other words, how the revolution would occur was no concern of theirs since there could be no revolution without education and the amount of education needed was enough to keep any socialist overpreoccupied with simply teaching.

Bolshevism, then, did not come and settle upon pre-established organs and ideologies. It shared nothing, except the hope of a better world, with Canadian socialism. Instead, owing to its success elsewhere, and the failures of Canadian socialism, Bolshevism found recruits from within the Canadian socialist, labour and working class movements.

3) The third explanation is a standard journalistic one. Ralph Allen has written: Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald helped Buck form the CPC in 1921 and three "organizers", one a Latvian using the name Charles Scott, came from Moscow bearing \$3,000 to finance the party's launching.<sup>3</sup> In this manner, Allen has treated the formation of the CPC as a technical fact, much like securing a patent. Omitted is any discussion of the social sphere with its crises, ideologies, classes, parties and struggles which contributed to the unification of the socialist parties under the CPC. The CPC was, therefore, a social organ with a social and political relevance for Canadian workers and not the blossomed idea of three political entrepreneurs.

4) According to Warrian, the Russian revolution was an "inspiration and model for radicals".<sup>4</sup> We have also stressed the Russian experience and Bolshevism as a model and this is a good general overview position to take. However, without further discussion it is insufficient to explain problems evident at the micro level of analysis which deals with the process leading from the Revolution/Bolshevism to the establishment of the CPC. Within a temporal context, the following question arises: if Warrien's 'model' theory is accepted, why then did five years pass before the WPC appeared?

The WPC/CPC emerged after the 1919 class struggles as a model, but not one without its competitors who also sought to explain the social crisis the working class found itself in. In order for Bolshevism to gain prestige and be a de facto model it was obliged to rise above the other alternatives namely the labour parties, the OBU and the SPC. How and why this came about is the concern of this chapter.

5) The last explanation belongs to Norman Penner. He deals with the CPC as the unity of a majority of the SPC; a minority of the SDPC; and, "almost the entire membership of" the SPNA.<sup>5</sup> Essentially this is correct, although it appears that the SDPC contributed a majority. What is still lacking, however, is a full analysis of the debates between the SPC and the CPC. In examining these debates, this chapter will show how the Bolshevik ideology gained ascendancy over the ideology of the SPC and the ideologies of the other alternatives. Consequently, we will present Bolshevism as a model and show how the WPC/CPC realized the unity of the socialist parties.

### III. The Bolshevik Revolution and Canadian Workers

The latter part of the 1900's and the early 1920's was a period of revolutionary social upheaval in Europe and North America. Not only do workers' and peasants' struggles bear this out, but so do the revolutions in art and ideology. In Poland, Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz wrote the basis of the revolutionary new theatre; Andre Breton founded the Paris Dada movement and articulated the aesthetics of Surrealism; in Canada Joe Lamb was one of three North American founders of jazz; and, Bolshevism became an influential force to be reckoned with the world over.

Our purpose here is to argue that, although support for the Bolshevik revolution was expressed by the Canadian working class, the lack of information concerning Bolshevism was instrumental in delaying the establishment of a communist party in Canada. This discussion will then present the first reason for the late emergence of the CPC. As Penner writes, the Bolshevik Revolution was warmly greeted by Canadian workers.<sup>6</sup> SPC member Sam Blumenberg stated at a 1918 Walker Theatre meeting: "Bolshevism is the only thing which will emancipate the working class".<sup>7</sup> After the Revolution the Western Labour News saw the need for a counter-hegemony and indicated: Revolution abroad calls to labour, the farmer and the returned soldier in Canada to get together.<sup>8</sup> The Bolshevik Revolution showed socialists and workers that social revolution was less distant and more possible. At the same time it was becoming apparent that Bolshevik, and not SPC, praxis was beginning to interest workers. As Tom Beattie, a Coleman, Alberta coal miner, wrote to the SPC: "In the mine where I work the sole topic of conversation both going in and coming out is socialism and Bolshevism . . ."<sup>9</sup> Another Alberta miner wrote: "We want to be using some Russian methods -- resolutions don't get us anywhere".<sup>10</sup>

However, the sympathy and support displayed for the Bolshevik revolution by the Canadian working class, was support for the ideal the revolution represented. It could not be support for Bolshevism since information regarding Bolshevism was unavailable until some time after 1917. In 1918 the Western Clarion wrote, we are waiting for "the news which is gradually coming through regarding the situation in Russia".<sup>11</sup> Gradually meant slowly because of the censorship of the socialist press

in Canada. Although some works by Trotsky and Lenin became reprinted or serialized in mid-1918, other important documents took longer. Lenin's most relevant work for Canadian socialists was his 'Left-Wing' Communism - An Infantile Disorder. Written in 1920 and distributed to delegates of the Third International's Second Congress in July, 1920, it appeared in 1921 in a serialized form in the B.C. Federationist during the SPC's Bolshevism debates.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, prior to 1920, not enough information existed on the Bolshevik party and its ideology to call for debate or organization according to Bolshevik principles. Only after the Theses and Statutes of the Third International became public in 1920 did debates and reflections on Bolshevism become pronounced.

Our argument thus far has taken a different course than the one expressed by Buck and the Short History of the CPC. Both state that Canadian workers were aware of the significance of both the February and October revolutions immediately after they occurred.<sup>13</sup> This presupposes that indeed Canadian workers were informed of the Russian situation of 1917. Now, to be sure, the working class press did report on the tyranny of the Russian regime as far back as the 1900's. However, in 1917 Canadian socialists were far from understanding what had occurred that year, much less did they know of the February revolution. Two months after the February revolution, the Western Clarion had correctly associated Lenin with the Bolsheviks and it knew a revolution had occurred.<sup>14</sup> But it showed no indication of comprehending the meaning of that revolution. The SDPC, on the other hand, fared no better in coming to grips with the February revolution. Although the party identified Kerensky rather early as a "fake socialist", it did not seem to possess

an understanding of socialist parties in Russia.<sup>15</sup> It appears the SDPC did not realize the Russian Social Democratic Party had split into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks since they treated Russian socialists as a unit.<sup>16</sup> Only the B.C. Federationist characterized the February revolution as the replacement of autocracy by capitalism and it therefore predicted that a socialist revolution in Russia was unavoidable.<sup>17</sup>

In reply to Buck we conclude that, until 1919, there was a lack of information concerning the Bolsheviks, their ideology and the specificity of the two Russian revolutions. This lack was the first reason why no CPC was established or could be established. Buck's failure to recognize this leaves him unable to explain why the CPC arose as late as it did. To be sure, he deals with this question in an indirect fashion pointing out that the repressive Orders-in-Council retarded the legal formation of the CPC.<sup>18</sup> Repression, of course, is an important element but the Orders appeared in mid-1918, or over half a year after a supposedly informed working class witnessed the Bolshevik triumph. The point we have stressed is the working class was still thirsting for news concerning the Bolsheviks some time after the revolution had occurred.

#### IV. The Elusive New Socialist Unity

In 1921 a clandestine meeting of Bolshevik sympathisers was held in a barn in Guelph. The meeting was an attempt to achieve working class unity under one socialist party. This meeting was the communists' founding convention at which four national officers were elected: Jack MacDonald as chairperson, T. Burpee as secretary, Maurice Spector as editor and Buck as party organizer.<sup>19</sup> This convention is important

because the CPC now became established de facto (it was referred to as the 'Z' party).<sup>20</sup> It awaited de jure status which was granted in 1924 with the elimination of legislation banning a communist party. The critical question is why was the Guelph barn meeting held in 1921 and not earlier?

The answer will take into account the ideological positions of the three socialist parties on socialist unity and Bolshevism prior to the Guelph barn meeting and prior to the repressive Orders-in-Council of 1918. By analyzing these statements and positioning these parties where they belong vis a vis Bolshevism we will accomplish two things. We will present the second reason why the communist party arose in 1922 while at the same time laying the ideological lines of debate according to which future debates and splits took place. At this time these lines were being drawn in the early aftermath of the October revolution. The section will conclude on a note on the direct effect of repression on the establishment of a communist party.

In 1918, radically different proposals from those made earlier were now made concerning socialist unity. The first call for socialist unity came from the Manitoba section of the SDF after its convention of 1918. The convention expressed a desire to unite with the SPC but not according to SDPC or SPC principles. The Manitoba SDPC thought it best that both parties fuse "on the basis of the Bolshevik programme".<sup>21</sup>

This, however, was not the position of the national SDPC. Its convention, held earlier in 1918, made no reference to socialist unity or Bolshevism. It was preoccupied with defining the role and organization of the party and discussing how the party was to deal with the new

labour parties.<sup>22</sup> Already, then, two ideological tendencies were beginning to crystalize in a party which would fragment and deliver a significant part of its membership to the CPC. On the one hand were the Second International adherents who called for an end to World War One through the revival of the International.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand stood the pro-Bolsheviks, who in 1918 were in the main represented by the SDP of Manitoba. Rather than be party to the Second International they opted for affiliation with the "nucleus of the Third International", the Zimmerwalde Conference.<sup>24</sup>

The second call in 1918 for a socialist unity conference came from the SPNA and it was directed at all Canadian socialists. The SPNA had accepted whatever they know of Bolshevik ideology such as the Bolshevik concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On this score the SPNA argued that the workers must take the "ready made state machinery, (and) convert this instrument of oppression and class domination into an agent for the emancipation of all mankind from wage slavery forever".<sup>25</sup> All that was missing was a reference to smashing the bourgeois state before establishing a proletarian state. That the bourgeois state appears as something the working class can itself use is evidence that the SPNA had not totally broken with its impossibilism. Nevertheless, the party was well on its way to accepting Bolshevik ideology. The reason given by the SPNA for the need for socialist unity was the necessity of building a national party and engaging in political action rather than simply "philosophizing".<sup>26</sup>

A positive response to the SPNA's call for unity came from the SDP's and SPC's Lettish locals, the SDPC's Russian branch and the

Manitoba and Alberta Provincial Executive Committees of the SPC. However, while the Dominion Executive Committee of the SPC identified with and supported the Bolsheviks, it was not moved by the appeals for unity. Indeed, it used Lenin and Trotsky as a cloak to legitimate its sectarianism and its reason for not forming a Bolshevik party. Both times, when fusion was discussed, Stephenson, the dominion secretary reminded his party that Lenin and Trotsky had argued for revolutionary action at all times and the SDPC and the SPNA were never considered revolutionary parties by the SPC.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the SPC was apprehensive about the Marxist quality of Bolshevik Russia. Once Trotsky had said that not all of the factories in Russia were nationalized immediately after the revolution, the SPC concluded on March, 1918 that Soviet Russia was not a Marxist regime, that conditions for socialism were not present, and that the Russian people had no knowledge of socialism.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the SPC's political sectarianism continued and it prevented organizational unity with other socialists. The lack of agreement in the SDPC and the sectarianism of the leadership of the SPC constitute the second reason why the CPC did not spring up immediately after October, 1917.

Repression, with which we have dealt in Chapter IV, constitutes the third reason for the delayed arrival of the CPC. After the Winnipeg General Strike the underground SPNA debated how to unite the Canadian left. However, the vigilant repressive apparatus of the Canadian state dictated impossible conditions for organization. On February, 1919, the first conference to establish the CPC was to be held at the SPNA headquarters (185 $\frac{1}{2}$  Queen Street, Toronto). The plan was betrayed and the meeting was raided. The consequences were postponement of the CPC and

the deportation of Joan and Arthur Evert to Germany.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, prior to 1922 there were three functioning alternatives-- the labour parties, the OBU and the SPC -- which attracted the attention of workers and socialists alike. It was only after these alternatives proved incapable of leading the working class did their members look to Bolshevism as an alternative working class party model. The inability of the organs to lead workers and the subsequent ideological debates which ensued will be discussed in the following section.

#### V. The Labour Party Alternative

In 1917 the TLC agreed to erect a national Canadian Labour Party (CLP) composed of provincial labour party sections which were to be organized by provincial labour federations or major urban TLCs. The alternative was non-Bolshevik and it was modelled after the British Labour Party (BLP). It was to be organizationally linked to the labour union movement, thus providing labour with its own political arm. Ideologically the alternative was committed to reform, evolutionary change and electoral political action.

However, not one party of this alternative became established in 1917 and the national co-ordinator of the alternative, the CLP, was organized only in 1921 (see Chapter IV, section IV -- The Labour Parties). To be sure, some labour parties did arise between 1917 and 1921. They were the early labour parties, the Federated Labour Party (FLP), the Dominion Labour Party (DLP), the Ontario Labour Party (OLP) and the Ontario Independent Labour Party (Ontario ILP). Despite initial organizational difficulties, these parties quickly attracted labour and working class support. But their inability to effectively represent

labour's interests led to the formation of the CLP and its sections were the mature representation of the BLP-model alternative and they were organized strictly by the labour movement. However, they fared no better than the parties they had replaced for the failures of the early labour parties had lowered the prestige of and labour's faith in the possible efficacy of the BLP-model alternative.

It is the purpose of this section to analyze the ideology and support of the FLP, the DLP, the OLP, the Ontario ILP and finally the CLP and its affiliates. We will argue that, except for the FLP and the DLP until 1920, all of the labour parties were linked to and dedicated to serving the political interests of the labour movement which was committed to the international union movement represented by the American Federation of Labour and the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (AFL/TLC). Consequently, the parties opposed Bolshevism and the most eminent working class organization, the One Big Union (OBU), because they both represented a threat to the TLC's economic and political leadership of the labour movement. On the other hand, the labour parties failed to gain the support of the labour movement when, even after provincial electoral successes in Manitoba and Ontario, they proved unable to struggle effectively for labour's interests. Therefore, the labour parties failed as an alternative before the CLP was established and long before the AFL opposed the TLC's direct involvement in the political arena.

Finally, although some labour party members joined the CPC and although the CPC sought the affiliation of the CLP's provincial parties, the labour parties did not split over the question of affiliation with

the GPC. This is because to the ideologically committed labourite Bolshevism was culturally foreign and ideologically non-palatable. Therefore, when the labourites were faced with a Bolshevik alternative or no political labour or working class organ, the majority were unable to compromise and accept Bolshevism. They opted to forego political struggle altogether and the provincial labour parties were abandoned.

The Federal Labour Party was established in 1918. In that year it stated that the object of the party was to acquire "industrial legislation, the collective ownership and democratic operation of the means of wealth production".<sup>30</sup> However the party was to fail in its bid to lead workers because it was not radical enough for the British Columbia working class and it was too radical for that section of the labour movement which had remained loyal to the international union movement.

The FLP made no headway with militant BC workers because it was apparently not in tandem with their preferences. In early 1919 it accepted industrial unionism but, it did not go beyond endorsing the OBU as anything more than an educational body. At approximately the time that the BCFL threw its support behind the OBU, Kingsley of the FLP rallied to oppose the OBU with arguments erroneously linking the OBU to the unlawful IWW. Although he accepted the "'general strike if necessary'" he opted for the electoral road to change because it was legitimate.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps to him it was legitimate, but the BCFL questioned this aloud. It criticized the election lists which, it claimed, were drawn up by enumerators who had the discretionary powers to keep anyone they wanted from the list.<sup>32</sup>

The BCFL saw that industrialization was causing rapid changes in society and it argued that working class organizations were in need of transformation. Consequently, along with the SPC, the BCFL pushed for the OBU and, followed by the Winnipeg TLC and the Vancouver TLC, the BCFL seceded from the national TLC. According to the BCFL, the TLC's "autocratic methods" did not allow it sufficient representation hence nothing effective, short of withdrawal, could have been accomplished.<sup>33</sup> By early 1920 the BCFL was disbanded since the OBU made it "redundant".<sup>34</sup>

Politically the BCFL-OBU threw its support behind the Bolshevik idea. It was the only labour body to support Bolshevism in this total and convinced manner; indeed, the BCFL-OBU was the SPNA of the labour movement. The B.C. Federationist reminded its readers that Lenin saw elections as useful but warned of becoming content with this method of 'legal' struggle. Elections, it wrote, were to be looked upon as a place to perform only educational work. However, just prior to the provincial election of 1920 the Federationist became involved in supporting "official working class candidates", six of whom were from the SPC and eleven from the FLP.<sup>35</sup>

The election concluded with the FLP electing three MLAs but not one socialist was elected. The FLP thought the electoral results provided good ground for optimism. Along with three elected members, the FLP candidates had polled 25 percent of the vote while the socialists had only obtained 6 percent.<sup>36</sup> According to the BCFL-OBU the results were not sufficient reason to support the FLP and the B.C. Federationist stated that while the class struggle was intensifying daily "the election has proven without a doubt that the tactics of the working class'

political movement in this province are a failure".<sup>37</sup> Dissatisfied with the ballot as the only means of bringing about social change, the BCFL-OBU took on a revolutionary dimension the FLP could not represent. Consequently, the BCFL-OBU support was given to the communist Workers' Party of Canada. As the B.C. Federationist wrote: "The Workers' Party has arisen in consequences of the failure of the hitherto existing parties to co-ordinate and lead the working class in its struggle against capitalism".<sup>38</sup>

The FLP was not willing to endorse or adopt Bolshevik praxis, let alone join the WPC. On the other hand, according to Kingsley, the FLP had been inspired by the Bolshevik revolution and the party itself expressed support for the Bolshevik regime.<sup>39</sup> However, this pro-Bolshevik sympathy did not appeal to the pro-AFL/TLC labour movement in British Columbia and collaboration between the FLP and labour remained limited.

The pro-AFL/TLC labour organized itself under the name of the International Labour Council (ILC) in Vancouver in August of 1919.<sup>40</sup> When the ILC was established it counted nine unions and 25 affiliates; by December 1919 its membership stood at 5000. Its praxis involved lobbying the provincial legislature and involving itself in municipal elections in coalition with veterans' groups and the FLP.<sup>41</sup>

However, the ILC-FLP coalition was limited by the conservative sectarianism of the ILC. Unlike the FLP which sought united action with the SPC, the ILC opposed the SPC because it had erected the OBU which, the ILC claimed, had almost destroyed craft unionism.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the ILC also opposed Bolshevism and accused the Communist Third International of splitting the labour movement the world over.<sup>43</sup> In its press, the B.C. Labour News, it attacked Bolshevism and held in contempt every working class organization which sympathised with Bolshevism.

Finally, the ILC was not beyond racist campaigns in which there is no evidence of FLP participation. When in 1921 economic conditions were forecast to worsen, the ILC formed the Asiatic Exclusion League together with "labour, soldier and merchant groups, including six unions and the Vancouver TLC".<sup>44</sup> The raison d'etre of the League was expressed at a meeting between it and the Japanese Workers' Union. Secretary Macaulay indicated that Orientals were replacing "white workmen and preventing the surplus population of Great Britain from coming out here". He added that repatriation of Orientals was in order.<sup>45</sup>

The FLP was totally disregarded by the ILC when the latter threw its support behind the Canadian Labour Party in 1921 and behind the newly formed provincial British Columbia labour party when it was established in 1924. The FLP continued to exist but it was virtually unknown. On September 29, 1925 it held a convention with the SPC. Together they fused and formed a small Independent Labour Party in British Columbia. Meanwhile, the British Columbia section of the CLP lacked working class support and ceased to exist in 1928.

Like the FLP, the DLP was established in 1918. On the other hand, unlike the FLP, the party enjoyed the support of the Winnipeg TLC and the labour unions of Manitoba before and after the founding of the OBU. However, despite electing ten MLAs in 1920, the DLP proved unable to represent labour satisfactorily. A decline in support and the party's fortunes then became inevitable.

The DLP's 1918 program was directed at the working class in general. It called for social ownership of capitalist property by the working class, public ownership of railroads and public utilities, an .

end to voting qualifications and child (under the age of sixteen) labour and for total enfranchisement of both sexes. To deliver this the DLP said it would seek representation on all public bodies.<sup>46</sup>

Before the DLP was able to contest the provincial elections the OBU was established. By withdrawing the militants from the Winnipeg TLC the OBU allowed the DLP, which was rooted in the urban TLC, to fall into the hands of the AFL/TLC supporters. The latter were led by R. A. Rigg, a one time SDPC member, who had been sent by the TLC to re-establish international unionism.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, the DLP became a conservative labour party and in co-operation with the TLC, it called for labour unity under the leadership of the TLC,

There is no room for defection, for factions, for secessions, or for internal animosities. The solid force of labour must<sup>48</sup> be behind the organized trade union movement . . .

The appeal was produced by and limited to the non-militant and pro-AFL/TLC labour against AFL/TLC opponents. Thus, the DLP, in tandem with the TLC, attacked the OBU as the DLP's "official manifesto" opposed the OBU and pleaded for the "constitutional means of political action".<sup>49</sup> When the communist party was formed and it announced its intention to capture the AFL in order to defeat the capitalist class using the AFL's organized class base, the DLP and the labour movement opposed the WPC and the CPC.<sup>50</sup>

In 1920, the DLP elected three members in Winnipeg and seven provincially. With the United Farmers of Manitoba it held 23 seats to the Liberal's 21 and the Conservative's 9 seats, (two riding elections were deferred).<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, despite its 'entent' with the farmers, the party produced no significant labour legislation. Far from satisfying

the working class, it did not even meet the promises of its program nor please the labour movement. As its efficacy decreased, the DLP was referred to less and less by the labour press. Consequently, when the CLP was formed in 1921, Manitoba labour looked forward to a Manitoba section of the national labour party. The new party was late in coming because differences between the Winnipeg ILP and DLP made unity impossible. Finally both the DLP and the ILP were abandoned as political weapons of labour when in the summer of 1924 the Winnipeg TLC organized a Manitoba section of the CLP which appeared in October of that year.

Ontario Labour, or more specifically the large Toronto TLC, was economically committed to the AFL/TLC and politically it was anti-Bolshevik. It concurred with Gompers on economic tactics and uncritically supported his policies. In a conservative fashion it stressed a co-operative approach to labour-management relations and rejected the OBU alternative.<sup>52</sup>

At the outset the Industrial Banner showed signs of support for the Bolshevik revolution as it would have shown towards any good intention. But once it recognized that Bolshevism meant extra-electoral politics and capture of the leadership of the labour movement it strongly opposed Bolshevik ideology. Consequently, Ontario labour sought political representation through a labour party dedicated to evolutionary reform and electoral action. However labour could not agree on whether to support the ILP of Ontario or the OLP and it constantly shifted its support between the two labour parties. On the other hand, both parties offered the same moderate programs despite the OLP's promise of giving the workers the total value of their product.<sup>53</sup>

In 1919 28 labour candidates were nominated at a joint ILP, veterans and United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) convention.<sup>54</sup> Expectations rose when 11 labourites were elected and two of them were appointed to the cabinet. As the Industrial Banner wrote: "The Farmer-Labour Cooperative administration will now lend itself to the task of legislating in the interests of people instead of the special interests".<sup>55</sup> However, unity with the UFO revealed the weakness of the ILP leadership as the ILP gradually fell under the domination of the UFO leadership. Moreover, although the labour portfolio was granted to Walter Rollo of the ILP, the ILP did not even make collective bargaining compulsory.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, the party became less discussed in the Industrial Banner and labour support was withdrawn from it. By 1925 the ILP was reduced to a party which boasted only two MPPs although labour members of the OLP had dissolved their party and joined the ILP.

The GLP was long in coming and brief in appearance. From the start socialists were more interested in Bolshevism than the labour party. Secondly, the GLP was only as effective as its provincial sections since it was organizationally based on these autonomous organs who were to yield elected representatives from the provinces.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, lack of support for the GLP reflected the lack of support for the provincial sections and the GLP was unable to unify and lead the working class.

A labour party was first discussed by the TLC in 1900. Then, in 1906, when labour rejected the SPC as its political arm, it drew the

parameters of what its labour party ought to be:

the workers of Canada should follow British precedent and organize a labour party upon such a basis that trade unionists, socialists, fabians, co-operators and farmers can unite on a co-operative basis to build up a political organization.<sup>58</sup>

But it was not until 1921 that a labour party constitutionally linked to the TLC was established

To co-operate with the executive council of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, or other kindred organization, in joint political or other action in harmony with the party constitution and standing orders.<sup>59</sup>

Ideologically, the CLP was akin to the OLP. Its platform began with the demand for complete socio-economic change and this was to be accomplished when the CLP would introduce unemployment insurance, proportional representation, health insurance, old age pensions, public utilities, direct legislation and international disarmament.<sup>60</sup>

For six years the CLP tried to bargain with the state earning only the stigma of class collaboration for its efforts. Finally, the party was disbanded because its TLC leadership was more in accord with Gomperism and the AFL than it was to British labour's political practice which was culturally its kin and politically its model. Once the AFL opposed the TLC's involvement in political action through the CLP, the CLP obeyed and the CLP was disbanded by 1927. In its place the AFL offered the model of its National Non-Partisan Political Campaign Committee (of the AFL), but the Canadians eschewed such 'action'. It was said that the All-Canadian Congress of Labour (ACCL), where political debates were not banned at union meetings, would be the source of a labour backed labour party.<sup>61</sup>

It was not to be. Once the TLC submitted to the AFL, no new

labour parties appeared, nor did defections or splits over the lack of a TLC backed labour party occur within the TLC. The ACCL itself was too small and organizationally and financially too weak to hoist its own party. Consequently, the British labour party model had had its day; it now would have to wait until 1933 to be concretized again.

Before the 1927 de jure liquidation of the CLP some debates between Bolshevik and labour party supporters ensued. The ideologically most immediate and problematic issue of contention which separated them was the method of praxis. Bolshevism stood for extra-electoral action and revolution while the BLP-model dictated reform through purely electoral action or lobbying. In preparation for the WPC convention, future WPC members appealed to labour party members stressing that the labour parties were not well equipped to fight for workers' interests. When electorally victorious, it was said they had fallen to "miserable compromise" with the farmers, had produced no important labour legislation and did not see "that 'democracy' is at best a miserable sham" and Parliament one of its most miserable expressions".<sup>62</sup> In answer to the communists (and also erroneously applied to the OBU), the Western Labour News wrote that both overlooked one singular fact

that the Anglo-Saxon mentality does not incline toward betterment through chaos, and that evolution rather than revolution is the predominant psychology of that race.<sup>63</sup>

The debates between communists and labourites were not prevalent in the WPC's press The Worker or indeed any TLC affiliated labour press. Rather than ideologically oppose the labourites' positions at length in its press, the WPC/CPC found a different method of arguing against and

showing the weaknesses of the labour parties. First, communists entered the labour unions and struggled there. Secondly, once the CLP and its provincial parties let communists join under the proviso that they accept the CLP's rules and abide by them, the communists attempted to swing the labour parties to communism by constantly presenting an alternative -- Bolshevik -- praxis.

The labour parties were unable to acquire and maintain support beyond the AFL/TLC labour movement due to their opposition to the OBU and Bolshevism. Moreover, their electoral failures and their inability to produce labour oriented legislative reforms cost them the support of the AFL/TLC labour movement itself. At no point, beyond the initial 1917 socialist splits and defections to the labour parties, did the parties attract socialist members. Labour party praxis and ideology was simply too weak and ineffective to establish itself as the model new organization through which socialists or labourites could mobilize and lead the working class.

#### VI. The One Big Union Alternative

In the early years of 1900, in England, further technological revolutions in production were eliminating jobs and were replacing the skilled by shaping the semi-skilled (machine-operator) worker out of the skilled and the unskilled.<sup>64</sup> In response to this social crisis, unrelieved as it was by traditional craft unionism, a new form of unionism began to emerge. It was qualitatively and quantitatively different from craft unionism but it was not syndicalism, although many identified the 'new unionism' as such.<sup>65</sup> Over time, due to the work of labour and

social historians and scientists, this early misconception has been clarified and laid to rest. In Canada, which experienced socio-technical change, social crisis and its own 'new unionism', the misconception persists whenever the OBU is conceptualized and analyzed.

The poorest characterization, one given by Bennett, is to call the OBU "a trade union and a political party".<sup>66</sup> On both counts this is far from an accurate picture. First, the aspect of new unionism is lost totally, and secondly, it was not a party. It contained no political program (electoral or otherwise) and it never contested elections.

Robin and Troop use a more prevalent argument that the OBU was syndicalist because it was influenced by the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).<sup>67</sup> The argument is untenable because the IWW was extinct in Canada by 1914 and when it was present in Canada, specifically in British Columbia, it was peripheral to mainstream unionism since it was situated in logging and railroad construction camps and among the coastal British Columbia Native People employed in the fishing industry.

Buck also calls the OBU syndicalist and claims that the SPC was responsible for the syndicalism in the OBU. He writes Canada was the only country where the "champions of Marxism . . . were also the leading champions of anti-Marxist anarcho-syndicalist ideas".<sup>68</sup> Although such SPC figures as Pritchard, Midgley, Knight, Johns and Kavanagh had been elected to the first OBU central committee, there is no merit to Buck's argument because the SPC was staunchly opposed to syndicalism.

To understand the OBU demands an appreciation of a distinction between industrial unionism and syndicalism and an analysis of the

purported syndicalist influences which fashioned the ideology of the OBU. Only once that is accomplished can an analysis of the OBU's defeat and failure be provided along with the repercussions of that defeat. We will argue that the OBU was a militant, industrial union which in the final analysis was bludgeoned by the combined forces of the AFL-TLC, the state and capital -- the so-called 'unholy trinity'. The OBU at first appeared successful but, given its non-syndicalist ideological orientation and praxis, it was unable to defend itself against the assault of the 'unholy trinity'. Moreover, it could not agree with the WPC on the issue of union praxis. Consequently, as an alternative it fell short of its goal leaving the working class to contemplate the class struggle in Bolshevik terms.

The first task of this section is to differentiate syndicalism and new unionism.<sup>69</sup> Syndicalism is concerned with short term benefits and long term solutions. Its object is not only to defend workers under capitalism, but also to eliminate capitalism through the general strike and establish an egalitarian, classless and stateless society when the system of production is controlled and co-ordinated by workers through their combinations. New or militant, industrial unionism is concerned primarily to politically and socially better protect and expand the rights of the workers. This defensive concern colours its use of the general strike which is not designed to be an assault tactic on the state, but is an extreme form of pressuring or coercing the ruling class to grant concessions. Since new unionism would rather deal with than eliminate the state, it is not above electoral politics and if it seeks to engineer social change it does so by throwing its support behind a

working class party.

In making the argument, then, that the OBU was an example of militant industrial unionism, we must first turn to its relation with the SPC. This relation and the antipathy towards syndicalism in the SPC made it most unlikely that the OBU would espouse the doctrine of syndicalism.

The ideological roots of the SPC were impossibilism, and that doctrine had nothing positive to say about the syndicalism of the IWW which it labelled anarchist. It thought the IWW "should be classed with the thugs, detectives, specials and other pimps of capitalism".<sup>70</sup> The primary reason for this is to be found in syndicalism's direct action approach and the SPC's marriage to the singular and supreme praxis of electoral political action. Anything other than political action was simply 'reactionary' or reformist. Therefore, the SPC refused to accept the general strike as capable of bringing about social change.<sup>71</sup> The SPC, then, did not tutor the OBU in syndicalism. Its influence on the unionists consisted of teaching them the need for electoral politics and education.

Meanwhile, the OBU was totally dedicated to industrial union struggle and political action. It did not see itself as the political weapon itself, as a party, but as an organization

formed to deal with the wage question and conditions on the job and at the same time to carry on an educational policy in the labour movement. That is all it is and can claim to be.<sup>72</sup>

The critical disagreement between the ideology of the IWW and that of the OBU concerned political action. The IWW stood for extra-electoral praxis, while the OBU, according to Midgley, did not reject electoral action.<sup>73</sup>

The OBU stated its object was to take action to mobilize its membership to participate electorally and deliver the votes necessary for an electoral working class party victory.<sup>74</sup>

To be sure, the OBU espoused the general strike weapon but never as a means of abolishing class rule. For example, one OBU executive member, the secretary of the Vancouver TLC, wanted to co-ordinate (urban) general strikes to force the concession of the right of collective bargaining from the state. And if the state resisted he thought it best to prolong the strike "'until the present government resigns and places the matter before the electorate'",<sup>75</sup> In other words, he did not want the working class to take over the state, but to precipitate a federal election. Before the SPC finally broke with the OBU in 1920 (this will be discussed in the section on the SPC below), the OBU not only stated political action was necessary to achieve its goals, but it admitted one of its objectives was the education of "correct political ideas" and electoral support for the SPC.<sup>76</sup> After the SPC dissociated itself from the OBU, the latter still endorsed the electoral road to social change without specifically indicating electoral support for the SPC.

The OBU, then, was not a syndicalist organization but an industrial union which did not recognise craft distinctions and was intent on organizing the entire working class. Therefore it posed a threat to the craft unionism of the AFL/TLC and the leadership of the TLC. Moreover, the OBU espoused a method of struggle -- the general strike -- which was unlike the lobbying praxis of the TLC to which capital and the state had grown accustomed. These three forces, the TLC, capital and the state, combined to destroy the OBU and their collaboration is

responsible for the near liquidation of the union.<sup>77</sup> During its embattled years, the union never exceeded the level of struggle for self preservation. Its defensive, industrially unionist ideology never allowed for a retaliatory, offensive and therefore a syndicalist position. Indeed, the OBU never took to the general strike to defend itself but preferred to use the courts when the state openly opposed it and it struck in the industries in which it was under attack. These strikes occurred without sympathetic strike support. Consequently, they were isolated and they permitted capital to make conditions on workers' union membership.

From the 1919 high of 41,150 reported members the government of Canada estimated that in 1920 membership was no more than 5,000 strong.<sup>78</sup> By mid-1922, only 6 OBU locals still stood in B.C., none of which were in Vancouver.<sup>79</sup> This decline of the OBU was part and parcel of the post-1919 defeat of the working class. It can be measured in terms of the decrease in strike activity (see Table I) and the lower number of unionized members (Table II). It was not until 1937 that union membership would return to the level it had achieved in 1919-1920.

The OBU's demise then permitted a crystallized conservative TLC leadership to strengthen itself and proceed to re-establish and reassume control of dissident labour in Canada. When the OBU appeared it polarized the labour movement by absorbing the radicals. When it broke ranks with the TLC it removed the radicals and cut itself off from the labour moderates and progressives who wanted to struggle for social reforms but within the TLC organization and through the use of labour parties.<sup>80</sup> This helps explain why before the appearance of the OBU, the labour parties displayed an interest in Bolshevism and an affinity for

TABLE I

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Beginning During the Year</u>	<u>Number of Strikes and Lockouts</u>	<u>Number of Workers Involved</u>	<u>Time Loss in Man Working Days</u>	<u>Percent of Estimated Working Time</u>
1910	94	101	22,203	731,324	
11	99	100	29,185	1,821,084	
12	179	181	42,860	1,135,787	
13	143	152	40,519	1,036,254	
14	58	63	9,717	490,850	
15	62	63	11,395	95,042	
16	118	120	26,538	236,814	
17	158	160	50,255	1,123,515	
18	228	230	79,743	647,942	
19	332	336	148,915	3,400,942	0.60
20	310	322	60,327	799,524	0.14
21	159	168	28,257	1,048,914	0.22
22	89	104	43,775	1,528,661	0.32

Source: Labour Canada, Strikes and Lockouts in Canada, 1977 (OTT: Supply and Services, 1978), v. 12.

TABLE II

## LOCAL UNIONS AND UNION MEMBERSHIP IN CANADA, 1911-1929

## MEMBERSHIP

<u>Year</u>	<u>Locals</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage Change from Previous Year</u>
1911	1741	133,132	n.d.
12	1883	160,120	+20.3
13	2017	175,790	+ 9.8
14	2003	166,163	- 5.5
15	1883	113,343	-13.7
16	1842	160,107	+11.9
17	1974	204,630	+27.6
18	2274	248,887	+21.6
19	2847	378,047	+51.9
20	2918	373,842	- 1.1
21	2668	313,320	-16.2
22	2512	276,621	-11.7
23	2487	278,092	+ 0.5
24	2429	260,643	- 6.3
25	2494	271,064	+ 4.0
26	2515	274,604	+ 1.3
27	2604	290,282	+ 5.7
28	2653	200,602	+ 3.6
29	2778	319,476	+ 6.3
1935	2717	280,648	- 0.2
36	2860	322,746	+15.0
37	3231	383,492	+19.0
38	3280	381,645	- 0.5

Source: Canada, Department of Labour,  
39th Annual Report on Labour Organizations (in Canada for 1949)  
(Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), p. 15.

significant social reform. Once the OBU began to grow, the labour parties (and labour presses) began a conservative swing reflecting their qualitatively and quantitatively diminished membership. At the same time, unable to expand numerically and weakened systematically by the 'unholy trinity', the radicals were unable to make the OBU alternative viable. With the fall of the OBU the only alternative to the ILC and the urban TLCs became Bolshevism.

Initially the OBU found itself in agreement with Bolshevism and it accepted certain Bolshevik ideological positions. However, the WPC and the OBU were unable to collaborate because they could not agree on union praxis.

It was an ideological clash between revolutionary communism and Canadian working class union nationalism. But at the same time, the ideology of the latter and the considerable defeats it suffered allowed for the easy, and indeed necessary, passage of industrial unionists into the WPC. Before the founding convention of the communist Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) in July, 1921 (the preliminary meeting was held one year earlier) and before the publication of Lenin's 'Left-Wing' Communism -- An Infantile Disorder, it was not difficult for new unionists to accept Bolshevism. They concurred with Nikolai Bukharin, who wrote in an article entitled "The Communist Party", that the AFL was an "old form of unionism" and its leaders "utterly middle class in mentality". He added that revolution by violence may be required because

The new order might come in peaceably were it not for the utter befogment of the middle class and mediocre minds.

Cosmic forces wait for no man, much less the mentally befuddled labour leaders and citizen committees. With a working class intelligent and conscious of its position, reactionary officials are powerless.<sup>81</sup>

By October 1920 the OBU publically expressed its bitter disappointment in the various labour parties and the SPC and it turned to Bolshevism. The important and attractive kernel of Bolshevism was its hostility to the AFL which was the vindication of the OBU's quintessence. Moreover, the OBU went on to accept the praxis of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It saw the new Bolshevik government as a practical model of a delegate system of representation.<sup>82</sup>

The OBU attended the first convention of the WPC with the object of making the new party its political arm.<sup>83</sup> However, the WPC demanded that the OBU belong to the RILU. For the OBU, the RILU's one redeeming quality was its preference for industrial union organization which eliminated the stratification between the skilled and unskilled and made it a working class organ. Unfortunately the RILU was unacceptable otherwise because it demanded that all unions ought to engage in struggle within the ranks of organized labour (the TLC/AFL) in order "to capture the organizations for Communism".<sup>84</sup> Belonging to the WPC and RILU, then, meant membership in the TLC.

The gist of this praxis was captured in and relayed by two slogans: one, 'back to the unions' and two, 'boring from within'. The object was to return militants to where they could influence or become influential in the conservative international unions since, as Lenin observed, that was where the masses were.<sup>85</sup> Nothing could have alienated the OBU more. Craft unionism was its point of departure. Indeed, concomitant with deteriorating economic conditions and technological change,

the conservatism of the AFL/TLC had led to the formation of the OBU.

The WPC/RILU praxis did nothing less than polarize the two organizations. After three conferences between the OBU and the WPC nothing was resolved.<sup>86</sup> Unable to change the WPC's outlook on extra-TLC union work, the OBU turned its back on the communist party never to meet with it again.

However, the OBU did not provide the working class with an alternative. Between 1920 and 1924 its membership was so low that the leadership refused or failed to supply the state with information regarding the union.<sup>87</sup> The ineffectiveness of the OBU, coupled with the economic depression, which began in May, 1920, proved to militants and socialists that the OBU was incapable of representing working class interests. Hence Bolshevism came to represent the alternative.

#### VII. The Socialist Parties and Bolshevism

The object of this section is to discuss the type of alternatives the socialist parties presented after they had proved they were unable to lead the working class in 1919. Secondly we will analyze the positions and splits in the parties vis a vis Bolshevism. Of the three parties the major focus of attention will be the SPC. This is because the SPNA and the bulk of the SDPC and their presses were illegal in 1919 and 1920.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, we must submit to the impossibility of monitoring their intra-party debates. Nevertheless, while the ideological debates are not available, a discussion of the SPNA and the SDPC is both possible and necessary. This section, then, will begin with a brief argument concerning the SDPC and the SPNA before proceeding to an analysis of the SPC. The discussion of the SPC will be introduced later.

The condition of illegality of the SPNA and the SDPC and their inability to become involved in the class struggle as political weapons of the working class led their memberships to reflect upon an alternative socialist party praxis. What little evidence there is of the SPNA proves conclusively that it supported Bolshevism and that the vast majority of the party helped form the communist party in Canada. As for the SDPC, before the 1918 repression the party was not agreed upon a pro- or anti-Bolshevik line. This indecision was carried into the period of repression. In January of 1919, Israel Niznevitch, the secretary of the Jewish SDP, sent a letter to other SDP locals asking them to form a new working class party. His effort earned him the opposition of the SDPC executive.<sup>89</sup>

After the Orders-in-Council the SDPC was unable to fully debate Bolshevism or a new (communist) party since the majority of its organized mass element was fragmented and isolated from itself. Therefore the federated language branches independently debated affiliation and finally split over the question of membership in a communist party. The splits were dependent upon the specificity of the organizations and, more times than not, the lines of disagreement were drawn between reform and revolution and nationalism and internationalism.

According to Avakumovic, the SDPC split along ethnic lines with most party leaders and Anglo-Saxon activists remaining aloof and unaffiliated.<sup>90</sup> However the argument is weak on both points. Those who did not side with the communists did not all remain unaffiliated but were drawn into the CLP.<sup>91</sup> One example is James Simpson, but there were others since sympathy for the CLP did exist and we will recall that at

the SDPC's 1918 national convention a tendency did put forward a liquidationist position which, were it not defeated, would have led the entire SDPC into the emerging labour parties. Secondly, splits along ethnic lines, where entire non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups entered the WPC, did not occur. This is not an oversimplification but a total oversight of the specific politics within the language branches and within the entire party.

The SDPC was never a totally united party owing to its extremely flexible leadership which permitted the existence of impossibilists and possibilists. While by and large the party was agreed on possibilists it varied on the practicable degree of this ideology. This is evidenced by the presence of one (right) wing whose representatives par excellence were Queen, Rigg and Simpson; and another (left) wing whose affiliates were the ex-SPC members (i.e. the Burns') and other Anglo and non-Anglo-Saxon socialists. This did not cause disunity primarily because both wings accepted an identical broader socialist ideology and praxis. The former was the Marxist theory of value, historical materialism/historical determinism (which thus allowed for impossibilism, and the class struggle. The latter was an affinity for education and political action--the road to reform and revolution. However, the February and October revolutions redefined praxis. It is due to these revolutions, one based on an evolutionary, constitutional method, the other on outright confrontation and seizure of the state, that the SDPC members were presented with two views of possibilist praxis. Consequently, it is over the issue of praxis that evolutionists and revolutionists emerged. The right wing argued that Kerensky would have introduced socialism and the left wing

held that socialism could only have been brought about through the Bolshevik revolution. The former, then, found it best to fall in line with an evolutionary party and in Canada this meant the labour parties. The latter were convinced that the SDPC was not efficacious because of its praxis, and they turned to Bolshevism rather than revive the now illegal party.

The second reason for splits in the SDPC concerned national liberation and internationalism. These divisions occurred within the Ukrainian and Polish socialist communities. The October revolution in the Russian Empire led Ukrainian nationalist socialists to demand nation state status for the Ukraine which immediately conflicted with the majority pro-Bolshevist tendency in the Ukrainian SDPC. Between 1917 and 1918 a debate ensued. It ended when the nationalists left the party and the pro-Bolsheviks formed the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association.<sup>92</sup> The numerical superiority rested with the latter. When in 1920 a Ukrainian SPC member published an anti-Bolshevik paper, Pravda, it lasted only four months due to lack of support.<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, Robochy Narod became the "mouthpiece" of Bolshevism among the Ukrainians.<sup>94</sup>

Polish socialists were likewise preoccupied with nationalism, even more so than the Ukrainian socialists. Generally Polish radicalism was weak in Canada because Polish immigrants were "traditionally conservative peasants". Hence Polish socialism was built by the "comparatively stronger participation of the Polish intelligensia".<sup>95</sup> However, the socialists were patriots who combined social radicalism with the struggle for national independence.<sup>96</sup> Since Poland had ceased to exist in 1791, owing to its occupation by Germany, Russia and Austro-Hungary,

the intelligensia sought to save the nation and Polish culture. Consequently, they supported the nationalist oriented Polska Partia Socialistyczna (PPS) and later Marshall Jozef Pilsudski.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the intellectuals were constantly seeking a progressive movement or ideology which displayed the possibility of national liberation. Therefore they warmly received the Bolsheviki because they had deposed the Tsar and sought to make changes in the Russian Empire. However, autonomy for nations under Russian imperialism was not granted and, after Pilsudski's army attacked Russia, the intelligensia withdrew its support for Bolshevism. In 1921 Florence Custance of the 'Z' party reported a "verbal application from several Poles who were willing to form a Branch, but who could not live up to the requirements as to numerical strength".<sup>98</sup> It was decided to let them form a branch nonetheless.<sup>99</sup> Meanwhile, the majority of Polish workers and the intelligensia remained outside the WPC/CPC's leadership.

The Finnish Organization of Canada also did not entirely cross into the WPC. It split with some members going to the IWW and the OBU while the majority went to the WPC.<sup>100</sup>

The SDPC was a victim of circumstance and its own ineptitude. It had failed to become entrenched anywhere other than in cultural organizations. It was undecided about Bolshevism and, before it was able to debate the virtues of the new ideology, it was repressed. Isolated and removed from active socialist participation, it became clear to a significant proportion of its membership that an alternative was necessary. This alternative was the praxis of the Russian revolution which had opened new vistas in working class politics. Thus, Bolshevism provided

delivery from failure and the hope of a new tomorrow. It also provided a floor for disagreement which resulted in splits with a majority of the party's mass element going to the WPC. Finally, it is important to recognize the splits as having developed over political issues which drew lines of division between evolutionary, nationalist, syndicalist, new unionist and Bolshevik approaches to social change. The latter approach was adopted by a majority of SDPC members.

The final socialist alternative under examination is the SPC. It was the only socialist party legally standing after 1919 and one also entrenched in the labour turned OBU movement. We will argue that, while the SPNA and the SDPC had split and/or affiliated with the WPC, the SPC refused to recognize Bolshevism as a progressive alternative for Canadian socialism. Instead the SPC continued to present itself as the alternative and necessary political working class party. However, the failures of the class struggles of 1919 only reaffirmed the party's belief in the need for more socialist education. This meant the reassertion of impossibilism and the electoral praxis impossibilism dictated at the cost of direct or non-electoral action. Therefore the SPC withdrew to a sectarian and passive praxis of impossibilism which it had espoused since its early beginnings. Moreover, the party disassociated itself from the OBU. As a result the SPC lost the support it had acquired among the working class since 1917. Secondly, the ideology of the SPC, impossibilism, became questioned by the Canadian socialist supporters of Bolshevism through a series of debates.

These debates did not directly involve impossibilist SPC members and organized Canadian communists. This is because the latter, except

for a few issues of the Communist Bulletin (of the Canadian section of the United Communist Party of America) and the WPC's press, the Communist, could not afford to publish their own press regularly and their organizations were illegal. Moreover, impossiblist propagandists displayed little desire to engage in discourse with the communists. The debates over impossiblism and Bolshevism then strictly took place within the SPC. The splits which followed the debates were the direct result of the desire of many SPC members who were convinced of the need to abandon the unsuccessful praxis of impossiblist and to engage in a new socialist praxis as defined by Bolshevism.

The disappearance of a pro-direct action position and the re-assertion of impossiblism in the SPC began on the eve of the most intense period of the class struggle. In early 1919 the Red Flag wrote ". . . prominent members of the SPC were saddled with the responsibility of originating the 'OBU'". Yet it indicated the SPC had criticized any propensity towards industrial unionism and now the Dominion Executive Committee (DEC) was working on a formal conceptualization of the OBU's relation to the SPC according to the constitution of the SPC.<sup>101</sup> The DEC never provided a definitive statement on the subject. What reigned throughout that year was a party with two tendencies. The first tendency espoused an affinity for an industrial unionist form of praxis and socialist praxis through unionism. Its definition of the strike was contained in this statement:

From now on no strike can end in a defeat. Every strike, no matter what the outcome as regards the immediate issue may be, advances the working class movement a step. There will be no permanent industrial peace from now on, while capitalism continues.<sup>102</sup>

The second tendency pointed out that all unions, whatever their ideological affinities, could not bring capitalism down nor teach workers that capitalism was unable to fulfill their needs. The tendency added that it was the responsibility of the SPC to instill class consciousness through education. Class conscious, then, would allow for class solidarity to develop. Finally this would culminate in increased working class militancy and then "the form and technique of revolution will take shape according to the needs of the movement. As to just when that movement will be no man can say more than that it looms perilously near".<sup>103</sup>

It was this second tendency which gained predominance in the SPC. Although it argued the SPC had organized the OBU, it flatly denied there was any connection between them because the SPC constitution forbade reformist praxis.<sup>104</sup> The break between the SPC and the OBU became evident in 1920 when the Western Clarion wrote that, while the OBU had hurt the Canadian Manufacturing Association and even the Canadian state, it was not the SPC's "function to proclaim the superiority of one form of industrial organization over another, if any exists".<sup>105</sup> Instead, the party offered freedom through educational and electoral praxis. An OBU paper, The Searchlight, responded by stating that the SPC should at least have "the courage and honesty" to tell the workers it was educating that there indeed was a union organization superior to others.<sup>106</sup> But the SPC only showed it was a sectarian party and it replied that all labour organizations were soiled by the presence of Christians, Liberals, and so on. Moreover, the organizations were responses to immediate demands whereas "on the other hand, the business of a Socialist Party

is the propaganda of Socialism which is ultimately to emancipate the race".<sup>107</sup>

Removed from the organized working class and content to simply be an educational body, the SPC drifted into isolation and it was no longer able to exert leadership on the working class. It is against this backdrop that the impossibilism -- Bolshevism debates began in early 1920. The debates proved that SPC propagandists were not theoretically developed to handle Marxist-Bolshevik discussions. Indeed, their backwardness was expressed by their hold onto abstraction without any conceptualization of revolutionary praxis. Hence, a Bolshevik ideology of praxis collided with an ideology of uncompromising Marxist purity whose sole praxis rested on education. On the eve of the debate within the SPC, the party exhibited its inability to lead the workers in struggle against capitalism when, in the preface to its fifth manifesto, it claimed social change was inevitable and that revolutions occur

from the inherent consequences of a particular social condition. While we confess the difficulty, nay the well nigh impossibility of organizing a revolution, we can at least try to understand one when it occurs . . . <sup>108</sup>

However, history since 1900 had shown that there was nothing inevitable about revolution. Not one socio-economic crisis had in and of itself brought society to the verge of social change, much less had it initiated social change. Moreover, the object was not to understand revolution, but rather the object was working class liberation and that meant the establishment of hegemony and the execution of revolution.

From the start it appeared clear to Canadian workers and socialists that the Bolshevik revolution was a product of working class

action and not socialist education. Applying the lesson of the revolution, one article reflectively argued it was action that was necessary during the Winnipeg General Strike.<sup>109</sup> However, for the SPC, the revolution signalled the need to engage in education and therefore continued passivity.<sup>110</sup> It defended this praxis when it wrote:

Mass action may sound very alluring as advocated by some so-called Communists, but the Marxist sees no particular benefit in stirring the mob to action. If the knowledge is possessed by a sufficient number of workers they will need no stirring; and in the meantime, while the number of clear visioned workers is small, educational methods are the only ones that enable us to make any progress.<sup>111</sup>

The first debate, then, and the one that underlay the others was one between action and education -- between the ideology of Bolshevism and the ideology of the impossibilism.

The issue of the second major debate concerned the concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The debate began when an article in the Clarion accepted the dictatorship as a logical aftermath of the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie'.<sup>112</sup> The reaction to this argument came directly from the Marx wielding propagandists like John Tyler. He opposed the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' claiming that socialism meant the democratic control of industry and he went on to quote Marx's statement about the possibility of a peaceful road to political power in England, America and perhaps Holland.<sup>113</sup> Tyler was called "sanctimonious" by a certain F. Clark who himself turned to one of the masters, and quoted Engels on the question of the state: "The Proletariate needs the state, not in the interests of liberty, but for the purpose of crushing opponents".<sup>114</sup>

The debate quickly improved to, if not an analytically original level of discourse, then certainly to a critical position beyond slogans and legitimating excerpts from Marx and Engels. After pointing out that Marx had talked of a dictatorship of the proletariat when referring to the Paris Commune, one author wrote:

We must mould our tactics in accordance with the conditions at hand. This the Bolshevik did . . . They did not stop to enquire what sages and seers had prescribed.<sup>115</sup>

The importance of this statement was the reference to devising tactics to deal with an impending situation. Necessarily this meant the transcendence of passive and failure ridden educational praxis. More and more this position was seized upon and the SPC was unable to accommodate such a tendency within its ranks. Hence, the two positions began to crystallize and polarize within the party. One was learning a lesson from Bolshevism. It began to see the need for action and leadership. On the other hand, the impossibilist position was finding the debate difficult because its ideology had ill equipped its proponents to grapple with questions of praxis. These divisions were manifested next in the debate over affiliation to the Communist or Third International (hereafter CI).

In 1918 the Clarion wrote that both Trotsky and Lenin were agreed on the need for a new international. That same year the SPC suggested that the CI be strictly revolutionary -- that is impossibilist -- and the nucleus it offered were the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Workers' Socialist Party of the United States and itself.<sup>116</sup> After this the SPC had nothing more to say with respect to the CI. But the pro-Bolsheviks would not allow silence to shroud the CI. The debate which

followed lasted nearly a year. It was bitter and inconclusive to such a degree that some members left the SPC because they found the polemics irksome.

Those opposed to affiliating with the CI were concerned that the tactics presented in the CI's Statutes and Conditions were "coloured by pre-revolutionary Russian conditions".<sup>117</sup> Others held that affiliation to the CI meant subjection to Russia.<sup>118</sup> Supporters of the CI and proponents of the praxis presented in the Statutes and Conditions believed that because the SPC was an educational party it was unable to defeat the bourgeoisie.<sup>119</sup> Sam Blumenberg argued that since capitalism was a world-wide social order the same tactics which defeated capitalism in Russia were to be used the world over.<sup>120</sup> Roscoe A. Fillmore, who had opposed affiliation to the Second International earlier, now called the CI "a real International" and stated the Bolsheviks were not Russians but internationalists.<sup>121</sup> However, the affiliation oriented socialists were not clear on the consequences or repercussions of joining the CI. Kavanagh, who very early had looked up to Lenin as an important revolutionary leader, believed that since Canada was not Russia different methods of praxis would be employed although the SPC would be an affiliated CI party.<sup>122</sup>

The second disagreement over joining the CI revolved around the fact that a CI party in Canada in 1921 would necessarily be illegal. The Statutes took illegality into account but the pedagogues who were committed to electoral praxis were appalled. Becoming illegal was considered an end to educational work and that in turn was considered an end to the challenge to capitalism. The thinking that the bourgeois electoral

system was objective and neutral weighed heavy on some SPC members and refused to let them consider the Bolshevik alternative. In reply to these socialists J. Beckman, Fillmore and others argued that a workers' party was legal so long as it was weak and that at anytime in a bourgeois society a workers' party could be declared illegal.<sup>123</sup> Once the communists organized themselves as the WPC, the illegality argument was clearly discredited because there were always means for dealing with repression much like the way the SPC was able to deal with press censorship.

During these SPC debates Canadian communists launched poignant critiques of SPC praxis through their two short lived newspapers. This was an opportunity for the SPC to attempt a dialogue with them to convince the working class of its superior understanding of the class struggle. However, no discussion developed and the SPC became hostile towards the communists. This was first and foremost foreshadowed by the SPC's reaction to Lenin's 'Left-Wing' Communism -- An Infantile Disorder'. The pamphlet, among other things, was an attack on Marxist purists. Canadian socialists could see that it was critical of the kind of praxis espoused by the SPC. Since it was being serialized in the B.C. Federationist, Chris Stephenson, the Western Clarion's editor, discussed it in a book review format. Throughout the review he remained non-partisan, resisting any temptation to criticize it or judge the SPC according to it. Moreover, he generally treated it as a work of no redeeming social or political value.<sup>124</sup>

One month later, Harrington reviewed The Communist Bulletin. It behoved him to go beyond the simple reproduction of tenents since

The Bulletin called him by name and said he was the "'purest of all pure Marxists'". Moreover, it attacked the SPC by name. It accused the party of never organizing the working class against the first world war and passively indicating that the solution to every problem was to vote for the SPC. Harrington's response was to simply deny the accusations.<sup>125</sup> Two weeks later Frank Cassidy responded to another Bulletin issue by calling it an "anonymous sheet . . . printed in a hole in the ground . . .". On May 1, 1921 The Communist appeared with a critique of the SPC's educational and electoral praxis.<sup>127</sup> But the SPC failed to defend its praxis.

The party did not appear sufficiently confident to enter into ideological debate with the communists. Instead it resorted to diatribe. Two weeks after the first Communist issue, Pritchard called the communists "sewer-pipe revolutionists . . . of the . . . rathole persuasion"<sup>128</sup> Moreover, he resorted to a sectarian sentiment claiming that the SPC was the only scientific party of, and fit for, Canada. He wrote, the communists could not convince "the 'broad masses of the people' of the need for Socialism. That is our task here in Canada. Let us do it".<sup>129</sup> No pro-Bolsheviks in the party responded directly to Cassidy or Pritchard.

The October 1, 1921 issue of the Clarion was the first to be void of any references to affiliation with the CI, and on November 16 of that year the Dominion Executive Committee called for a vote on affiliation. The vote took place in each local but the results were never published. The reason why lies in the fact that the SPC was a spent party and impossibilist ideology no longer held the attention of the working class nor the allegiance of the majority of the SPC membership. Moreover,

having withdrawn from the OBU, the SPC had concomitantly dissociated itself from the possibility of leading workers. Thus the SPC showed a decrease in membership as early as 1921 when it counted only 14 locals. They were nationally distributed as follows: British Columbia - 4; Alberta - 6; Manitoba - 2; and, Ontario - 2; (the Clarion did not reveal the membership of the locals).<sup>130</sup>

Since the SPC was a party oriented toward elections it is worthwhile to review its demise in terms of electoral support. This is of particular interest since we have occasion to discuss the 1921 national elections which occurred during the SPC's vote on affiliation to the CI. It was an election that swept the Progressive movement into Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The Progressives declined the Parliamentary position while the SPC was declined by the electorate. In Vancouver South, Kavanagh ran opposed by, among others, the FLP. The Clarion said it welcomed the contest because it let the workers decide between the two parties.<sup>131</sup> The final tally was:<sup>132</sup>

Ladser (Coalition)	4893
Odlum (Liberal)	4130
Richardson (FLP)	2827
Kavanagh SPC)	810
Richmond (Farmer)	312

Elsewhere, in the SPC's onetime sure seat in Nanaimo, Pritchard only received 25 per cent of the vote.<sup>133</sup> In Winnipeg North it is not clear whether Russell ran on the SPC ticket or not since the Clarion referred to him as purely a "socialist" candidate. Russell was defeated when Jacob Penner, running as a candidate for the communist Workers' Alliance,

split the working class vote. The results of the election were:<sup>134</sup>

McMurray (Liberal)	3743
Russell (Socialist)	3193
Blake (Coalition)	3042
Penner (Communist)	596

The SPC leadership reacted with hostility towards the Workers' Alliance and for good reason. Of all the socialist candidates Russell had come the closest to being elected. If Penner's total was added to Russell's, McMurray would have lost by 43 votes. Meanwhile, if not in Russell's case, then in every other riding in which the SPC had chosen to run for election, all of their candidates had been rejected by the working class.

The SPC declined because ideologically and in terms of praxis the party no longer offered the working class or the labour movement an effective method of struggling against capital. Nevertheless, after defections to the WPC had reduced the party's members substantially, a few socialists kept the SPC alive until 1925. They continued educating and believed that the ILP feared the SPC because each SPC member knew more of Marxism and the class struggle than did an ILP member.<sup>135</sup> Such a reliance on a praxis of passivity clearly disproven by the class struggles of 1919, and in the face of an action oriented alternative, could not lead to anything other than ultimate quietus. By early 1923 The Worker called the SPC an "obsolete sect".<sup>136</sup> One year later the impossibilist version of Canadian socialism passed into the 'museum of antiquity'.

### VIII. The Communist Party

The establishment of the communist party in Canada cannot be confined to a single meeting or convention. Bolshevism began being discussed by workers immediately after 1917 and as pertinent information slowly made its way into Canada debates increased and intensified. In some cases Bolshevik sympathisers organized communist groups. In this period, from 1917-1921, anti-Bolshevik repression was severe, class struggles were intense and economic and political working class alternative organizations were present. The communist party emerged semi-legally as the Workers' Party of Canada (WPC) in February, 1922 after defeat subsided the struggles and after the alternatives experienced failure. It was an opportune time for the WPC to appear, it was also the first chance for communists to form a visible, above-ground organization. But the first WPC convention in February 1922 which launched the party is important for another reason. With the possible success by the CLP, the question of the efficacy of the alternatives was settled and the pro- and anti-Bolshevik affiliation debates and splits had already taken place in the socialist parties and socialist language locals. The 1922 convention, then, also marks the unity of Canadian socialists under a party which was a Marxist alternative to all the Canadian socialist parties.

In May of 1921 at a clandestine meeting in a barn in Guelph, Ontario, the communist underground 'Z' party was formed and it sought to organize workers into cells while awaiting legalization before holding a public convention. This party was the first organized nucleus of Canadian Bolshevism. While repression was the rule in Canada, some

socialists as early as mid-1919 went to the United States. There they set up locals of the Canadian communist party in the Communist Party of America (CPA) and in the United Communist Party of America (UCPA).<sup>137</sup> However, the United States provided no security as the repressive Palmer Raids cut down the CPA's 100,000 membership to 10,000 while in the process deporting 5,000 communists.<sup>138</sup> Consequently, rather than risk the decimation of Canadian communism without ever having delivered it to the shores of Canada, the Canadians returned with the information and knowledge they had gathered abroad.

The communists' return to Canada was not immediate and therefore only a handful of communists participated in the 1921 Guelph barn meeting. Nevertheless, this was the beginning which made its appeals to and clandestinely organized workers. According to Buck, communists had already been organized in nine industrial centers in Ontario alone prior to the December 11, 1921 Toronto conference which had been called in order to prepare for the establishment of the WPC.<sup>139</sup> Indeed the organizing work and response to Bolshevism was so positive that the conference included members from all of the socialist parties, the OBU and some individuals from the labour parties. Moreover, after the Toronto conference, more communist locals were formed in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Lac du Bonnet, Fort William, Sudbury, Niagara Falls, Hamilton, Guelph, Kitchener and Timmins.<sup>140</sup>

The WPC, then, was a unifying organ which attracted members of nearly every economic and political working class organization which had sought to provide working class leadership. This unity also included

the WPC's leadership over the Finnish Organization of Canada (FOC) and the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association (ULTA). (In 1924 the latter admitted farmers as members and became the Ukrainian Labour and Farmer Temple Association). However, the two major socialist language locals in Canada did not formally affiliate to the communist party, although its members were free to do so.<sup>141</sup> Rather, the organizations gave their consent to the WPC's leadership which opened the cultural groups to WPC praxis and thus the groups and their communities became the major locus of early organized communist activity. It is only in the year the WPC became the CPC that the party developed a systematic praxis beyond cultural organizations. This was when it sought to include farmers as an integral part of the CPC and Bolshevization of the party took place. The latter meant the transcendence of communist activity focused on cultural circles. Consequently communist praxis broadened and entered the realm of propaganda work within the unions.

However, in 1924, the CPC counted 2,200 Finns, 700 Ukrainians, 500 Jews and 1,500 of various nationalities. It is this quantitative fact which has led many to a qualitative argument depicting the foreign or non-Anglo-Saxon character of Canadian communism. What is forgotten in such an argument is what R. B. Russell saw in mid-1924 when he wrote that both non-Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Saxon labour activists were joining the CPC.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the authors who use cultural arguments fail to recognize that Marxism was developed to a higher degree by European rather than by British socialists and this is why Anglo-Saxons constituted a minority.<sup>143</sup> Why it is that British workers had not developed Marxism to a high degree has less to do with ethnicity and everything to do with

the specificities of international working class struggles.

The non-Anglo-Saxons who immediately turned to the WPC/CPC were both economic and political refugees from the Tsarist Empire. Their socialism reflected the battles it had engaged in with the Tsarist state. Therefore it was pragmatic and Marxist. In Canada, these workers faced economic exploitation, political repression and ethnocentric attacks. Hence, they applied their Marxism with the necessary changes to deal with a more advanced capitalist society. Moreover, their socialist language branches maintained contact with the 'old world' and were constantly exposed to a revolutionary and practical socialist ideology unlike that which was offered by the SPC or any Canadian labour party. Consequently, the non-Anglo-Saxons did not have to wait for all the alternatives to fail and, unlike Anglo-Saxon Marxists primarily those of the SPC, non-Anglo-Saxons found it easier to accept the new Bolshevik ideology. This then was translated into an over representation of non-Anglo-Saxons in the WPC/CPC which also included Anglo-Saxons.

However, although cultural arguments omit discussing the Anglo-Saxon element in the communist party, that element cannot be neglected. Once an accurate representation of ethnicity is taken into account and once the WPC is situated and discussed within the context of the political history of the working class it becomes evident that the formation of the communist party had as little to do with ethnicity as did the earlier establishment of the socialist parties. From the perspective of working class politics, Bolshevism was an alternative ideology and political weapon which found support from the socialists of the three Canadian socialist parties along with further support from some OBU and labour party members.

The WPC was able to unite socialists because ideologically, organizationally and in terms of praxis it was an alternative offering a different road to success. Bolshevism had proven itself efficacious in Russia and it was seen as the necessary alternative approach given the failure ridden condition of Canadian working class politics. It was to this condition that the first communist manifesto to the workers referred to when it said: "we cannot sit down and wait patiently for capitalism to collapse".<sup>144</sup> Consequently, the WPC opposed simple lobbying or parliamentary action and it proposed to organize "a labour party as will unite all of labour's forces for real political action."<sup>145</sup> The "forces" which would constitute the "United Front of Labour" under WPC leadership were the SPC, the DLP and the ILP. The Front's primary task was to fight wage cuts and give support to the Soviet Union.<sup>146</sup> Unlike the SPNA, the WPC stressed a non-sectarian outlook, evidenced by its desire to form a Front and by its involvement in the labour parties. Like the SDPC, the WPC agreed on the need for reforms and revolution but disagreed with strict adherence to the political action approach. And, unlike the SPC, the WPC did not express an emphasis on education as the sine qua non revolutionary praxis.

The best example of why the WPC could and would appeal to Canadian workers is found in its general program which was formulated at the WPC's first convention. The opening sentence of the preamble read: "The Workers' Party has arisen in consequence of the failure of the hitherto existing parties to co-ordinate and lead the working class in its struggles against capitalism".<sup>147</sup> To the socialist or labourite who had directly engaged the bourgeois state in struggle, or the worker

who had watched alternative organizations rise and fall, the following four-point program could not help but present the WPC as a necessary alternative to the socialist, industrial and labour organs. The four points were: 1) the new party would enter into and strengthen existing labour unions, transform them into anti-capitalist weapons of struggle and "strive to replace the present reactionary leadership by revolutionary leadership". 2) It would participate electorally in the political process to "expose the sham democracy of capitalism", to help organize workers against the bourgeois state and make public the grievances and demands of workers. 3) The party's object was: "To lead in the fight for the immediate needs of the workers, broaden and deepen their demands, organize and develop out of their every day struggles a force for the abolition of capitalism". 4) And, the party promised to overthrow capitalism and establish a workers' dictatorship and a workers' republic.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, beyond ideology, the WPC/CPC presented itself organizationally as the party capable of successfully engaging in a war of position. This is because it contained a mass element which supported the leadership of the party and, with the election of ex-SPC, OBU and labour party members to the national executive of the WPC, the party also developed an element of contact between the leadership and the rank and file. Moreover, for the first time in Canadian socialist history, the party leadership held centralizing and disciplinary powers which, unlike those of the SPC, were not autocratic but democratic due to the existence of contact. This is born out in the WPC constitution<sup>149</sup> where the national Central Executive Committee (CEC) was the "supreme body of

the party". It was composed of seven elected members from the immediate vicinity of the National Headquarters, who were concomitantly the Administrative Council of the Party, and four elected members to represent "the other most important districts in the Country".<sup>150</sup> The CEC was also composed of district organizers, secretaries and one representative per each language federation who met every four months. But, while authority was centralized and policy carefully monitored by the CEC, discipline was decentralized along a hierarchy of leadership posts beginning with the local level with appeals permitted at the District Executive Committee or City Central Committee and finally at the annual national convention. With hierarchical leadership organized in this manner the CEC did not completely possess unlimited authority and disciplinary powers. What the party did possess were those elements which made it capable of uniting the working class politically. Therefore, it was the WPC/CPC which appeared best suited to lead the working class in the war of position.

#### IX. The International Links of Canadian Communism

Throughout this thesis we have emphasized the influential role Canadian socialist ideology played in paving the way for the CPC. Therefore the focus throughout the thesis concerned an analysis of primary and secondary national factors. However, to understand the origin of the CPC a study of the ideologies of the socialist parties is insufficient. It is not sufficient because we still must account for the coming of Bolshevism to Canada, and this coming is based on and influenced through the international connections between the WPC/CPC and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Moreover, these connections are essential if we want to study and understand the communist party after its date of

origin of 1922.

Bolshevism in Canada was accepted by socialists and workers at the cost of Canadian socialist ideology and parties both of which were laid to rest once the WPC/CPC arose. Nevertheless, Bolshevism built upon the experiences of the socialist parties in the sense that the socialists who had been party members came to realize that it was necessary for Canadian socialist ideology and praxis to change. Consequently, then, they seized upon the new Bolshevik ideology and established the CPC. But the ideology of the CPC possessed an additional dimension. Unlike previous Canadian Marxist ideology, it was reinforced through its connection to communist internationalism.

The connection we are dealing with took on two forms, one formal, institutionalized and structural, the other informal and dependent upon the initiatives of individuals. The former can be readily apprehended through the linkages between Moscow and the CPC. The first evidence of such a connection concerns the three emissaries from Moscow who met with Canadian communists furnishing them with information and financial support. In 1923 WPC executive members Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald travelled to Moscow and returned with organizational directives to be implemented. One directive concerned the Bolshevization of the party. In Canada this meant a de-emphasis on agitation in the non-Anglo-Saxon communities and instead an emphasis on communist incursions into the TLC labour movement. The second form of linkage between the CPC and Moscow refers to the efforts of individuals who travelled or attended congresses in the Soviet Union and the significance of their published impressions concerning the situation in Soviet Russia. This was begun early after

the revolution when John Reed and Louise Bryant wrote a series of articles which were reproduced in socialist and labour papers in Canada. Later Canadians like W. W. Lefeaux, who wrote Winnipeg--London--Moscow A Study of Bolshevism, travelled and recounted their experiences and the condition of the Soviet workers' republic.

Therefore, while Canadian socialist parties were rejected due to their inefficacy and Bolshevism was seized upon due to its success in Russia and due to the hope it held for workers internationally, these structural conduits and to a lesser degree the informal connections furthered the ideological development of the CPC along Bolshevik lines.

## X. Conclusion

We have argued that the communist party arose because the alternatives to the ineffective socialist parties, the labour parties, the OBU and the SPC during the period it was linked to the OBU, had proven unable to unite workers and lead them in their struggle against capital. The failure of all of the alternatives accomplished two things: it left working class activists in want of a political organ and it turned the activists' attention towards Bolshevism. But the WPC did not simply arise as an alternative to all preceding organs because of the delays caused by a lack of information and party nucleus, repression and functioning

worker organizations had situated Bolshevism in Canada at a specific and opportune time period. This would be to forget that the communist party, unlike any other alternative, was the unity of the three socialist parties. Therefore the WPC was qualitatively more than another political option. It was a unifying organ because, on the backdrop of failures by socialist and other organs and Bolshevism's revolutionary success in Russia, ideologically and organizationally the WPC was an alternative which offered a new and proven praxis and with it a new hope.

In order to present this argument we began by analysing, initial working class support for Bolshevism immediately after 1917. This led to the discussion into providing an answer to the question why the communist party could not have been formed earlier. The reasons for the 1922 arrival of the WPC were the early lack of information concerning Bolshevism, the sectarianism and indecision of the SPC and SDPC, repression and prevalence of newly organized alternatives to the lack of socialist and TLC leadership. Since the alternatives were new options for the working class, they held the support of workers. But, once the labour parties proved to be failures even after electoral victories, once the OBU was set back by the combined forces of capital, the state and the TLC and once the SPC reverted to electorally committed impossiblism, the Canadian working class in want of a political organ turned to Bolshevism. This turn also occurred in a period when information was sufficient to allow for debate and when repression relaxed enough to permit the semi-legal WPC to exist. Thus debates and splits over the question of Bolshevism followed. Bolshevism found sympathy but no agreement with impossiblism, possiblism, industrial unionism or British

labourism. Consequently, socialists and others who had struggled and been defeated rejected their ideologies in favour of an alternative ideology which was proven successful.

In the course of this discussion we have examined the five theses presented in section two on the origin of the Communist party. We have shown that a reliance on ethnicity (Morton) leads to a misunderstanding of the significance of the WPC. To Morton the WPC appears as an organ of non-Anglo-Saxons and therefore it is not indigenous to Canada but is un-Canadian. We have argued that the WPC was the unity of the majority of socialists of the SPC, the SDPC and the SPNA and it was as Canadian as the socialist parties and as Canadian as impossiblism and possiblism. Through a study of debates and splits over Bolshevism we have seen that, unlike Grimson's claims, Bolshevism did not fuse with the ideologies and use the organizations which belonged to socialists, syndicalists and industrial unionists. This is because Bolshevism was not compatible with these organizations and therefore the 'Z' party and the WPC did not structurally arise from the womb of any pre-established organization. Secondly, the splits ensued in the SPC and SDPC precisely because Canadian impossiblism and possiblism held nothing in common with Bolshevism except the ideal of a classless society. Furthermore, we have gone beyond the shallow arguments of Allen, Avakumovic and Warrian to present the arrival of the WPC as the product and integral element in the socio-political development of the working class. Finally, this presentation has been a detailed and analytical expansion of Penner's argument which schematically indicated that it was the membership, in part or almost in whole, of the SPC, SDPC, and SPNA, who formed the WPC.

In this discussion we also added that the WPC received some members from the OBU and the labour parties.

## NOTES

1. W. L. Morton, Manitoba, A History, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 373.
2. Tom McEwen, The Forge Glows Red from Blacksmith to Revolutionary, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1974), p. 93.
3. Ralph Allen, "The Case History of Comrade Buck", MacLean's Magazine, 15 March, 1951, p. 8.
4. Peter Warriian, "The Challenge of the One Big Union Movement in Canada, 1919-1921", (M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1971), pp. 49-50.
5. Norman Penner, The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1977), p. 77.
6. Ibid., p. 33.
7. D. G. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 4.
8. Western Labour News, November 22, 1918.
9. Russell Trial, T. Beattie to \_\_\_\_\_, 9 and 24 November, 1918 in Gerald Friesen, "'Yours in Revolt': The Socialist Party of Canada and the Western Canadian Labour Movement," Labour/Le Travailleur, Journal of Canadian Labour Studies, I (1976), 142.
10. Western Clarion, October, 1917 as cited in A. Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 144.
11. Western Clarion, March, 1918.
12. See Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 78.
13. Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1967), pp. 17-19; "Short History of the CPC", Robert S. Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (UTL, TF in subsequent citation), Chapter 3, p. 18.
14. See Western Clarion, April, 1917.
15. Canadian Forward, March 24, 1918.

16. Writing about socialists in a coalition government while Russia was at war, the SPC wrote:

The Russian socialists have succumbed to the system of ideas and to the state of psychology which the war has produced in our ranks everywhere, and unless (which is quite likely) the Russian masses themselves revolt, we shall soon be confronted with a new disappointment, perhaps the bitterest of all.

(Canadian Forward, August 24, 1917).

17. BC Federationist, March 28, May 18, June 22, 1917.
18. Tim Buck, Thirty Years: 1922-1952, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1952), p. 21.
19. "Short History of the Communist Party in Canada", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, Chapter 2, p. 4; William Beeching and Dr. Phyllis Clarke, editors, Yours in Struggle: Reminiscences of Tim Buck, (Toronto: NC Press, 1977), p. 98.

Although he returned from the United States in 1919, Avakumovic writes that Buck was not present at the Guelph barn meeting. (Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), p. 11. On this score Avakumovic appears in error if we refer to the "Earliest Known Surviving Minutes of the WPC/CPC", (in Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF), where it is evident Buck worked as the party's national organizer preparing for the February 1922 WPC conference.

20. Rex vs Tim Buck, et al., Evidence, November 2, 3-5, 1931 (Public Archives of Ontario), p. 134 in Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1968), p. 147.
21. Canadian Forward, April 10, 1918; Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 58.
22. Canadian Forward, February 10, 1918; for more on issues which concerned the SDPC see Canadian Forward, January 10, 1918.
23. Canadian Forward, January 17, 27, 1917; Canadian Forward, August 24, 1981.
24. Canadian Forward, April 10, 1918.
25. Marxian Socialist, July, 1918.
26. The call to unity was first published in the SPNA's paper, the Marxian Socialist. It was reprinted by 'Pat' in the SPC column in the Western Labour News, October 4, 1918.

27. The Voice, March 15, 1918 and Western Clarion, September, November, 1918 in McCormack, Reformers, p. 142.
28. Western Clarion, March, 1918.
29. "Short History of the CPC", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, Chapter 2, p. 1; Potrebenko, No Streets of Gold: A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1977), p. 142. Tim Buck was not present at the time and the SPNA was not the primary instigator of the meeting, but rather a man named Ziradowski was. Beeching and Clarke, eds., Yours in Struggle, p. 95.
30. BC Federationist, March 15, 1918.
31. BC Federationist, April 4, 1919.
32. BC Federationist, November 9, 1917.
33. BC Federationist, October 10, 1919; Gordon Wilkinson, Canadian Union Conflicts (Ottawa: Canada Department of Labour, 1972), pp. 10-c and 11-c.
34. Paul A. Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: BC Federation of Labour and the Borg Foundation, 1967), p. 84.
35. BC Federationist, November 26, 1920.
36. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 89.
37. BC Federationist, December 3, 1920.
38. BC Federationist, February 3, 24, 1922; see also BC Federationist, January 16, 1922.
39. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 71.
40. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 85.
41. Idem.
42. BC Labour News, August 21, October 21, 1921.
43. BC Labour News, February 10, 1922.
44. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 88. In view of this Avery is incorrect when he writes, no "systematic campaign" was launched against "immigrants". (By the former term he, of course, means non-Anglo-Saxons). Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners' European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada 1896-1932, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), p. 10. Not only does the

Asiatic Exclusion League prove Avery wrong, but so do the Orders-in-Council and the practice of the Canadian state.

45. BC Labour News, September 16, 1921.
46. The Voice, February 1, 1918.
47. Warrian, "The Challenge of the OBU", p. 92.
48. Western Labour News, February 18, 1921; Western Labour News, January 7, 1921.
49. Western Labour News, December 10, 1920; Western Labour News, February 11, 1921.
50. See the Western Labour News, March 17, 24, 1922.
51. Western Labour News, July 2, 1920.
52. Industrial Banner, July 25, 1919.
53. BC Federationist, April 19, 1918.
54. Industrial Banner, October 10, 1919.
55. Industrial Banner, November 14, 1919.
56. Beeching and Clarke, eds., Yours in Struggle, p. 69.
57. Eleventh Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1921, p. 51.
58. Seventh Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1917, p. 40.
59. Fourteenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1924, p. 191.
60. Eleventh Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1921, p. 51.
61. Twentieth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1930, pp. 176-177.
62. Twelfth Annual Report on Labour Organizations in Canada, 1922, pp. 175-176.
63. Western Labour News, March 17, 1922.
64. See E. J. Hobsbawm, Industry and Empire (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1975).

65. G. H. D. Cole, The World of Labour, edited by John Lovell (Brighton Sussex: The Harvester Press: 1973), p. 1.
66. Bennett goes on to erroneously claim that this was the contradiction which killed the efficacy of the OBU. William Bennett, Builders of British Columbia, (Vancouver: n.p., 1937), p. 47.
67. Robin, Radical Politics, p. 150; G. R. F. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", (M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1922), p. 106.
68. Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution, p. 53.
69. This is what the government publication dealing with labour organization did as early as 1912. The difference, it argued, was that syndicalism was "the extremist form of labour organization" the model of which was the IWW. Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1912, p. 11.
70. Western Clarion, July 18, 1914.
71. See The Voice, April 12, 1907; Western Clarion, May 25, 1912.
72. BC Federationist, January 23, 1920.
73. BC Federationist, November 21, 1919.
74. OBU Bulletin, November 1, 1919.
75. Western Labour News, June 5, 1919, in Charles Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959 (Montreal: Canadian Social Publications, 1966), p. 194.
76. OBU Bulletin, September 20, 1919; see also OBU Bulletin, August 12, 1919.
77. Norman Penner, "Introduction", in Norman Penner, editor, Winnipeg 1919, second edition (Toronto: Lorimer and Company, 1975), p. xix; Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution, p. 68.
78. Tenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1920, p. 63.
79. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 109; Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 91.
80. Beeching and Clarke, eds., Yours in Struggle, p. 82; Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, pp. 220-221; Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 110.
81. The Soviet, August 15, 1919. The Soviet was published in Edmonton by an SPG-OBU member named Joseph Knight.

82. OBU Bulletin, December 13, 1919.
83. Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution, p. 91.
84. Thirteenth Annual Report on Labour Organizations in Canada, 1923, p. 144.
85. Buck, Thirty Years, p. 31; Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 91; Norman Penner, "International Unions and the Canadian Left", in Craig Heron, Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada, Essays from the Marxist Institute of Toronto (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, n.d.), p. 192.
86. OBU Bulletin, May 25, 1922.
87. Fifteenth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1925, p. 12.
88. To be sure, the SDPC's English locals were not outlawed, however, their press, the Social Democrat, has not been saved for posterity. In North America there is only one library which claims to have the entire collection, 1918 to 1920, of the Social Democrat. It is the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library but it only has in its possession the December 31, 1918 issue and no more. The Library speculates it lost the Social Democrat microfilm reels when it moved to its present location recently.
89. Beeching and Clarke, eds., Yours in Struggle, p. 91. It is interesting that Buck writes that Niznevitch's proposal was the first call for a Bolshevik party (Buck, Thirty Years, p. 17) when in 1918 the same call was heard and among the exponents was Buck's own party, the SPNA. Also interesting is Avakumovic's claim that preparations for the CPC were undertaken by Eastern Europeans in the SDPC who in January of 1919 formed the Workers' International Revolutionary Party. Avakumovic adds a police raid wiped out the party and set back the CPC's launching by two years (Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 12). However, I have found no reference to such a party by either socialists, labourites or communists and hence have no historical grounds upon which to discuss it.
90. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 24.
91. Troop, "Socialism in Canada", p. 69.
92. Vera Lysenko, Men in Sheepskin Coats: A Study in Assimilation, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 118.
93. Bennett, Builders, p. 132.
94. Paul Yuzyk, The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), p. 98.

95. Victor Turek, Poles in Manitoba (Toronto: Polish Alliance Press, 1967), pp. 147-148.
96. Ibid., p. 147.
97. Ibid., p. 148.
98. "Earliest Known Minutes", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, p. 8.
99. Idem.
100. J. Donald Wilson, "The Finnish Organization of Canada, The 'Language Barrier', and the Assimilation Process", Canadian Ethnic Studies, IX, no. 2 (1977), 114.
101. Red Flag, March 22, 1919.
102. Red Flag, June 14, 1919.
103. Red Flag, June 7, 1919.
104. Red Flag, August 30, 1919.
105. Western Clarion, March 1, 1920.
106. Western Clarion, May 1, 1920.
107. Ibid.
108. Western Clarion, September 16, 1920.
109. Western Clarion, March 16, 1921.
110. Western Clarion, October 1, 1920.
111. Western Clarion, March 1, 1920.
112. Western Clarion, August 16, 1920.
113. Western Clarion, October 1, 1920.
114. Communist Manifesto (Whitehead Library), p. 39 in Western Clarion, November 1, 1920.
115. Western Clarion, November 16, 1920.
116. Western Clarion, March, August 1918.
117. Western Clarion, March 1, 1921.
118. Western Clarion, March 1, and March 16, 1921.

119. Western Clarion, August 1, 1921.
120. Western Clarion, March 16, 1921.
121. Western Clarion, February 15, 1921.
122. BCFL, 1919, Proceedings, pp. 28-36 in Lipton, The Trade Union Movement, p. 188; Western Clarion, Feb. 15, 1921; BC Federationist, Jan. 20, 1922.
123. Western Clarion, February 15, March 16, April 1, 1921.
124. See Western Clarion, March 1, 1921.
125. Western Clarion, April 1, 1921. There is no record anywhere of the Communist Bulletin nor of the later paper The Communist in any library. The only documentation of it rests in what the Clarion reproduced directly or verbatim. It is my observation that the substance was not overly distorted and Harrington, for one, gave the communists a fair, although selective, hearing.
126. Western Clarion, April 16, 1921.
127. See Western Clarion, June 1, 1921.
128. Western Clarion, July 16, 1921.
129. Ibid.
130. Western Clarion, February 1, 1921.
131. Western Clarion, December 1, 1921.
132. Western Clarion, December 16, 1921.
133. Phillips, No Power Greater, p. 90.
134. Western Clarion, December 16, 1921.
135. Western Clarion, July 15, 1922.
136. The Worker, March 15, 1923.
137. "Short History of the CPG", Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF, Chapter 2, p. 3. The UCPA had emerged from the CPA owing to ideological controversies. The Canadians, however, were not party to the disputes, nor did they continue the disunity by carrying the particular CPA or UCPA stamp with them to Canada. For the Canadians, the determining reason why they joined either American party depended upon whom they met first after leaving their country.

138. Beeching and Clarke, eds., Yours in Struggle, p. 91.
139. Buck, Canada and the Russian Revolution, p. 87.
140. Twelfth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, p. 174.
141. Potrebenko, No Streets of Gold, p. 176.
142. OBU, Russell to Roberts, June 19, 1924 in Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners', p. 119.
143. McEwen, The Forge Glows Red, p. 127.
144. Buck, Thirty Years, p. 23.
145. "Manifesto of the WPC on the Immediate Problems of Canadian Labour", (Toronto, March, 1923), Kenny Collection, Ms. Coll. 179, Box 1, UTL, TF.
146. The Worker, July 1, 1922.
147. Twelfth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, p. 178.
148. Idem.
149. For the WPC constitution see ibid., pp. 180-184.
150. The first WPC CEC did not strictly follow this procedure; eleven were elected with six representing Toronto and area and five representing the extra Ontario regions. Ibid., p. 179.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis began by asking the simple yet synthetic question of how and why the communist party was founded in Canada. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to discuss the unification of Canadian socialists under the Communist Party of Canada. It was argued that Canadian socialism, which began as a united force under the impossibilist Socialist Party of Canada, was not able to remain united nor were the subsequent socialist parties, the SPC, the Social Democratic Party of Canada and the Socialist Party of North America, able to cooperate. The lack of cooperation and the divisions among parties weakened Canadian socialism, while neither the impossibilist SPC and SPNA nor the possibilist SDPC were able to mobilize and lead workers against the capitalist regime. This condition prevailed until repression and intensified class struggle revealed the ineptitude of impossibilism and possibilism and the working class opted for political and economic alternatives to Canadian socialism. These alternatives were labour parties, the One Big Union and a direct action oriented SPC which was linked to the OBU. But, with the failure of the alternatives and the victory of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, Canadian socialists and workers saw the need for and were provided with an alternative model of a political working class party. The Bolshevik alternative then arose in Canada as the unity of socialists and members of the labour parties and the OBU.

Until the Workers Party of Canada and immediately after the limited 1905 unity of socialists under the SPC, the development of

working class politics was regressive, that is, away from unity and into division and weakness. Both Chapters II and III were designed to argue this by examining the ideology and praxis of the SPC, SDPC and SPNA. In Chapter II, the SPC was shown to be a sectarian and impossiblist party which drew its ideology from the pre-1900 Socialist Labour Party. It was unable to expand because its impossiblism led the party to engage in an electoral and educational praxis designed to elect the SPC thus making the socialist revolution. Otherwise the SPC eschewed struggle for reforms which alienated the labour movement.

Although two MLAs in British Columbia belonged to the SPC, the party suffered from a deficiency in its element of contact and from an over-zealous hold on power and authority by its leadership. The former was hampered by, not only the lack of intellectuals for this was a condition endemic to the entire workers' movement, but also by the lack of a mass element to leadership mobility and the weakness of impossiblism to articulate the workers' everyday experience in terms of the class struggle. Consequently the SPC was unable to present an ideology or praxis capable of ensuring working class support and capable of developing a counter bourgeois hegemony. This condition, coupled with the unwillingness of the leadership to yield to intra-party pressures for a change to possiblist praxis, resulted in the fragmentation of and the splits in the SPC.

It was the object of chapter III to discuss the two new parties the SPC had spawned and the inter-party relations which ensued. One party, the SPNA thought itself more purely impossiblist than the SPC, hence, at the cost of socialist unity, it maintained that sectarianism

was more virtuous. The other party, the SDPC was overwhelmingly possibilist and it was constantly willing to unite with the SPC. But the latter reaffirmed its impossibilism and continued being sectarian. Socialism in Canada was thus divided and weakened. Moreover, the SDPC and SPNA did not develop a praxis beyond education and electoral politics and were not able to electorally improve on the SPC's record. Hence, neither party was able to attract labour or working class support. The split among socialists and the shortcomings of the socialist parties resulted in the labour movement's quest for its own political expression(s).

The SDPC was unlike the SPC and the SPNA for it espoused an ideology of reform and revolution. But, as chapter IV argued, the SDPC was not able to entrench itself and gain the support of the labour movement. Consequently, without entrenchment in the labour movement and committed ideologically to electoral praxis rather than organizing the unskilled into industrial unions in which it could have become entrenched, the SDPC was unable to lead the working class in the intensified class struggles of 1919. Moreover, once the SDPC was proclaimed illegal by the state it was able to continue its socialist activity only within its cultural groups which were its only basis of entrenchment. The SPNA's extra-party involvement and entrenchment was also weak and, when the 1918 Orders-in-Council were announced, the party ceased functioning since it was unable to conceal itself within worker or cultural organizations. Therefore, it was the specificities of the parties coupled with repression, and not repression per se, which removed two parties from the class struggle. Conversely, it was not the state's failure to repress the SPC which permitted it to flourish. Rather, at the time when the

labour parties were caught in a quagmire of ineptitude and were unable to develop, it was the SPC which rose, entrenched in the British Columbia Federation of Labour and among western labour, to lead the working class into the One Big Union and the intensified class struggles of 1919.

The concern of the fifth chapter was to discuss the gap between, on one hand, the Canadian socialist failures and the Russian Revolution which brought the ideology of Bolshevism to the international proletariat, and, on the other hand, the erection of the Communist Party of Canada as the Workers' Party of Canada in 1922. This chapter argued that, although the Russian October revolution generated interest in Bolshevism among Canadian workers, there were insurmountable obstacles barring the way to the establishment of the CPC. The obstacles included were insufficient information on Bolshevism, the lack of a legal and overt nucleus of Canadian Bolsheviks in Canada to take the lead in establishing the CPC, the state's repression of socialist and communist organizations and the prevalence of alternative, already organized, political and economic working class organizations. The organizations had developed in order to replace the inept socialist parties and consequently they held the attention and consent of many Canadian workers. However, once the alternatives proved incapable of representing the interests of workers, their ideology and praxis were discredited and workers were faced with the need for a new political party. This is when, with more information about Bolshevism available, that ideology began being considered as an alternative and working class organizations entered into debates concerning the merits of the model of Bolshevism vis-a-vis their organizations. These debates resulted in splits in the

socialist parties and secessions from the OBU and the labour parties as members, unable to sway their entire organs to Bolshevism, opted for the Bolshevik alternative. Consequently, when the CPC arose, it was formed as the unity of a majority of the members of the SPC and the SDPC, and the vast majority of the SPNA. Also included were some members of the labour parties and the OBU.

This thesis has attempted to make several arguments and shed light on hereto neglected areas of Canadian politics. Consequently, the thesis has sought to make a contribution to the political history of the Canadian working class. The most important argument to be made arose in the discussion of the linkage or relationship between Canadian socialism and the CPC. The result of establishing a link between Canadian socialism and the CPC has led the thesis to put forward that the CPC is not foreign culturally or ethnically to Canada, but is indigenous to the Canadian working class by virtue of its genesis. Moreover, the thesis has argued that Marxism or revolutionary socialism is also indigenous to Canadian working class politics by virtue of its history in Canada.

In order to make its argument, it was necessary for the thesis to discover and analyze the histories and ideologies of the SPC, SDPC, and SPNA. These parties have been neglected or misunderstood, although some scholarly work on the subject of the Canadian working class has been written. This deficiency and weakness is the direct result of the failure of Canadian historiography and the social sciences, both liberal and Marxist, to research and discuss the political history of and the political and economic movements of the working class. It is expected

that as research continues as it has, from its interest first in the Winnipeg General strike and then the OBU, inevitably and through necessity researchers will come into contact with these parties. It is hoped that this thesis has made an informative contribution towards this direction of study.

With respect to the Winnipeg General Strike and the OBU, they have been and are the singularly most discussed working class events at the turn of the century. Nevertheless, little has been established as conclusive and the field remains open to much awaited critical analysis. On the question of the Winnipeg General Strike we argued as did Charles Lipton that the Strike was a defensive withdrawal of labour and it was a lost opportunity to mobilize workers against the state. Agreement with Lipton, however, was reached through a discussion of the lack of socialist leadership in the Strike which led to an analysis of the reason for and the character and the consequences of the labour leadership of the Strike. The OBU, meanwhile, stands as an important link in the history of unionism in Canada. Not only did it arise in reaction to intensified class struggle and the inability of the socialist parties and the TLC to defend workers, but it was also a reaction to craft unionism. The OBU developed during the initial technological revolutions of industrial capitalism, which were re-structuring intra-working class relations by eliminating crafts and developing a semi-skilled strata. Unfortunately, studies which discuss the OBU suffer from two weaknesses, one theoretical, the other, historical. The first is shared by many who fail to come to terms with the nature of and the differences between syndicalism and industrial unionism. To overcome the second weakness

it is important to understand the specificity of the OBU. This behoves one to come to grips with the history of the insurgent labour movement and the role of the SPC throughout this insurrection.

In summary, a word must be said about the approach undertaken. There has been no attempt to amend Gramsci's theory. Rather Gramsci's work was qualified and certain aspects of his theory were highlighted. It must be remembered that Gramsci had occasion to write in and maintain prime reference to Italy. The specificity of that class struggle is therefore naturally reflected in his conceptions of hegemony and party. This does not mean that theoretically Gramsci is unable to shed light on the development of working class politics in Canada. To be sure, Gramsci wrote of hegemony over "subordinate classes" and was concerned with uniting the Italian peasantry with the working class and, moreover, since Canadian socialist parties could not unite themselves and mobilize the working class, this appears as grounds for the rejection of Gramsci's theory. But beyond this lies the quintessence of the theory as an analytical approach concerned with discussing what ought to be if the working class is to challenge the rule of the bourgeoisie. When this theory is applied to Canadian socialist (and other) parties the source of their weaknesses and ineffectiveness can be understood. Moreover, the political process from socialist unity under one single socialist party, to a plethora of political and economic labour and working class organizations, to the unity of socialists under the communist party is also better understood.

The introduction of entrenchment as a pre-requisite of hegemony was a logico-analytical addition to the Gramscian theory. It was the

recognition that if a party seeks to lead the working class it must involve itself in the struggles of the workers. In Canada this meant struggle for and struggle with industrial unions. The verification of the logic and need for such activity is born out by the fate of the socialist parties in view of the state's repressive Orders-in-Council.

Secondly, while Gramsci stressed the role of intellectuals, we have only had propagandists to view. Here the discussion does not lessen Gramsci's applicability. Rather it is evidence of the difference, in this case, in the composition of Canadian and European socialist parties. The inability to discuss the roles of organic socialist intellectuals did, however, demand a shift in focus in the element of contact. Instead of studying the production and mobility of intellectuals (and leaders) from the rank and file to the executive, we analyzed the bridging of the gap between the heads of the party and its membership through ideological articulations. This was especially necessary with respect to working class organizations in the post-1919 period. In many cases, their brief appearance, lack of a newspaper and/or lack of intra-party information on mobility left nothing else visible save for the party's ideology and praxis. This, along with evidence of support for a party, made it possible to gauge the relationship between the party and the working class.

Thirdly, the approach to Canadian socialism and the CPC depended upon an understanding of bourgeois and counter-hegemony, ideology, social crisis and social class. Following Gramsci, hegemony was defined as the consent of the lead. Bourgeois hegemony was therefore discussed as a class', in this thesis specifically the working class', consent to

exploitation. According to Gramsci, where hegemony was used as the bourgeoisie's approach to governing, the socialist revolution could be brought about only through the establishment of a counter-hegemony. This counter-hegemony, we indicated, was dependent upon unified, or at least cooperative, socialist parties dedicated to mobilizing and leading the working class. As in the case of building a counter-hegemony, mobilization also required working class consent to the leadership of the mobilizing socialist party. This consent is achieved through a socialist party's execution of the war of position. This is essentially an ideological war where socialist 'maps of social reality' (Geertz) provide workers with an explanation of their day-to-day experiences and condition in terms of the class struggle. This socialist ideology ought to address workers' concerns providing more powerful explanations and hence drawing workers away from bourgeois hegemony.

Socialist ideology is aided in this task by the socio-economic repercussions of social crises. As Adam Przeworski pointed out, consent to exploitation and hence bourgeois rule rests upon an acceptable material basis. Therefore, bourgeois hegemony is secure as long as the capitalist economy and its labour market avoid social crises which affect the workers' standard of living. Conversely, if a social crisis develops and depresses the accepted standard of living among workers, then bourgeois hegemony is weakened by the withdrawal of consent. Therefore, while it was argued that no social crisis in and of itself can lead to the collapse of the bourgeois regime, it was pointed out that as social crises weaken bourgeois hegemony they allow socialist ideology to entrench itself more strongly in the working class.

Now, to be sure, it was taken into account that the Canadian working class was stratified according to skilled and organized workers (the labour movement represented by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada) and unskilled and organized workers (the working class). Moreover, it is also understood that the former were better able to defend themselves than were the latter. Nevertheless, the types of social crises which developed in Canada between 1900 and 1922 frequently undermined the material basis of both labour, especially labour in the peripheral regions, and the working class.

In conclusion, it was the inability of the socialists, and finally the alternatives to the socialist parties, to mobilize and lead the workers during periods of social crisis and economic stability which led the majority of Canadian Socialists to erect a Bolshevik party in Canada.

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