

# Introduction

John Manley

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to the preceding volume in this series Gregory S. Kealey tentatively concluded that the 1933-34 RCMP Security Bulletins (those that were available) revealed "a general strengthening" of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). He also suggested that an upturn in party fortunes could be dated from the spring of 1934, when a Toronto jury acquitted A.E. Smith, National Secretary of the Canadian Labour Defence League (CLDL), from a charge of sedition.<sup>1</sup> Smith's acquittal certainly contrasted sharply with the fate, two years earlier, of the CPC's Political Bureau, and in the process made their continued incarceration increasingly problematic. It was, however, more a culmination than a beginning, the climax of a year in which in its various incarnations the still illegal CPC embedded itself, really for the first time, in the Canadian working-class movement. Communists, for example, strengthened their track record as the most consistent and persistent supporters of Canada's unemployed. Smith's acquittal benefited directly from the Free Speech Fight waged throughout the summer of 1933 by Toronto's Communist unemployed activists; their successful struggle to reclaim the public spaces of the Queen City for the propagandizing of revolutionary politics helped shift public opinion away from the reflexive anticommunism of the early 1930s.<sup>2</sup> Also in this period the Workers' Unity League (WUL) established "red" trade

<sup>1</sup>Gregory S. Kealey, "Introduction," in Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., *The RCMP Security Bulletins: The Depression Years, Part I, 1933-1934* (St. John's 1993), 15.

<sup>2</sup>John Manley, "'Don't Starve, Fight!': Communism, Class Struggle, and Canada's Urban Unemployed, 1930-1937," unpublished paper, presented to Memorial University of Newfoundland, History Department Seminar, September 1994.

unionism as a serious force in the ranks of organized labour.<sup>3</sup> Its "March Campaign" coincided with an economic upturn that gave a minority of industrial workers the confidence to call a halt to speed-up and wage cuts. All across Canada packets of red unionism emerged out of semi-clandestine perseverance. In Vancouver, the WUL rose apparently from nowhere to a position of authority on the waterfront, transforming the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association from a company union into the base of operations for a drive to organize longshoring and marine transport throughout British Columbia.<sup>4</sup> In Winnipeg, WUL membership rose from 170 in March to 955 in September.<sup>5</sup> But if there was a single turning point in party fortunes, it probably occurred during the Stratford, Ontario, furniture strike in September and October 1933. Though not a total WUL victory, the Stratford strike represented, in the words of a leading non-communist participant, "the best possible arrangement that could be made at that time," one that forced the manufacturers to recognize "the authority and the right of the worker to participate in the organization of the plant." After Stratford, the WUL had an identity based on achievement rather than simply aspiration.<sup>6</sup>

Lacking the relevant bulletins for the first half of the year, *The Depression Years, Part I: 1933-1934* could not reflect the Toronto campaign or the significant progress of red unionism during the spring and summer of 1933. It could be forgiven for taking its lead from those state officials who often had difficulty seeing or acknowledging CPC advances, except when they were impossible to ignore. In the very first report in *The Depression Years, Part I* the RCMP Officer Commanding, Western Ontario, reported that "the revolutionary organizations are losing their hold upon the unemployed masses, and that Communist activities throughout the district are practically at a standstill."<sup>7</sup> In fact, during the next six months there was hardly an urban centre in Ontario which did not experience a rising level of unemployed and workplace struggle; whether it was Windsor, a key

<sup>3</sup>John Manley, "Canadian Communists, Revolutionary Unionism, and the 'Third Period': The Workers' Unity League, 1929-1935," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, NS #5 (1994), forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup>*The Heavy Lift*, 5 January 1934; "Strengthen the Work in the Strongholds of Social Fascism," *Communist Review*, May-June 1934.

<sup>5</sup>Joe Forkin, speech to WUL Second National Congress, in *The Worker*, 23 September 1933.

<sup>6</sup>Evidence of O.J. Kerr, in Canada, House of Commons, Special Committee on Price Spreads and Mass Buying, *Evidence and Proceedings*, 176-93. Compare this with Desmond Morton with Terry Copp, *Working People: An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour* (Ottawa 1980), 144.

<sup>7</sup>Kealey and Whitaker, eds., *The Depression Years, Part I*, 21-2.

target of WUL concentration, or the “company village” of Hespeler, which in December 1933 hosted one of the year’s most militant strikes.<sup>8</sup>

Such occasional inaccuracies do not vitiate the documentary utility of the Security Bulletins; rather, they actually help expose the mindset of certain state officials. The bulletins are more widely useful. One is struck again and again by their matter-of-fact realism. One must remember that these documents were tailored to suit an audience of ministers and officials who would not have appreciated being the recipients of misinformation. Hence hopeful editorializing is the exception rather than the rule. The bulletins offer in accessible form a massive quantity of information on the CPC — which completely dominated the RCMP’s attentions — from which the reader may judge independently whether Communism was advancing or declining. Thankfully, apart from the unfortunate deletions, the 1935 bulletins present a reasonably complete and continuous scrutiny of the CPC during a pivotal year.

If one theme dominates the present volume, it is the crystallization of the United Front and its rapid passage over into the People’s or Popular Front. By the end of 1935 almost all of the style, tone and temper of Third Period Communism had been buffed and bevelled into conformity with the new approach emphasized by the Seventh (and last) World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in July 1935. Until the party line changed again in 1939, the CPC, like Comintern affiliates everywhere, sought to broaden its appeal by becoming respectable, constitutional, and patriotic. By December the party had shed its sectarian skin so effectively that leading members were having to defend themselves from the charge that the party had “changed its line and [was] becoming a ‘pink’ organization.” Sidney Sarkin neatly summarized the rationale of the United Front to a party unit meeting in Montréal. While the party’s ultimate goal remained “a Soviet Canada,” he explained, “a large portion of the workers are not prepared for Socialism, but were definitely opposed to fascism and war.” Frustratingly, the RCMP report does not describe the context of Sarkin’s speech. Was this criticism of the party’s political trajectory internal? If so, it invites further research into how the party carried out the

<sup>8</sup>Manley, “The Workers’ Unity League.” For other examples of mistaken predictions, see Ottawa, Department of National Defence Directorate of History, File 161.009 (D63), William Griesinger to DOC, Military District #1, 8 February, 17 February 1934. The prediction here was that increased WUL efforts in the Windsor-Walkerville-East Windsor auto and auto parts plants would fail to produce strikes. Exactly one month later, a minor strike wave started in the Border Cities.

ideological battle for the Popular Front. More importantly, perhaps, it questions the easy categorization of the party as monolithic or “Stalinist.”<sup>9</sup>

The shift from Third Period to Popular Front was gradual; it was certainly incomplete by the end of 1935. Party trade union work is instructive here. At the start of the year the CPUSA formally “liquidated” its Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) and sent its members (many of whom had, in any event, been voting with their feet throughout 1934) back into the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Since the CPC always watched the goings-on in its sister party with keen interest, it surely knew that the going of the TUUL had implications for the WUL.<sup>10</sup> As early as March — some four months in advance of the Seventh Congress — Tom Ewan informed a WUL rally that the WUL was willing to send its members into *any* reformist union — even into the Catholic Syndicates of Québec — to promote the goal of workers’ unity. Ewan’s statement underlined the rapidity of the unity process; it also, though certainly inadvertently, highlighted the limits of the WUL’s self-ascribed commitment to rank-and-file democracy. Ewan did not lack authority in the party; he had, after all, been reinstated as WUL National Secretary immediately after his release from Kingston in October 1934.<sup>11</sup> But who, we want to ask, gave him the mandate for this offer? Unfortunately, the bulletin does not refer to any audience response. When he proceeded to attack “Trotskyites and Lovestoneites” (there were *limits* to unity!) for their hostility to the WUL, he was probably trying to mollify those WUL members who rejected his unity scenario.<sup>12</sup> He insisted that the WUL had already demonstrated an ability

<sup>9</sup>Sarkin, quoted in Bulletin No. 784, 4 December 1935. To describe the CPC as “Stalinist” in 1935 runs the danger of replacing analysis with rhetoric. Bryan Palmer, for example, argues that the CPC was one of the “Stalinized” Comintern’s most “pliant” affiliates in the 1930s, and that this pliancy, revealed in its subservience to the zig-zags ordered from Moscow in 1929, 1935, 1939 and 1941, lost the party most of the credit and credibility it had accumulated from its pioneer organizing efforts. Elsewhere, however, for example in his comments on the unorthodoxy of many CPC rank and filers and the postwar onslaught on the party by the combined forces of the state and social democracy, he begins to paint a less crude and conventional picture of Canadian Communism. See Bryan D. Palmer, *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto 1993), 252-3, 266-7, 290-4.

<sup>10</sup>William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin* (New York 1937), 274; Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York 1984), 129-32.

<sup>11</sup>Bulletin No. 752, 10 April 1935; Kealey and Whitaker, eds., *The Depression Years, Part I*, 314. Ewan was released on 19 September 1934.

<sup>12</sup>For the Trotskyist and Lovestoneite positions on the party’s labour union tactics, see Bill Matheson, “Revolutionary Strategy in the Trade Unions: The Balance of

to draw "many reformist unions' into action around unemployment and "the war danger" and hence still had a role to play. The report does not reveal the precise nature of the role, largely one suspects because the issue had not been decided.<sup>13</sup>

What the bulletins cannot answer is why the WUL did not simply follow the TUUL into early liquidation. Focused narrowly on the party, and to some extent on the party's international obligations, the bulletins are less than sensitive to the domestic forces that shaped its policy.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, they do show that it was ultimately a Comintern directive that terminated the red union interlude. They also show that, even as forces beyond its control were making its future problematic, the WUL remained the outstanding organizer of the unorganized. The bulletins reveal in copious detail its activity in a host of industries and even in some locations where defeated strikes had ostensibly driven it out (Estevan, Flin Flon). Moreover, despite the pressure to abandon independence, it was combining new organizing work with increasingly effective left-wing oppositional activity in the reformist unions. We learn, for example, that it had a substantial presence in the huge CPR Angus locomotive repair shops in

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'Third Period' Sectarianism," *The Vanguard*, November-December 1932, and Bill Moriarty, "Errors of Dual Unionism," letter to the editor, *Toronto Daily Star*, 27 July 1935.

<sup>13</sup>For the development of the unity drive in the unions, see Manley, "The Workers' Unity League" and David Frank and John Manley, "The Sad March to the Right: J.B. McLachlan's Resignation from the Communist Party of Canada, 1936," *Labour/Le Travail*, 30 (Fall 1992), 115-34.

<sup>14</sup>In the United States, Roosevelt's New Deal (specifically, Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act) seemed to offer a presidential seal of approval to the cause of collective organization. Hundreds of thousands of unorganized mass production workers in steel, auto, rubber, electrical products and so forth took miners' leader John L. Lewis's advice that "the President wants you to join a union" literally, and then literally forced their way into the American Federation of Labor (AFL), albeit in the semi-detached form of Federal Labor Unions. In Canada, there was a sharp rise in industrial struggle in 1933-34, but in no way was it comparable to events south of the border. The absence of a Canadian NIRA meant that workers who went on strike almost became rebels. Unlike the AFL, the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) came under no sustained pressure to lead either an organizing drive or a campaign for positive legislation. It could be argued — and Trotskyists certainly did so at the time — that the party should have sent its WUL cadres into the AFL at this juncture. From the CPC's perspective, however, the risks outweighed the potential benefits; there was no guarantee that the traditionally somnolent TLC Executive Council would respond positively (indeed, the record of the 1920s suggested precisely the opposite), while the red unions were growing. The one way to insure that some organization of the unorganized would continue was for the WUL to keep its unions going.

Montréal; its shop unit produced a regular shop paper, *The Headlight*, with a claimed sale of 500 copies.<sup>15</sup> The bulletins' coverage of CPC trade union policy demolishes some of the myths that still surround the WUL: it was a fly-by-night outfit; it exploited sporadic worker militancy for political purposes; it never really built organizations designed to last. Its continued vitality through 1935 indicates that Communists had a genuine commitment to strengthening working class organization and collective power. The next volume in the series, covering 1936, will show how the party's trade union influence not only survived but flourished after the liquidation of the WUL.

If, in the early 1930s, party life revolved almost entirely around trade union and unemployed struggles, the broadening-out process of the later 1930s involved the CPC in a much wider range of activities. With the release of the party leadership in the latter part of 1934 (see *The Depression Years, Part I*), the CLDL lost much of its *raison d'être*; the 1935 bulletins indicate that it was a declining force. In its place, however, two other "transmission belts" helped spread the party's influence across a wider spectrum of the working class and increasingly into the middle class. The Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU) and Canadian League Against War and Fascism (CLAWF) were formed respectively in 1930 and 1934.

Launched during the height (or nadir?) of the Third Period, the FSU found that its initial project of building broad working-class solidarity for a Soviet Union encircled by hostile imperialisms remained pertinent to the new United Front line; indeed, it could now be extended outwards towards the middle class. Relatively little is known about the FSU, however, and it may be that its attraction remained class bound, confined mainly to working-class militants who were less enamoured of the domestic party than of the Soviet experiment.<sup>16</sup> Was the FSU's national organizer James Cowan, as his name suggests, another of the Scottish immigrant radicals who made such a vivid impact on the CPC in the 1930s (several inhabit the pages of this collection: Sam Scarlett, another FSU stalwart; Jim Litterick, soon to become Canada's first Communist provincial legislator; Fred Collins and Jim Coleman [a.k.a. "Scotty" Houston], two of the WUL's most dynamic industrial organizers; and J.B. McLachlan — "Old Jim" — who in 1936 left the party because he considered its application of the Seventh Congress decisions a "sad march to the right")?<sup>17</sup> The FSU received a boost at the start of 1935 with the return from the USSR of the 1934 Canadian Workers'

<sup>15</sup>Bulletin No. 747, 6 March 1935; Bulletin No. 770, 28 August 1935.

<sup>16</sup>See Stuart Macintyre, *Little Moscows: Communism and Working Class Militancy In Inter-War Britain* (London 1980).

<sup>17</sup>J.B. McLachlan to Tim Buck, 13 June 1936, reprinted in Frank and Manley, "The Sad March to the Right," 132-4.

**Delegation.** There had been similar delegations in the past, but never was a homecoming so effectively exploited. Returning delegates fanned out across the country, addressing scores of mass meetings — many recorded here — on the glories of Socialist Construction. Their predictably glowing reports were precisely what many audiences wanted. On occasion, however, if RCMP reports are to be believed, the message became tiresome and some listeners displayed a cynical edge in the traditional question and answer sessions. Vancouver delegate Pete Munro had to fend off a question that must have echoed through many a workers' hall: why, if he liked the USSR so much, had he not stayed there?<sup>18</sup> At another meeting San Scarlett played on a theme that seemed to inspire party members: the liberating potential of the Red Army. Every one of its members, Scarlett claimed, was "working for the cause of the world revolution." Perhaps Canada's class fighters, who had been encouraged during the early 1930s to believe in the imminence of world revolution, could envisage the Red Army marching on Parliament Hill.<sup>19</sup> One wonders, however, whether Scarlett's evocation of this prospect would have played well with the thousands who were moving towards the CLAWF, undoubtedly the party's most successful "front."

According to CLAWF National Secretary A.A. McLeod, the organization had 337,000 members in 1935! This figure can be taken with a handful of salt; it was originally arrived at by totting up the membership of every organization officially represented at the CLAWF founding conference in October 1934.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, in its first full year of operations the CLAWF, which actually began life as the Canadian Youth League Against War and Fascism under the presidency of Stanley Ryerson, displayed a promising ability to reach forces hitherto untapped by the CPC.<sup>21</sup> It drew in professionals, Jewish and Protestant religious leaders, and left-leaning (or sounding) labour unionists (All-Canadian Congress of Labour President A.A. Mosher attended the founding conference). It proved particularly attractive to labour and "progressive" women, to whose embryonic feminism it offered a variety of outlets. As Joan Sangster has shown, it also managed to convert the tendency towards absolute pacifism exhibited by some members of this group into an anti-fascism that could contemplate

<sup>18</sup>For his reply, see Bulletin No. 745, 20 February 1935.

<sup>19</sup>For similar feelings, see J.B. McLachlan, "When the Red Army Sings," *Nova Scotia Miner*, 23 January 1932.

<sup>20</sup>*Proceedings of the First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism*, Toronto, 6-7 October 1934; Kealey and Whitaker, eds., *The Depression Years, Part I*, 330-2.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Hunter, *Which Side Are You On Boys ...: Canadian Life on the Left* (Toronto 1988), 52-4, 74-7. To be absolutely precise, the CLAWF and the CYLAWF both grew out of initial local and provincial initiatives.

the use of force.<sup>22</sup> Later volumes will show the development of the CLAWF (and its successor Canadian League for Peace and Democracy) as the agency of Popular Front mobilization.

The growth of the "fronts" illustrates the coexistence of "residual" and "emergent" tendencies in party life. The FSU and CLAWF grew in part because the party consciously attenuated its control over them. But while these were organizations of sympathizers and "contacts," they remained "transmission belts"; not just vectors of ideological influence, but recruiting agents for the organizational consolidation of the party. The CPC never ceased to emphasize the importance of party building. At a moment when revolutionary goals were in suspension, the exercise of long-range political influence through the CLAWF and its prominent non-party members was a viable tactic. But that suspension would not last for ever, and in the final conflict influence could never be as reliable as party discipline. Hence the party had to be built. We may reasonably infer that a growing proportion of new recruitment in the later 1930s originated in these two organizations.<sup>23</sup> This raises questions which future volumes in the series will help answer: to what extent did the party see the Popular Front as a tactic, a temporary manoeuvre away from, but not a negation of the goal of a Soviet Canada? Was a different sort of recruit attracted to the party in the Popular Front years? How did they relate to the working-class — though invariably unemployed — militants who had joined during the grimmer times of the Third Period? What sort of party did the CPC become in 1937, 1938, and 1939?

The continued importance of party building is underlined here by the CPC's efforts in Québec. *The Depression Years, Part I* provides abundant evidence of the protracted struggle mounted by the party to break out of its British and Jewish redoubts into the mass of the Francophone working class.<sup>24</sup> The Industrial Union of Needle Trades' Workers' (IUNTW) strike in the Montréal dress trade in August and September 1934 may have been

<sup>22</sup> Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1900-1950* (Toronto 1989).

<sup>23</sup> At the Central Committee Plenum of the CPC in October 1935, Buck gave party membership as 9000, an increase of almost 2000 over the 7390 claimed in July. While retaining a healthy skepticism towards these claims, there is little reason to doubt that the party was growing fairly rapidly during 1935. Compare "Control Tasks Set by 8th Plenum," *Review* (July 1935), 30-4 and CPC, *Towards A Canadian Peoples Front* (Toronto 1935), 104.

<sup>24</sup> Kealey and Whitaker, eds., *The Depression Years, Part I*, 60-1, 88, 146-7, 164-5, 205, 242-3, 263, 274-6, 289, 326-7, 406, 410-1, 421-3, 475-6. See also Andrée Lévesque, *Virage à Gauche Interdit: Les communistes, les socialistes et leurs ennemis au Québec 1929-1939* (Montréal 1984), chs.1-2.



another of those deceptive turning points where, beneath the appearance of defeat, lurked the foundations of qualitative advance. This bitter and bloody strike was undoubtedly a severe setback for the IUNTW and the party. Indeed, one hostile international unionist gloated, even before the formal end of the strike, communists were “not to be seen or heard” in the Montréal garment district; they were “dead to the world.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, in the months leading up to the strike IUNTW organizers had redoubled their efforts to break down the inter-ethnic rivalry between Jewish and French Canadian workers, especially between the “girls” of the trade. They had to “go visit many [French Canadian] parents ... and convince them that it’s ... all right to belong to the union, that they will, because they now belong to the union, assume the dignity of labour.” “Many parents,” union leader Joshua Gershman later reported, “agreed us, but the Church really worked against us.”<sup>26</sup> Though hostility and suspicion prevailed over solidarity — hundreds of French Canadian male workers seized the chance to jump into the traditionally Jewish skilled trades of pressing and cutting — some of the party’s emphasis on class solidarity seems to have stuck.<sup>27</sup>

Fully half of the 10,000 workers who packed Montréal Stadium to hear Tim Buck on 28 December 1934 were French Canadians.<sup>28</sup> No doubt buoyed by this turnout, the party and its associated organizations defied the relentless obstructions of the provincial state with increasing success (Québec under Taschereau and Duplessis came closer to genuine fascism than anywhere else in the Dominion at this time), and just about achieved the level of public activity and recognition that had established *de facto* legality elsewhere in Canada. The CPC did receive one desperate blow to its hopes: the premature death of Paul Delisle. As Andrée Lévesque has remarked of Delisle, who had returned to Québec in August 1934 after 18 months at the Lenin School, “son charisme attire les foules.”<sup>29</sup> He was not easily replaceable. As we see here, however, French Canadian surnames became more common in RCMP reports (though hardly abundant; the RCMP was well aware that “Roger” was really Stanley Ryerson), and there is some evidence that Communists were beginning to develop a discourse

<sup>25</sup>Multicultural History Society of Ontario (Toronto), International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU) Records (microfilm), Bernard Shane to Sam Kraisman, 17 September 1934.

<sup>26</sup>Irving Abella, “Portrait of a Jewish Professional Revolutionary: The Recollections of Joshua Gershman,” *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 2 (1977), 201-2.

<sup>27</sup>Shane to Kraisman, 17 September 1934.

<sup>28</sup>Bulletin No. 739, 9 January 1935.

<sup>29</sup>Lévesque, *Virage à Gauche Interdit*, 52.

tailored to French Canadian cultural sensibilities.<sup>30</sup> Although the bulletins suggest that the party's penetration of the French Canadian community declined in the latter part of 1935, once again this judgment should not be taken at face value. At the very least, Québec was ceasing to be quite so exceptional.<sup>31</sup>

Not all the themes suggested in this volume can be introduced here. One last topic, however, demands comment. Ian Angus has shown in some detail how "Tim Buck's Party" was "made" between 1929-1931.<sup>32</sup> The 1935 bulletins bear witness to the "making" of the man himself and the origins of what would become a rather sickening personality cult. Gritted teeth may be required to savour the later phases of this process, but we can see here some of the personal qualities that made Buck genuinely popular (and raise some doubts about Angus's one-sidedness). Buck's personal charm has been well-documented: he was polite, affable and modest (though Stewart Smith for one thought he had much to be modest about); never aloof (unlike Smith), he had time for everyone and the politician's invaluable knack of always remembering names.<sup>33</sup> What strikes the reader here is his stamina. Buck was not a robust man. He had been quite seriously ill with a nervous condition in 1930, and his 1932-34 sojourn in Kingston

<sup>30</sup>See the account of the Paris Commune Memorial Mass Meeting, in Bulletin No. 750, 27 March 1935. On Ryerson, see Gregory S. Kealey, "Stanley Bréhaut Ryerson," *Studies In Political Economy*, 9 (Fall 1982), 105-7.

<sup>31</sup>The claimed membership of CPC District 2 (Québec) in July 1935 was 730, placing it fifth in size among the party's 10 districts. Andrée Lévesque claims, however, that only in the late 1930s did the French Canadian membership number more than 50. See "Control Tasks Set by 8th Plenum!" and Andrée Lévesque-Olssen, "The Canadian Left in Quebec during the Great Depression: The CPC and the CCF in Quebec, 1929-1939," PhD dissertation, Duke University, 1972, 82, 140.

<sup>32</sup>Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Montréal 1981) does a fine job of exposing the CPC's creative reconstruction of Buck's early party career, and also charts a helpfully clear path through the internecine struggles that accompanied the arrival and acceptance of the Third Period line in Canada. Angus's demolition job, however, needs to be tempered with greater appreciation of the dynamics that placed Buck in an intermediate position, between the Stewart Smith and Jack MacDonald tendencies, where he genuinely tried to adapt the new line in a way that kept the CPC onside with Moscow, while recognizing Canadian realities and doing the least damage to the party. Some of this comes across in correspondence in National Archives of Canada, MG 28 IV 4, Communist Party of Canada Papers, Box 8, Folder 7.

<sup>33</sup>Bryan D. Palmer, ed., *A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers' Movement, 1927-1985* (St. John's 1988), 51-2; David Frank and Donald McGillivray, eds., *George MacEachern, An Autobiography: The Story of a Cape Breton Labour Radical* (Sydney, NS 1987), 98; Stewart Smith, *Communists and Komsomolskas: My Years in the Communist Party of Canada* (Toronto 1993).

penitentiary can have done little to restore him to full health; an assassination attempt must have been particularly unsettling. Yet within weeks of his release and triumphal return to Toronto (see *The Depression Years, Part I*, 439-44), Buck embarked on what must have been an exhausting speaking tour of central Canada. Between 23 December and 18 February he addressed rallies at (chronologically) Toronto, Montréal, Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins, South Porcupine, Kirkland Lake, Rouyn-Noranda, Ottawa, Montréal (again), Kitchener, Windsor, Hamilton, Niagara Falls and Ottawa (again). This last appearance gave him particular satisfaction; it followed a long campaign — after the state had made sure that his first appearance was a make-do-and-mend affair — to find an appropriately prestigious meeting place in the nation's capital.

Many of these meetings found their way into the RCMP bulletins and are recorded here. The face Buck presented to the public was modestly triumphant. By the simple device of comparing *this* meeting with the last occasion on which he had addressed the workers of 'X,' he could drive home the message that "mass pressure" had created a growing Communist movement. His Hamilton audience of 2000 can have had little difficulty in working out the precise magnitude of this growth; an Buck's previous, pre-prison appearance, they learned, only 200 had been present.<sup>34</sup> Buck's Ontario tour was plainly designed to capitalize on the wave of popular sympathy that greeted the release of the party leadership. At an understandably gentler pace, Buck maintained the momentum with personal appearances all over the country. In July the Seventh Comintern Congress underlined his eminence by electing him *in absentia* to the Comintern's Executive Committee. His growing Canadian popularity (in the party's terminology, Buck became "much loved" in 1935) was revealed three months later, during his campaign for the historic North Winnipeg federal seat held by A.A. Heaps of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Heaps retained the seat, but Buck's vote of 7,418 was by far the highest recorded by any of the CPC's 13 candidates. Buck's last mention in the 1935 bulletins underlines his lack of pretension. He had ended 1934 speaking to a crowd of 17,000 at Maple Leaf Gardens. Having become a national figure, he ended 1935 addressing a meeting of 50 party and non-party students at the University of Toronto.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Bulletin No. 745, 20 February 1935. Hamilton had always been one of the party's unhappier hunting grounds. The handful of sightings in W. Peter Archibald's fascinating study "Dissent, Distress, and Alienation: Hamilton Workers in the Great Depression," *Urban History Review*, 21, 1 (October 1992), 3-32 would seem to reflect fairly accurately the party's political weight on the Hamilton left, at least before the coming of the CIO.

<sup>35</sup>At that time, and in that hotbed of academic elitism, a turnout of 50 was another small triumph.

This latest contribution to the *Security Bulletins* series is an invaluable documentary source on the history of Canadian *Communism*. It does, however, contain numerous silences, not all of which are of the "deleted" category. It needs, therefore, to be supplemented from the growing published record and archival sources. Indeed, thanks to Access to Information legislation and the (fingers crossed) impending National Archives' acquisition of microfilm copies of Comintern archives relating to Canada, historians are in danger of being overwhelmed by primary documentation. Even after the arrival of this documentary treasury, the RCMP bulletins will remain an accessible, detailed, and convenient introduction to the CPC, the security services, and the relations between them. This introduction has attempted to flag just a few of the themes on which the 1935 bulletins shed light. Succeeding volumes, which, thankfully, are as complete, as this one, will provide still further illumination.