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"The Development of Canadian-American Trade Union Relations: Some Conclusions"

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# The Development of Canadian-American Trade Union Relations

## Some conclusions <sup>1</sup>

C. Brian Williams

*On one hand, binational trade unionism seems to be the product of three features in Canadian-American economic relations: international trade, labor migration and American investments in Canada. On the other hand, the origin of Canadian unionism and conflicts within can be explained by economic nationalism, by a commitment to the teachings of the Church in Quebec and by an opposition to the AFL-type of craft unionism outside Quebec. The boundary issue is irrelevant to the explanation of both phenomena. In this article, the author has gathered some evidence which tends to support those hypotheses.*

### Introduction

The Canadian trade union movement, unlike any other trade union movement in the world, has traditionally had the vast majority of its local labor bodies in affiliation with trade unions of another

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(1) This paper discusses the conclusions reached after an 18-month examination of « Canadian-American Trade Union Relations ». The three primary purposes of the study were to : (a) contribute to the identification of the causes and motives behind « International Trade Unionism » (herein referred to as Binational Trade Unionism) and, as a corollary, to determine the reasons why the vast majority of Canadian unionists favour Binational organizations ; (b) examine in detail the nature of Canadian unionism particularly the nature of the opposition expressed by Canadian unions which fought vigorously against the Binational Trade Union movement ; and (c) examine in detail the types of issues which have accompanied Binational union activities in Canada.

The study advances the hypothesis that Binational Trade Unionism was Canadian and American labors' response to consequences resulting from the extension of the competitive labour and product markets faced by the national unions

country — the United States.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon — herein called binational unionism — has been a source of conflict within Canadian labor, particularly among those Canadian unionists who felt that the Canadian trade union movement should be all-Canadian and independent of the United States.<sup>3</sup> This paper attempts to explain the causes and motives behind binational unionism and examines the nature of the conflict and issues which have surrounded its activities.

The key to answering the two questions — why binational unionism? what were the conflicts and issues that accompanied it? — lies in the degree of significance to be placed on the International Boundary. The major conclusion of this study is that little significance should be attached to the existence of the boundary. Thus, with respect to the first question, it can be maintained that the boundary had no relevance to the territorial jurisdiction of the American trade union. Given the close Canadian-American economic relations, this argument follows from the conclusions of students who have explained American trade union jurisdiction in terms of the extent of labor and product markets.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the existence of the boundary was irrelevant to the question of the territorial jurisdiction of American trade unions.

With respect to the second question, the International Boundary has been used by Canadians opposed to the binational system to support their case against those who favored it. The boundary was a symbol around which the proponents of an all-Canadian trade union movement

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of the United States to the territory of Canada. This widening of competitive markets was the result of three features in Canadian-American economic relations — Canadian-American trade, Canadian-American labour migration, and the presence of American capital in Canada. The influence of labour migration was examined in the light of the history of the Canadian Iron Foundry Industry and the International Molders and Allied Worker's Union of North American (1860-1885). The influence of Canadian-American trade and American capital in Canada was examined in the light of the Canadian Coal Industry and the United Mine Workers of Canada (1900-1920). The history of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Industry and the United Paper Makers and Paper Workers (1910-1945) offered insights into the influences of all three features — Canadian-American trade, labour migration, and American capital in Canada.

(2) On December 31, 1962, approximately 73% of Canadian trade union members belonged to locals of unions which were headquartered in the United States. Canada, Department of Labour, Economics and Research Branch: *Labour Organization in Canada* (1962), p. XII, Table 3.

(3) HAROLD A. LOGAN, *The History of Trade-Union Organization in Canada*, Chapters IV-VIII, pp. 123-315.

(4) JOHN R. COMMONS and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States*, Volume I, Introduction, pp. 3-21 and LLOYD ULMAN, *The Rise of the National Trade Union*, Chapter 18, pp. 569-604.

could rally in their opposition to binational unionism. In this they were making common cause with Canadian economic nationalists. As a result, the arguments for Canadian economic nationalism and Canadian economic independence from the United States cropped up in nearly all instances of open conflict between the proponents and opponents of pure Canadian unionism.<sup>5</sup> However, the real issues were seldom those of Canadian economic nationalism. Rather, they were internal trade union disputes growing out of the relationships between the various constituent bodies which made up the trade union movement in Canada. Therefore, the International Boundary was also irrelevant to the second question since the conflicts would have arisen even if the trade unions had been wholly Canadian.

As a rule, the tendency towards binational unionism was strongest where Canadian and American labor and capital were closely related, or frequently came into contact, and where the outlook of the Canadian unionist was unaffected by influences such as Canadian economic nationalism, or the teachings of the Quebec Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, the tendency towards Canadian unionism, as represented by the PWA and French-Canadian unionism, was strongest where Canadian and American capital and labor were not closely related, or infrequently came into contact, and where the Canadian unionist outlook was dominated by either the doctrine of Canadian economic nationalism or the teachings of the Quebec Roman Catholic Church.

Interestingly enough, the principal influences at work leading to both binational unionism and its opponent, Canadian unionism, were closely related. All Canadian labor was aware of these influences. However, it was divided over their consequences to its structure and methods.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, binational unionism was the result of (1) the extension of product and labor markets within Canada as a result of

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(5) The arguments advanced by the National Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Federation of Labour before the Senate of Canada in support of the Loughheed Bill of 1903 (a Bill to bar American labour leaders from Canada) offer excellent examples. See « Labors' Statement to the Senators », *Toiler*, Volume 3, No. 27, June 12, 1903, p. 1, and subsequent issues reporting under the same title.

(6) Differences in opinion over the consequences of these influences to the Canadian Labour Movement precipitated the Berlin declaration of 1903 and led to the formation of the NTLG and its successor the CFL. Both groups advocated economic isolation from the United States. See C. BRIAN WILLIAMS « Development of Relations Between Canadian and American National Trade Union Centres — 1886-1925 », *Relations Industrielles - Industrial Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 3, April 1965, pp. 340-371.

American participation in the Canadian industrial economy, and more importantly and for the same reason, the extension of Canadian and American product and labor markets across the international boundary, and (2) the superior development of the national labor organizations of the United States (which were brought on by extension of American product and labor markets) which afforded an established and proven system of protection as contrasted with the alternative of creating a wholly Canadian organization for such purposes.

On the other hand, Canadian unionism was the result of: (1) the rise of the spirit of Canadian economic nationalism as a result of American participation in the Canadian industrial economy, (2) the commitment of Quebec unionists to the teachings of the Quebec Roman Catholic Church which opposed both American economic domination of Canada and the AFL craft type of unionism, and (3) opposition (outside of Quebec) to the AFL craft type of unionism. Binational union supporters, both Canadian and American, not only accepted the extension of the labor and product markets, but also concluded that the territorial jurisdiction of national bodies in a trade or industry should include locals in both Canada and the United States.<sup>7</sup> However, Canadian union supporters, particularly during the period 1903-1927, not only rejected the growing North American product and labor markets (on the grounds of Canadian economic nationalism since American interests had the greater share of the expanded markets) and called for the elimination of all American influences in Canada, but also concluded that Canadian laborers' interests would best be served by a wholly Canadian union structure.<sup>8</sup>

### **Binational Unionism**

#### **EXTENSION OF PRODUCT AND LABOR MARKETS**

United States labor's interest in Canada was prompted by the realization that, as Canadian industry grew and developed and as eco-

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(7) These conclusions were reached after examining: (a) the influences of American capital, trade, and labour migration on the competitive position of the Canadian stove, coal, and paper industries; (b) the events and circumstances surrounding the initial entry into Canada of the International Molders and Allied Workers' Union, the United Mine Workers of America, and the United Paper Makers and Paper Workers; and (c) the debate among Canadian molders, coal miners, and paper makers over whether they should affiliate with the American union. See C. BRIAN WILLIAMS. «Canadian-American Trade Union Relations — a study of the Development of Binational Unionism.» (Ph. D. Dissertation, New York State School of Industrial and Labour Relations, Cornell University, 1964), Chapters III-IV (Stove industry), V, VI, and VII (Western Canadian coal industry), VIII (Eastern Canadian coal industry), and IX and X (Pulp and paper industry).

conomic relations between Canada and the United States became more intimate, many Canadian and American product and labor markets transcended the international boundary. In other words, many product and labor markets, formerly limited to one country, assumed North American dimensions. This enlargement of markets was the result of three influences which flowed from the long history of Canadian-American economic relations: (1) The participation of American capital and enterprise in the Canadian industrial economy, (2) the rapid growth in Canadian-American trade, and (3) the voluntary intermingling of the Canadian and American peoples in response to the call of economic opportunity. <sup>9</sup>

*Participation of American Capital and Enterprise in Canada.* <sup>10</sup>

The participation of American capital and enterprise in Canada has a long history. During the mid-1800's, when this movement first started, participation took the form of the migration of American industrialists to Canada where they built and operated factories to service the growing Canadian local market. Later, in the mid-1870's, American capital, attracted by the rich natural resources endowment of Canada, developed these resources to satisfy the needs of the rapidly expanding American markets and industries. Still later, at the turn of the twentieth century, many American manufacturing firms embarked on what was loosely described as the « branch plant movement ». Subsequently, the American producer, often hampered by the Canadian tariff on manufactured articles, sought to continue to benefit from the Canadian market by establishing a branch plant on Canadian soil.

The growth and success of the Canadian economy owes much to American interests and participation. In 1930, nearly 40 percent of the capital invested in Canadian manufacturing, mining, railways, utilities, and merchandising was supplied by Americans. Americans owned 33 percent of manufacturing, 34 percent of mining, 21 percent of railways, and 30 percent of utilities. In 1932, over 18 percent of the total Canadian manufacturing work force was employed in American-controlled firms. Non-ferrous metals headed the list with 79 percent, followed by

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(8) *Ibid.*, Chapter XI.

(9) *Ibid.*, Chapter I-II.

(10) Data and conclusions were principally drawn from a study conducted by HERBERT MARSHALL, FRANK A. SOUTHARD, JR. and KENNETH W. TAYLOR, *Canadian-American Industry*.

chemicals, 60 percent; rubber, 42 percent; and iron and its products, 18 percent. Over 26 percent of the Canadian work force in mining was employed by American controlled firms.

American capital and enterprise in Canada broadened the product and labor markets in three ways. First, and most important, American capital in primary industries such as lumbering, metal mining, and pulp and paper was basically interested in supplying the needs of a growing American market. Second, American capital in manufacturing industries, particularly branch plant capital, was primarily interested in servicing the Canadian market, a market which prior to the branch plant development was largely serviced by the American export trade. Third, American industry in Canada in effect trained Canadian labor in the industrial skills and technologies which so greatly facilitated the stability of Canadians to migrate to the United States in search of employment opportunities.

*Canadian-American Trade.*<sup>11</sup> By far the most important cause of the extended product market was the expansion of Canadian-American trade. Events which began in the 1840's foreshadowed the failure of a Canadian economic development strategy based on close ties with Europe. The Canadian economy, cut off from former ties and uncertain of its future, looked south to the United States in search of a trading partner.

In 1854, as a compromise to a proposal that Canada annex to the United States, the two countries entered a twelve year period of reciprocity in selected products. From that day forward, in spite of tariff adjustments, trade between the two countries steadily increased. In 1886, Canadian trade with the United States absorbed 45 percent of its imports and 44 percent of its exports. By 1913, two years after Canadians had heard the cry of no « truck or trade with the Yankees, » 65 percent of Canada's imports and 45 percent of its exports were traded with the United States.

The effects of Canadian-American trade on the dimensions of product markets are readily apparent since expansion of trade is practically

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(11) Data and conclusions were principally drawn from HUGH L. KEENLYSIDE, *Canada and the United States*, H. G. AITKEN, *et al.*, *The American Economic Impact on Canada*, and IRVING BRECHER and S.S. REISMAN, *Canada-United States Economic Relations*.

synonymous with the expansion of product markets. On the one hand, the products of Canadian industry penetrated the markets of the United States. On the other hand, and to a greater extent, the products of American industries penetrated the markets of Canada. What is remarkable about Canadian-American trade is the extent to which it was carried on in spite of attempts through tariff adjustments to constrain the partnership.

*Intermingling of Canadian and American Peoples.*<sup>12</sup> One of the most dramatic characteristics in Canadian-American relations was the extent of the voluntary intermingling of the peoples of each country. From 1850 to 1930, Canada consistently ranked third or fourth on the list of countries supplying population to the United States. In 1890, the 980,900 Canadian-born in the United States represented 11 percent of the foreign-born population. In 1930, the 1,300,000 Canadian-born represented 9 percent of the foreign-born population of the United States.

The American-born in Canada, while considerably less in number than Canada's contribution to the United States, ranked second only to the British-born as a supplier of population to Canada. In 1890, the 81,000 United States-born in Canada accounted for 13 percent of its foreign-born population. By 1930, the number had increased to 345,000, or 15 percent of Canada's foreign-born population.

By and large, the motives behind this population migration were the economic opportunities offered by each country. The fact that the United States attracted more Canadians than Canada did Americans in part reflects the differentials in opportunities offered by each country. Most Canadian-born entered the United States in search of industrial employment; most American-born entered Canada as settlers.

*Facilitating Features.* The expansion of the product and labor markets of Canada and the United States were encouraged by three additional features in Canadian-American relations. First, the boundary between the two countries, particularly up to 1915, was largely unpatrolled and often undefined. In the absence of immigration and custom centers, the early movement of peoples and products across the boundary

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(12) Data and conclusions were principally drawn from studies conducted by LEON E. TRUESDELL, *The Canadian Born in the United States*, and MARCUS LEE HANSEN and J.B. BREBNER, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples*.



went unchecked and unrecorded. Even after 1915, regulated immigration between the two countries operated without quotas. The United States Alien Labor Law of 1896 and Canada's subsequent retaliatory measure were not rigidly enforced against the peoples of each country. The fact that, in the absence of admission, it was difficult to distinguish between English-Canadians and Americans added to the problems of enforcement. Second, the industrial and population centers of Canada were located close to the industrial centers of the United States. This fact, together with well established north-south lines of transportation, encouraged and facilitated the movement of capital, products and peoples between the two countries. Third, socially and culturally the Canadian and American peoples were very similar. To a large degree the peoples were part of a similar colonial history. Both lived in countries which operated similar legal systems. They spoke the same language, dressed the same, ate the same foods, used similar systems of measurement, operated similar home lives, and worked in industries with similar (if not the same) systems of technology. They studied under similar educational systems and the Christian religion, mainly protestant, was common to both. It was (and is today) difficult to find distinguishing social and cultural characteristics between the Canadian and American peoples.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF EXPANDED PRODUCT AND LABOR MARKETS TO LABOR <sup>13</sup>

The expansion of product and labor markets led to three consequences of concern to both Canadian and American labor : (1) product and labor market competition, (2) the « Americanization » of Canadian industry, and (3) American domination of the Canadian economy.

*Competition.* In the light of the ever increasing capital migration and trade in primary and secondary products, it was almost inevitable

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(13) These conclusions were reached after examining (a) the influence of American capital, trade and labour migration on the competitive position of the Canadian stove, coal and pulp and paper industries ; (b) the events and circumstances surrounding the initial entry into Canada of the International Molders and Allied Workers' Union, the United Mine Workers of America, and the United Paper Makers and Paper Workers ; and (c) the debate among the Canadian molders, coal miners and paper makers over whether they should affiliate with the American Union. See C. BRIAN WILLIAMS, « Canadian-American Trade Union Relations — A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism ». (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York State School of Industrial and Labour Relations, Cornell University, 1964) Chapters III-IV (Stove industry) V. VI and VII (Western Canadian coal industry), VIII (Eastern Canadian coal industry), and IX and X (Pulp and paper industry).

that, somewhere at some time, the products of each country would meet in a common market. Canadian coals from the mines of Vancouver Island, some of which were operated by Americans, competed with North Dakota, Montana, and Washington coals in the Pacific coast states of Washington, Oregon, and California. At one time it was even expected that the high quality coals from the coast fields of British Columbia, mined by cheap labor, loaded on oceangoing vessels directly from the tipple, and routed through the Panama Canal could compete in the coal markets of eastern United States. Coals from eastern Canadian fields on the mainland of Nova Scotia and on Cape Breton Island entered the New England states and met the competition of coals from Pennsylvania. American coals from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois serviced the industrially rich and heavily populated markets of Ontario and Quebec and competed with the Nova Scotia products. Canadian woodpulp, pulp wood, and paper products produced at American as well as Canadian controlled plants in Ontario and Quebec competed with the American product in markets at Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

« *Americanization* » of Canada. The term « Americanization » was popularly used to describe the acceptance and incorporation of American influences into Canadian economic and social life. It embraced a host of elements, most of which were met in every day Canadian life. For examples : first, the Canadian product market was dominated by a wide range of American-made products (or made in Canada in American branch plants) most of which reflected the most up to date designs, features, and materials of the American-made product. Particularly was this so of durable goods such as stoves, refrigerators, automobiles, clothing, processed food products, and chemical products. Second, as noted earlier, American industry in Canada occupied a conspicuous role in Canadian industrial development. Most large American firms in the fields of insurance, manufacturing, mining, and construction established branch operations in Canada and the names of many became common household words. Third, and of particular interest, much of the literature read in Canada was published in the United States and many of these were written by American authors. In the fields of advanced education, Canadians relied heavily on American literature, particularly in the technical fields of the social and physical sciences. Canadian newspapers and journals, instruments so influential in molding public opinion, not only reported extensively on events in the United States, but also used American authored materials. More than anything else, the quantity of American literature read in Canada not only molded the Canadian out-

look in the image of the American, but also reflected and reinforced the domination of « Americanization » in Canadian life. Lastly, the term includes a host of characteristics readily apparent in the Canadian industrial economy — an industrial economy strikingly similar in character to that of the United States with its concentration of capital in large enterprises, widening consumer markets, development of new producing centers, corporate organizations, professional management, mass production, advanced technology, and specialization in the production and distributions functions.

*American Domination of the Canadian Economy.* Few serious thinking Canadians will dispute the fact that the size of American capital and enterprise in Canada and Canadian reliance on American trade resulted in the American economic domination of Canada. From time to time, Canadians and their governments voiced cries of protest against this domination. In 1867, the newly formed Canadian nation, alarmed at the growing American presence in Canada, embarked on a program for the development of an independant Canadian economy based on the St. Lawrence transportation system and the markets of Europe. By 1879, the future industrial development policy of Canada found expression in the National Policy of which the system of protective tariffs (often directed against the United States) was indicative of its intent.

However, in spite of the government-inspired National Policy and the Canadian electorate which, later in 1911, rejected a Canadian-American reciprocity pact and the government which proposed it, the extent of the Canadian and American economies continued to grow. If the amounts of American products consumed in Canada and the pull of American economic opportunities are any indicators, the peoples of Canada certainly did not take their protestations against the American presence very personally, or possibly very seriously. However, regardless of the extent to which Canadians seriously questioned the American presence, it has been and continues to be a source of concern to the Canadian peoples.

#### SUPERIOR DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LABOR ORGANISATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

Up to the late 1880's, the labor organizations of Canada consisted solely of local bodies and a few loosely organized city centrals in centers such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal. Union membership was confined almost exclusively to the craft trades such as molders, printers,

machinists, and the construction trades. In addition, in line with the pattern of growth of the Canadian industrial economy, the labor movement was confined largely to the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Beginning in the 1850's nearly all of these Canadian local bodies, such as the molders and printers, began to affiliate with the emerging national organizations of the United States. This practice continued undisturbed and at an accelerated rate up to September of 1903.<sup>14</sup>

Although the prevailing practice of Canadian locals was to affiliate with the American national unions, it should not be assumed that Canadian locals did not try to set up similar Canadian bodies. Prior to 1903, there were at least two such attempts and both cases involved coal miners. However, in both cases rank and file unrest and impatience over the progress and effectiveness of the organizations resulted in their eventual disbandment in favor of affiliation with American bodies. The experiences gained from these early attempts brought home to Canadian unionists the weaknesses inherent in wholly Canadian bodies and clearly established the affiliation with a United States national body as an exceedingly more attractive alternative.<sup>15</sup>

There are four primary reasons why Canadian unionists favored affiliation with American national bodies : (1) a small potential membership and the concentration of membership in large enterprises, (2) the wide geographical separation of locals, (3) the superior financial resources and benefits offered by the American bodies, and (4) a mutuality of interests with American unionists because of the American presence in Canadian industrial life which led Canadian unionists to assume a « binational outlook ».

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(14) Records published in the *Labour Gazette* for the years 1902 and 1903 indicated that approximately 95 per cent of Canadian union members were in locals affiliated with a central union of the United States. The remaining 5 per cent were in unaffiliated locals.

(15) The first organization was the Nanaimo Miners and Mine Labourers Protective Association. The NMMLPA went over to the Western Federation of Miners in 1897. In 1911 the WFM was succeeded by the UMW (District 28). The second organization was the Provincial Workmen's Association of Nova Scotia. The PWA was finally taken over by the UMW in 1919. In both cases, the abandonment of the existing organizations (NMMLPA and PWA) was done only after violent controversy. For detailed discussion of the PWA/UMW conflict see C. BRIAN WILLIAMS « Canadian-American Trade Union Relations — A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism » (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York State School of Industrial and Labour Relations, Cornell University, 1964) chapter VIII. For detailed discussion of NMMLPA/WFM conflict see ALAN JOHN WARGO « The Great Coal Strike : The Vancouver Island Coal Mines' Strike, 1912-1914 ». (MA thesis, Department of History, University of British Columbia, 1962.)

*Small Potential Membership and Concentration of Membership in Large Enterprises.* In 1911, the trade union membership in Canada totalled only 133,000. Membership and trade statistics prior to 1911 are fragmentary. In 1870, the estimated membership in the molding trades totalled only 350 out of the trade membership of nearly 2,000. In 1900, the west coast coal miners numbered only 10,000 and the east coast miners only 15,000

The most important consequence of a small membership was the limitation on funds available for purposes of organization, strike administration, and benefits. In addition, particularly in primary industries such as coal mining, the industry, although located in different parts of the country, not only was highly concentrated in small geographical areas, but also was controlled by one or two large employers. For example, nearly all of the Vancouver Island coal output was controlled by two operators. After 1915, over 80 percent of Nova Scotia's miners were employed by a single firm. Consequently, sources of strike support to a wholly Canadian coal union would have been limited to accumulated funds plus any assistance available from unionized miners of the west coast. Standing alone, Canadian unionists hardly were a match for the large and powerful Canadian employer and the resources at his disposal. In other industries, such as stove manufacturing, Canadian locals found themselves faced by a well-organized association of employers who through the use of the lockout were determined to break the union movement in the industry. In many associations, membership was made up of both Canadian and American employers, or, if not, the two bodies worked closely on common problems.

*Geographical Separation of Locals.* Trade union organization in Canada first developed in Ontario and subsequently spread east to Quebec and the maritime provinces and west to British Columbia. On the whole, as one would expect, it followed the pattern of growth of Canada's industrial economy. Canada is a large country, but its industry is concentrated on a thin east-west line (with a gap in the prairie provinces) close to the international boundary. Except for the heavily industrialized provinces of Ontario and Quebec, the job of unifying local labor bodies along this narrow east-west line was an almost impossible task. It would have required numerous organizers and large monetary expenditures — items which Canadian locals simply could not afford. In addition, the product market pattern of many Canadian industries (the paper

industry is a notable example) runs north-south, not east-west. As a result, depending upon the extent to which the various sections of Canadian industry serviced the domestic or United States markets, the product market patterns, because of differences in attitudes in each section to the tariffs, would tend to divide Canadian labor rather than unite it. For example, the Vancouver Island coal operators were largely dependent on Pacific Coast United States markets for the sale of their products. However, the markets in the east coast provinces of Ontario and Quebec were supplied partly by American coal and partly by Nova Scotia coal. In addition, Nova Scotia coal flowed to the New England markets of the United States. In 1910, faced by a decline in demand in all their markets, the Nova Scotia operators vigorously attempted (with the support of the Nova Scotia miners) to increase their share of the domestic Ontario and Quebec markets. As a result, the industry and its unions were split into two parts — the west coast interests arguing that north-south product markets should be maintained and the east coast interests arguing that the north-south product markets should be closed (by raising the tariff) in favor of an east-west marketing pattern.

*Superior Resources Offered by American Bodies.* The national unions of the United States did not always offer superior resources to the Canadian locals. In several trades, such as molding and printing, Canadian locals assisted at the birth of what was to become an effective and powerful binational organization. In these cases, there was hardly any « demonstration effect » because the national (binational) body had yet to prove its worth. However, in later years, considering the consequences resulting from the small number of potential union members, the problems presented by wide geographical separation of locals, and the lessons learned from the unhappy experiences of wholly Canadian unions, the resources offered by the American national unions were clearly superior to those offered by similar Canadian bodies. The binationals' vastly larger membership base, established machinery for organizing, resources available for strike support, and benefit programs as well as their eagerness to accept Canadian locals made it difficult for a wholly Canadian rival body to offer serious competition.

*The « Binational Outlook ».* This term is used to describe the attitude of Canadian unionists, not only to American participation in the Canadian industrial economy, but also to their participation in labor organizations which, not only had their headquarters in the United States, but also were primarily led and governed by American unio-

nists. Very early in Canadian industrial development, Canadian labor realized that with each passing year the Canadian economy was becoming more and more dependent upon the United States. As early as the 1870's, elements within Canadian society, led by Canadian industrialists who desired protection from American competition, voiced protest against the « Americanization » of Canada and demanded that the federal government through tariffs, immigration laws, and regulatory controls over foreign capital seal-off the country from American influences. In the field of labor, this issue, basically the attitude of Canadians towards the economic relations between Canada and the United States, resulted in a split between those who approved of close economic relations and labor solidarity and those who did not. Those who approved of intimate Canadian-American economic relations and one of its consequences — binational unionism — can best be described as having a binational outlook.

The binational outlook, although it recognized and accepted the political separation of Canada and the United States, simply could not find meaningful differences in the Canadian and American economic and social fabrics to support separate and distinct Canadian and American economic and social institutions. Consequently, on questions relating to Canadian-American economic and social relations they believed that not only should such relations be continuous, but also that they should not be « artificially » interfered with, particularly as a result of action taken by Canadian political institutions. The binational outlook recognized and accepted the interdependence of Canada and the United States and believed that economic and social relations between the two countries should be open, free-flowing, and intimate even to the point of sharing economic institutions.

### **Canadian Unionism**

During the past sixty years, elements within Canadian labor repeatedly attempted to establish wholly Canadian trade union bodies. By and large, these efforts resulted in failure. In all cases, but to varying degrees, these attempts were caused by a negative response to: (1) American economic and social influences in Canada which led Canadian unionists to assume a « national outlook », and (2) the participation of the AFL type of trade unionism in Canadian labor affairs. Attempts to establish a wholly Canadian movement fall into three classes de-

pending upon variations in the degree to which each of the two causes were influential: (1) those groups which primarily protested against American economic and social influences in Canada, (2) those groups which protested against both American influences and the AFL type of unionism, and (3) those groups (other than groups influenced by the Quebec Church) which primarily protested against the AFL type of unionism.<sup>16</sup>

#### ECONOMIC DOMINATION OF CANADA AND THE « NATIONAL OUTLOOK »

Attempts to establish wholly Canadian trade unions commenced in September 1903 when Canada's national center, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, declared itself solidly in favor of binational unionism. As a result of the declaration, a number of locals which had not affiliated with the appropriate binational union were expelled from the Congress on the grounds of dual unionism. Immediately these locals established their own national center — the National Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. In 1908, the NTLC was reorganized as the Canadian Federation of Labor. The CFL was disbanded in 1927.

The TLC expulsions were basically the manifestation of a long-standing dispute within Canadian labor as to whether it should accommodate its structure to the American union system. However, behind this immediate issue was the conspicuous role that Americans were playing in the Canadian economy. Canadian unionists argued that the industry of Canada as well as its unions should be controlled and operated solely for the benefit of Canadians. Their champion was Canadian economic nationalism and its motto « Canada for Canadians ». Besides attempting to enroll local bodies in their cause, most of their efforts involved attempts to persuade the federal and provincial governments of Canada, through upward tariff adjustments, immigration controls, and regulation of foreign capital in Canada to promote the development of native Canadian industry and to close-off Canada from American economic and social influences. In the trade union field, for example, they supported employer-led efforts to bar American trade union officials from Canada and demanded that the federal government prohibit binational unions from disbursing funds (strike aid and benefits) to their Canadian locals.

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(16) These conclusions were first advanced in C. BRIAN WILLIAMS « Development of Relations between Canadian and American National Trade Union Centres — 1886-1925 » *Relations Industrielles — Industrial Relations*, Volume 20, No. 3, April 1965, pp. 340-371.



Whereas supporters of binational unionism were described earlier as having responded to American influences in Canada with a binational outlook, the supporters of the NTLC and CFL responded with a « national outlook ». Adherents of the national outlook placed major emphasis, not on the economic and social similarities of Canada and the United States, but on the political separation of the two countries. They believed that political institutions should be used to maintain separate Canadian and American economic and social institutions. The national outlook, while recognizing the similarities in the Canadian and American economic and social fabric, did not consent to these similarities and feared that the continued lack of differences would lead to a complete merger of all Canadian and American economic and social institutions and possibly even political institutions. Consequently, on questions relating to Canadian-American relations they considered that intimate relations, such as shared economic institutions, were totally undesirable.

#### ECONOMIC DOMINATION OF CANADA AND AFL TYPE OF UNIONISM

Quebec Catholic unionism was a European influenced, Church directed effort to save the working classes of Quebec from the ravages of industrialism and socialism.<sup>17</sup> Of the three expressions of Canadian unionism, it was the most successful. The movement started in the early 1900's, established its own national center in 1921, and is still operating today as the Confederation of National Trade Unions.

Quebec's Catholic unionism was one manifestation of the Church's concern over the appearance of non-church approved influences in Quebec life. It was just as concerned over influences flowing from English-speaking Canada (practically the rest of Canada) as it was over influences emanating from the United States. On the question of independent Canadian industrial development, it subscribed to the basic tenets of Canadian economic nationalism but redefined its meaning to such an extent that it could be more aptly described as Quebec economic nationalism. To the Quebec Roman Catholic Church, binational unions were « evil » and « sinful » and the AFL was an instrument of « socialism ». To the Quebec Church, the solution to the working class problem was found in the acceptance by industry and labor of a

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(17) Based on conclusions advanced in C. BRIAN WILLIAMS « Canadian-American Trade Union Relations — A Study of the Development of Binational Unionism ». (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York State School of Industrial and Labour Relations, Cornell University, 1964) Chapter IX.

Church-approved philosophy of corporatism. Over 90 percent of Quebec's population was French-speaking and Roman Catholic, and the Quebec Church dominated all of Quebec life. Consequently, the Church, because of its influence over the Quebec working class, was able to direct its attention effectively to Church-approved trade union bodies.

However, over the years, the Quebec trade unionist gradually became disenchanted with an unrewarding Church-directed movement. Church leadership and the philosophy of corporatism were gradually replaced by an aggressive lay leadership and the philosophy of business unionism. Anxieties over foreign control of the Quebec industrial economy (particularly American) appreciably decreased and its presence reluctantly became accepted as a fact of life. Today, Quebec Catholic unionism, in outlook and methods, differs little from the binational unions which represent the vast majority of Canadian workers.

#### AFL TYPE OF UNIONISM

By 1927, the degree of protest exhibited by the NTLC and CFL against American domination of the Canadian industrial economy had appreciably diminished. Like the Quebec Catholic movement was to do later, began to accept the American economic and social presence as a fact of life. In May 1927, the remnants of the CFL, together with unaffiliated Canadian industrial unions, such as the One Big Union and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees, established the All-Canadian Congress of Labor. Later, in 1940, the ACCL together with the CIO counterparts in Canada, formed the Canadian Congress of Labor.

The protest against American influence in Canada exhibited by the ACCL and CCL was not so much against American economic and social influences in Canada, nor the fact that American led and governed unions operated in Canada, but rather the AFL's and TLC's policies of craft unionism, exclusive jurisdiction, and their refusal to aggressively organize unskilled industrial workers.

By and large, the ACCL and the CCL were the result of the industrial union issue which split the AFL in the 1930's and its Canadian counterpart in the 1940's. By 1940, United States control of Canada and the presence of American led and governed unions, except for the Que-

bec movement, were no longer seriously contested issues in the house of Canadian labor.

## Summary

### BINATIONAL AND CANADIAN UNIONISM

In reviewing the record of the early history of three binational unions in Canada and the record of the conflict between the Canadian and American labor bodies, it is apparent that there were five basic causal factors which prompted the development of binational unionism and its opponent, Canadian unionism. The degree to which each of the five factors influenced Canada's union structure varied from industry to industry and from one region of Canada to another. The relationship between the magnitude of each factor and its consequences on the structure adopted by Canadian labor is presented below in Table 1.

TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAGNITUDE OF EACH CAUSAL FACTOR  
IN INDUSTRY OR REGION AND TENDENCY FOR A BINATIONAL  
OR CANADIAN UNION STRUCTURE

<i>Causal Factors</i>	<i>Magnitude of Causal Factor for :</i>	
	<i>Binational Str.</i>	<i>Canadian Str.</i>
1. Broadened Product and Labor Markets		
a) Extent of American Capital in Canada	large	small
b) Extent of Canadian-American Trade	large	small
c) Extent of Intermingling of Peoples	large	small
2. Attraction of Superior Development of American Unions	high	low
3. Degree of Commitment to Canadian Economic Nationalism	low	high
4. Degree of Commitment to Teachings of Quebec Roman Catholic Church	low	high
5. Degree of Opposition to the AFL Type of Trade Unionism	low	high

## MOTIVES BEHIND AMERICAN LABOR'S INTEREST IN CANADA

Opponents of binational unionism, both in industrial and labor circles, frequently argued that American unions operated in Canada in order to advance the interests of their industry in the United States. They argued, for example, that the American controlled unions could influence the costs of the Canadian-made product and, consequently, on the one hand preserve the Canadian market for the American-made import, and on the other hand preserve the American market for the American-made product. As a result, so it was argued, Canadian industry would develop to a lesser extent than if it were free from American labor influences.

While it is certainly possible that such motives were behind American participation, it is highly unlikely in light of the record of binational unionism. First, this type of thinking is antithetical to the concept of national unionism as well as binational unionism. The concept of a national union did not assume that the United States was a single non-competitive national labor or product market. On the contrary, it was the realization that the United States industrial economy, as it grew and spread out over the country, was made up of regionally competitive product and labor markets that prompted the national union idea. Supporters of the national union idea realized that, in order to protect the union-made product, all competitive producers of the product or suppliers of labor for the product had to be within the jurisdiction of national unionism. Even within the United States, regional producers and unions resisted the pressures of national unionism and union conditions in order to preserve their competitive positions. The history of the American coal and textile industries and of their unions are excellent examples. As a result, the fact that the Canadian product and labor markets became integrated with American markets and that the Canadian markets came under the umbrella of national unionism is consistent with the philosophy of national unionism. Contrary to what some Canadians believe, the presence of American unions in Canada did not in itself indicate a motive based on protection to American industries and their unions. In addition, to the extent that the history of the molders, coal miners, and papermakers in Canada were representative of the total binational movement, the record is barren of any evidence that the motives behind American labor's interest in Canada were any different from those which prompted the national union structure in the United States.

Second, « protect American industry and labor » argument implied that American labor at some time recognized the competitive threat of Canadian industry and subsequently with forethought and purpose moved north and launched its campaign to organize Canadian labor. Again, to the extent that the three cases are representative, this implication is not supported by the record. Binational unionism was not the product of a self interested American labor movement determined to control Canadian industry and labor, but was the product of Canadian and American unionists who mutually recognized the weaknesses of separate Canadian and American labor movements. On the one hand, American national unions recognized the competitive threat of the rapidly developing Canadian industrial economy and realized that in order to protect their position Canadian industries would have to operate under national union terms and conditions. On the other hand, Canadian labor locals, realizing the almost identical nature of the Canadian and American industrial economies, the success of the American bodies, and their own weaknesses sought to increase their bargaining power by affiliating with the national union bodies of the United States. These motives were the same as those which encouraged and advanced the national union movement in the United States.

#### ISSUES IN CANADIAN AND AMERICAN LABOR CONFLICT

During the more than one hundred year history of the participation of American unions in the Canadian labor movement, there have been three types of issues which have precipitated Canadian and American labor conflict. Recognizing the often emotionally charged attitude of Canadians to American control of the Canadian industrial economy and the tendency incorrectly to link all conflict to American control of the Canadian economy, it is important that the differences in these issues be clearly understood.

*Grievance Against the Binational.* This type of issue developed out of the relations between subordinate (Canadian locals) and superior (the binational union) trade union bodies and reflected the Canadian local's protest against the manner in which rules and regulations were administered by the binational. For example, in 1884, the Toronto molders, faced by employer demands for wage reduction, requested that the binational authorize strike action and supply strike relief. The

binational refused, and as a result of its lack of support the local had to accede to the employer's demands. Subsequently, the Toronto molders led an unsuccessful attempt to establish a wholly Canadian union in the trade. The issue was not that an American union had refused to support its Canadian locals, but that the binational, the supreme governing body in the trade, had refused to support the demands of a subordinate local body. It is highly probable, in light of numerous similar cases involving American locals, that this type of issue would have arisen even if Canadian locals had formed their own national union.

*The AFL Type of Unionism.* Canadian labor, like American labor, was by no means uniformly convinced that the AFL type of unionism offered the best structure and methods to advance labor's cause. Disagreement centered on the AFL's doctrine of exclusive representation, concentration on methods of business unionism (as opposed to methods of political representation and legislative regulation), and its refusal to organize the rapidly increasing ranks of the semi-skilled and unskilled industrial workers. Considering the size of the two labor movements, disagreement over these issues was more pronounced in Canada and in part may have reflected the greater British influence. The important point is that the issue arose, not as a result of American economic control in Canada, but as a result of disagreement over the structure and methods Canadian labor should adopt to advance its cause.

*Canadian and American Labor's Economic Interest.* When a primarily economic institution, such as a binational trade union, transcends separate political jurisdictions, such as Canada and the United States, it is highly likely that the economic interests of its members in each political jurisdiction will come into conflict. The history of Canadian and American trade union relations offers numerous examples of this type of conflict. In 1908, the Provincial Workmens' Association (a wholly Canadian trade union body) together with the Nova Scotia Coal Operators commenced a nine year fight to keep the UMW out of the Nova Scotia fields. To the PWA and the Nova Scotia Operators, the immediate issue was who would service the rich Ontario and Quebec markets — American operators and miners or Canadian operators and miners. This issue, basically the need felt in some Canadian circles to insure the growth and preservation of native Canadian industry, was (and is) by far the most often used argument raised against Canadian locals participating in the binational union movement. The implication

was (and is) that in the absence of binational union protection, Canadian labor, voluntarily or involuntarily, would accept wages and working condition terms inferior to those obtained with binational union protection and hence give native Canadian industry an edge in competition with American industry. At times this conflict of interest within Canadian labor has severely tested its loyalty to the binational system. It will continue to do so. Should Canadian industry become less dependent on the United States and should native Canadian industry develop to challenge the American products in the Canadian markets (and there are definite signs of this), this issue will increasingly be a source of conflict between Canadian and American labor. However, up to now, Canadian labor has steadfastly refused to permit the inherent weaknesses of a wholly Canadian movement to provide the basis for the growth, development, and protection of a native Canadian industrial economy.

## QUELQUES CONCLUSIONS SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RELATIONS INTER-SYNDICALES CANADA-ÉTATS-UNIS

Le phénomène d'un syndicalisme bi-national qu'on retrouve seulement au Canada a toujours été une source de conflit au sein du mouvement ouvrier canadien ; en particulier, chez les militants qui soutenaient la thèse d'un syndicalisme exclusivement canadien, soustrait à la dépendance des Etats-Unis.

### LA STRUCTURE SYNDICALE CANADIENNE : LES CAUSES

Les facteurs qui peuvent expliquer l'origine et la persistance d'un syndicalisme bi-national diffèrent passablement de ceux qui peuvent rendre compte des rivalités internes au sein d'un syndicalisme exclusivement canadien.

L'expansion du marché des produits, la migration des travailleurs, les investissements américains au Canada, la croissance rapide du syndicalisme américain sont autant de facteurs qui présidèrent au développement du syndicalisme bi-national. Par ailleurs, les rivalités internes au sein du syndicalisme ouvrier canadien seraient le résultat de diverses influences comme la montée du nationalisme économique, la diffusion de l'enseignement social de l'Eglise et l'opposition au syndicalisme de métier tel que conçu par la Fédération Américaine du Travail.

Pour retracer les causes de l'apparition et du développement d'un syndicalisme bi-national nous avons fait l'étude des dossiers des industries et syndicats suivants :

<i>Compagnies</i>	<i>Syndicats</i>
Canadian Iron Foundry Industry	International Molders and Allied Workers' Union of North America (1860-85)
Canadian Coal Industry	United Mines Workers of Canada (1900-1960)
Canadian Pulp and Paper Industry	United Paper Makers and Paper Workers (1910-45)

Après un examen des archives qui relatent les débuts des relations syndicat-direction dans ces secteurs industriels, cinq causes principales énumérées plus haut peuvent expliquer l'origine et l'évolution du syndicalisme bi-national et de son opposé, le syndicalisme exclusivement canadien. Cependant, le degré d'influence de chaque cause varie d'une industrie et d'une région à l'autre.

#### LE SYNDICALISME AMÉRICAIN ET SES INTÉRÊTS AU CANADA

Les adversaires d'un syndicalisme bi-national soutenaient l'idée que les unions américaines oeuvraient au Canada dans le but de promouvoir les intérêts de leurs industries aux Etats-Unis. Ils affirmaient, par exemple, que les unions sous domination américaine pouvaient influencer les coûts de production des produits fabriqués au Canada. Ainsi, ces unions pouvaient à la fois, sauvegarder le marché canadien pour des produits d'importation américaine et préserver le marché américain pour des produits fabriqués dans ce pays. L'analyse des archives démontre que ce mode de pensée est incompatible avec la conception d'un syndicalisme national aussi bien que bi-national.

De plus, ce genre d'argumentation laissait croire que le syndicalisme américain, à quelque moment que ce fût, a reconnu la menace concurrentielle de l'industrie canadienne et s'est dirigé vers le nord pour lancer une campagne d'organisation en territoire canadien. Dans la mesure où les trois cas étudiés sont représentatifs, il n'existe pas d'évidence pour en arriver à une telle déduction. Le syndicalisme bi-national n'est pas le produit d'un mouvement ouvrier américain déterminé à dominer l'industrie et les travailleurs canadiens, mais plutôt le produit de leaders ouvriers américains et canadiens qui ont développé une conscience mutuelle des faiblesses d'un syndicalisme canadien et américain séparé.

#### CONTROVERSES AU SEIN DU MOUVEMENT OUVRIER CANADIEN ET AMÉRICAIN

Trois types de controverses ont accentué le conflit au sein du syndicalisme nord-américain :



a) *Grief contre le syndicalisme bi-national*

Ce premier type de difficultés a pris naissance dans les relations entre des organismes syndicaux subordonnés (les locaux canadiens) et des organismes supérieurs (l'union bi-nationale). Ce fut une protestation locale sur la façon dont les règles et règlements étaient appliqués par l'union bi-nationale.

b) *Le type de syndicalisme conçu par la FAT*

La mésentente portait sur la doctrine de la représentation exclusive prônée par la Fédération américaine du Travail, sur l'accent mis sur le syndicalisme d'affaires, et le refus d'organiser le nombre sans cesse grandissant des travailleurs semi et non spécialisés.

c) *Les intérêts économiques du monde syndical canadien et américain*

Quand une institution à caractère économique, telle qu'une union bi-nationale, transcende la sphère des juridictions politiques distinctes, la probabilité d'un conflit entre les juridictions sur le plan des intérêts économiques est grande. L'histoire des relations syndicales canado-américaines offrent de nombreux exemples de ce genre de conflit.

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