

1977

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Jaroslav Petryshyn

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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A.E. SMITH
AND THE
CANADIAN LABOUR DEFENSE LEAGUE

by

Jaroslav Petryshyn
Department of History

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
February, 1977

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ABSTRACT

Albert Edward Smith, for nearly twenty-two years of his life, was one of a generation of Methodist clergymen who, during the final years of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth century, attempted to promote progressive reform through the church. For most of those years, Smith, along with such notables as J.S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland, and William Ivens, represented a broad mainstream of social Christians who preached a social philosophy which decried excessive individualism and social Darwinism and emphasized the need for the temporal welfare of society as a whole. Through the course of his career however, Smith diverged significantly from his fellow "social gospellers." In his passionate commitment to identify and rectify the latent evils of society, he abandoned democratic socialism and embraced Marxian communism. In 1925, after a series of frustrating experiences within the church, he renounced his position as a high ranking Methodist minister and crossed the Rubicon to become a leading member of the communist movement in Canada. As a communist, he forged a colourful and controversial career.

Any consideration of Smith entails the assessment of the organization he led for eleven years--the Canadian Labour Defense League (C.L.D.L.). During its existence, 1925-1940, the C.L.D.L. was subjected to a wide range of interpretation. Some viewed it as a diabolical bolshevik organization designed to create dissension within Canadian society which would culminate in the overthrow of

the political and social system. To others, it was a humanitarian agency which sought to relieve those who had found themselves in intolerable conditions. The reconstruction of the activities of the League and the clarification of its role in the interwar period, is essential to understanding the activities of Smith.

The C.L.D.L. was a front organization for the Communist Party of Canada (C.P.C.). Its decreed purpose was to "unite all forces willing to co-operate in the work of labour defense into a broad national organization based upon individual and collective membership that will stand...for the defense and support of the industrial and agricultural workers, regardless of their political and industrial affiliations, race, colour, or nationality, who were persecuted on account of their activity in class interests of the industrial and agricultural workers." Supported by radicals, muckrakers, malcontents, and others who were dissatisfied with the nation's social, political, and economic structure, the C.L.D.L. achieved prominence during the worst years of the depression, by promoting communist policies agitating on behalf of the C.P.C. and by defending in the courts over six thousand individuals who had ventured astray of the law because of their militant labour activities. Led by Smith, the League mildly intimidated, greatly annoyed and constantly pricked and prodded political authorities into action. Against its broad assault on the Canadian state, the authorities reacted sporadically, in the process sometimes placating but often alienating public opinion.

When the C.P.C. and sixteen other organizations including the C.L.D.L. were declared illegal in 1940 under the War Measures Act, Smith came to the rescue of the communist movement. Through the newly formed National Council for Democratic Rights, he led a nation-wide campaign to legalize the C.P.C. because "the communists are making a vital contribution to the war effort." He continued his agitation until 1943, when the C.P.C. was transformed into the Labour Progressive Party. Smith died four years later, while engaged in writing quasi-polemical, quasi-historical weekly columns for the Canadian Tribune.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I am indebted to the late Professor D.G.G. Kerr for his patience and guidance in the preparation of this thesis. Secondly, I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. P. Neary for acting as protem advisor. I would also like to thank Mr. R. Kenny for suggesting the topic and for allowing me to spend many hours in his home looking at the material on A.E. Smith and the Canadian Labour Defense League, that he has collected. Gratitude must be extended to the Canada Council for financial assistance during the research period and to my wife Luba, who not only provided moral support but also typed the thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A.C.C.L. - All Canadian Congress of Labour
A.F.L. - American Federation of Labour
B.D. - Bachelor of Divinity
B.E.S.C.O. - British Empire Steel Corporation
C.C.F. - Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
C.C.L. - Canadian Congress of Labour
C.L.D.L. - Canadian Labour Defense League
C.L.P. - Canadian Labour Party
C.N.R. - Canadian National Railway
Comintern - Communist International
C.P.C. - Communist Party of Canada
C.T. - Canadian Tribune
D.C.C. - District Central Committee
D.L.P. - Dominion Labour Party
E.C. - Executive Committee
F.O.C. - Finnish Organization of Canada
F.U.L. - Farmers' Unity League
I.L.D.L. - International Labour Defense League
I.L.P. - Independent Labour Party
I.R.A. - International Red Aid
I.U.N.T.W. - Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers
K.C. - King's Counsel
L.A.W.I.U. - Lumber and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union
L.C.C. - Local Central Committee

L.P.P. - Labour Progressive Party
L.W.I.U. - Lumber Workers' Industrial Union
Mac-Pap Battalion - Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion
- M.L.A. - Member of Legislative Assembly
M.W.U.C. - Mine Workers' Union of Canada
N.C.D.R. - National Committee for Democratic Rights
N.E.C. - National Executive Council
N.U.W.A. - National Unemployed Workers' Association
O.B.U. - One Big Union
P.A.C. - Public Archives of Canada
P.A.O. - Public Archives of Ontario
P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. - Public Archives of Ontario, Attorney-General
Papers Relating to the Communist Party of Canada
R.C.M.P. - Royal Canadian Mounted Police
R.I.L.U. - Red Internation of Labour Unions
T.L.C. - Trades and Labour Congress
T.U.E.L. - Trade Union Educational League
U.A.C. - Unemployed Association of Canada
U.F.M. - United Farmers of Manitoba
U.F.O. - United Farmers of Ontario
U.L.F.T.A. - Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association
U.M.W.A. - United Mine Workers of America
U.S.D.P.C. - Ukrainian Social Democratic Party of Canada
W.B.A. - Workers' Benevolent Association
W.P.C. - Workers' Party of Canada
W.U.L. - Workers' Unity League
Y.C.L. - Young Communist League
Y.W.L. - Young Workers' League

INTRODUCTION

I

The subject matter of history is human affairs, men in action, things which have happened and how they happened; concrete events fixed in time and space, and their grounding in the thoughts and feelings of men--not things universal and generalized; events as complex and diversified as the men who wrought them, those rational beings whose knowledge is seldom sufficient whose ideals are but distantly related to reality, and who are never moved by reason alone. 1

Albert Edward Smith, for nearly twenty-two years of his life, was one of a generation of Methodist clergymen who, during the final years of the nineteenth century and the first twenty years of the twentieth century, attempted to promote progressive reform through the church. For most of those years, Smith, along with such notables as J.S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland and William Ivens, represented a broad mainstream of "social" Christians who preached a social philosophy which decried excessive individualism

1. Sir Lewis Namier, "History and Political Culture," cited in Fritz Stein, ed., The Varieties of History, (Cleveland, 1956), p. 372.

and social Darwinism and emphasized the need for the temporal welfare of society as a whole. Through the course of his career however, Smith diverged significantly from his fellow "social gossellers." In his passionate commitment to identify and rectify the latent evils of society, he abandoned democratic socialism and embraced Marxian communism. In 1925, after a series of frustrating experiences within the church, he renounced his position as a high ranking Methodist minister and crossed the Rubicon to become a leading member of the communist movement in Canada. As a communist, he forged a colourful and controversial career.

The recreation of Smith's life is not only of intrinsic interest but also provides insight into the many prevailing ideas and attitudes which were part and parcel of the nation's development from the settling of the Canadian west in the late 1890s to the end of the Second World War. Smith's vision of a new social order, his conviction that it could be realized in Canada and the tenacity with which he pursued his goal was characteristic of a small but vocal minority who possessed a set of social and political values contrary to those of the vast majority of Canadians.

Any consideration of Smith entails the assessment of the organization he led for eleven years--the Canadian Labour Defense League (C.L.D.L.). During its existence, 1925-1940, the C.L.D.L. was subject to a wide range of interpretation. Some viewed it as a diabolical bolshevik organization designed to create dissension within Canadian society which would culminate in the overthrow of

the political and social system. To others, it was a humanitarian agency which sought to relieve those who had found themselves, as a result of intolerable conditions, in conflict with the law.

The reconstruction of the activities of the League and the clarification of its role in the interwar period, is essential to understanding the activities of Smith.

The C.L.D.L. was a front organization for the Communist Party of Canada (C.P.C.). Its decreed purpose was to "unite all forces willing to co-operate in the work of labour defense into a broad national organization based upon individual and collective membership that will stand...for the defense and support of the industrial and agricultural workers, regardless of their political and industrial affiliations, race, colour, or nationality, who were persecuted on account of their activity in class interests of the industrial and agricultural workers."¹ Supported by radicals, muckrakers, malcontents, and others who were dissatisfied with the nation's social, political, and economic structure, the C.L.D.L. came into its own during the worst years of the depression, promoting communist policies, agitating on behalf of the C.P.C., and defending in the courts over six thousand individuals who had ventured astray of the law because of their militant labour activities. Led by Smith, the League mildly intimidated, greatly

¹: Canada: Department of Labour: Report on Labour Organization in Canada, 1925, p. 208 (cited hereafter as Labour Organization in Canada.)

annoyed, and constantly pricked and prodded political authorities into action. Against its broad assault on the Canadian state, the authorities reacted sporadically, in the process sometimes placating but often alienating public opinion.

II

This study is divided chronologically into three parts. Chapters I to III inclusive deal essentially with the "making of a communist." They portray Smith in a state of ideological flux. Although much of Smith's philosophical development was a result of personal idiosyncrasies stemming from his childhood he was also greatly influenced by his immersion in western Canadian society. Smith arrived in the Canadian west in 1890 and remained there for the next thirty-three years. In those years, he witnessed economic expansion of unprecedented proportions combined with the largest influx of immigrants ever to enter Canada and bitter industrial turmoil. In Winnipeg and Brandon he encountered extensive poverty and debilitating working conditions. With Salem Bland, J.S. Woodsworth, William Ivens, and others, Smith tried, in his work among the poor and illiterate, to alleviate some of the worst curses of an urbanizing and industrializing society. The experience left an indelible impression on him. The sordid conditions of the workers in an ostensibly dynamic and rich society combined to make Smith more and more critical of the capitalist.

ethic and the social contradictions it fostered and to turn him toward socialism and militant trade unionism as a means to redress these inequities.

• Chapters IV to VIII inclusive, which cover the years between 1925-1934, illustrate the fossilization of Smith's ideas into the dictates of a rigid and monolithic party. As general-secretary of the C.L.D.L., he propagated the views of the C.P.C.; this was especially true during the great depression, when communists mobilized their forces to take advantage of the economic calamity. The depression brought with it a certain degree of chaos which the communists tried to channel to their advantage. Since the "capitalistic class" would not dethrone itself voluntarily, Smith and other communists sought to undermine it through propaganda and militant activity among the workers and farmers of Canada. However, the political authorities reacted vigorously to any attempts to subvert the state. In 1931, the Ontario courts declared the C.P.C. illegal under Section 98 of the criminal code. The outlawing of the C.P.C. necessitated a change in communist tactics; under the auspices of the C.L.D.L., Smith modified his revolutionary tone somewhat and sought through parliamentary means--i.e., the repeal of Section 98--to restore the legality of the C.P.C. For five years he campaigned against the "nefarious" law until 1936, when the removal of Section 98 from the criminal code by the King government ipso facto legalized the C.P.C. It was a bitter struggle for Smith, during which time he was

indicted and brought to trial for sedition.

Chapters IX and X, which include the years 1934 to 1947, reveal Smith's role as a staunch apologist for the communist movement in Canada. His enduring faith in the communist course led him to support the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. In 1936 he visited Spain as an emissary to the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. With the outbreak of World War II, Smith attempted to justify the communists' twists and turns in policy and attitudes toward the conflict. The C.P.C.'s approach to the war ran the full gamut of opinion, depending on what directives the Comintern gave. Ultimately, it was an "imperialist war" that turned into a "just" war when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. When the C.P.C. was banned in 1940, Smith again came to its rescue. Through the newly formed National Council for Democratic Rights, he led a nation-wide campaign to legalize the C.P.C. because "the communists are making a vital contribution to the war effort." He continued his agitation until 1943, when the C.P.C. was transformed into the Labour Progressive Party (L.P.P.). Smith died four years later, while engaged in writing quasi-historical, quasi-polemical weekly columns for the Canadian Tribune.

Taken in toto, this study explores a complex and diverse personality who made a measurable contribution to Canadian history. In the context of his times, Smith fits well the quintessential man in Namier's dictum: he was one of those "rational beings whose

knowledge is seldom sufficient, whose ideals are but distantly related to reality and who are never moved by reason alone."

P

CHAPTER I

The Formative Years 1871-1913¹

The genesis of Albert Edward Smith's colourful and varied career is found in his childhood experiences. The debilitating poverty of his parents led him to embrace the Methodist Church at an early age. In the emotionalism of Methodist evangelism he sought escape from the "wretchedness" of his early existence. His growing commitment to the church and his desire to become a minister took him to the Canadian prairies. His submergence in the new environment opened a new chapter in his life, from a

1. For this chapter the author has used the original Smith memoirs--three hand-written volumes recording his personal experiences until 1919. For the purposes of footnoting, these manuscripts have been designated Collection I (C.I), Collection II (C.II), and Collection III (C.III). C.I has a blue cover, C.II has a brown cover with book II written on it, and C.III describes Smith's life under a third person alias--Roger Bilsen. Hereafter all quotations taken from these sources will be noted either as C.I, C.II, or C.III and the original pagination will be employed. These manuscripts can be found in the Smith Papers, United Church Archives, micro D.3.3 #49 and micro D.3.3 #50. Other material which is scattered throughout the Smith Papers will be clearly defined.

student missionary desiring only to "save souls," he matured into a respected minister concerned with social and institutional reform.

I

Albert was the son of William George Smith. The elder Smith was born in 1835 to a Cockney family in the east end of London, England. At an early age he ran away from home and in 1854 enlisted in the British army. The fortunes of the Empire took him to the sands of Egypt and the rocky island of Malta before the upsurge of the Fenian movement in the United States brought Smith's unit, the Seventh Rifle Brigade, to Hamilton, Canada West.¹ Enroute to Hamilton, Private Smith married another new-comer to the colony--Elizabeth Bilsen. The Bilsens were English agrarian settlers on their way to Grey County, Canada West, when William met Elizabeth at Quebec City, wooed her briefly and then took her for his bride. During the couple's residence in Hamilton, two daughters were born. Meanwhile, Smith received his discharge from the army. Sometime in the late 1860s he moved with his family to Guelph, where Albert Edward was born 20 October 1871.

1. Smith's remembrances of his father. Typescript material (7 pages). Courtesy of Mr. R. Kenny, Toronto (private collection). The collection hereafter will be cited as Smith Papers p.c.

William Smith could not adjust to life outside the army. He had a "good mind but failed to secure the discipline in youth which gives strength...soundness...judgement and fiber to... intelligence."¹ Part of William's problem was his susceptibility to alcohol; it was a curse which prevented him from securing steady employment. William was fully aware of his shortcomings; he "heaped condemnation upon himself and broke his own heart by self-reproach."² This had a profound effect on Albert, who as a child experienced the "grim, self-imposed silence and suffering of mother and father."³

The Smiths lived in poverty, a condition which Albert learned to recognize and despise. In his memoirs he wrote:

One evening...[I]...found a strange man seated in the room which served as dining room, sitting room, and parlor....
 "Who is this?" I asked my mother....
 "He is the Bailiff's agent,...[came the reply]. He has come to collect the rent ...for the landlord and we have no money to pay it. He says he has orders to stay here until we get the money or else he will come again, and take away the things out of the house to sell for rent...." 4

The youth was shocked for he knew that "every article in that small house represented long, hard hours of toil for both mother

1. C.III, Chapter 2, p. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 3.

4. Ibid.

and father,...that no one in the home had ever indulged in an article of luxury."¹

The Smiths were a transient family, moving to Hanover in 1879, Walkerton in 1881 and migrating to Hamilton in 1884. It was in this latter industrial city of about 35,400 people² that Albert quit school at the age of thirteen and sought employment to ease his parents' financial burdens. He obtained work in the fur store of William Acres at a wage of \$1.50 per week. After two years of sweeping the shop and cleaning the front windows Smith, all the while looking for a more promising position, was accepted out of forty-one applicants as an apprentice in the machine plant of J.H. Moore and Company. With this company his salary increased to \$2.50 per week.³ The experience of the first two months in this factory, however, convinced Smith that he could never complete his five-year apprenticeship term. His hours of work had increased from fifty-six to sixty-two per week and he had to clean castings and perform other heavy manual labour. For Smith, who was a "small child with a frail constitution," this was too strenuous. He found more suitable employment at the

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Hamilton: Its History, Commerce, Industries and Resources, (Published by the City Council, 1913), p. 75.

3. Cited in "The Years March On," a weekly column A.E. Smith wrote during the 1940s in the Canadian Tribune, 2 Sept. 1944. Hereafter cited as A.S.C.T.

book-binding of R. Duncan and Company and for four years he was engaged in mastering the book binder's trade.

During this period he discovered the power of "religion." The first day in the shop he met a fellow apprentice, William Durand, who inquired whether he had ever attended Sunday School. When Smith answered in the negative, Durand offered to take him to his church the following week. Smith noted in his memoirs that "true to his word...Durand came...on Sunday afternoon...The Sunday School had a new member...and before...[me]...there opened a new and different world."¹ Durand was of the Methodist faith, a lively religion which appealed to and constantly recruited lonely, hard-working individuals. In Hamilton, Methodism was a leading religion, adhered to by an estimated one-fifth of the population.²

When Smith entered the "old" Gore Street Methodist Episcopal Church in the heart of Hamilton, he was captivated by the emotional, religious eloquence of Reverend Charles Johnson. Johnson was one of those leaders of Methodist revivalism who preached the grim theology of salvation of the soul through resistance to sin. "The soul was of supreme value," he declared, "it was worth more than all the gold in the universe,...worth more than all the worlds...[but]...most importantly, it was possible to lose it."³

1. C.III, Chapter 2, p. 10.

2. Marjorie Freeman Campbell, A Mountain and a City: The Story of Hamilton, (Toronto, 1966), p. 159.

3. C.III, Chapter 2, p. 4.

The sinner was risking the loss of his soul every day, and the saving of the sinner's soul had been the whole object of the coming of Christ. This was the apocalyptic message Johnson sought to convey to his congregation.

That he was successful is evident from Smith's memoirs. On one occasion he wrote:

This teenaged boy [Smith] had at times felt himself to be a vile and wicked sinner. He sobbed in perpetual tears in the early meetings in the church under the spell of the fervid words of the old gospel preacher who described the agonies of a dying saviour whose love and mercy was all for the taking.... [His]...imagination was influenced by these ...appeals. He saw the great, good face of the Redeemer in agony in his dreams. He seemed to hear the calling voice reaching him from every place and every day. He went away alone to think...pray and weep in ...love for the unseen, yet present person ...Jesus. 1

And in another instance:

The strong message of the religious teaching filled [the] mind with pictures and figures. He [Smith] saw God. He saw...Jesus upon the cross. He felt the pain and anguish of the nail wounds and the knotted muscles,... blighting thirst, and the deep despair of lonely death. He saw the Devil and heard the cutting hissing of his hot breath.... 2

It was not only joy that attracted Smith to the church. It was also the terror and the dread of a certain calamity that was to overtake

1. Ibid., Chapter 1, pp. 1-2.

2. Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 5.

something about him called his soul.

At the impressionable age of sixteen, Smith became "fully converted" when he attended a "special service" conducted by Johnson. He gave a vivid description of the event:

The majority at the meeting were religious people and were in deep sympathy with the minister as he spoke. . . . Exhortation, song, prayer followed one another. . . . "God is present," said the minister, "tonight in our meeting, in loving power to save and bless our souls. Turn your eyes toward God and seek his mercy and your sins will be forgiven, and your whole nature renewed by his loving spirit. Is there anyone in the meeting who will come to the altar here and signify by so doing that they are seeking the Saviour? Come now, Jesus calls you now. . . ."

These simple words, urged and influenced with the personality of the man whose earnestness and love no one could question . . . swept into the spirits of the people. The emotion was heightened to the breaking point; many wept quietly, some were struggling to suppress their sobs. . . . The altar was crowded.

Smith was among those who came forth to be saved. Although he did not understand the meaning of sin or salvation, he knew that the "charm of Reverend Charles Johnson had gripped him and seemed to be . . . all he needed as a saviour and God."²

Smith did not immediately undertake to broadcast his new revelations. He did, however, acquire a sense of "pity" for his

1. Ibid., Chapter 1, pp. 8-9. .
2. Ibid., Chapter 1, p. 12.

"unreligious" friends. Moreover, he suddenly desired to know more; religion and education became inextricably connected. He joined an educational society and registered at night school. Although shop and school were hard task masters, Smith persevered, obtaining a rudimentary knowledge of Greek and Latin.

In June 1887, Reverend Johnson's three year term as pastor of the Gore Street Methodist Church expired and he was replaced by the Reverend John Pickering. The arrival of Pickering brought Smith into contact with a different type of preacher. Whereas Johnson was the passionate, dramatic evangelist who depended on the power of emotions to captivate his congregation, Pickering was an analytical thinker, whose forte lay in his ability to stimulate other minds by the keenness of his own. It was Pickering who encouraged Smith, a zealous student, to enter the ministry.

In order to become a probationary local parson, Smith had to pass an oral examination conducted by an eight-man board from the Gore Street Methodist Church. This proved difficult owing to the presence of Brother Brooke, a member of the local Preachers' Board. Brother Brooke, an "austere man of severe rectitude," took an interest in Smith and had asked if he would give a sermon in a local church. Smith agreed but on the appointed day forgot his sermon in full view of the congregation and Brother Brooke. To Brother Brooke, this was a "disgraceful" performance and Smith should be failed. Most of the examiners were more lenient and thought that he had learned his catechisms well enough. Brooke's

objections were overruled by the chairman, Reverend John Pickering, and Smith, in due course, received his license.¹ In 1888 he was made a local preacher. For the next two years he supervised evangelistic services in a mission church on the south side of Hamilton.

In June 1890, Smith received a letter from the Reverend Doctor James Woodsworth,² superintendent of missions in the North-West Territories, informing him that he had been stationed by the Methodist Conference in a village named MacGregor in Manitoba.³ He was expected to take charge on the first Sunday in July. Smith had never met Woodsworth, nor had he any idea how his name had gotten into the superintendent's hands. Not yet twenty years old, with little experience and even less education, he decided, nevertheless, that he must go for "he did not want to shirk any duty or call that...came to him for service."⁴ Besides, he was only making \$14.00 monthly in Hamilton which was "not enough to keep me." He quit his job at the book-bindery, gathered together his meager

1. Ibid., Chapter 3, pp. 4-9, 19-21.

2. The Reverend Doctor James Woodsworth was the father of J.S. Woodsworth.

3. Such notifications were not unusual for the Methodist Church desperately needed young men to preach the gospel in the Northwest. See G.H. Emery, Methodism and the Canadian Prairies, 1896-1914: The Dynamics of an Institution in a New Environment, Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1970; Chapter II.

4. C.III, Chapter 4, p. 9.

belongings, bade farewell to his parents and boarded a C.P.R. train westward.

It was high-minded idealism, compelled by a strong moral impulse that sent Smith on this journey westward without adequate preparation and with no knowledge of the task to which he was committed. The major portion of his literary training consisted of what he had acquired in sporadic attendance at various public and night schools over a five-year period. He had no training whatsoever in theology and he had never been given a single lesson in the art of public speaking.

II

The foundations of Methodism in the west had been laid in the 1840s when Methodist missionaries came to "christianize" the natives. The first organized assembly was held in 1872 when the missionary authorities called all the scattered brethren together at Winnipeg to ordain a minister.¹ It was not until 1883, however, that the Manitoba and North-West Conference was established; previously the prairies, along with Japan had been a section of the Toronto Conference.² The new organizational body consisted of six districts, sixty-eight circuits and missions, stretching from

1. The Methodist Year Book for 1915, p. 347.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

the Great Lakes to the rugged Rockies and northward into the boundless horizons.

In 1890, the prairies were virtually empty; the great waves of immigrants from Britain, Europe and the United States were still to come. A mere quarter of a million people, most of whom were in southeastern Manitoba inhabited the area. Winnipeg, with a modest population of about 25,000 inhabitants, was the only centre of significant size. Understandably, Smith's journey into the Terra Nova filled him with excitement and anticipation. As the train stuttered to a stop on the north side of Winnipeg's C.P.R. depot, he was immediately impressed by the throng of human activity in the city. He later wrote:

Winnipeg...was a city in the making....
It was a hustling center of people from
all over the world....These new people
were flowing into the west. I was going
along with them. The great upsurge of
humanity had caught me in its drag and
pull.... 1

Smith felt himself a part of the opening of the west. In his later years he often repeated, with great satisfaction, that "I was there when the west was born."

Although Winnipeg filled him "with wonder," he could not stay because he was expected in MacGregor, a little railway village about one hundred miles west of Winnipeg, where he was to take up

1. A.E. Smith, All My Life, (Progress Books, Toronto, 1949), p. 9.

his duties as a prospective minister of the Methodist church. On his arrival, Smith was greeted warmly. Unfortunately, as might have been expected, he did not become an immediate success. Although he developed considerable force and vividness in his sermons, his pulpitism of heaven, hell and salvation annoyed his congregation. His exhortations to "declare oneself for Christ" were usually met with astonished silence. The great revival meetings of his imagination did not materialize. Many church members disapproved of evangelistic methods and threatened to stay away from the services if he kept on with the "absurd business of asking people...to stand up for Jesus."¹ The inhabitants of MacGregor and the surrounding country-side, mostly farmers and a few merchants, were pragmatic people who had little taste for young Smith's emotional services. Preoccupied primarily with earthly affairs, they were repulsed by Smith's preaching style, and would have preferred him to be more orthodox in manner. As a result, within six months, Smith was relieved of his MacGregor charge. He went on to preach on the Wellwood and Rockhurst rural circuits² for the next three years and gradually gained in experience.

As a missionary student, Smith experienced true pioneer life. He lived with a succession of settlers on their homesteads, helping

1. C.III, Chapter 4, p. 15.

2. See Reverend George Cornish, Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada, Vol. II, 1881-1903, (Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto, 1903), p. 84.

them build their dwellings and break the age-old sod of the prairies to seed their crops. He worried along with them that an early August frost might destroy the fruits of their labour. He learned first hand, the mechanics of civilizing the west; with the virgin land cultivated, other activities followed such as the construction of roads, schools and churches and the organization of municipal governments. The long slow process inspired in him hope for a "full-handed" future.

Finally, in the fall of 1893, Smith was given an opportunity to further his career in the ministry when the Manitoba and North-West Conference chose him; along with a number of other candidates, to attend Wesley College, Winnipeg. For the next four years, he studied intermittently within the grey halls of Wesley, as well as preaching every Sunday to three different communities on the Austin circuit. Not having matriculation standing was a handicap, but he managed to pass his first year as a theological student. It was the second year that proved to be a disaster; personal illness and bankruptcy resulted in a lost school term. For several months, Smith obtained what jobs he could, first in a flour mill, then working for a farmer. In October 1895, he reregistered and completed his studies in the following two years. In June 1897, after much trepidation, he was ordained a Methodist minister.¹

1. In order to complete the academic requirements for ordination, Smith had to convince the stationing committee of the Methodist Conference to let him remain at the college an additional

Despite his difficulties, Smith's sojourn at Wesley substantially affected both his intellectual and social development. He was a member of the first editorial board of the Vox, the college newspaper, and was active in the debating society. On two occasions before the public, he took the lead on the affirmative side in debating the question: "Resolved that the social and economic causes of poverty so far outweigh the personal causes, that despite all individual efforts to the contrary, a great many Canadians must remain poor."¹ Among his fellow students he met J.S. Woodsworth, who "did develop my mind to some degree in making observations in regard to the economic and social conditions of the people with whom I had to work in years to come."² Most important of all, he met his future wife, Maude Mercy Rogers of Regina. They would be married on 2 February 1898 and Maude would constantly support and reinforce all of her husband's future endeavours.

On a more sublime level, during his stay at Wesley College, Smith experienced the influence of the "modernists," who emphasized a worldly purpose to religion. In the classrooms, Smith, along with other theological students, was exposed to the then new scientific approach to the Bible which belittled the optimistic post-millennialism

year rather than send him to preach at a pastorate. Though Smith fulfilled the requirements for ordination, he nonetheless remained four courses short of a B.D. degree.

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 23.
2. A.S. C.T., 24 March 1945.

of "old-time religion." The "new theology" which was being taught, was less emotional and more rational. It examined the Bible in a spirit of scientific enquiry, in the light of historical and archeological findings and suggested that much of the Bible was not literally true.¹ This "higher criticism" of the Bible struck an agreeable cord within Smith and along with many of his fellow students he embraced a liberal interpretation of the scriptures. Later, at the Regina District meeting, May, 1900, for example, he would present a paper entitled "What should be the minister's attitude towards the question of present day historical criticism of the Bible?" In it he defined two schools of thought--the traditional view (lower criticism) and the historical view (higher criticism). The traditional view forced an individual either to accept or reject the old testament as a whole without questioning the contents, structure, character or purpose of the Book. The historical approach held that the Bible could be read in the light of its origins, that it had imperfections, inconsistencies, errors but at the same time, it contained the "unmistakable presence of the Spirit of God and the working out of his divine and unswerving plan for the elevation of mankind into fellowship with himself."²

Smith accepted this historical view because "allegiance to the truth does not demand that it should be taken for granted either

1. Emery, Op.Cit., p. 59.

2. C.II, p. 160.

that the Bible is verbally inspired, or that it is free from error...."¹ The Bible was but

the history of the process of the development of the religious consciousness ...under the divine Spirit. It is not that religious consciousness. It is not that originator of truth, justice and love. These do not depend for their existence on any particular religion; they exist forever in and emanate from the bosom of the Eternal Father. 2

Thus the minister interpreting the Bible had to be "an-open-minded seeker after...truth...avoid[ing] dogmatism, arbitrary opinions, pre-suppositions and pre-impositions."³ The lecture clearly illustrated that Smith had left behind the "old time religion" of his Sunday School days and had become a "modernist" opening for himself avenues of what he believed to be objective and critical thinking.

In May 1897, the year he left Wesley and was ordained, Reverend Dr. Maclean, chairman of the Neepawa District, appointed Smith to preach on the Plumas circuit. Plumas was a little village situated about forty miles north west of Portage La Prairie. The Canadian Northern Railway Company had opened a line into this section of Manitoba and settlers were pouring in. Smith became the first Methodist minister in the village. The following year, when

1. Ibid., p. 161.

2. Ibid., p. 162.

3. Ibid.

he was married, the stationing committee offered Smith a charge in Dauphin, approximately one hundred and fifty miles north west of Portage La Prairie near Lake Winnipegosis. He readily accepted because "there was no suitable place...in which to live in the village of Plumas."¹

Dauphin, an amalgamation of two pre-railway hamlets of Lake Dauphin and Gartmore, had sprung up in the midst of a field of golden wheat in 1896 when two energetic railway promoters, William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, had persuaded the Manitoba legislature to grant them a guarantee of bonds up to \$8,000 a mile for a railway to the Dauphin country.² Shortly thereafter, Polish and Ukrainian immigrants arrived to take advantage of the cheap, fertile land available in the district. Consequently, Smith's appointment involved a considerable increase in duties and responsibilities. Along with the Dauphin charge, he was made superintendent of five other areas--Ochre River, Gilbert Plains, Grand View, Winnipegosis, and Swan River--which took him over 125 miles beyond the end of the railway line.

At Dauphin, Smith first encountered a largely immigrant populace. He was well disposed toward them; the country, he believed needed inhabitants and the immigrants "...seemed strong and confident." During the first year on the circuit, he marvelled

1. C.I., p. 129.

2. W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 267.

at how the newcomers had transformed the "low, willow scrub" terrain north of Dauphin into "fine, fruitful land."¹

This, however, did not mean that he completely sympathized with the "foreign element" entering the country. Because of his background, he inherently believed in the superiority of British "stock" and British "culture" and he was to express this sentiment on occasion throughout his career as a minister. Smith, nonetheless, never allowed these feelings to degenerate into racism. As he became more and more acquainted with "immigrants" he realized the valuable contribution they were making to the development of the nation.

Dauphin was a frontier outpost; a point of convergence for those who were returning from the wilderness and those who were about to venture into it. All sorts of people trekked through the village--hunters, trappers, prospectors, timber rangers, Indian guides, lumbermen, railway engineers, river drivers, traders, and the immigrants. Smith conducted among these people of varied backgrounds successful services, filling the church on any given Sunday. His success was not a result of their overt love of religion. On the contrary, as Smith noted, "they did not come particularly to hear me, but it furnished diversion for them."²

Like the pioneers he served, Smith was exposed to all the

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 28.

hazards of frontier life. In the summer of 1898, for example, when the settlement was scourged by typhoid fever, he came into contact with it in the course of his duties and it would be many weeks before he could rejoice ultimately that he was not one of the many resting in the village's cemetery on the banks of the Vermillion River.

Smith was forced to move in the summer of 1899, despite his success in Dauphin where he had gathered a congregation of over three hundred people. The Conference decided that the Dauphin area should be made into a district. This necessitated the installation of a district chairman in the town. Smith, an ordained minister for only two years, was considered to lack the qualifications and experience needed for the position. Although the Dauphin Church Board thought otherwise, and protested, Smith and his wife were transferred to Prince Albert, North-West Territories.¹

This community of approximately two thousand people, where Smith was to preach for three years, was quite a different type of frontier settlement from Plumas or Dauphin. Surrounded by unadulterated wilderness, 250 miles by rail from Regina, it was much more isolated and there were no new settlers flocking in. One half of the population was Métis while most of the other half consisted of bootleggers and adventurers in search of quick

1. C.II, pp. 146-147.

fortunes. With the Yukon Gold Rush in full tide, many ambitious individuals travelled through the town en route to the goldfields. Preaching to individuals such as these, and having discarded his evangelistic fervour at Wesley College, Smith turned to a consideration of the social conditions within the settlement. Foremost on his agenda was the evil of the liquor traffic--a curse plainly evident in Prince Albert. Smith became so obsessed with the "demon drink" that for several months he published a four-page monthly, The Lance of the North, dedicated to temperance. Somewhat melodramatically he noted its effects:

When the first issue of the Lance of the North appeared on the Main Street of Prince Albert, it knocked men down like a gattling gun....There was a mighty stir. The liquor men...were indignant, the habitual drinkers were horrified... the tranquil little community was upset. 1

For Smith, the liquor traffic was inextricably connected with destitution. The logical consequence of alcoholism was despair and poverty. Smith's temperance campaign had two sources: his family environment where his father had indulged in the unsavoury habit and the doctrines of the Methodist Church which had among its most conspicuous requirements total abstinence from alcohol. In a community which fostered rampant materialism and religious indifference, Smith's temperance crusade probably had little effect.

1. Ibid., pp. 154-155.

In 1902 Smith accepted an invitation to become pastor of the McDougall Memorial Methodist Church in the north end of Winnipeg. After residing in an isolated frontier town for three years, the Smiths, now augmented to four with the addition of two daughters,¹ were thrust into the midst of the booming "Gateway City." Manitoba had entered a decade of expansion;² this was reflected in Winnipeg's growth. Between 1901 and 1906 the city's population escalated from 42,340 to 90,153 of which an estimated one-quarter to one-third were foreign born.³ New problems and new challenges had emerged. Overcrowded conditions created vast slums and intolerable living standards. Smith could not remain indifferent to the plight of the urban poor.

Smith's first task was to enhance the popularity of the McDougall Church. This was readily accomplished. An initial congregation of about forty individuals multiplied to some five hundred in four years' time.⁴ Smith remained dissatisfied, however, because the church as an institution did not seem to be catering in any concrete way to the needs of the urban poor.⁵ The old

1. Smith's daughters were Mercy, who later became Mrs. Robert Hale of Moose Jaw and Cora, who returned to Prince Albert as Mrs. William Hill.

2. See W.L. Morton, Op.Cit., Chapter 12, pp. 273-295.

3. K. McNaught, A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1959), p. 23.

4. C.II, p. 176.

5. Ibid., pp. 177-178.

theological doctrine of "personal salvation" seemed inappropriate when mass poverty could be attributed not to individual deficiencies, but to broad social and economic forces over which the victim had no control. Smith became aware that the majority of the residents of Winnipeg were

industrious, sober, thrifty. They were good neighbours. They were intelligent and kind...[but]...most of them despite thrift, industry, and personal moral living were poor. They lived in fear... fear of want. That is the essence of poverty. 1

If the church was to perform a meaningful function it had to positively affect social and economic conditions.

In his sermons at the McDougall Church, Smith often berated the congregation for their indifference to the urban poor. Prosperity was abundant, yet it did not filter down to the average worker. Smith asked why, and much to the chagrin of the leading Methodists in the church, provided the answer--wealth corrupts. The "nouveau riche" were more interested in ostentatious displays of magnificent homes and expensive entertainments than in eradicating slums and uplifting the morality of those less fortunate. For Smith, this was the antitheses of the Christian gospel which purported to "help thy neighbour." The church elders, he noted, had "...no deep concern for the poor...no deep sense of responsibility." They "could plan the extension of business...but they had no social

1. Ibid., p. 186.

sense."¹

Smith's socially orientated sermons were not unique, but reflected the prevailing attitude about the city's slums among other equally concerned ministers. J.S. Woodsworth, for example, who in 1904 was appointed pastor of the Grace Church, one of the wealthiest places of worship in Winnipeg,² also attacked his congregation for their "sin of indifference." In much more eloquent terms than Smith, Woodsworth restated the same theme:

...Christianity stands for social righteousness as well as personal righteousness...It is quite right for me to be anxious to save my never dying soul; but it is of greater importance to try to serve the present age...If it is right to help the sick it is right to do away with filth and overcrowding and to provide sunlight and good air and good food...You can't separate man from his surroundings and deal separately with each... 3

Woodsworth's scholarly sermons were based on wide reading, travel, and observation. Smith's were the result of experience: he had lived in the slums and had known utter poverty. In each case, however, the message was the same--the church had to take an advanced position in social reform.

1. Ibid., p. 179.

2. McNaught, A Prophet in Politics, p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 26.

III

At the same time as Smith was becoming aware of social evils, he was learning of the remedies proposed by "socialism." Before his arrival in Winnipeg, Smith had not known any socialists, but shortly thereafter encountered many through "open-air...meetings on the market square, in parks...on street corners." He examined their philosophy and accepted their premises "to a degree."¹ Through the Reverend Ben Spence, he met A.W. Puttee, publisher of the labour paper, The Voice, and the federal member of parliament for the city of Winnipeg. In the 1904 election campaign, he gave a number of speeches on Puttee's behalf.

That Smith became acquainted with socialist ideas in Winnipeg was not surprising. For a number of reasons Winnipeg was an important center for Marxists, socialists, secularists, and other radicals. As a booming, expanding metropolis, inextricably connected to the development of western Canada, the city had become the focal point for industrial growth and the emergence of trade unions. The influx of immigrants with radical ideas and articulate leaders had ensured a high degree of militancy in the trade unions. By the turn of the century the labour movement had become politically active as workers and employers jostled for a greater share of the profits in the rapidly maturing industrial order.²

1. C.F.I., p. 190.

2. K. McNaught and D.J. Bercuson, The Winnipeg General Strike: 1919, (Longman, Toronto, 1974), p. 6.

Smith was an interested observer in this development. He sympathized with the workers' common grievance in not having a larger role in the city's economic and political life but initially he was not in any substantial way committed to a particular ideology as a means of rectifying this situation. Even in his support of Puttee, he gave only tentative approval to socialism. Puttee was a moderate, who sought to reform society, not restructure it; he advocated a gradualist programme which included direct legislation, a single tax on land, and old age pensions.¹ Smith was well aware of Puttee's views for, at least on one occasion, Puttee spoke to the McDougall Church congregation on his invitation.² Smith's support of Puttee, although cautious, indicated that he was "ready to take a labour stand in politics."³

In 1906 Smith became involved in his first major industrial dispute. Early that year employees of the privately-owned Street Railway Company struck for higher wages. The strike developed into a bitter struggle between the workers and the company with troops being eventually called out by civic authorities to quell disturbances and prevent the destruction of street cars which had begun after the company imported strike-breakers from eastern Canada.⁴

1. See A.R. McCormack, "Arthur Puttee and the Liberal Party," Canadian Historical Review (C.H.R.), June 1970, pp. 164-176.

2. Smith, All My Life, p. 33.

3. Ibid.

4. McNaught and Bercuson, Op.Cit., p. 6.

Smith, because he was sympathetic to the "working man" in his sermons, was invited to speak at a public meeting of the strikers. Hesitantly he accepted; it was the first time he had ever been present at a "big labour meeting." In a brief speech, he expressed the moderate opinion that the dispute should go to arbitration.¹ Even this annoyed some of his more conservative church members who thought that his conduct was "unbecoming to a minister."²

Smith, however, was spared any further altercation with his congregation. In July 1906, the Manitoba Conference, moved him to Portage La Prairie, a growing town of approximately eight thousand people. Smith became pastor of a newly built white brick church in the center of the city. In the next three years he developed a large congregation and gained an excellent reputation as a responsible minister.

In the Portage La Prairie pastorate, Smith began to criticize in a more cogent manner the existing political system, the laissez-faire form of economics, social vices such as alcohol and even the Methodist Church itself. The criticisms had their foundations in his new conception of Christ. As noted earlier, Smith had discarded the evangelistic approach of representing Christ solely as a figure whose purpose it was to offer mankind eternal salvation. Instead, Christ had become, for Smith, a "social being" who sought

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 35.

2. Ibid.

to "reconstruct society on the principles of Brotherhood." Consequently, Smith believed that entrance into the Kingdom of God did not entail individual salvation but "serving your fellow-men in this life."¹ This in turn, required the reforming of any social, economic, and political institutions which formed an obstacle to the betterment of society.

In the contemporary political system, Smith saw a monopoly of the two old political parties which negated any real competition during elections. During the 1908 federal election, for example, he delivered a sermon to his congregation which attacked the political parties' attempts to control elections and scorned those individuals who based their allegiance to a party platform on tradition and irrelevant party slogans. He also attacked the caucus system, because this procedure allowed crucial decisions to be made in secret and not in the House of Commons. To effectively reform the country's political system, Smith advocated direct legislation and the referendum.²

Concomitant to his analysis of the political system, he also

1. Portage La Prairie-Weekly Manitoba Liberal, 11 Feb. 1909.

2. Ibid., 8 Oct. 1908. As can be expected Smith's comments annoyed some members of the congregation and letters were written in the local press protesting Smith's "so-called religious service." At this time Portage La Prairie was also the home of the young and aspiring Arthur Meighen who frequently used the tennis courts adjacent to Smith's church, and, who heartily disapproved of Smith's tirade on the nation's political system. (Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976).

noted, in his sermons, the inadequacies of the laissez-faire system of economics. Capitalism, he contended, by encouraging competition among men to accumulate wealth, was harmful because it forced employers to cut production costs by introducing specialized machinery. With mechanization of the factory came the deterioration of the craft industry and the shift to piece work, which "robbed the worker of his strength and versatility." Remembering his own experiences as an apprentice in Hamilton--the low wages and poor working conditions--Smith concluded that such a development could only result in increased industrial warfare. The solution to this situation was for the labour unions and the churches to recognize and to assert that "manhood was superior to machinery, to profits in business, or to material success."¹ The church especially "could not remain silent in the disputes between capital and labour" and indeed, in some cases, "it was the duty of the church to take sides."² In this respect, Smith concluded, the Methodist church had failed. At the annual Manitoba Conference in 1907, for example, he proclaimed that the Methodist church was the "fattest institution in the country, because it was on the fence all the time."³ This was a criticism that Smith would return

1. Portage La Prairie Weekly Review, 13 Sept. 1906, cited in L.W. Felske, Science and the Radical Social Gospel in Western Canada, (M.A., University of Calgary, 1975), p. 87.

2. Manitoba Free Press, 17 June 1908, cited in Ibid.

3. Manitoba Free Press, 14 June 1907.

to frequently in his career.

While at the Portage La Prairie pastorate, Smith became deeply involved in community affairs. He initiated a branch of the Y.M.C.A., conducted a special summer session for Sunday School students near Dauphin and served as vice-president of the Central Teachers' Association. As well, he incessantly campaigned on the evils of gambling, prostitution, and alcohol. Indeed in 1907 he tried, unsuccessfully, to organize a local option campaign to abolish the bar room which, according to him, was the "citadel of the traffic and the training school of appetite."¹ In the fall of that year he was elected by the prohibitionists in the town as chairman of a joint temperance organization formed by the local Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches. As their representative, he journeyed to Winnipeg in November to participate in a province-wide temperance conference. Throughout his anti-alcohol campaign Smith believed that although public opinion was in favour of prohibition, the liquor interests of the town were in "league" with provincial authorities to oppose any change in the law which would remove the three-fifths majority requirement for local option and vest the

1. Portage La Prairie Weekly Manitoba Liberal, 14 Feb. 1907, cited in Op.Cit., p. 79. Indeed Smith would venture into the local bars and proceed to demonstrate the evils of liquor by dropping live worms into the beverages and noting that they quickly died, thus, attesting to the poisonous effect of alcohol. (Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.)

control of the liquor licenses in the municipal council.

In the spring of 1909, Smith's appointment at Portage La Prairie expired and the Manitoba Conference stationing committee relocated Smith and his family to Dauphin--a pastorate he had held briefly nine years earlier. Smith remained in Dauphin for two years, during which time, he unsuccessfully endeavoured, as in Portage La Prairie, to transform the Dauphin district into a "dry" area. As part of his social work, Smith also organized in the Dauphin church a men's club which discussed scriptural interpretations and held public talks on current sociological problems.¹ Included among the guest speakers were such labour leaders as F.J. Dixon, R.A. Rigg and A.W. Puttee. The behaviour of "capitalists" in Dauphin rekindled in Smith one of his most persistent concerns--the plight of the working class. He was especially annoyed at the Canadian National Railway Company which had sold to unsuspecting immigrants, most of whom were railway workers--Dauphin was the divisional point for the C.N.R. line--"apparently" fertile land south of its railway line. This land was actually susceptible to annual floods, which destroyed not only property and homes, but also agricultural crops.² In a lucid and charismatic manner, Smith stressed in his sermons the injustices the workers suffered at the hands of their employers.

1. Christian Guardian, 2 Feb. 1910.

2. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

Because of his social activities and his experience as a Methodist minister, Smith was placed third in the balloting for the presidency of the Manitoba Conference at the 1910 convention held in Fort William.¹ Later in the year he attended the national conference of Methodists at Victoria B.C. as an elected representative. While there, he was invited to take charge of the Trinity Methodist Church in Nelson. It was an attractive prospect in a beautiful country² and in June 1911 the Smith family, which in Portage La Prairie had grown to six with the births of Douglas and Stewart, trekked to British Columbia.

Smith's two years in Nelson were marked by a further attraction to socialism. He continued to meet socialists such as Jack Johnstone--an "agitator extraordinary"--and to conduct social study classes which featured speakers on such subjects as poverty, criminality and taxation.³ He also became involved with the Nelson Socialist Party. The party, which was preparing for the 1912 provincial election, hired a theater and asked Smith to give a talk on a topic of his choice. He consented but discovered a few days later that his name had been placed side by side with the socialist candidate's name on billboards in Nelson as a political speaker. The Nelson Trinity Church elders were scandalized

1. Fort William Daily-Times Journal, 17 June 1910, cited in Felske, Op.Cit., p. 99.

2. Smith, All My Life, p. 36.

3. Smith Papers, p.c.

and pointedly told Smith that he was dragging the name of the church in the mud. Nevertheless, Smith gave a speech and supported the socialist candidate in the election. Smith's career as a pastor at Nelson came to an end in 1913 when he accepted an invitation to become minister of the First Methodist Church in Brandon, Manitoba.

The years in Brandon would constitute a major turning point in his career. The direction of the change, however, was already foreshadowed by the time he left British Columbia. His childhood background and his experiences in the west were beginning to combine to alter significantly his goals as a minister. The emotionalism of Methodist evangelism and its corollary of "saving souls" from "earthly wretchedness and sin" was being replaced by concern for the quality of human relations in a collective society. Smith's tentative approaches to the labour movement and socialism were manifestations of his changing religious perspective. His ministerial endeavours in the frontier outposts of the west and in the slums of Winnipeg had convinced him that the new civilization which was emerging on the prairies could best be served by social and institutional rather than moral reform.

- CHAPTER II

The Making of a Radical 1913-1919

Smith spent ten eventful years in Brandon, six as pastor of the First Methodist Church and four as minister of the People's Church. For half the decade, he chaired the Brandon District of the Manitoba Conference and was twice elected president of the Manitoba Conference--an unprecedented event. His rise to positions of responsibility, however, were negated by his "unorthodox" behaviour. By 1919 Smith had become an apostate.

I

The First Methodist Church of Brandon, supported by a well-to-do middleclass congregation of over one thousand members, was one of the wealthiest churches in the city.¹ Here Smith discovered that being a preacher had its earthly rewards; he received an annual salary of \$2,500, a month's holiday every year and a "free, well-

1. Smith Papers, p. 6. black note book.

furnished home."¹ For the first time, he felt financially secure, so much so, that he brought his parents to Brandon to live more comfortably with him and his family.²

Yet, despite this monetarily desirable change, Smith became discontented and restless with the "narrow conception of religion heeded by many of my people."³ The majority of the church members still believed in the "old gospel"--individual salvation from sin--an attitude Smith attributed to the "long years of evangelistic preaching."⁴ Although he respected their views, he found it difficult to engage in a "campaign for souls" because his theological beliefs had changed from an emphasis on the personal-ethical doctrine of Methodism to the concept that "salvation" entailed social reform.⁵

In order to re-educate his congregation, Smith instituted a new format for his services. Instead of "prayer sessions" he held mid-week discussion meetings on the problems of the day and gave Sunday afternoon talks on such topics as poverty, unemployment, labour relations and criminology.⁶ Through these activities Smith

1. Ibid.

2. Smith's parents and his older sister came to Brandon sometime in early 1914. The reunion, however, was saddened by the death of his father shortly after his arrival.

3. Smith Papers, p. c., black note book.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

continually reminded his congregation that individuals were a product of nurture not nature, that people had to be seen in their social surroundings and that to save man there had to be a social transformation in the community in which he lived.¹ Smith concentrated his sermons and discussions on the need for alleviating the hardships and deprivations of the working class.

Much to the discomfort of the prosperous members of his congregation he urged the importance of curbing the influence of the wealthy in church councils and the necessity for the church to engage actively in large scale social welfare work. In these views, he was not alone--J.S. Woodsworth, Salem Bland, William Ivens and other social gospelers all demanded that the church take a progressive stand on social reform. And indeed, the Methodist church did move a considerable distance in the direction these leaders were advocating. As early as the turn of the century, it had recognized that the rich had some responsibility toward the poor; that Christianity faced a special challenge in the cities and that individual economic circumstances were not just attributable to personal habits but to broader socio-economic forces. In Winnipeg, for example, throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, funds of the Methodist church had gone to social research and city missions, and committees on sociological questions had been

¹ Ibid.

established within the church which came to accept, in principle, labour unions and the legitimacy of strikes.¹ But the change was slow and a substantial number of Methodist laymen remained reluctant to accept progressive innovations. Not until 1914, for example, would the Methodist Church Department of Temperance, Prohibition, and Moral Reform be transformed into the Department of Social Service and Evangelism.

Smith, for his part, as he did in Portage La Prairie, began to focus his sermons on the inequality between labour and management. As with other social gospellers, he saw this at the core of the problems created by industrialization. Drawing on his own early experiences, he deplored the indifference of owners and managers of industrial enterprises to their workers' demands for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, and collective bargaining. In 1914, he chaired a church committee which presented a report to the Department of Social Service and Evangelism of the Methodist church, on industrial conditions across Canada. The report argued that the "spirit of discontent" was a healthy sign and arose out of widespread response to the ideas for social reconstruction which were gradually gaining ground in the minds of Canadians. "The relations of the Church," it continued, "to this condition of the public mind is necessarily that of guide and inspirer, so as to ensure progress in building into society the broad principles of the

1. See for example McNaught, Prophet in Politics, p. 37 and Emery, Op.Cit., p. 114.

Kingdom of God."¹ Since unemployment was an obstacle to the realization of these goals, it exhorted the general-secretary of the Department of Social Service and Evangelism "to urge upon the federal authorities...the necessity of [a] full and exhaustive investigation...into the causes and consequences of unemployment in Canada."² As well, the report proposed the establishment of Free Labour Bureaus in the industrial centres throughout the Dominion: "these Bureaus could speedily investigate and report upon the conditions of labour and the labour needs of industry in any community and without cost to the unemployed, secure employment for them...to the place where labour is scarce and needed."³ The report also recommended that all trade unions be given legal status, so that employers and employed could deal with each other upon a clear cut legal basis: "...while recognizing the dominant principle of brotherhood, we must also remember that mutual responsibility before the law is the essence of contract...." "We recommend," it concluded, "that in all disputes arising between capital and labour the principle of arbitration be made compulsory by law."⁴ As evident in the report the rash of strikes which accompanied trade union expansion led Smith and other members in

1. Social Service and Evangelism Report, "The Waking Church and the Wakening World," pp. 48-49.
 2. Ibid., p. 49.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid., p. 50..

the Department of Social Service and Evangelism of the Methodist church to believe that impartial government officials should intervene and expose the issues to public opinion in order to secure a fair settlement. Smith participated in the Social Service Congress held in Ottawa, March 1914, where these and other issues were discussed¹ and lent his support to such progressive measures as the extension of the franchise to include women, direct legislation and child welfare programmes.²

As Smith increasingly came to regard the church as an agent of social reform, he became more and more opposed to competition among the various denominations for "souls." He became a vigorous supporter of the church union movement.³ His known views on this subject and his willingness to work hard to further this objective were the main reasons why he was twice chosen president of the Manitoba Conference in 1915 and 1916.⁴ He served with Dr. John

1. See Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928 (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1971), pp. 18-34.

2. See The Department of Social Service and Evangelism Report for 1915-16, "The Church at War for Justice, Righteousness, Peace," pp. 63-67 and The Department of Social Service and Evangelism Report for 1916-17, "Christianization of Canadian Life," pp. 69-73.

3. K.W. Gunn-Walberg, The Church Union Movement in Manitoba 1902-1925, (Ph.D., University of Guelph, 1971), pp. 84, 104. Also Smith, All My Life, p. 39.

4. A.S.C.T., 6 Jan. 1945. Prior to his election as president of the Manitoba Conference in 1916, Smith had tried for the position on three previous occasions. His advocacy of Church union specifically and the rising reform sentiment among Methodists in the province generally, probably had much to do with his successes in 1915 and 1916.

McLean and Dr. W.A. Cooke as the Methodist representatives on a joint commission with the Presbyterians to examine all proposals for local union as they came in from local churches.¹ The result of the commission's work over the years was the establishment of over fifty local united churches within the territory of the conference.²

Smith believed that church union was a step closer toward an emerging social Church of Jesus Christ. "We can not," he declared, "preserve a selfish religion...the weaker should join the stronger, otherwise dry rot would set in."³ In the Christian Guardian he wrote:

To preserve the small denominations, with their sharp outlines and prescribed appeals...will be to weaken the faith of men that the Church has a larger end to seek than her own self-preservation. And the inevitable result will follow--self-preservation will be self-destruction. 4

Ironically, in 1925, the year that the United Church of Canada would be finally brought into existence, would also be the year that Smith, having already left the ministry, would become a communist.

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1. Gunn-Walberg, Op.Cit., p. 104.
 2. A.S.C.T., 6 Jan. 1945.
 3. Article by Smith in an unidentified newspaper clipping found in the Smith Papers p.c.
 4. Christian Guardian, 3 July 1912.

II

When war erupted in 1914, Smith became uncertain what his attitude, as a Methodist minister, should be toward it. He believed the conflict to be contrary to Christian faith and practice but thought it his patriotic duty to support the Canadian effort. He gave the following reason:

The war is the paramount issue in public policy at this date. It fixes the point of view for us all and for all policies on whether they are concerned with the internal or the external affairs of the Dominion. The first thing which is to be said regarding the war is that--it must be won by the allies and Canada must do her part continuously to the end to win the war. This matter is so clear to every well disposed citizen that there is no need to take the time to consider the alternative policy or to try to outline what it would mean to us if the war should be lost. 1

He volunteered to become an army chaplain but was never called to service.²

Subsequently, in 1917, Smith endorsed the "non-partisan" government declaring that "the Union Government should be regarded as the result of the very best political thought of our leading statesmen at this time, and should be loyally supported in the efforts that are now being made to establish order and give direction to governmental

1. Smith Papers, p.c., notes for a speech.
 2. Smith, All My Life, p. 40.

agencies in the new system for the active prosecution of the war."¹ This, however, did not mean that Smith endorsed all the policies of the union government. For example, although supporting conscription, he believed that it should include not only conscription of manpower but also of wealth and resources:

All the wealth of the nation is the result of some form of community action....In the time of national danger, when the fate of the nation hangs in the balance there should be very little room for questioning the right of the nation to command the power that lies in wealth in order to serve the nation....No one should be permitted to increase his bank account at the expense of the people in the form of war profits and exemption from taxation. Provision should be made for the securing to uses of the nation of a fair share of all the excess profits in every business operating upon a certain capitalization. 2

As the war progressed, Smith came to have serious doubts as to its righteousness. At the annual June conference in 1917, for example, he noted that a survey of history showed every civilization based on "brutality, cruelty and materialism" eventually collapsed.³ He was becoming increasingly dismayed at the prevalent war-time profiteering by businessmen and anxiously looking forward to the Borden government's post-war reconstruction programmes.⁴

1. Smith Papers, p.c.

2. Ibid.

3. Manitoba Free Press, 11 June 1917, cited in Felske, Op.Cit., p. 109.

4. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

Although Smith supported the union government, he was not a member of any party. Indeed, at different times and in different places he had supported conservative, liberal, labour, and socialist candidates. Thus when a group of businessmen, prominent in the Brandon Conservative Association asked him to run as a unionist candidate in the coming federal election he declined to do so stating that

the only man who can serve the country at this or any time is one who is beyond the reach of the fear of flattery of the machine partizan or clique. He is the truly independent man. 1

A year later, however, Smith was to cast aside this non-partizan philosophy and join the Dominion Labour Party.

III

The war and the moral problems connected with it were not the sole reasons for Smith's increasing uncertainty as to his role in the ministry. Events within the Methodist church itself aroused in him serious concern. In particular, the dismissal of Salem Bland and A.J. Irwin from Wesley College, the resignation of J.S. Woodsworth and the ousting of William Ivens from the McDougall Methodist Church in Winnipeg were all events which disturbed him greatly. The reasons for the dismissals of Bland and Irwin were

1. Smith Papers, p.c.

complicated and in Smith's view quite dubious. In May, 1917, Wesley College faced a bank overdraft of \$28,000 caused by a deficit of approximately \$10,000 annually accumulated since the beginning of the war.¹ The entire faculty of the institution was asked to resign to allow the principal, Dr. J.H. Riddell, to reorganize the staff. A special committee, formed by the college board to deal with the reorganization, was composed of Smith along with J.H. Ashdown, Dr. Popham, Dr. Halpenny, Dr. Hughson, Dr. Darwin, and E.L. Taylor.² Smith initially opposed the dismissal of Bland and Irwin but he was convinced by his colleagues on the board that the \$7,000 per year saving that this would bring was the only way to rescue the college from its financial difficulties.³ The initial decision not to rehire the two professors was thus made unanimously. Shortly thereafter, however, Smith changed his mind, and when the fired faculty members were given a hearing before the college board he introduced a motion to reinstate them. The rest of the board remained firm and Smith failed to find a seconder.⁴ Smith was now convinced that the reorganization of the staff and the dismissal of Irwin was all part of a plot "to get rid of Bland...

1. Richard Allen, Salem Bland and the Social Gospel, p. 114.

2. Ibid., p. 114. Also see McNaught, A Prophet in Politics, p. 80.

3. Allen, Ibid., p. 114.

4. McNaught, Op.Cit., p. 80.

because of his political activity and public utterances."¹ Smith was inclined to agree ultimately with the Grain Growers' Guide when it declared Bland suffered because of his "outspoken condemnation of political corruption and his unswerving championship of social reform."²

The resignation of J.S. Woodsworth at about the same time further weakened Smith's confidence in the Methodist church. Ever since their first meeting as students at Wesley, Smith had held Woodsworth in high regard and he was deeply moved by his resignation³ brought about because of his pacifist convictions. He was all the more affected because Woodsworth's letter of resignation was addressed to Smith himself, as president of the Manitoba Conference.⁴

1. Smith Papers, p.c., Smith to William Ivens, 13 Oct. 1917. Circumstantial evidence tends to suggest that perhaps Smith was correct. On 9 April 1918, J.H. Riddell reported that the \$10,000 yearly deficit had been eliminated by rigid economy; that Ashdown, chairman of the board and member of the committee which disposed of Bland and Irwin, had offered \$10,000 against the debt of \$28,000 if others would cover the rest and that in December, when a campaign for an additional endowment of \$400,000 was undertaken, Ashdown had subscribed \$100,000 in advance (Richard Allen, Salem Bland and the Social Gospel, p. 117). Thus it appeared that the college could have gotten the money without having to resort to the dismissal of Bland and Irwin.

2. The Grain Growers' Guide, 27 June 1917, cited in Allen, The Social Passion, p. 56.

3. A.S.C.T., 24 March 1945.

4. For a copy of Woodsworth's resignation letter see McNaught, Prophet in Politics, pp. 82-85. After Woodsworth had resigned, Smith regretted that he had not attempted to retain Woodsworth in the Church. Smith considered this a "shameful" act on his own part, because at the time he did not have the courage

Although his own views on the war differed from those of Woodsworth, he could not help but realize that one of the Methodists' most valuable members had become disillusioned with the orthodox line being taken by the church as a whole.

The case of William Ivens reaffirmed these concerns. Smith had first met Ivens back in 1902 when he was minister of McDougall Church in Winnipeg. Ivens, then a market gardener, wished to enter the ministry. Smith "advised him to start studying right away." In June 1909, Ivens finished his B.D. course and it was Smith who sponsored his ordination as a Methodist minister. In 1918, Ivens was relieved of his position at the McDougall Methodist Church because of his opposition to the war and his socialist inclinations.² Early in the year the deposed minister became editor of the Western Labour News, a weekly publication of the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council, which was designed to be "the voice of the working people." He began a stormy career as a vigorous and eloquent advocate of labour through the press and on the public platform.³

to face the resulting public reaction if he had "stood up" for Woodsworth. (Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.)

1. A.S.C.T., 17 Mar. 1945. Also see Smith, All My Life, p. 55.

2. Douglas Frederick Pratt, William Ivens and the Winnipeg Labour Church, (B.D. thesis, St. Andrew's College, 1962), p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 8.

Once again Smith's loyalty to the church was challenged, this time because of his sympathy for Ivens' viewpoint. In a letter to Ivens, written in June 1918, he expressed this clearly:

Copies of the [Western] Labour News came to me... I could detect your personality through the pages. You did excellent work and I rejoice in the impact you are having in a vital center of the West.... 1

By accepting the stand of the Western Labour News, Smith was moving a long way in the direction of socialism.

His support for a complete transformation of the economic system as advocated by the socialists had other roots beyond these personal associations. Indeed it was based generally, as were the views of Bland, Woodsworth, and Ivens, on the injustices accompanying the economic, social, and political development of the Canadian west. These, reinforced by the special grievances of the war years, had produced deep class divisions; workers and farmers were increasingly convinced that the old two-party system operated to their disadvantage and both groups felt the need for checks and controls over the new industrialism. Among the workers in particular there was a strong background of belief in direct political action which had its origins in a semi-digested Marxism and had recently received fresh stimulation as a result of the Russian revolutionary experiment.² Although Smith had had little

1. Smith Papers, p.c., Smith to Ivens, 4 June 1918.

2. McNaught, Prophet in Politics, p. 91.

direct connection with these activities, he was inclined to sympathize with them. He believed that laissez-faire individualism in private and public life was outmoded and inappropriate to deal with the emerging industrial problems of the west. When the Methodist General Conference of 1918 declared as one of its principles belief in the "transformation of capitalist property into social property with production for use instead of for profits," Smith was reassured. Writing in the Western Labour News, he stated that this principle "committed the church to nothing less than a social revolution."¹ But he was impatient with the slow movement of the church and the reluctance of many of its members to support reform. He felt the need to hurry forward with the reconstruction of society. When individuals such as J.S. Woodsworth and William Ivens, who shared his basic views on social questions, went unheeded, and felt obliged to leave the church, he became frustrated and angry.

His own attempt to separate himself from orthodox religion and the old parties came sometime in 1918 when he joined the Brandon Labour Party which was an affiliate of the Dominion Labour Party. The latter was a Winnipeg based organization composed of Fabians and trade unionists schooled in the socialism of Bellamy and Blatchford and in the social gospel. Within the party he had long discussions with his old associate, William Ivens,² and met S.J.

1. Western Labour News, 8 Nov. 1918.

2. It has been suggested to the author (interview with

Farmer, F.J. Dixon, A.A. Heaps, John Queen, W.D. Bailey and other moderate labour leaders.

By 1919 Smith had also become thoroughly disgusted with the Borden government's lack of plans for post-war reconstruction. The federal government was not taking the necessary initial steps--the nationalization of all public utilities, services, and natural resources--which Smith and other socialists thought were vital in facilitating the "democratic control of industry and the democratic distribution of industrial products." Early in April 1919, Smith travelled to Calgary to give a number of speeches at the Peoples' Forum and at Calgary's Methodist Churches. In his speeches he advocated socialism as the only means by which men could build a new Christian order. While in Calgary he also testified before the Mathers' Royal Commission on Industrial Relations and expressed the view that Canada was in the middle of a revolutionary period which would eventually destroy the capitalistic exploitation of man by man. For Smith this revolutionary period was brought about because of the working class' sudden realization of their denigrated position. He suggested that the best possible way to channel this mounting unrest was to form a national government which would represent all social and economic groups.¹

Mr. R. Kenny, Toronto, 20 Nov. 1974) that Ivens persuaded Smith to edit anonymously for a number of months the Confederate, the organ of the Dominion Labour Party. The newspaper appeared early in Jan. 1919.

1. Canada. Evidence Presented to the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, Smith testimony, pp. 836-837.

Smith's full association with the labour movement and socialism came in 1919. On 25 April of that year, the Brandon civic strike erupted when the city council refused to recognize a newly formed civic union.¹ Upon returning from his speaking tour in Calgary, Smith, who at the time represented the Ministerial Association on the Trades and Labour Council offered to assist the strike committee in any capacity he could. He aided in preparing strike bulletins and addressed three open-air meetings organized by the strike committee.² These activities soon launched him into a larger crusade--the Winnipeg General Strike.

IV

On 3 May, Winnipeg's building and metal trades went on strike. The dispute was over wages and collective bargaining. When negotiations between the unions and their employers broke down, the Building Trades Council and the Metal Trades Council called on the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council to support their cause. A vote was taken on 13 May, and the results indicated that the city's trade unionists favoured a sympathetic strike by a twenty-two to one margin. Thus on 15 May approximately thirty thousand workers left their jobs. From that day until 26 June, when the strike

1. Western Labour News, 2 May 1919.

2. A.S.C.T., 27 Jan. 1945.

collapsed, Winnipeg was at a virtual standstill. Meanwhile, trade councils in Brandon, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria issued bulletins calling for general strikes in sympathy with their Winnipeg brethren. In Brandon, despite the fact that the strike of the civic employees had just ended with the workers having won most of their demands, the trade council decided to walk out on strike again in solidarity with their Winnipeg comrades. Smith, who had worked diligently for the Brandon civic strikers, expressed some fear that the civic union might jeopardize former successes,¹ but on the whole he enthusiastically supported the sympathetic strike.

Smith had no official connection with the strike in Winnipeg but he could not refrain from commenting on it in his sermons. He took the inspirational view that

[the]...upsurge of...organized workers... was really a religious movement. It was a mighty revival of religion. The people and ministers of the church largely in imitation of the old prophets had been calling on God to revive his work in the world. Here was the visible and outward sign and token of God's answer to this prayer. 2

To the dismay of some members of his congregation, he even argued that if the church did not respond to the workers' movement it would "find itself on the side without the people and without any mission on earth."³

1. The Toronto Star, 25 Apr. 1925

2. C.II, p. 211.

3. Ibid., p. 212.

On a practical level, he declared that the cause of the strikers was just and that it was the employers who were at fault for refusing to negotiate. What annoyed Smith most was the attitude of the federal government to the strike; Ottawa was not prepared to concede any of the strikers' demands. He later wrote:

I was struck by the nation-wide, class-against-class issue involved in what, at first, seemed to be a small wage question. The Tory Premier...Robert Borden, had signed documents at the peace conference in France proclaiming labour's right to collective bargaining and the eight-hour day. But all the evidence showed that the government at Ottawa was blocking labour's demands in Winnipeg in an effort to discourage the rising movement across the country. 1

Smith's indictment of the government had more relevance to his future activities than he could possibly know at the time. Ottawa clearly aligned itself with Winnipeg's middle and upper classes in a determined effort to defeat the strikers. Borden, quite alarmed at the industrial unrest in western Canada, took the view that the strike was an attempt at a revolution led by socialist elements whose aim was to subvert the legitimate civic authority in Winnipeg. As a result he decided to take drastic action to end the dispute. On 6 June the House of Commons passed an amendment to the Immigration Act which permitted the deportation of British-born immigrants; on 11 June parliament approved amendments to the

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 48.

criminal code which broadened the definition of sedition. The result was Section 98 of the criminal code which provided for the suppression of any organization which advocated the overthrow of the government by force and violence. A measure designed to provide the authorities with a more effective means of dealing with radicals, it remained on the statute books for the next seventeen years. Later, during the decade of the depression, Smith was to make its repeal a major objective of his activity.

During the strike, Smith contributed to the Western Labour News' Special Strike Editions¹ and participated in mass meetings on behalf of the workers. On 25 May in Victoria Park, Winnipeg, along with J.S. Woodsworth and W.A. Pritchard, a leading member of the Socialist Party of Canada, he addressed an audience of eight thousand.² He reminded the huge crowd that the Methodist General Conference (1918) had declared itself for a radical reconstruction of society and the substitution of co-operation for the competitive ethic. The strike, to Smith, epitomized this crusade for "better wages" and a "better living." His answer to the fear that the church, acting under the dictates of the rich who threatened to leave it, would not support the strikers was: "Let them go, a church that

1. See for example, Western Labour News Strike Edition #26, 15 June, 1919.

2. Smith had developed a lucid and charismatic style of speaking. Indeed the R.C.M.P. believed that his oratory was capable of inciting riots. P.A.C. Record Group 18, Section H, Vols. 1-3, R.C.M.P. Reports on the Brandon Strike, 26, 31 May and 7 June 1919, cited in Felske, Op.Cit., p. 99.

thought more of real estate than of principles has no place in the life of today."¹

The actions of the official board of the First Methodist Church in Brandon made it difficult for Smith to express his views on the strike. On 26 May, the board called a special meeting to curb Smith's inflammatory sermons.² In the acrimonious discussion that followed Smith was accused of starting the Winnipeg Strike, opposing the war, calling soldiers murderers and of being un-Christian.³ Although the original motion restraining Smith was withdrawn because no specific charge had been laid, the board remained adamant. Smith forewarned them that he would make known at the next service (1 June) his intended course of action. The choice was painfully clear: either to support the strike and leave the church or renounce the strikers and devote himself to orthodox religion.

V

On 1 June 1919, Smith gave his last sermon in the First Methodist Church. Later that day, in the city's Rideau Park, before a crowd of over two thousand people he stated that since the official

1. Norman Penner, ed., Winnipeg 1919: The Strikers' Own History of the Winnipeg General Strike (James Lewas and Samuel, Toronto, 1973), p. 148.

2. A.S.C.T., 10 Feb. 1945.

3. Ibid.

church did not want to build the "Kingdom of God" on earth, he would carry on his ministry outside it.¹ He announced his intention of establishing a Peoples' Church in Brandon.

Smith at first did not intend to leave the Methodist ministry. The following week he planned to attend the annual meeting of the Manitoba Methodist Conference as usual. Prevented from arriving for the first two sessions because of the sudden death of a colleague, he discovered to his dismay that "most outrageous stories were invented about me."² He was summoned before a number of senior ministers who questioned and cautioned him on his radical behaviour. He was indignant that "my Brethren should so...prejudge my conduct as to determine that I needed to be cautioned,"³ but contented himself with requesting that the stationing committee leave him "without a station for one year in order to engage in the work of the Peoples' Church." The stationing committee granted the request but their decision was subsequently upset by the ministerial session of the conference by a vote of thirty-six to thirty-two. Smith could do little else but submit his resignation from the ministry. In his memoirs, he wrote despondently:

It was no light matter...to make the decision
....I had been in the work of the Methodist
Church for 29 years. I had shared the work

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1. Ibid.
 2. C.II., p. 224.
 3. Ibid., p. 225.

in all its grades and requirements. I had carried the responsibility of office in the District Chairmanship for many years and for two years in the Presidence (sic) of the conference. I had been a member of three General Conferences which was the highest court of the Methodist Church. I had sat on the Board of Evangelism and Social Service for 16 years.

Smith's action was based upon the grounds that "my freedom...and... service to my fellowmen were narrowed,...hampered and fettered by the church."¹ The resignation was accepted.

The reasons for Smith's course were deeply rooted in his early childhood and environment. He had known what it meant to be poor; it had "a great and lasting influence on my later life." He had sought to elevate himself and others from this social disease by embracing the church. Over a long period of time his understanding of the church and his faith in it had undergone many changes. First and foremost, he had discarded "evangelism," the initial force which drove him across the bleak prairies in search of "souls to save." Under the impact of the social gospel he experienced a new vision: the "Kingdom of God" as a social order among men. The mission of the church as he now saw it should be to seek this objective. His concept of the person and message of Jesus Christ, had undergone a corresponding change. Christ was no longer a "wandering evangelist," dividing men into the "saved" and the "doomed," but a socialist concerned with social justice. The church had failed in the acid test

1. Ibid., p. 228.

of the Winnipeg Strike to accept the Christ of the social gospel. Instead of acting as an agency to eradicate the capitalistic order--the root of social injustice--it had defended the status quo. Ultimately, when the clear-cut choice was forced upon him, either to subvert his ideals or leave the pulpit, Smith chose the latter.

CHAPTER III

The Road to Communism 1919-1925

Between the years 1919 and 1925, Smith took part in a number of controversial activities. Immediately after his resignation from the Methodist church, he became pastor of the Brandon Peoples' Church. The church was, in essence, a labour forum where individuals who were dissatisfied with orthodox religion came to discuss the problems of the working man.¹ While at the Brandon Peoples' Church, Smith was also elected a labour candidate to the Manitoba legislature and participated in the rejuvenation of the Canadian Labour Party in Winnipeg, 1921. Smith remained with the Brandon Peoples' Church until 1923 when he was persuaded to move to Toronto to found a similar institution there. In Toronto he came into contact with the members of the newly formed Communist Party of Canada (Workers' Party). His attraction to the party over the next two years continued to grow until in 1925 he joined

1. The first of the Peoples' or Labour churches was established by William Ivens in June 1918. The sympathetic strikes and the labour unrest of 1919 led to their development in western urban centres between the years 1919 to 1924.

that nascent organization.

I

The Brandon Peoples' Church was established on 8 June 1919 when two hundred individuals met in the Starland Theatre to organize an agency which would "fearlessly propound the Gospel of Social Christianity."¹ A declaration of precepts was made and a basis of membership was broadly laid:

Any person shall be eligible...in the Peoples' Church who believes in the need for and the possibility of a better day for human society and constructive contribution of thought, time, influence and means toward that end. 2

A committee of twenty-one was elected to oversee the enterprise and Smith became its first minister.

The Peoples' Church gave Smith the opportunity to explain his interpretation of the Scriptures. He believed that theology and the church had misrepresented Christ. Jesus was not a "wandering evangelist...healing and trying to save souls from sin and hell;" on the contrary,

Jesus was a deeply convinced and well informed leader of the communist orders of thinkers and teachers that had been

1. The Peoples' Church, Brandon, printed pamphlet, (n.d.) Smith Papers, p.c.

2. Ibid.

extant for many ages in the Hebrew race and included such men as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, John the Baptist,...and the Early Church until it was perverted by the individualistic theologian and politician. 1

"From the fourth and fifth centuries down to the present," he argued, "the history of the church is a history of painful misdirection."

He attributed this to the "emerging dominance of the capitalistic" system [which] meant the capture not only of the schools and governments but also of the church to justify capitalistic exploitation."

Smith postulated that "if Jesus were in the world today, he would be a protestor, a revolutionist against...the church."²

For Smith, the real religion of Jesus entailed a vision of the working class emancipating themselves from the injustices of capitalism. In adapting this kind of millennial social hope, he embraced the theory of historical materialism as put forth by Karl Marx. Indeed, he acquired a copy of the Communist Manifesto, read the "marvellous document" and sought to convey its "revelations" to his congregation. On 6 July 1919, for example, he gave a sermon entitled "The Uprising of the Common People,"³ which clearly delineated his religious socialism. He argued that "Jesus had laid the foundation of society based on fraternity not on property....,"

1. A printed "Personal Letter on Divine Healing" by Smith to a friend in Vancouver, June 1923, Smith Papers, p.c., p. 5.

2. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

3. A printed sermon by Smith found in the Smith Papers, p.c.

but because of human selfishness this "fraternal standard" could not be implemented until it was crystalized into a determined course of action. "There must be found," he explained, "a class that will identify itself with this ideal not only because of its character but also because their own hope for bread and butter depend upon its victory." That class, for Smith, was the proletariat. Only the proletariat could eradicate capitalism and restructure Canadian society in the interests of all labourers. The overthrow of the capitalist system, then, was the objective because "it will end in the whole means of production being owned by the whole body of workers...." This in turn will provide a "permanent solution of the labour problem, put an end to insecurity, abolish poverty, dissolve antagonism, destroy social inferiority and stop physical and economic exploitation."¹

Among Smith's sermons between 1920-1922 were included such titles² as:

The Communism of Jesus
 Modern Religion versus Materialistic Socialism
 The Industrial Revolution
 Private Property and the Common Good
 Leon Trotsky and his Theories
 Poverty, the Economic Crime
 The Communism of Tolstoi and Why it Failed
 The Russian Revolution

During his years in the People's Church Smith continued to evolve

1. Ibid.

2. From "The Lecture Programme of the Brandon Peoples' Church 1920-1922," printed pamphlet, Smith Papers, p.c.

and refine a religio-political perspective of the development of human society. It became based firmly on an economic interpretation of human history. This blended well with the economic deprivation he experienced in his youth and accorded him a standard of right and wrong by which he could judge the actions of certain segments of society. For Smith, capitalism was evil because it led to economic exploitation while socialism was to be sanctified because it sought to remove this evil. In this regard, it was the "working people" who had the leading role to play and a major duty to perform.

While at the Brandon Peoples' Church, Smith made his first contact with communists. In 1919, a communist group was formed in Brandon centred around Gavin Broadhurst, Douglas Mitchell and H.M. Bartholomew. These men often came to the Peoples' Church to put forth their ideas and on at least one occasion Smith debated, with Bartholomew, the communist view point. At the time, Smith described himself as a "moderate socialist believing in evolutionary not revolutionary change."¹ It was a position he was to substantially alter in the next four years.

The Brandon Peoples' Church proved to be one of the most popular and best organized congregations in the west. The committee of twenty-one was an able and diverse group which included an art teacher, a city alderman, an accountant, a railway conductor, a trade unionist, a motor mechanic, a musician, and a trained social

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 168.

worker who worked with women and children.¹ Although the congregation, like most others, initially had financial difficulties, by mid-1921, its three hundred members were able to move to permanent quarters.² Indeed, even in its first year, signs of success were so evident that Smith's mind turned to the founding of other Peoples' Churches. In March and April 1920, he toured western Canada for that purpose and managed to establish shortlived churches in Victoria, Vancouver and Calgary.³

II

Meanwhile, the aftermath of the Winnipeg General Strike still loomed over the political scene in Manitoba. The intervention of the federal government and the collapse of the strike was bitterly resented by local labour leaders who now saw the necessity of political action to redress the grievance of state intervention. Moreover, eight leaders of the strike had been arrested and charged with seditious conspiracy. Included were William Ivens, founder of the Winnipeg Labour Church and Smith's close associate; George Armstrong, a well-known socialist and member of the strike committee;

1. Allen, The Social Passion, pp. 165-166 and Smith, All My Life, p. 62.

2. It was not until 1922 that attendance began to drop. See Allen, Ibid., p. 166.

3. Ibid., p. 164.

R.E. Bray, chairman of the returned soldiers committee; A.A. Heaps and John Queen, both socialist aldermen in Winnipeg's Ward Five; R.B. Russell, secretary of District Two of the Machinists' Union; R.J. John, also of the Machinists' Union and W.A. Pritchard, representative of the Vancouver Trade and Labour Council.¹ In the months following the strike, J.S. Woodsworth and other prominent labour leaders toured Manitoba and the west, organizing a defense committee for the arrested leaders and spreading the gospel of independent political action as the only possible cure for state intervention.²

That the general strike had powerful repercussions on the political scene was evident in the 1920 Manitoba provincial election when every labour candidate running outside the city of Winnipeg was returned.³ Smith was included among them. While on his tour to establish additional labour churches, Smith had received a telegram from a branch of the Dominion Labour Party (D.L.P.) in Brandon advising him that he had been nominated to contest the Brandon seat in the coming provincial election.⁴ Smith received the nomination at a joint committee meeting of the Brandon District

1. Also arrested were F.J. Dixon and J.S. Woodsworth but they were subsequently released. Dixon was acquitted while Woodsworth was never brought to trial.

2. Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930, (Kingston, 1968), p. 203.

3. Ibid., p. 207.

4. A.S.C.T., 3 Mar. 1945.

Association of the Grain-Growers' Association and the D.L.P. of Brandon and Souris, chaired by his former assistant at First Methodist, Reverend Salter. With some hesitation and doubting the possibility of winning, Smith let his name stand.

He campaigned hard, however, during the next five weeks. Basing his campaign on the need for the "socialization of industry and capital," Smith stressed "working class rights" which included the right to organize and the right to be recognized and dealt with as a union.¹ He attacked both the "Grits" and the "Tories" in the province as capitalistic parties who used the legislature only as a huge committee for "big interests," and berated the Liberal-Norris administration for its Fair Wage Board and Industrial Council which, according to Smith, was inadequate and dominated by "capitalists."² As well, he suggested an improvement in the Manitoba educational system whereby vocational training would be introduced in the secondary schools.³ When the votes were counted on 6 July, Smith, much to his surprise, discovered that he had won by a majority of 604 votes over his nearest rival S.E. Clement.

Smith's victory was only one of eleven among labour candidates

1. Smith Papers, p.c., newspaper clipping, the Brandon Daily Star, (date unknown).

2. Smith Papers, p.c., Black campaign note book, also see A.S.C.T., 3 Mar. 1945.

3. Smith Paper, p.c., Black campaign note book.

to take place at the "height of class feeling engendered by the general strike and post-war conditions." Included in labour's contingent to the legislature were William Ivens, John Queen, and George Armstrong--prominent figures in the Winnipeg General Strike. In addition, and representing at least some of the same views on reform, there were sixteen United Farmers' of Manitoba (U.F.M.) among the victors. When the sixteenth legislature of Manitoba opened in February 1921, the liberal Norris administration controlled twenty-one out of fifty-five seats in the House while the conservatives held eight. Farmer and labour members hoped to enjoy the balance of power.

In fact, little was accomplished. The sessions of 1921 and 1922 were singularly barren of reform legislation.² Part of the reason was the inability of Smith and others to form a farmer-labour coalition. The U.F.M. members were essentially conservative and suspicious of labour. At a meeting in October, they decided against entering the House as an opposition group at all and instead agreed to support the Norris administration.³ The failure of the "united front" with the farmers was compounded by a split within the ranks of labour itself in the House. The elected labour candidates were by no means a homogeneous group. Their considerable success in the 1920 provincial election had

1. Robin, Op.Cit., p. 208.

2. W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, p. 377.

3. Op.Cit., p. 210. For a detailed discussion of this see Robin, Chapter XIII, pp. 199-218.

been because of the general atmosphere of the time and their appeal as individuals. They were not bound to a common party platform and, indeed, were soon seen to be split into two opposing factions--the more radical entering an individual membership in the D.L.P. and the more conservative seeking support in trade union affiliation, including the A.F. of L. Indeed, so irreconcilable did the split become that a core group of the D.L.P.--F.J. Dixon, S.J. Farmer, W.D. Bailey and William Ivens--broke away from the party and formed the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.), maintaining that "straight labour internationalists were rapidly losing control of the party through the affiliation of international union locals."¹ On this question, Smith found himself irresolute. Uncertain where his own sympathies lay he could only hope, rather futilely, that the two sides could "patch up their differences and preserve labour unity."²

Nevertheless, in the House, Smith along with his colleagues, did have some input in the legislative session which followed the election. He promoted the "idea of group government as a temporary agent to be employed in advancing the cause of the people."³ In the most notable occurrence of the two-year government, he moved a resolution, seconded by another labour member, W.D. Bailey, that

1. Ibid., p. 211

2. Western Labour News, 21 Feb. 1921.

3. Smith Papers, p.c., printed pamphlet (n.d.) by Smith entitled "Group Government."

whereas the present representation in this legislature is a result of a recent expression of the will of the people of this province...be it resolved that in the opinion of this legislature the time has arrived when the Executive Council for the administration of the affairs of this province should be selected from and by the present representation in this legislature.... 1.

After a savage three week debate, Smith's proposal that each group in the legislature be given a seat in the cabinet in proportion to its numbers was defeated by the speaker's deciding vote. The liberals, supported by the conservatives were able to remain in office until 1923 when another election was called. In this contest, the liberals and conservatives joined forces to defeat candidates such as Smith and reduce labour-socialist representation to six.²

It was during his term in the legislature that Smith was a delegate to a convention held in Winnipeg in August 1921 to rejuvenate the Canadian Labour Party (C.L.P.). The C.L.P., originally established in 1906, had hitherto consisted of four loosely organized provincial sections in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta. Each section was a federation of small local labour parties, trade unions, labour councils and cooperative societies.³

1. Ibid.

2. Morton, Op.Cit., p. 379.

3. William Rodney, Soldiers of the International: A History of the Communist Party of Canada 1919-1929, (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1968), p. 97. Also see Smith, All My Life, p. 70.

The Winnipeg convention, held under the aegis of the Trades and Labour Congress, attempted to remake the C.L.P. into a nationwide labour party based on unions. John Bruce of the Plumbers' Union was elected president and James Simpson,¹ became secretary-treasurer. The new party committed itself to a restructuring of Canada's social and economic system. The preamble to its platform read:

We have in mind a complete change in our present economical and social system. In this we recognize our solidarity with the workers of the world. 2

Included in the party's programme were demands for a state unemployment insurance paid for by industry, the nationalization of all public utilities and sources of natural wealth and the institution of old age pensions.

At the convention, an attempt was made to unite the I.L.P. and the D.L.P. with the C.L.P. so that labour candidates could run under a single banner in the 1921 federal election. The hopes of Smith and other supporters of labour unity, however, were not realized. The D.L.P. voted to affiliate with the C.L.P. but the

1. Born in Lancashire, 1874, Simpson emigrated to Canada at the age of fourteen and worked for three years in a factory before becoming a typesetter's apprentice. Active in the trade union movement and a diligent worker in the Methodist church (for a time vice-president of the Moral and Social Reform Council) Simpson and Smith were to cross paths on numerous occasions in the future. A dedicated craft unionist, Simpson became a rabid anti-communist who was to be bitterly attacked by Smith.

2. Labour Organization in Canada, 1922, p. 218.

I.L.P. did not. The C.L.P. executive subsequently announced that it would forego action in the federal election.

III

Meanwhile, in another part of the country, an event took place which was to affect profoundly Smith's subsequent career. In June 1921, twenty-two men met secretly in Fred Farley's barn on the outskirts of Guelph, Ontario to form a distinctively Marxist Canadian organization. This conference like the one held in Winnipeg a few months earlier was held in the hopes of reducing the fragmentation of the Marxist elements in the socialist movement. There was a variety of organizations professing Marxist principles in Canada--the Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union, the Socialist Party of Canada, and the Social Democratic Party of Canada which had affiliated with it a large number of Finnish and Ukrainian organizations--but none was particularly strong. The Guelph meeting was an attempt at garnering the energies of these different socialist groups under a single banner.

Significantly, the conference was held under the auspices of the Communist Third International. The Comintern, as it was commonly called had been founded on 2 March 1919 in Moscow by Lenin and other Moscow appointed delegates.¹ It was the result

1. Colin G. Grimson, Communist Party of Canada 1922-1946, (M.A. McGill, 1966), p. 24.

of the disarray in the Second International because of the worker reaction to the outbreak of the First World War. Lenin had repudiated the Second International after the majority of its members reneged on their promises not to support the "imperialist war" and solidly stood behind their respective governments' war efforts. At the founding convention of the Third International, Lenin laid down his famous Twenty-One Conditions for affiliation which ensured that all member parties would be subjected to the strict dictates of the executive committee of the Comintern.

Shortly after its inaugural congress, the Comintern sought to establish communist parties throughout the world. To North America the Comintern sent three agents in 1920. Although they were primarily concerned with the Communist Party in the United States, one agent, who used the name Charles E. Scott, circulated extensively throughout Canada. His mission was to establish a Canadian communist organization. He was the main speaker at the Guelph conference; not only did he present the twenty-one conditions for affiliation to the Communist International but also produced \$3,000 to aid the group in the formation of the party.

At the conference, it was decided that the new party would function as an underground movement, maintaining a purely revolutionary character and not supporting other left wing organizations. This tactic corresponded with Article 12 of the Comintern's constitution which stated that conditions in Europe and North America were not favourable for the operation of a legal

communist party. To Canadian Marxists, this seemed an appropriate proceeding since the federal government was still pursuing "counter-revolutionary policies" which it had adopted during the Winnipeg General Strike. These included the amendment to Section 98 of the criminal code and the amendment to Section 41 of the Immigration Act. Moreover, the War Measures Act, which had been enacted during the war, was still in effect. It was felt that the government would regard the formation of an "open" Communist Party with a jaundiced eye and seek to suppress it.¹

Shortly after the Guelph meeting however, at the second congress of the Comintern (July-August, 1921) a different policy was adopted which significantly affected the future course of the embryonic communist movement in Canada. Comintern officials now declared that the revolutionary situation of 1919 had subsided and that measures had to be taken to entice the masses away from moderation in social reform. In order to do this, the Comintern required communists everywhere to end their boycott of the labour movement and the socialist parties and to play an active role in such organizations. It was hoped that by working within these organizations and advocating measures of immediate interest to the working class-- better wages, shorter working hours--the communists might win the confidence and support of the workers. The practical application of this policy meant that communists everywhere would have to join

1. See Tim Buck, Thirty Years 1922-52, (Progress Books, Toronto, 1952, p. 18.

with reformist leaders. The change in policy was actually a subtle attack on existing labour organizations for although the communists would join the unions and work diligently for their immediate objectives, at the same time, their primary aim would be to replace the "reformist leaders" by communists. Aptly named "boring from within," the tactic sought the conquest of all labour organizations by internal attack rather than by their destruction through competition.¹

This meant that the infant underground Communist Party of Canada (C.P.C.) had to surface as a legal party. This was accomplished at a convention in Toronto, 11-12 December 1921, where the Workers' Party of Canada (W.P.C.) was formed. The platform adopted testified to the nascent nature of the movement. Among its objectives was the permeation of the labour unions and the replacement of "the reactionary leadership by revolutionary leadership." The party would also participate in the political life of the country to "expose the sham of capitalism;" to lead in the fight for the immediate needs of the workers and to "work for the overthrow of capitalist dictatorship and the workers' republic."²

In accordance with Comintern policy, shortly after its formation, the W.P.C. executive approached the C.L.P. for affiliation. In February, 1922, John MacDonald, the W.P.C. general-secretary, attended

1. Grimson, Op.Cit., pp. 36-39.

2. Labour Organization in Canada 1924, p. 142.

the third annual convention of the Ontario section of the C.L.P. to establish the basis of affiliation. By the end of the year both the Ontario and Quebec sections of the C.L.P. had approved W.P.C. participation, provided the W.P.C. members abided by the C.L.P. constitution and paid their dues.¹ Smith had no direct connection with these events, although he would, between the years 1923-25, develop intimate relations with members of the Workers' Party.

IV

After his defeat in the 1923 Manitoba provincial election, Smith was offered a position as pastor of a Labour Church in Toronto. A "progressive" group in that city had decided to establish a Peoples' Church there and asked him to take charge. Smith was to "organize group classes for the study of sociology, history, economics under 'class' teachers and conduct public meetings...for the purpose...[of]...preaching...the Gospel of freedom and the better day for all mankind."² After some soul searching, Smith decided that Toronto offered "...a larger field of service"³ than Brandon and accepted the offer. Early in

1. William Rodney, Op.Cit., p. 97.

2. Smith: Papers, p.c., Provisional Committee to Smith, 6 Apr. 1923.

3. A.S.C.T., 12 Apr. 1945

August 1923, the Smith family, which by now had grown to eight,¹ packed their belongings and journeyed eastward to Toronto.

Smith was occupied in organizing the Toronto Peoples' Church for the next sixteen months. In September 1923, he secured the use of the old Spadina Hall at 450 Spadina Avenue to conduct his services. Then, in October, the executive committee of the Peoples' Church merged with the Forum Committee of the Labour Temple--a branch of the C.L.P. and Smith added the position of secretary of a Labour Forum to his other duties. These now included arranging "systematic studies in economics, sociology, political geography, english grammar and public speaking for over three hundred pupils young and old."² It was during such classes that the central issue invariably became "Social-Reformism" versus "Communism." He soon made the acquaintance of Tim Buck, John Macdonald, Florence Custance and other members of the C.P.C.³

Among the Canadian Marxists; Smith found that sense of purpose which seemed to be lacking in the Methodist church and in other socialist parties. The individuals Smith encountered within the

1. Smith's entourage to Toronto included five children, David, Jean, Arthur Eben (who died in 1929 in his sixteenth year), Stewart, and Cora, and three adults, his sister Alvina, his wife, and himself. His other daughter Mercy had married and resided in Moose Jaw while his eldest son, Douglas, settled in Humbolt, Saskatchewan, earning a living as a teller at the Bank of Commerce.

2. A.S.C.T., 21 Apr. 1945.

3. In 1923 the W.P.C. changed its name to the C.P.C.

organization appeared "intelligent, well-read and most importantly dedicated."¹ They believed fervently that in Marxist communism they had found the one single, total all-inclusive explanation for the ultimate questions--questions as to the cause of things, the sources of history and the destiny of mankind. Smith had always had difficulty with these matters. He had been very uncertain in his response to the war and to the dismissals at Wesley. His confidence in the Methodist church had been challenged by the resignation of Woodsworth and the reaction of his own congregation and of his colleagues to his support for the Winnipeg General Strike and he had been forced into leaving it. He retained, however, his original evangelical zeal to find the "truth,"--and his rather naive belief that it could be found. In the societarian, cooperative, guarantistic elements of communism he saw "the firm purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level of life, and to abolish the evil exploitation of one man by another for personal gain."² This had been and would remain his own "firm purpose" throughout his career. He was not particularly well read, or indeed, much interested in the philosophical foundations of communism. Hegel and Feuerbach--the progenitors of Karl Marx--were alien to him. The fundamentals he learned from the socialist critique of capitalism, the Communist Manifesto and scattered

1. Smith Papers, p. c., black note book

2. Ibid.

passages from Lenin and Trotsky. Nevertheless, his discussions with the Marxists opened a new vision of society for him. "In communism," he stated, "I found the basic movement which would steadily grow into the agency by which the workers, and all mankind, would be released from economic and political bondage, from ignorance and disease--the broad movement which would eventually bring forth the true nature and spirit of man in a classless society of firm-conscious brotherhood over all the earth."¹

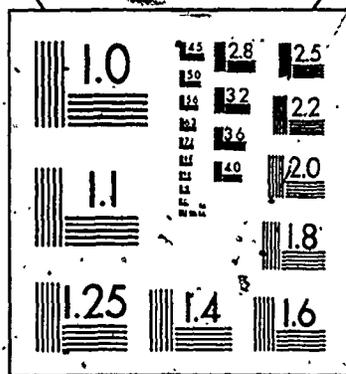
Smith's attraction to Marxist communism was further enhanced by the activities of his son Stewart. Moving with his parents to Toronto, Stewart attended Humber College for a short time and then found work in a factory. A rebel, like his father, he joined the Young Workers' League (Y.W.L.), a communist youth organization, and in 1924 became the Y.W.L. national secretary. By the end of the year his endeavours ranged from editing the Young Worker to speaking at forum meetings and rallies on behalf of the C.P.C. Father and son had long discussions on the pros and cons of communism and Stewart's arguments and enthusiasm helped to sway his father toward the communist position.²

Another individual who had a measurable affect on Smith's movement to acceptance of communism was Tim Buck, the C.P.C.'s

1. Ibid.

2. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

2



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Industrial director. A fiery speaker, twenty years younger than Smith, he epitomized to Smith the "wise, intelligent leader of the left-wing labour movement."¹ Like Smith, Buck came from a proletarian background; born at Beccles, Suffolk on 6 January 1891, one of eight children, at the age of twelve he was forced to work in a machine shop to aid his parents financially. Becoming an engineering apprentice, at the age of fifteen he joined the Amalgamated Society of Engineers where he came into contact with trade union theory and practice. He emigrated to Canada in 1910, finding employment in Toronto as a machinist and at the same time attending night classes and becoming active in trade union circles. At the end of the First World War he joined the Communist Party of America and in 1921 became a district organizer for the underground C.P.C. A hard-working, amiable personality, Buck was instantly liked by Smith. The two men had long and absorbing discussions on evolution versus revolution and the need for a disciplined Communist Party in Canada.

Smith's attraction to communism, however, jeopardized his position as secretary of the Labour Forum. In the fall of 1924, he was forced to resign because "the executive committee felt that I was too much disposed to inculcate communist teachings into my lectures...they alleged that I was trying to make communists out of them."² The charge arose because he had invited several communists

1. Smith Papers, p.c., black note book.
2. A.S.C.T., 12 May 1945.

to participate in summer school sessions conducted by the Labour Forum. And indeed Smith had moved closer to the communist camp. As an elected delegate to the fifth annual convention of the Ontario section of the C.L.P., 22 March 1924, he endorsed John MacDonald's candidacy for vice-president of the Ontario section of the C.L.P. and supported the C.P.C. resolution demanding Canadian recognition of the Soviet Union.¹

By the end of 1924, Smith was at another crossroads in life. He was now fifty-three years old, an outcast from his profession, and living on the fringes of society. Was he to cast his lot with the communists or could he go back to the church and work within it? Old associates endeavoured to persuade Smith to accept this latter alternative. James Simpson, the Reverend Ben Spence and Dr. T.A. Moore, head of the Department of Evangelism and Social Service, were attempting to form a Sociological Fellowship to "promote study for the better understanding of human society."² They asked Smith to give a lecture tour to church groups on its behalf.

To Smith, however, the certitudes and dogmatism of the communists had become more appealing. In January 1925, in a small upstairs room on 8 Gerrard Street, William Moriarty, communist organizer for the Toronto district, accepted the application of

1. Smith Papers, p.c. Smith to an unidentified comrade, 6 Apr. 1924.

2. Smith Papers, p.c., Introductory Statement of the Sociological Fellowship of Canada.

Smith and his wife for admission into the C.P.C. Smith later explained:

While still in the church I had come to see that the transfer of industrial production from the basis of profit and self interest to the basis of service and use was the essential step to human Brotherhood. In the general strike I learned that this would not be accomplished by a great captain and a band of angels but by the party of workers. I had the conception of a gradual achievement of reform after reform, step after step, until a new social order would emerge....

Now experience and study were teaching me that revolution was part of evolution.... The Russian Revolution was victorious.... Elsewhere the social-democratic parties of labour had produced retreat and defeat.... in the strikes and in the clash of opinion in the Canadian Labour Party. I was drawing near to the conclusion that the communist position was...what was needed. 1

For Smith, communism was the ultimate innovation of human society. This conclusion was based on his belief that social structures came out of human experience, that human experience was a continuous and expanding process ever deepening in intelligence and understanding. From this point of view, communism was not an accident arising out of the whim or caprice of somebody or some principle but a "scientific truth," the end-product of the various stages of human development. Ultimately, for Smith, communism entailed moral and material progress; it reinforced his personal need to understand and explain the basis of his early

1. Smith, All My Life, p: 75.

environment and the world he lived in.

At the same time he became disillusioned with much of the rest of the Canadian socialist movement and, in particular, came to regard trade union officials as "a smug, self-seeking group unfit and unworthy to lead."¹ The C.P.C. seemed to afford him the best means to carry on in an organized manner a tête-à-tête struggle against capitalism.

1. Ibid., pp. 73-74.

CHAPTER IV

Smith, The Communist Party of Canada, and the Origins of the Canadian Labour Defense League, 1925-1929

The year 1925 marked the beginning of Smith's career as a party functionary. In that year he was appointed president of the communist-sponsored Unemployed Association of Canada (U.A.C.), Toronto branch, participated in the C.P.C.'s attempt to infiltrate and control the C.L.P., toured Canada on behalf of the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.) and took an active part in the formation of the Canadian Labour Defense League (C.L.D.L.)--the party's most successful "front" organization.

I

Immediately upon joining the C.P.C., Smith plunged into local organizational work for the party, becoming secretary of the Toronto City Committee of the party, conducting "Sunday School" classes to develop the cultural life of the children in our [communist]

movement,"¹ and working vigorously to promote the party inspired Unemployed Association of Canada (Toronto Branch). As secretary of the Toronto City Committee of District Three his function was to aid in organizing party units in defined areas of the city.² According to Smith, there were about forty members in the city committee and they went about their tasks with "diligence and enthusiasm."³ He stated:

I took up to the best of my ability active work...as a Toronto organizer for the Communist Party....We carried through the reorganization of the party [in Toronto]. The branches were placed on the basis of a given area of the city, rather than on the previous basis of various nationalities. 4

Throughout 1925 and 1926, Smith and his wife Maude contributed also to the cultural life of the party. Every Sunday in the old Alhambra Hall on Spadina Avenue the Smiths taught almost one hundred children "the meaning of socialism."⁵ Smith was quite proud of these classes which lasted throughout the fall and winter of 1925-1926. Not only did he endeavour to teach these "young pioneers" about Lenin and Marx but he also organized children's concerts and singing lessons which included such songs as the Red

1. A.S.C.T., 6 Oct. 1945.

2. Smith Papers, p.c., black note book.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. A.S.C.T., 6 Oct. 1945.

Flag, Liberty, We Are the Builders, The Internationale and The Marseillaise. He described the Sunday School curriculum thus:

Under the executive committee, there were prepared over forty lessons dealing with the prime factors in human living: Food, Clothing, Shelter and Heat. We taught the children the simple truths about those things....

Then arose the question about how we got our food, clothing and shelter-- the simple story of the everyday struggle for a living, which has to be taken up by the father and the mother of every child.... We told them about the unemployed. We told them about the rich, who never lost a meal and who were never employed....

Through these lessons, Smith hoped to "enlighten them so when they grow to manhood and womanhood they would become active in the communist movement."²

Operating a communist Sunday school was not without its perils. The Toronto Womens' Council, for example, sent observers to some of the classes and accused Smith of attempting "to poison the minds of little innocent and helpless children."³ They called, without success, for the school to be formally closed and further classes forbidden.

At the same time, Smith was occupied by other activities. In the early 1920s Canada was still suffering from a post-war recession; inflation had not been curbed while unemployment remained at a high

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

level. - This was especially true of the urban areas. The Worker, for example, editorialized in 1924 that:

In the city of Toronto there are at the present time in the neighbourhood of 5,000 unemployed men tramping through the streets looking for jobs that do not exist. The labour market is gutted, periodical depression is effecting thousands of victims. 1

Under these conditions it was a "fallacy to expect a revolution because of the emptiness of stomachs."² It was necessary first to organize and educate the unemployed. This the C.P.C. attempted to do by creating the Unemployed Association of Canada, a nationwide unemployed movement which adopted the slogan--"work or full maintenance."³ It was designed to appeal to the unemployed and those with insecure jobs, and branches were established in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, and Vancouver.⁴ In January 1925, Smith was appointed chief executive officer of the U.A.C., Toronto branch. He proved to be an able organizer. Within two months over three thousand members were enrolled at headquarters in the Labour Temple on Church Street.⁵ The association held its weekly

1. The Worker, 26 Jan. 1924.

2. Ibid., 12 Jan. 1924.

3. Smith Papers, p.c., The Constitution of the Unemployed Association of Canada.

4. Smith to J.S. Woodsworth, M.P., 8 Feb. 1925; Smith to W. Sinclair, M.L.A., leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, 26 Feb. 1925. Smith Papers, p.c.

5. Smith, All My Life, p. 78.

meetings on Wednesday mornings, cramming as many as a thousand men into the small Labour Temple. Following the sessions, Smith appeared before the mayor and board of control to submit complaints, cases of eviction or sickness and to plead for aid on behalf of destitute men.¹ In this way, the U.A.C. drew attention to the problem of unemployment in the city. It scrutinized House of Industry provisions, suggested possible public works programmes and investigated relief employment dismissals.² Thomas Foster, the mayor of Toronto, responded to the U.A.C.'s representations and petitions by including Smith in an eight-man delegation to Ottawa to request a \$100,000 grant from the federal government to combat unemployment in Toronto. Prime Minister King and his cabinet, however, proved an unsympathetic audience. King quoted from the British North America Act that such a grant was not within the Dominion government's jurisdiction. Smith's plea for the establishment of a system of unemployment insurance was equally of no avail.³ Toronto remained solely responsible for its jobless.

For a number of reasons the Toronto branch of the U.A.C. curtailed its activities in April 1925. Frequent disorderly conduct marred the association meetings as "comrades persist in coming...

1. Ibid.

2. Smith to Mayor Foster, 22 Jan. 1925, Also Smith to Foster and the Board of Control, 18 Feb. 1925, Smith Papers, p.c.

3. Presentation to the Rt.Hon. McKenzie King and members of the cabinet, 31 Jan. 1925, Smith Papers, p.c.

drunk as Lords...abusing everybody and everything."¹ Moreover, the Toronto Police Commission prevented Smith from organizing parades, demonstrations and collections--all of which were vital for effective propaganda work. The U.A.C. was also in financial difficulty. The monthly membership dues of ten cents were not sufficient to cover expenses and were not received regularly.

Along with local activities, Smith turned his attention toward provincial and federal party activities. He participated in the C.P.C.'s two highest priorities--"the building up of the C.L.P. and the crystalization of the left wing in the trade union movement."² The first priority involved transforming the C.L.P. into a militant federal party "...which would link up the poor farmers with industrial workers in a common front against capital."³ In pursuit of this goal, at the C.L.P. Ontario section's sixth annual convention in Toronto, April 1925, Smith was nominated to oppose the incumbent president Harold Kerwin. Much to his surprise, he defeated Kerwin by two votes.⁴ His associate, John MacDonald, was re-elected vice-president and four of the five delegates selected for the C.L.P.'s national convention were also communists. It was an impressive victory for the party's "united front" policy. The

1. Smith to unidentified comrade, 27 Jan. 1925, Smith Papers, p.c.

2. Labour Organization in Canada 1924, p. 147.

3. Ibid., p. 148.

4. Labour News, 30 Apr. 1925.

C.P.C. had a secure hold on the Ontario section of the C.L.P. which represented ten thousand workers from trade unions and local labour parties.

Smith next endeavoured to strengthen the C.L.P. as a national party. In October he ran as one of sixteen labour candidates in the federal election. Like most of his comrades he was unsuccessful.¹ Only two labour candidates were elected--J.S. Woodsworth and A.A. Heaps--and they were members of the Independent Labour Party of Manitoba which was anti-communist and hostile to the C.L.P. Smith sought a seat again in the 1926 federal election but was again defeated.²

Along with the attempts to elect labour candidates, Smith with his communist colleagues in the C.L.P., explored the possibility of turning the C.L.P. into a national "Farmer-Labour Party." It was a policy which the Comintern had urged the communists to adopt as a means of extending their influence among the farmers. As early as 1923, Charles Edward Scott, the Comintern's overseer in the C.P.C., had informed the readers of The Worker that: "The clarion call of the Communist International--a Farmer-Labour Government, should be the starting point of the onward move and"

1. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1926, p. 268. Smith ran in the Port Arthur-Thunderbay Riding. The results were as follows: Longworthy, Conservative--3,277; Garrick, Independent Conservative--2,424; Matthews, Liberal--2,414; Smith, Labour--1,363.

2. Ibid., 1927, p. 186. Smith increased his vote by 19.

attack of all the oppressed and exploited in Canada."¹ In July 1925, Smith was in Saskatchewan and attended a convention of the Farmers' Political Association of Saskatchewan. He described his efforts:

My purpose was to get established a new farmer-labour party....I served on their committee to revise the constitution... [to]...allow affiliation from labour groups. 2

A union of farmers and industrial workers, however, was for the time being at least doomed to failure. It would be with much disgust that Smith would later note that "this association (Farmers' Political Association of Saskatchewan) was diverted to serve as the basis of the C.C.F."³

Meanwhile, opposition to the communists was developing rapidly within the C.L.P. Many members objected to the revolutionary character of C.P.C. resolutions, believing that it created a spirit of distrust among the workers.⁴ On 28 November 1925, the Quebec section of the C.L.P. expelled the C.P.C. from its ranks. A similar move was initiated by James Simpson in the Ontario section. At the section's annual convention held in London, 1 April 1926, a resolution providing for the cancellation of C.P.C. affiliation

1. Ivan Avakumovic, "The Communist Party of Canada and the Prairie Farmer," cited in Western Perspectives, I (Toronto, 1973), p. 79.

2. Smith Papers, p.c., black note book.

3. Smith, All My Life, p. 83.

4. Labour Organization in Canada, 1924, p. 144.

was put forward. It was defeated and Smith was re-elected president.¹ By the spring of 1927, however, Smith and his colleagues were faced with open revolt. Non-communist members of the C.L.P. led by James Simpson formed the nucleus of a new anti-communist labour party--the Independent Labour Party of Ontario--at a convention in Hamilton on 15-16 April. The objective of the new party was to transform the capitalist system into a socialist commonwealth through constitutional rather than revolutionary means.² In retaliation for this "sabotage," the Toronto Central Council of the C.L.P. dominated by C.P.C. members, withdrew the party's support for Simpson's nomination for controller in the coming Toronto municipal election.³ Simpson, who had been the secretary-treasurer of both the Dominion executive of the C.L.P. and its Ontario section since its inception resigned, taking with him many non-communist members and effectively isolating the C.P.C. By 1929, the C.L.P. would be defunct. Many sections throughout the country would have been dissolved while the Ontario and the Nova Scotia sections would have ceased to meet.⁴ The C.P.C.'s attempt to control the C.L.P. destroyed it.

Meanwhile, other events were occurring at the international

1. The Canadian Labour Advocate, 15 Apr. 1926.

2. Op.Cit., 1928, p. 175.

3. Ibid., 1929, p. 20.

4. Ibid.

level which nullified the tactics of "boring from within" and limited the success of the C.P.C. in the latter half of the 1920s because, as an affiliate of the Comintern, the C.P.C. was required to follow its dictates. At the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, which assembled in Moscow 17 July to 1 September 1928, Comintern spokesmen postulated the theory that the expansion of capitalism which had been proceeding apace since 1921, was to lead inevitably to the most severe capitalist crisis ever witnessed and that a fight against "bourgeois" labour parties should be initiated immediately. This emphasis on a struggle against more moderate socialists stemmed, in part, from Stalin's desire to mute the criticism of those Soviet communists who complained about the Soviet leader's lack of revolutionary zeal.¹ Until 1929, the Canadian party continued to adhere faithfully to tactics of "boring from within" and "united front" activities with other labour parties. Then, however, the new directives of the Comintern arrived ordering the party to become more revolutionary, to participate directly in election campaigns and to build up a separate left-wing trade union movement.

The change in Comintern policy caused ideological quarrels within the C.P.C. which led to the expulsion of some of its leading members. The first to be expelled was Maurice Spector, chairman of

1. Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada: A History, (Toronto, 1975), p. 54. For a more detailed account on the relations of the C.P.C. with the Comintern see Rodney, Op.Cit., chapters 15 and 16.

the party. He had attended the Comintern's Sixth World Congress and had witnessed the struggle for power between Stalin and Trotsky. Greatly impressed by Trotsky's critique which intimated that it was impossible to build socialism in one country, he endeavoured to disseminate Trotsky's views in Canada. For his efforts, Spector was ejected from the C.P.C. in November 1929. The same fate befell John MacDonald, general-secretary of the party and former vice-president of the Ontario section of the C.L.P. He was expelled because he did not accept the Comintern's thesis of an eminent capitalist crisis in North America. MacDonald's expulsion was initiated by Stewart Smith, Albert Smith's son, who had just returned from Moscow where he had been the first Canadian student to attend the Lenin School (1926-1928), and by Tim Buck, who had been a representative of the C.P.C. at the Sixth Comintern Congress. They denounced MacDonald for refusing to conform to Comintern directives. By November 1930, the Smith-Buck faction had triumphed and MacDonald left the party.

Smith supported his son and Buck in their manoeuvres to oust "Trotskyite" and "right wing-deviationists" from within the C.P.C.

In his autobiography he wrote:

The struggle against Trotskyism and MacDonald's right wing policies dominated the district and national conventions of the party. I remember well the meetings of the Toronto district convention to which I was elected a delegate. MacDonald delivered a lengthy speech in which he made a bitter attack upon Stewart. He also attacked Maude and me. He questioned the validity of my membership in the party.

I felt compelled to speak immediately after he sat down. I was followed by Tim. Stewart was absent in Montreal. The convention continued the following week with every delegate in place. Having returned from Montreal, Stewart was given an opportunity to reply. He characterized MacDonald's attack upon himself as an attempt to divert attention from the main issue of his right-wing ideas to non-political, personal abuse. A prolonged discussion ensued. MacDonald withdrew his remarks and, as a matter of fact, apologized to myself and Maude for what he had said. 1

For Smith the schism within the party was a time of "high feeling" and "much distress of the mind," for it threatened to divide and possibly destroy the party. He was relieved, therefore, when in 1930 all was over with MacDonald expelled and Tim Buck securely in place in the party leadership.

II

Concomitant with its activities within the C.L.P., the C.P.C. was also bring into the Canadian trade union movement through the Trade Union Educational League. The League began to function as a derivative of its American counterpart early in February 1922, with Tim Buck, the C.P.C.'s industrial organizer, acting as general secretary. The League's aim was to work within the existing trade unions to develop them into "cohesive, militant and powerful".

1. Smith, All My Life, pp. 95-96.

organizations."¹ By 1925, T.U.E.L. was beginning to exert some influence among the coal-miners of Alberta and Nova Scotia. In Alberta, T.U.E.L.'s western section had established a core group of agitators in the Drumheller-Wayne coalfields while in Cape Breton, J.B. McLachlan, president and D. Livingstone, secretary-treasurer of District Twenty-Six of the United Mine Workers' of America (U.M.W.A.), were active members of the C.P.C.

The communists totally disrupted District Eighteen of the U.M.W.A. in Drumheller by advocating secession from the union when the union's district executive negotiated an agreement with the Red Deer Valley Coal Operators' Association providing for a wage reduction of fifteen per cent without submitting it to the rank and file.² Their agitation led to the creation of a rival union, the Mine Workers' Union of Canada (M.W.U.C.). When coal operators refused to negotiate with the M.W.U.C., the union proceeded to picket the mines and prevent U.M.W.A. members from resuming work. Disturbances continued intermittently throughout the summer of 1925 until provincial police arrested a considerable number of the picketers.³ Miners in Cape Breton, meanwhile, went on strike when the British Empire Steel Corporation (B.E.S.C.O.) insisted on a ten per cent wage cut and terminated the miners' credit

1. Labour Organization in Canada 1924, p. 152.

2. Ibid., 1925, p. 180.

3. Ibid., p. 181.

at company stores.¹

Smith played the part of agent provocateur for the C.P.C. in both of these events. He toured Cape Breton, conferred with J.B. McLachlan and held a number of mass meetings in Glace Bay, Reserve, and Dominion, urging the miners not to submit to B.E.S.C.O. On 1 July, he travelled west and in addition to attending the meeting of the Farmers' Political Association of Saskatchewan he spoke on several occasions in support of both groups of miners. Before an audience of fifteen hundred in Victoria Park, Saskatoon, for example, he demanded the withdrawal of the troops that had been sent to Cape Breton by the federal government, ostensibly to protect company property. On 19 July, in Calgary, he pleaded for federal aid to the Drumheller miners and their families.² The Cape Breton and the Drumheller affairs, like the Winnipeg General Strike, represented to Smith "a full fledged political struggle, which had concern for every citizen of Canada."³

In Drumheller the U.M.W.C. had found itself in desperate financial circumstances by August 1925. Moreover, seventy-five of its members had been arrested on charges ranging from "watching" and "besetting" to assault. As a result of this

1. Stuart Marshall Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-1966, (Ottawa, 1968), p. 201.

2. Smith, All My Life, p. 82.

3. A.S.C.T., 28 Apr. 1945.

situation, Tim Buck, the C.P.C.'s industrial organizer and general-secretary of T.U.E.L., organized a meeting in September 1925 in Toronto to establish a "non-partisan" organization which would initiate a broad campaign for funds to help pay lawyers' fees, and fines incurred, and to provide relief for families of imprisoned miners.¹

The meeting was attended by Jack Young, president of the Toronto District Trade and Labour Council, J.L. Counsell, a wealthy Hamilton lawyer, James Simpson, still secretary-treasurer of the C.L.P., Samuel Lawrence, Hamilton alderman and trade unionist, and Tim Buck, Florence Custance, A.E. Smith, Annie Buller, Malcolm Bruce, and Robert Shoesmith--all representing the C.P.C. Although called for the immediate purpose of aiding the Drumheller miners, it was resolved that a permanent organization be established which would "unite all forces willing to cooperate in the work of labour defense...that will stand as an ever willing and ever ready champion...of the industrial and agricultural workers, regardless of their political or industrial affiliations...who were persecuted on account of their activity in the struggle for class interests of the industrial and agricultural workers."² The new organization was officially entitled the Canadian Labour Defense League (C.L.D.L.). A provisional

1. Smith Papers, p.c., also Tim Buck, Our Fight for Canada, (Progress Books, Toronto, 1959), p. 42.

2. Labour Organization in Canada, 1925, p. 208.

executive committee was appointed. It consisted of Florence Custance, general-secretary, John Young, president, J.L. Counsell, vice-president and Samuel Lawrence, controller. Smith became the League's chief organizer and immediately set out on a promotional tour throughout western Canada.

The individuals who formed the C.L.D.L. were not all communists but they did share the belief that at the heart of the capitalist system of production lay the principle of exploitation from which flowed the distortions that existed in society. This philosophy was evident in the appeal they sent to influential labour bodies throughout the country on 8 October 1925:

From time to time organized labour in Canada is stirred because of unwarranted persecution and imprisonment of workers who take active part in the struggles of the working class against master class oppression. The period from 1918-1925 alone provides many such cases....

To cope with each case of persecution as it arose local defense committees sprang up. As soon as the cases left the public eye interest died down, and the defense committee died with it. But hardship and victimization remained for many after the fight and with no one to care for the victims. Such a list of victims of working class struggle in so short a period compels serious attention, especially as the struggle of the classes shows signs of becoming more acute. In Europe alone tens of thousands of workers are languishing in prisons because they struggled against capitalist oppression and intolerable conditions in life.

The intensity of the modern struggle is shown well in the cases of the miners of Nova Scotia and Alberta. Local defense committees...do not fit the needs at this time. The Canadian Labour Defense League

has been organized to fit this need....

Canadian workers who take part in the struggle for a decent living existence and against other forms of master class oppression must be defended and protected when prosecuted by the courts of Canada. This phase of working class cooperation and unity has been only a matter of chance up to date. The Canadian Labour Defense League is here to make its work a part of labour's cause. It is here to give legal, financial and moral aid to the victims of the struggle. This security will strengthen the morale of the workers in their struggle. 1

- The trades and labour councils for the most part turned a cold shoulder on the appeal.

The idea of a Canadian labour defense agency was derived from the International Red Aid (I.R.A.), organized in 1922 by the "Society of Former Political Exiles and Prisoners" in Moscow. The object of the I.R.A. was to rally "toilers throughout the world" to struggle against "capitalist class injustice" and to supply relief aid to "class-war" prisoners and their families.²

- Although the Comintern had suggested such a Canadian agency to the C.P.C. as early as 1924, the C.P.C.'s official organ, The Worker, did not begin to editorialize on the need for a permanent labour defense league which could provide legal aid

1. Public Archives of Ontario (P.A.O.) Attorney-General of Ontario, Communist Party of Canada, Box 11, Envelope 11. (Hereafter cited as P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B and E.

2. Beckie Buhay and A.E. Smith, The World Defense Congress--Its Lessons for Canadian Workers and Farmers, published by the C.L.D.L., 1933, p. 3.

to those arrested and imprisoned because of their militant activities until the Drumheller strike of 1925.¹ By this time, the C.P.C. also had an American example to follow, the American Communist Party having founded in late June the International Labour Defense.²

The Canadian League's first patrons were the arrested Drumheller miners. Smith, as the League's chief organizer, toured western Canada and British Columbia in 1925 and 1926 to collect funds for the miners. A total of \$4,000 was raised. The C.L.D.L. also organized protest campaigns against the sentences imposed on those involved in the strike, especially "Kid" Burns³ and Cecil Terris, two agitators, who were sentenced three years, four months and three years, six months respectively, for assault during the disturbance. Both men were denied trial by jury on the ground that offences such as assault could, at the discretion of the judge, be tried without a jury according to the Northwest Territories Act of 1875 and the revised statutes of Canada 1886 (sec.66). The C.L.D.L. provisional committee argued that this law was antiquated since Saskatchewan had repealed these provisions of the Act in 1907. Its position was that Alberta kept the law in the statute books because

1. See, for example, The Worker, 8 Aug. 1925.

2. Theodore Draper, American Communism and the Soviet Union: The Formative Period, (New York, 1960), pp. 180-181.

3. His real name was Lewis Macdonald.

Alberta, in addition to being a prairie province, has also rich mineral deposits. The mining industry is but in its infancy. The possibilities for development are always before the eyes of the investor and operator. This Act...fits very conveniently the needs of the mine operators in their newly developing industry. Its retention, without a doubt, has been for anti-labour purposes. We are forced to this conclusion since Saskatchewan, a strictly farming province, does not require the provision of the Act either for protection or privilege. 1

The campaign failed to achieve its objective. Nine miners were given heavy sentences ranging from one to three years; others were given lighter sentences and fined. As a result of the strike over three hundred miners were blacklisted by the operators.

Nevertheless, Smith believed that the establishment of the C.L.D.L. was an important step in "providing defense and material help to Canadian workers who had been arrested for activity in the labour movement."² He would continue to make it a central feature of his communist endeavours for many years to come.

III

The C.L.D.L. existed in the form of a provisional committee until 29-30 October 1927, when the first national convention was held in Toronto. Forty-five organizations were represented,

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1. Canadian Labour Advocate, 26 Feb. 1926.
 2. Smith Papers, p.c.

including twenty-seven local branches of the C.L.D.L., three women's labour leagues, five trade and labour councils and ten other bodies. Florence Custance¹ reported that in two years, fifty-two branches identified with the League accounting for three thousand individual paying members.² The convention officially set forth the aims of the C.L.D.L. as follows:³

1. To provide legal defense for all workers prosecuted for expressions of opinion or for working class activity.
2. To provide material and moral support for all working class prisoners.
3. To provide material support for the families and dependents of such prisoners.
4. To initiate and centralize special campaigns for the defense and release of working class victims of the courts in their struggle for the betterment of their conditions.
5. To work for the repeal of all anti-working class laws.
6. To defend foreign-born workers against persecution and unwarranted deportation.
7. To collect material and give publicity to facts regarding the persecution of

1. Custance was born on 3 December 1881 at Dartford, Kent, England. She came to Canada shortly before the First World War. Together with Spector, Bell and Moriarty she became one of the leading spirits in forming the Plebs League and the Ontario Labour College, two organizations which preceded and accelerated the rise of the C.P.C. in Canada. She attended the convention held in Guelph and in 1921 became secretary of the Canadian Friends of the Soviet Union--a communist front organization. A diligent party worker, she was appointed general-secretary of the C.L.D.L. upon its inception. (Rodney, Op.Cit., pp. 164-165.)

2. Labour Organization in Canada 1927, p. 237.
3. Ibid., pp. 239-240.

workers and to expose secret anti-labour activities, labour spy systems, etc.

8. To organize campaigns of protest against the white terror in other capitalist countries and to give moral and financial aid wherever possible to the victims of such terror.

The organization, membership, administration, and finances were thoroughly discussed and laid down in the articles of the C.L.D.L. constitution.¹

The convention also decided to issue a monthly bulletin giving information regarding labour activity at home and abroad; to sanction the appointment of a field secretary and an organizer; to maintain a clear non-partisan attitude in regard to political activity or affiliations; and to maintain contact with similar organizations abroad.² A resolution was also adopted which stated that in various countries the efforts of the workers to secure their emancipation are being met with prison, torture and even death and that the League endeavour to rouse public opinion against such acts by disclosing the true state of affairs. Finally, the matter of paying salaries to the general-secretary, the field secretary and organizer was referred to the executive committee after the convention had approved of the principle.³

1. See Appendix I.

2. Labour Organization in Canada 1927, p. 240. Indeed, the C.L.D.L. was the Canadian section of the I.R.A.

3. The general-secretary of the C.L.D.L. ultimately received \$500 per year while other "full-time" field secretaries received \$320 per year. Report of the First Representative Convention of the C.L.D.L., (Toronto, 14-17 July, 1933).

The infrastructure of the C.L.D.L. resembled that of the C.P.C. The basic unit was the branch, of not less than five members. Above this was the Local Central Committee (L.C.C.) formed when there were two or more branches in a city. The main officer of the L.C.C. was the secretary. This position was filled only with the approval of the National Executive Committee (N.E.C.). In 1930, the constitution was revised to include District Central Councils (D.C.C.) formed in areas of industrialization. Members of a D.C.C. were elected by the district convention, which consisted of delegates from the L.C.C. (later called the Local Delegate Council). A district organizer from the N.E.C. was assigned to each D.C.C.

The National Executive Committee was the supreme body of the C.L.D.L. It was elected at the national convention by delegates selected from the district conventions and consisted of members who performed the daily business of the League. The general-secretary--the chief officer--was elected by the N.E.C. from among its own members. The N.E.C. was represented on all District Central Councils and all D.C.C. decisions had to be approved by it. Provisions were made for separate organizations of branches for immigrants who knew little or no English. The Finns and the Ukrainians were the largest of these groups.

The executive of the C.L.D.L. was controlled by communists

from the time of the 1927 convention to its dissolution thirteen years later. Although its first committee was decorated by such a respected non-communist as James Simpson,¹ the operation of the League was tightly held by Florence Custance, Smith, and Beckie Buhay,² a dedicated Marxist who joined the N.E.C. in 1929.

From its first days until January 1929, the national office of the C.L.D.L. was situated in an upstairs room in the home of Florence Custance. Early in January she became seriously ill and Smith was appointed acting general-secretary by the N.E.C. All the appurtenances of the office were moved to his home--521 Runnymede

1. Although James Simpson was on the executive committee when the C.L.D.L. was formed in 1925; by 1927 his name is not on any C.L.D.L. documents. It is difficult to ascertain precisely when and why Simpson left the League since the Simpson Papers in the Baldwin Room of the Toronto Public Library do not contain any references to the C.L.D.L. However, it can be assumed that it was because of the dominance of the communist element in the C.L.D.L.

2. Buhay was born 11 February 1896 in London, England. She came to Canada in 1912 and was active in socialist circles during the First World War. Her interest and activity increased while she was at the Rand School of Social Sciences in New York in 1918-1919. There she met some of the better known socialists such as Scott Nearing, and for a time was secretary of a Socialist Party of America group in the Bronx. She returned to Canada in 1919 as an organizer for the O.B.U. With the decline of the O.B.U. and the rise of the C.P.C., Buhay shifted her allegiance to the new revolutionary body and in March 1922, was elected to the executive of the W.P.C. In that capacity she toured the country, lecturing and taking part in various labour activities in western Canada. Because of her ability to "expound the doctrine," her intense and overriding seriousness, she was entrusted with such responsibilities as organizing and directing party schools and acting as business manager of The Worker. (Rodney, Op.Cit., p. 164.)

Road, Toronto. When Florence Custance died on 12 July 1929, Smith decided to move the national office from his bedroom to a central location in the city. The N.E.C. secured two offices at 105 Bloor Street West. Within six months, they were compelled to seek larger quarters. Shortly thereafter, the national office was established in the Star Building at 331 Bay Street, from which it operated for the next eleven years.

CHAPTER V

The Canadian Labour Defense League: Finance, Control and Membership, 1929-1931

Until 1929, the activities of the C.L.D.L. had not been overly impressive. The C.L.D.L., however, soon found itself in much greater demand as a result of the Comintern's directives to pursue a revolutionary course, the onslaught of the depression, and the C.P.C.'s agitation among the Canadian workers for militancy and strike action. As communists marshalled their forces against the state, so did they find themselves coming under attack from the political authorities. In Toronto and in other urban areas in the country, there was a dramatic increase in the number of individuals who required the services of the C.L.D.L. before the courts. This gave the C.L.D.L. greater prominence in the communist movement and left it, as well, with a constant shortage of funds and personnel to carry out its activities. Faced with these and other difficulties, the C.L.D.L. executive, led by Smith, instigated a number of campaigns to procure funds and to conscript members.

I

As well as being the national headquarters of the C.L.D.L., Toronto also became the major focal point of the League's activities. Beginning in autumn 1928 and continuing throughout the 1930s a massive anti-communist campaign was inaugurated by the city's Board of Police commissioners. Alarmed at the spread of communist propaganda throughout the city, especially among the foreign-born, and believing that communists were a disloyal group in the pay of Moscow,¹ the Board passed in January 1929, two edicts which were designed to curtail communist propaganda. The first forbade addresses at all public meetings in which the language was not English, adding that "no disorderly

1. Michael Horn, "Keeping Canada 'Canadian': Anti Communism and Canadianism in Toronto 1928-1929," Canada: A Historical Magazine, Vol.3, no.1, p. 43.

These suspicions were heightened by the Arcos Affair in Britain. In May 1927, the British prime minister and the foreign secretary authorized a large force of policemen to search the Arcos building and the Soviet trade delegation premises in London in an effort to find an important document relating to the British armed forces allegedly stolen by Soviet agents. Although the document was not found, it was discovered that indeed members of the Soviet trade delegation had also been working on espionage and subversive activities in Britain and Europe. One of the Soviet delegates arrested had a number of sealed envelopes addressed with names of well-known communists, as well as directives from the Communist International to communist organizations in England. Among the names found were those of J. MacDonald, M. Spector and Tim Buck, all having Toronto addresses. For a fuller discussion see Aloysius Balawyder, Canadian-Soviet Relations Between the World Wars, (Toronto, 1972), pp. 93-104.

or seditious reflections on our form of government or the King, or any constituted authority will be allowed." The second stated that if owners of public halls and other places of public amusement rented their premises for "communist or bolshevik public meetings" their licenses would be cancelled immediately.¹

Led by the chief of police, Brigadier-General Dennis C. Draper, a man who sincerely believed that "the political and economic system of the nation was being undermined by communists"² and whole-heartedly supported by Samuel McBride, the mayor of Toronto, who declared publicly that "our stopping of communistic meetings shows that we are truly British,"³ the city police launched a systematic campaign of harassment and physical abuse which usually resulted in fines and incarceration for those radicals who persisted in defying the edicts. The Canadian Forum described the tactics used by the police thus:

When the communists, unable to secure rooms, attempted to hold open-air meetings the police refused to permit them to use public parks, and when they met on street-corners, they were arrested for 'obstructing the traffic,' 'creating a public disturbance,' 'vagrancy,' and sundry other charges. The police found

1. See The Mail and Empire, 23 Jan. 1929, and The Toronto Globe, 31 Jan. 1929.

2. Lita-Rose Betcherman, The Swastika and the Maple Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties, (Toronto, 1975), p. 58.

3. Cited in Horn, Op.Cit., p. 43.

no difficulty in obtaining convictions
in the local courts....]

The "Free Speech Struggle" in Toronto, as the communists called it, ensured a heavy work load for the C.L.D.L. From January 1929 to February 1930 the League handled eighty-eight cases in the police and county courts of Toronto.

While Toronto proved to be the "hotspot" for C.L.D.L. activity, other centres in the country also commanded the League's attention. The League gave legal aid, during this same period, to forty striking relief workers in Vancouver who demanded union wages from the city, \$1,155.00 in support of Hamilton strikers against the National Steel Car Company and contributed \$2,800.00 to the defense of Arvo Vaara, the editor of the Sudbury Finnish left-wing newspaper Vaupaus, who was charged with seditious libel. The latter was sentenced to six months in prison, and fined \$1,000.00. In Port Arthur, the C.L.D.L. paid \$150.00 legal expenses to investigate the disappearance of J. Voutalainer and V. Rosevall, two Finnish union organizers in the Maki lumber camps. They vanished in November 1929 on route from one lumber camp to another a few miles away. Their bodies were found the following spring under the ice in a stream. The case was never fully resolved. Finally in Windsor the League gave \$200.00 in defense of two Ukrainian communists who were charged with disturbing the peace when they attempted to break up a fascist

1. J.F. White, "Police Dictatorship," Canadian Forum, XI, Feb. 1931, p. 167.

meeting.¹ The result of such activity was that by early 1930 the C.L.D.L. was receiving more cases than it could cope with financially. As tables I and II² illustrate, in one year the League had accumulated a deficit of over \$2500.

In large part, this deficit was attributable to lawyers' fees. In September 1928, for example, the C.L.D.L. executive retained the services of an obscure Toronto lawyer with socialist inclinations,³ J.L. Cohen, who would handle the majority of the cases on behalf of the League throughout 1929 and 1930.⁴ By the middle of August 1930, the League owed Cohen \$1110.15 for services rendered;⁵ by the end of April 1931, Cohen was pressing the League for payment of the balance of over \$1300.00 that the League owed him.⁶ Smith finally settled the account with Cohen by offering the lawyer a sum of \$400.00,

1. The resume of the cases was compiled from the following sources: The Canadian Labour Defender, Vol. I, no. 1, p.8.; Public Archives of Canada, (P.A.C.) Cohen Papers, Vols. 1, 2; Smith, All My Life, pp. 110-111; and the Eastern Canadian Labour Defense League Emergency Conference Minutes, 26-27 Apr. 1930, Hamilton, Ont., p. 3.

2. The figures were calculated from the C.L.D.L.'s official journal The Canadian Labour Defender, Vol. I, no. 1, May 1930, p. 8.

3. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

4. P.A.C., Cohen Papers, Vols. I, 2.

5. Ibid., Vol. 2.

6. Ibid., Vol. 2, Cohen to Smith, 28 Apr. 1931.

TABLE I

Record of Cases Handled by the C.L.D.L. January 1929 to February 1930

Number of people arrested	Disturbing the Peace			Depor- tation	Picketing	Misc.	Total
	74	6	8				
Toronto	74	6	8	--	--	--	88
Vancouver	--	--	--	40	--	--	40
Hamilton	--	--	--	37	--	--	37
Sudbury	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
Port Arthur	--	--	--	--	2	--	2
Windsor	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
Total	76	7	8	77	2	2	170

TABLE II

Financial Expenditures for Defense of Cases in Table I

Toronto and Vancouver	\$7,600.00
Hamilton	1,155.00
Sudbury	2,800.00
Port Arthur	150.00
Windsor	200.00
Total Expenditures	\$11,905.00
Income between Jan. 1929-Feb. 1930	9,299.21
Deficit	\$2,605.79

almost \$1000 less than was due.¹ Cohen accepted the meager payment and subsequently withdrew from further C.L.D.L. cases in an effort to bring his relationship with the League to a dignified end.²

II

It was because of these demands for its services and the resulting deficit that the C.L.D.L. launched, at the beginning of 1930, a major campaign for membership and funds. On 8 January 1930, all District Executive Councils, Local Executive Councils and District organizers received bulletins outlining the League's difficulties and proposed course of action:

The issuance of literature and other important matters have been held up because of the serious condition of the treasury. The cases in courts demand immediate funds. We therefore, urge you to get busy on the collection lists at once. 3

1. Ibid., Vol. 2, Smith to Cohen, 6 May 1931.

2. There was, during 1930 and 1931, a growing animosity between Cohen and Smith. When the C.L.D.L. hired Cohen, he was a little known Toronto lawyer. As a result of the cases he handled for the C.L.D.L. he became well-known and respected as a labour lawyer. He thus was becoming in demand to settle contract disputes between employers and government on behalf of labour unions. As his reputation grew his fees became more exorbitant and he seemed to lose interest in working for the C.L.D.L. which had difficulty in procuring the funds that Cohen demanded. (Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976).

3. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C., B11 E30.

The N.E.C. provided the financial objectives for each district as follows:¹

Edmonton and vicinity	\$750.00
Calgary	500.00
Vancouver and Vancouver Isl.	1500.00
Drumheller	50.00
Canmore	50.00
Medicine Hat	50.00
Lethbridge	100.00
Crows' Nest Branches	50.00
Moose Jaw, Sask.	50.00
Dunblane, Sask.	50.00
Regina	50.00
Saskatoon	50.00
Brandon, Man.	100.00
Winnipeg	1500.00
Lettonia, Man.	25.00
Meadow Portage, Man.	25.00
Pt. Arthur, Ft. William, Ft. Frances, Ont.	500.00
Sudbury, Timmins, Coniston, S.S. Marie	700.00
Hamilton, London, Guelph, Welland,	
Windsor	400.00
Montreal	1500.00
Toronto	2000.00
Total	10,000.00

The N.E.C. also sent out two organizers to aid the District Central Councils. C. Drayton, a party stalwart, covered British Columbia and Alberta, while Lillian Himmelfarb, a seventeen year old girl, who was a "splendid fighter in the revolutionary movement" travelled throughout Ontario and Manitoba.²

Despite the elaborate planning, the increase in funds and membership did not fulfill expectations. From 8 January to 31

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

March 1930, only \$1608.81 was received by the National Executive of the C.L.D.L.¹ Although considerably greater sums of money had been raised by the D.C.C.s, much was allocated to local activities. The League persuaded only two thousand new persons to join, increasing to five thousand individual memberships. Sixteen new branches were organized while seven branches were reorganized throughout the country. Among the new branches were five Finnish, five Ukrainian and some Slovakian, Jewish, and Hungarian. The remainder were Anglo-Saxon or mixed branches.² Sixty labour organizations, including thirty trade unions affiliated to the C.L.D.L. on a collective membership basis.³

These results were disappointing to the national executive. As reports of increasing labour disturbances flooded in, the N.E.C. decided to take further action. An "emergency defense conference" was called in April to "popularize the League, in order that new branches and affiliations could be built and the

1. The Canadian Labour Defender, Op.Cit., p. 11. The breakdown for the funds for the provinces was as follows:

Ontario	\$1094.71
Quebec	111.75
Nova Scotia	13.80
Manitoba	64.70
Saskatchewan	3.00
Alberta	140.85
British Columbia	178.98

2. Ibid.

3. Eastern Canadian Labour Defense League Emergency Conference Minutes, p. 5.

necessary funds raised."¹ On 26-27 April, 166 delegates representing ninety-four organizations met in Hamilton.² After the "enthusiastic singing of the Internationale," Smith opened the conference with a greeting and message from the executive committee of the International Red Aid, Moscow of which the C.L.D.L. was the Canadian section.

The executive committee [of the I.R.A.] is sure the C.L.D.L. will organize regular functioning city committees in all important towns in all provinces; will establish regular monthly reporting of all organizations...to the E.C. of I.R.A. ...and will start campaigns in favour of the oppressed toilers in India, China, Japan, Indonesia, Indochina, Arabia, in connection with events there. 3

Greetings were also forthcoming from a coterie of communist organizations including the central executive committee of the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association, the newly formed Workers' Unity League, the executive committee of the Finnish Organization of Canada, "Der Kampf" of Montreal and the Freiheit Choir of Toronto.

Smith was the first speaker at the conference. In a brief address he dealt with the Toronto situation as a result of the two police edicts. "This free speech struggle is still

1. Op.Cit.

2. See Appendix II.

3. Eastern Canadian Labour Defense League Emergency Conference Minutes, p. 5.

on and must be waged," he declared. He emphasized that the tactics of the Toronto police were being copied by police in other cities; Hamilton, Montreal, Windsor, and Vancouver were cited as examples. After Smith's opening remarks came a "splendid proletarian banquet" for the delegates to the conference. Over one hundred and fifty individuals participated.

The next day the conference proceedings were opened by an address from J.L. Cohen, the solicitor for the C.L.D.L. He spoke on the "free speech struggle" in Toronto and assured the delegates that he supported the C.L.D.L.'s campaign against the "police terror" and the protest against the police edict by which the use of halls and theatres for mass meetings were denied the militant workers' organizations. He hoped to test the validity of this edict before the courts at the earliest possible opportunity.¹

Following Cohen, J. Louis Engdahl, general-secretary of the International Labour Defense, New York, spoke. He voiced greetings from the I.L.D. of the United States² and then discussed at length the "white terror over all the capitalist world and its manifest increase in the United States and Canada." Engdahl declared that there was a "sharpening class struggle," that "imperialist war plans" were in the making and that there was

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. In 1930 the I.L.D. had over 600 branches with and individual membership of over 20,000.

a "growing economic crisis." Associating himself with the message from the I.R.A. which had been presented to the conference, he stated that "the defense of the Soviet Union against Imperialist War was of prime importance to the League." Finally, he noted that "the Communist Party was the object of attack by the capitalists because the Party stood for the defense of the Soviet and sought to organize the workers to resist unemployment and starvation."¹

After Engdahl's harangue came a discussion on the state of the Canadian economy. It was resolved that "Canadian capitalism was entering a period of sharpening economic crisis...[and that] ...the burden of this crisis fell directly upon the working class..." because it meant "great unemployment" and "speed ups in work and lengthening hours" for those who labour in industry. The "working class," therefore, had to "...use all means in its power to fight against these worsening conditions."² In this regard the C.L.D.L. was to be instrumental in the "proletarian struggle" in at least three ways. First it would wage a struggle in defense of workers' demonstrations and against the "bloody police terror of the bourgeoisie." Secondly, it would support strikes--not only defending the arrested workers in the courts but also carrying on a vigorous campaign against the laws on

1: Ibid., p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

picketing. And thirdly, the League would fight against "Sedition laws" and concomitantly defend the "foreign-born worker," the "unemployed worker," and the "working-class press."¹

The defense of the "foreign-born worker" prompted considerable discussion. Charles Sims, a C.P.C. stalwart, stated that "in the present period of intensifying class struggle...the position of the foreign-born working class and their organizations demanded that the C.L.D.L. develop greater campaigns throughout Canada on the issues of fascism, anti-working class legislation and police terror." Sims singled out the U.L.F.T.A., the F.O.C., the Jewish Labour League, the Macedonian Cultural Club, and the Freiheit Choir as "particularly feeling the iron club of fascism and police terror." To combat all the attacks and intimidations on the foreign-born workers, Sims concluded, was the C.L.D.L.'s major task. He made a number of recommendations which were adopted by the delegates. These included a "wide agitational campaign to organize branches and committees of the C.L.D.L. among the various language minorities in the Canadian working class;" the appointment of language organizers as representatives of the C.L.D.L., especially in Finnish and Ukrainian organizations; and finally "the strengthening of the entire C.L.D.L. by linking up the struggles of the foreign-born workers with the general working class movement."²

1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

A number of other "shortcomings" in the C.L.D.L.'s organization were also discussed. It was pointed out that the District committees and branches that had been established did not function efficiently. There were very few reports and a decided "looseness" in the methods of organizations." Indeed, the inner life of the branches appeared to be negligible with insufficient discussion of defense League problems and major political issues. Moreover, not enough was done to see that dues were paid up; there was a large discrepancy between actual members and those paying dues. Also it was noted that industries had not been approached and very few C.L.D.L. branches existed in factories and in miners' union locals. Neither had there been any organizational work done among French-Canadian workers, and the Province of Quebec as a whole remained virtually untouched by the C.L.D.L.¹

The final address was given by Smith on the League's finances. The key to the C.L.D.L.'s continued operation remained a healthy financial base. As has been shown earlier, the C.L.D.L. was operating at a deficit; income was much less than expenditures.² Smith noted in his financial report that support fluctuated greatly and that payments of dues had been disappointingly unsteady. He concluded that if machinery was to be developed to meet the demands upon the League, then there had to be an increase in the financial

1. Ibid., p. 12.

2. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

support given to the C.L.D.L.¹ Smith proposed a number of changes in the constitution and these were adopted. First, the membership dues were altered from ten cents per month per member to twenty cents, five cents of which was payable to the local branch and five cents to the central committee (where one existed). Secondly, the price of due stamps from the national office was increased to ten cents each.²

The fees paid by organizations affiliated en bloc also underwent revision. The fee of five cents per member per annum for affiliations of unions and mass organizations was advanced to twenty-five cents per member per annum for the first one thousand members and ten cents per member for all members over one thousand. In the case of composite or federated bodies, for which the fee was one dollar per year for the first five bodies composing the organization and one dollar for each additional five, the new fee was fixed at a flat rate basis of ten dollars per year for organizations composed of from five to fourteen bodies, twenty-five dollars for organizations from fifteen to twenty-five bodies, and for any over that number thirty-five dollars per annum.³

As a result of the reports and discussions during the two-day conference, a number of recommendations were submitted to the

1. Ibid., p. 20.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. to "overcome the shortcomings and to improve the local and national work of the League." First, it was declared that 1 July be set aside throughout the Dominion for a day of picnic demonstrations and that on May Day all central committees and branches demonstrate and take part in May Day parades. Secondly, the N.E.C. was instructed to begin preparations for a national convention of the C.L.D.L. to be held early in 1931. Thirdly, the League executive would begin a campaign for new members and financial support all over Canada throughout November and December. The objectives were set at ten thousand new members and fifteen thousand dollars--five thousand dollars of which was to assist workers in Europe through the I.R.A. Fourthly, it was decided to publish a monthly journal--Canadian Labour Defender¹--as soon as the League had secured a "substantial" number of subscribers. Fifthly it was recommended that organizational work be initiated among French-Canadian workers, women and youth. And finally, all sympathetic ethnic mass organizations would be called upon to cooperate with the League in organizing ethnic branches--under the direct jurisdiction and control of the N.E.C.²

Smith was eager to put into effect the resolutions adopted at the conference. After extensive preparation he embarked upon

1. The first issue of Canadian Labour Defender came out in mimeographed form in May 1930.

2. Eastern Canadian Labour Defense League Emergency Conference Minutes, p. 12.

a national organizational tour of Canada (1 October to 15 December 1930). As a result nine new district central committees were established in Timmins, Sudbury, Port Arthur, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Sault Ste. Marie, Windsor, and London, and one sub-district committee in the Crow's Nest Pass.¹ The establishment of these D.C.C.s was regarded by Smith as a "real step forward towards a well functioning organization: apart from the fact, that the district form of organization was generally necessary for the purpose of centralizing, stimulating and checking-up the work in the different localities, the establishment of District Committees. also served as a means of preparing our organizational machinery for the membership and finance drive."²

Following Smith's exhaustive tour a membership and fund-raising drive was initiated (18 January to 30 April 1931) and more tours were undertaken by comrade Gordon who visited Timmins, Sudbury, Port Arthur, Winnipeg and Toronto, comrades Campbell and Kassian who travelled throughout British Columbia and comrades O'Sullivan and Bryson who traversed Alberta.³

This concentrated effort on the part of Smith and other organizers resulted in an increase of individual membership branches from seventy-four to 123. Out of the 123 branches, there were

1. Canadian Labour Defense League Plenum Minutes, 11-12 July 1931, Toronto, p. 18.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

thirty-seven Ukrainian with a total of 1,208 members, twenty-six Finnish comprising 856 individuals, thirty-two English and "international" branches with 1,455 persons of which fifty per cent were Anglo-Saxon and twenty-seven branches of other European national minorities--Russian, Polish, and Jewish with a total membership of 1,386. There was one Chinese branch with twenty members and one Japanese with thirty members. Also seven mining, one railway and eight farmers' units were formed. Over ninety per cent of the membership consisted of factory workers, of which forty per cent were unemployed.¹ There were also 137 affiliated organizations with a membership of fifteen thousand, of which forty-five hundred were from trade unions. The N.E.C. had two full-time functionaries and four permanent district cadres in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Winnipeg.²

III

While Smith and his colleague struggled with the numerous difficulties of the C.L.D.L., changes were taking place within the world defense organization--the I.R.A. At its third plenum held in Moscow in early April 1930, the I.R.A. fell in line with the revolutionary course pursued since the Sixth Congress of

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

the Communist International. At the Plenum, I.R.A. leaders now argued that the period of stability and prosperity in capitalist countries was over and these countries were entering a period of deep crisis signalled by a tremendous intensification of the "class struggle." The I.R.A. now had to purge all "Trotsky and right-wing elements" within it and alter its character from that of a legal aid organization which appeared on the periphery of the "class struggle" to a militant mass organization of the proletariat. This change in character was shortly thereafter conveyed to the various sections of the I.R.A. which existed throughout the world. Among them was the C.L.D.L.

On 21 November 1930 the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. received a lengthy memorandum from the National Executive of the I.R.A. The I.R.A. demanded a detailed report of the activities of the C.L.D.L. and instructed the League to transform itself into a militant and internationally orientated organization.

Excepting the brief report of Comrade Beckie Buhay, we have received no new material from you since your April conference, no report whatsoever on the activities developed and successes obtained since your conference. We, therefore request not only the normalization of relations between you and this E.C. but that you send us immediately all the material on the preparation of your national congress...in order to enable us to study it carefully and on its basis send you our decisions.

Your April conference, while accepting enthusiastically the greetings sent by this E.C., has pledged itself to organize a campaign for the months of November

and December 1930, whose aims were the recruiting of 10,000 new members and the collecting of \$15,000, \$5,000 of which was destined for the international fund for the benefit of white terror victims in other countries. Up till now we have not been informed as to the fate of this campaign and we request you to send us all the material elaborated for the fulfillment (plan of work)....

The executive committee of the I.R.A. then proceeded to give their criticisms of the activities of the C.L.D.L. and "our directives which must be followed by you...."¹

A major criticism centred on the League's insufficient attention to the development of international campaigns:

There exists no political and international education for the members.... No plan of work exists for the creation of a cadre of functionaries, of which the organization is in absolute need. It has not responded energetically against propaganda among the members of the reactionary trade unions to win them to our side.

The League was also attacked for "the lack of constant agitation and propaganda campaigns, but appearing to the workers as an organization of legal and financial aid." In reference to the finance committee report Smith had submitted at the Hamilton conference, the I.R.A.'s message was clear:

This executive committee is against all these propositions. The increase of income from individual and collective membership dues must not be obtained

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B11 E30.

by increasing the dues, but by increasing the number of individual and collective memberships. Only in this way will it be possible for the large masses of workers to join our organization, while the increase of dues would keep them away.

As an alternative, it suggested that the C.L.D.L. establish "Patronages" which would be an important source of income:

The C.L.D.L. should assume the Patronage over prisons in other countries and foment this initiative among the toiling mass, thus contributing to their international education. It should at the same time see that Patronages are established among the emigrant workers (Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, etc.):

The C.L.D.L. must set down the rules regarding financial aid to the prisoners and their families. It must build up a Judicial Bureau composed of sympathizing lawyers, willing to assume [at] gratis or [for] reduced fees, the legal defense of our prisoners.

Patronages were committees organized ostensibly by immigrants themselves. These committees were to embrace those who did not belong to "revolutionary" organizations to collect funds for "political victims" in their native countries.²

The I.R.A. suggested that specific ethnic groups of the C.L.D.L. be selected for the work of raising funds and carrying on campaigns against the "terror" in their respective countries through agitation and propaganda. The work of the Patronages was to be under the direct control of the C.L.D.L., promoted in

1. Ibid.

2. Canadian Labour Defense League Plenum Minutes,
p. 14.

conjunction with C.L.D.L. campaigns among foreign-born workers. The Patronages would thus be utilized as an extension of the organizational framework of the C.L.D.L.¹

In response to the letter from the I.R.A. Smith wrote a reply outlining the progress the C.L.D.L. had made and pointing out that his small staff did not have the time to prepare and send out the detailed regular reports which the I.R.A. demanded. This, however, did not satisfy the executive of the I.R.A. A memorandum dated 10 May 1931 was sent to the N.E.C. of the League. It flatly stated:

The excuse you give (the heavy pressure of work in your offices and the limited number on your staff) for not preparing and sending us regular reports is not acceptable. The maintenance of regular reports between you and this E.C. is the most important condition for us in order to follow closely your activities and to help you in all your work. 2

The matter did not end there. At the C.L.D.L. Plenum held 11-12 July,³ the I.R.A. attempted to pressure the League into

1. Ibid., p. 29.

2. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B11 E30

3. The Plenum was held in Toronto with seventy delegates representing five out of eight districts of the C.L.D.L. in Canada. Of the seventy delegates twenty-six were members of the C.P.C., four of the Y.C.L.--the others were non-Party members. Sixteen registered as members of trade unions and nine were members of the communist inspired National Unemployed Workers' Association, Op.Cit., p. 1.

passing resolutions more in accord with its policies.

J.L. Engdahl, general-secretary of the International Labour Defense, who was present at the Third Plenum of the I.R.A. in Moscow, again attended and set the tone of the proceedings at the Plenum. He reiterated all the criticisms and directives that the I.R.A. had outlined to the C.L.D.L. executive, strongly emphasizing that the League not be merely a relief agency, but a militant revolutionary organization. Engdahl's concluding statements underlined the I.R.A.'s attempt to redirect the priorities of the C.L.D.L.:

This Plenum signalizes an important turn in the work of the C.L.D.L. It states categorically that the first task of the C.L.D.L. is mass mobilization of protest against terrorism and class persecution, secondly, relief to all class war prisoners and dependents and thirdly legal defense. The attitude that one group of workers are organized into organizations doing the fighting and another into organizations which defend workers from capitalist justice; must be fundamentally changed. The attitude that what is necessary in cases is "the best available lawyer," is a false attitude that must be combatted. It must be made clear that we use legal defense because efforts must be made to get whatever possible out of the "capitalist justice" and to expose the nature of this justice. But above all MASS MOBILIZATION is the only effective weapon of the workers. Thus the struggle for defense of the working class becomes a struggle which must involve all possible mass organizations of the workers, the broadest stratas of the workers from factory, field, mine and unemployed ranks. Therefore the only correct policy of defense is the organization of mass protest and mass defense out of

the specific issue out of which the
arrest resulted, on the broadest united
front basis. 1

After Engdahl spoke, Tim Buck, the national secretary of the C.P.C., addressed the delegates. He endorsed Engdahl's speech and urged a "turn" in the work of the C.L.D.L. The delegates obediently accepted these directives from above in a resolution which stated:

This Plenum of the Canadian Labour Defense League has heard the report by comrade J.L. Engdahl on the Third Plenum of the Executive Committee of the I.R.A. and has considered the letter of the I.R.A. on the work of the Canadian Labour Defense League.

This Plenum pledges itself to energetically carry out the decisions of the Third Plenum of our world organization and to overcome immediately the shortcomings enumerated in the letter received by our organization.

We pledge ourselves to make a sharp turn away from all forms of legalization and to carry through the correct policies of the I.R.A. in building up an independent militant mass organization of struggle.... 2

The last report of the Plenum was given by Smith. The defense of the "foreign-born" worker was his main topic. He put forth a number of proposals. First, that a department be established in the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. to initiate councils for the defense of foreign-born workers and to establish Patronages; secondly, that the membership of these councils be composed of representatives

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1. Canadian Labour Defense League Plenum Minutes, p. 14.
 2. Ibid., p. 30.

from as many "working class organizations" and sympathetic bodies as possible; and thirdly, that efforts be made to bring into these councils all language groups that had had no connection with the C.L.D.L. (i.e. Italian, Greek, Latvian). The purpose of these councils was two fold. Under the direction of a full-time functionary appointed by the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. these councils would conduct intense and wide-spread agitation on specific cases of deportation or persecution arising within their own areas. They would also participate in the campaigns for the repeal of deportation laws by means of organized demonstrations and deputations to the provincial and federal governments.¹ Smith's proposals, obviously inspired by the I.R.A., were unanimously accepted by the delegates.

Indeed throughout the 1930s, the C.L.D.L. executive continued to endeavour to follow closely the directives of the I.R.A. The League, for example, attempted to mobilize a mass following by using incidents such as the Scottsboro case² in the United States and by organizing Patronages among the immigrants. The latter effort was the most successful. Twenty-one Hungarian, eighteen Russian and a number of Ukrainian committees were established.

1. Ibid., p. 25.

2. The Scottsboro case referred to eight negro boys who were sentenced to the electric chair on what communists and civil libertarians in the United States and Canada believed were "trumped up charges" of raping two white girls on a freight train in Alabama.

In 1932, the Hungarian committees forwarded \$301.96 while the Russian committees sent \$400.00 to the I.R.A. through the C.L.D.L. The largest contribution was made by the Association for the Aid of the Liberation Movement in Western Ukraine (Tovovyrnazu--Tovarystvo dopomohy politychnym viasniam v zachidnii Ukraini); it sent \$1,425.14 to Western Ukraine and Poland during 1932. It also donated liberal sums to the C.L.D.L. The total sum sent from Canada during 1932 and to July 1933 via the Patronages was \$2,127.10.¹ In 1932, Smith would reaffirm his commitment to the I.R.A. when he travelled to Moscow as a Canadian delegate to attend the first world I.R.A. Congress.²

IV

Ethnic organizations provided the major source of membership and financial support for the C.L.D.L. As Table III³ illustrates, by 1932, well over half of the League's rank and file was made up of "immigrant" branches. The largest and most important of the ethnic organizations which affiliated to the League were the

1. First National Representative Convention Report of the C.L.D.L., (Toronto, 1933), p. 11

2. The I.R.A. continued to harangue the C.L.D.L. with criticism and directives until 1935 when the Comintern's, revolutionary course was discarded.

3. Op.Cit., p. 9.

TABLE III

Membership of the C.L.D.L. According to Nationality August 1932

Nationalities	Branches	Members
Mixed	93	5,897
Ukrainian	40	2,730
Finnish	35	1,475
Hungarian	19	1,029
Russian	14	582
Yugoslavian	10	646
Polish	6	94
Scandinavian	3	94
Czechoslovak	3	81
Lithuanian	2	124
Jewish	2	110
French Canadian	2	52
Lettish	1	40
Japanese	1	40
German	1	28
Italian	1	20
<u>Total</u>	<u>233</u>	<u>13,042</u>

Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association (U.L.F.T.A.) and the Finnish Organization of Canada (F.O.C.). Established in the early 1920s by ardent socialists who imported their ideas from Europe, both organizations became part and parcel of the C.P.C. by the end of the twenties. Without these organizations the C.L.D.L. could not have functioned efficiently; therefore, a closer examination of the U.L.F.T.A. and the F.O.C. is needed to reveal how the League utilized ethnic groups.

Among the estimated two hundred thousand Ukrainians¹ who migrated to Canada from 1896 to 1914 inclusive there was a small number of social democrats from Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They had been members of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party. In Canada, they disseminated socialist ideas among Ukrainian settlers, forming in 1907 the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party of Canada (U.S.D.P.C.). The party, based in Winnipeg, became a section of the Social Democratic Party of Canada and supported the Second International. Its newspaper, Chervony Prapor (Red Flag), outlined the party's duty as "interpreting and defending the interests of the working class and giving it ideological

1. Paul Yuzyk, The Ukrainians in Manitoba: A Social History, (Toronto, 1953), p. 11. It is difficult to compile the exact number, as the Ukrainians are registered under at least eight nationalities. The confusion of nomenclature, the faulty official classification and the incompetence of the census enumerators combined to militate against exact figures. See V.J. Kaye, "Three Phases of Ukrainian Immigration," in Slavs in Canada, Vol. I, Proceedings of the First National Conference of Canadian Slavs, (Alberta, 1965), pp. 36-43.

leadership" and "lead[ing] the working masses in the struggle against injustice, exploitation and slavery, over the ruins of capitalism toward the sunlight and life."¹

The successes of the Russian revolutionary efforts at Petrograd in March 1917 and of the October Bolshevik Revolution had profound repercussions on the U.S.D.P.C.² Under the leadership of radicals such as Matthew Popovich and John Nawiziwski (Navis), the establishment of the Soviet government was hailed as the victory of the proletariat in Russia and the harbinger of world communist revolution.³ In order to broaden its base, the party established the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association, ostensibly as a cultural and educational society. When the Canadian government banned the U.S.D.P.C. for spreading "Bolshevik propaganda" in September 1918, the party leaders rallied around the continuing Ukrainian Labour Temple Association. On 21 October 1924, this body was incorporated by the Secretary of State as a cultural organization; it was officially entitled the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association.

By 1928, the U.L.F.T.A. had a membership of 8,438 people. Attached to it were fifty-six dramatic and choir groups with 1,622 members, seventy-six mandolin and other orchestras with 1,073 members

1. Cited in Peter Krawchuk, "The Ukrainians in Winnipeg's First Century," The Ukrainian Canadian, May 1974, pp. 32-33.

2. Zuzyk, Op.Cit., pp. 97-98.

3. Ibid., p. 98.

and fifty schools for children with 2,204 pupils. The association owned sixty-three buildings and four lots across Canada with a total value of \$696,717.63.¹ It also sponsored a number of auxiliary bodies. The most important of these was the Workers' Benevolent Association (W.B.A.), a "fraternal benefit organization" established in 1922. The W.B.A. was essentially an insurance agency to which members contributed one dollar per month for a sick benefit of ten dollars weekly, for a maximum of ten weeks in any given year.² Matthew Popovich, prominent in the U.S.D.P.C., the U.L.F.T.A. and the editor of the Robitnychi Visty (Labour News), successor of the Chervony Prapor, was the W.B.A.'s first national president. Between its first national convention in January 1925 and the fifth in February 1929, the number of W.B.A. branches increased from twenty-two to one hundred sixteen and the membership from 799 to 7,400.³

At the birth of the C.P.C., the U.L.F.T.A. was officially represented by ten members.⁴ After the C.P.C. was established, suggestions were made in the C.P.C. central executive committee and at party conventions that the U.L.F.T.A. be liquidated and its

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4.

2. Anthony Bilecki, William Repka, Mitch Sago, eds., Friends in Need: The W.B.A. Story: A Canadian Epic in Fraternalism, (Winnipeg, 1972), p. 81.

3. Ibid., p. 135.

4. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4.

members incorporated into the C.P.C. This proved impossible; the U.L.F.T.A. had a strong base with membership in the thousands and was not willing to submerge its identity completely in the C.P.C. Instead, C.P.C. branches were organized within the U.L.F.T.A.

In order to ensure systematic control over the U.L.F.T.A., and its auxiliary bodies, the C.P.C. created a special bureau which, under the supervision of the Central Executive Committee of the party, worked within to direct the policy of the U.L.F.T.A. This bureau was known by various names between 1922-1925: The Ukrainian Language Bureau, the National Agit-Prop Committee and the National Ukrainian Fraction Bureau. The function of the Bureau was to ensure that the decisions of the party were carried out in the Ukrainian organization. On a broader scale, through the bureau, the party hoped to

actively mobilize the Ukrainian workers in the...economic conflict and growing mass movements of the Canadian workers. To aim continuously to draw the Ukrainian workers into the general proletarian mass organizations...to make every endeavour to train for the C.P.C....new active and revolutionary members...[and to involve the U.L.F.T.A. in]...direct participation in the revolutionary class movement of Canada. 1

The bureau ensured that all important U.L.F.T.A. activities were sanctioned by the central committee of the C.P.C.

In 1930, when the role of the C.L.D.L. was expanding, the

1. Ibid.

question of the relationship of the U.L.F.T.A. to it arose. T. Kobzey, secretary for the central committee of the U.L.F.T.A. circulated, as a result, the following bulletin to all U.L.F.T.A. branches:

The 11th convention of the U.L.F.T.A. which was held on 11-14 of Feb. 1930 decided that our organization of the U.L.F.T.A. must affiliate with the C.L.D.L.....How should this be done? You will call a meeting of the members and at this meeting explain the role of the C.L.D.L. and the decision of the convention and after that send us the number of members, men and women and 5¢ yearly dues for every member. The central executive committee will send this money to the central executive committee of the C.L.D.L. in Toronto....

All correspondence in regard to the C.L.D.L. must be sent through central executive committee of the U.L.F.T.A. We will send money for the whole membership to the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L.

From the time that our organization affiliates with the C.L.D.L....the question of the C.L.D.L. must be placed on the agenda of every meeting of the branches of the U.L.F.T.A....Separate executive committees for the C.L.D.L. should not be elected but the U.L.F.T.A. branch executive will function for the C.L.D.L.

Shortly after this circular, the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. sent letters to the central executive committee of the U.L.F.T.A. and W.B.A. with instructions to send delegates to the 1931 Plenum of the C.L.D.L.

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B9 E13. Even this block affiliation was considered insufficient by the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. Successful efforts were made to establish individual branches within the U.L.F.T.A. Emergency Defense Conference Report, 26-27 April 1931, p. 12.

The League received a positive response. As table III illustrates, by 1932 there were 2,730 Ukrainians within the C.L.D.L. and probably many more League sympathizers. The League was able to use the Ukrainian press to advocate its policies. In 1930, this press included Robitnychi Visty, a tri-weekly from Winnipeg with a circulation of ten thousand, Farmerske Zhyttya (Farmers' Life) with a circulation of six thousand and Robitnyci (Working Women) with a circulation of sixty-six hundred.¹

The Finnish experience was much the same as the Ukrainian. Among the 21,220 Finns² that immigrated to Canada from 1900 to 1914 inclusive, were members of the Finnish Social Democratic Party. They had fled the intense "Russification" of their native land initiated by Nicholas II in February 1899.³ In Toronto and particularly in the Sudbury district, where working and living conditions were far from ideal, various small Marxist societies were formed.⁴ By 1920, these had been consolidated into the

1. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 141. Commissioner of the R.C.M.P. to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, 27 Aug. 1930.

2. Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Bilingualism, IV, pp. 235-239.

3. For details see John H. Hodgson, Communism in Finland: A History and Interpretation, (Princeton, 1967), pp. 3-19.

4. Martha Isobel Gerrard Allen, A Survey of Finnish Cultural, Economic and Political Development in the Sudbury District of Ontario, (M.A., University of Western Ontario, 1954) Part IV, pp. 75-91.

Finnish Socialist Organization of Canada. On 24 October 1923, this organization was incorporated under Part I of the Companies Act by the Secretary of State as the Finnish Organization of Canada--ostensibly as a cultural and educational association.¹

The F.O.C. proved to be a thoroughly communistic organization like the U.L.F.T.A. At the founding of the C.P.C. it was represented by eight official delegates.² A year later, at their annual convention in Toronto, the Finnish Socialist Organization affiliated with the C.P.C. Without losing its separate identity, the sixty branches of the organization with approximately two thousand members also became the Finnish Federation of the Workers' Party of Canada. The membership paid dues to both organizations.

At the third national convention of the C.P.C., a report was presented revealing the extent of Finnish activity within the party. According to it, the Finnish section had donated \$2000.00 to the Worker and had paid out \$5,749.11 for various party dues.³ Like the U.L.F.T.A., the F.O.C. proved to be a relatively wealthy organization; in 1927 it had forty-two halls and properties valued at \$250,000.00. The printing plant which produced Vaupaus, the official newspaper of the F.O.C., was worth \$40,000.⁴

1. P.A.C., Department of Justice Records, Stuart Edwards, Deputy Minister of Justice to R.H. Webb, Mayor of Winnipeg, 24 Nov. 1931.

2. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

The F.O.C. was controlled by the C.P.C. A.T. Hill, secretary of F.O.C., for example, in a letter to J.W. Ahlquist, "the grand old man of the F.O.C.", wrote: "your every action as a Party member in these mass organizations (F.O.C.) belongs to the Party, and as a party member you must always set the party instructions and party discipline first...."¹ Similarly, Vaupaus became a mouthpiece for the C.P.C. The minutes of the Finnish Fraction Bureau of 2 November 1930 stated:

The general political line of the Vaupaus and the organization of its staff shall be based unequivocally upon the line of the Comintern and specifically as laid down in the decisions and directives of the C.P.C....The Vaupaus shall be the collective organizer of the Finnish masses, rallying them in and around the F.O.C. in open support of the C.P.C. and for the defense of the Soviet Union. 2

As with the U.L.F.T.A., the aim of the C.P.C. was to draw Finnish workers into the general stream of a revolutionary proletariat ready to support the party:

The chief objectives of the languages organizations must be to become real mass organizations which are to draw the foreign-born workers into the general stream of the Canadian Labour movement...such as the C.L.D.L..... The Finnish society must become a broad mass organization and be utilized by the party fraction as a recruiting

1. Ibid., A.T. Hill to J.W. Ahlquist, 14 Dec. 1929.

2. Ibid.

ground for the Party.... 1.

In 1930, the F.O.C. affiliated with the C.L.D.L. By 1932 it had over one thousand official members within the League.

The U.L.F.T.A. and the F.O.C. thus provided the League with a substantial financial and membership base. As the depression continued unabated and anti-foreign sentiment became more pronounced among native Canadians, the League would enlarge its "foreign-born" support.

1. Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

The Communists, the Authorities, and the Depression 1929-1931

While Smith struggled to consolidate the C.L.D.L. into a nation-wide organization, the C.P.C., reflecting the directives issued at the Comintern's Sixth World Congress, established two other front organizations--the Workers' Unity League (W.U.L.) and the Farmers' Unity League (F.U.L.). Using the W.U.L., the communists hoped to organize Canadian workers into powerful revolutionary industrial unions which would promote communist policies throughout the country. The F.U.L. was a similar attempt to attune Canada's rural workers to communist programmes in the agrarian sector. Both organizations sought to take advantage of the economic depression to further their ends. Inevitably, the C.L.D.L. became closely associated with the activities of these two organizations. Increased communist activity, however, provoked a corresponding reaction among the vast majority of Canadians and the political authorities. Fearing that in time of depression, the populace was susceptible to subversive ideas, governments took decisive steps to suppress the communist movement.

Canadians, whether politicians or lesser mortals, were totally unprepared for the depression. The collapse of the stock market meant little to Mackenzie King; he was not aware that anything extraordinary had occurred. In the 1930 session of parliament King was in a complacent mood and the government proposed no special measures to combat the ailing economy. Canadians knew better. In July 1930, King paid the political price for his serious underestimation of the depression; the Liberals were soundly defeated at the polls.

King's successor, R.B. Bennett, however, proved totally unsuited in temperament to deal with the vulgarities of the depression. Where understanding and compassion were needed and inspiration was sought, Bennett, imbued with strict moral standards¹ and cold businessman logic, offered only perseverance, hardwork, and an orthodox, unimaginative administration. Moreover, he indulged in outbursts of childish egotism in dealing with those that did not share his views.

Meanwhile, as the world prices of primary commodities declined, so did the demand for a number of the nation's export staples. Canada, depending heavily on the export of raw and semi-processed goods, found itself in the midst of a world wide economic war.

1. Donald Creighton, Canada's First Century, (Toronto, 1970), p. 198.

High tariffs, currency devaluation and foreign exchange manipulation played havoc with the Canadian economy. The collapse of international wheat prices created hardships for prairie farmers while lower productivity caused unemployment. Hard hit were the country's labour bodies; they saw their size and stature undermined as the depression wore on. The coal, textile and clothing unions were the most unfortunate. According to S.T. Jamieson

...coalmining, textile and clothing [unions]...almost disappeared during the early 1930s. The United Mine Workers, which claimed almost half a million members during the early 1920s had hardly more than 25,000 in good standing by 1932. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which had 177,000 members in 1920, received per capita payments from only 7,000 in 1932.... 1

In these industries the communists endeavoured to take advantage of the economic malaise. Although the C.P.C., rocked by expulsions, was not very strong in terms of membership² or finances, it organized the Workers' Unity League (W.U.L.) and Farmers' Unity League (F.U.L.) which played a measurable role in promoting communist policies throughout the nation.

The W.U.L. grew out of the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.)--an organization of the C.P.C. designed to influence

1. Jamieson, Op.Cit., p. 214.

2. In February 1931, the Party had only about 1,300 members paying dues although officially the Party was reporting 4,000 members. See M.L. Pelt, The Communist Party 1929-1942, (M.A. University of Toronto, 1964), p. 74.

trade union policy by propaganda. When the Comintern decided to abandon the policy of "boring from within" existing trade unions and establish "revolutionary unions," the Red International of Labour Unions (R.I.L.U.) sent directives to the C.P.C. outlining a "series of immediate measures designed to set into motion a broad revolutionary trade union movement from below under your (C.P.C.) leadership."¹ In November 1929, the W.U.L. was organized and the national executive committee of T.U.E.L. joined it.²

The purpose of the W.U.L. was to "organize the Canadian workers into powerful revolutionary industrial unions created on the axis of the widest rank and file centre; to fight for the defense and improvement of conditions of the working class, mobilizing and organizing the Canadian workers for the final overthrow of capitalism and for the establishment of a Revolutionary Workers' Government."³ The W.U.L. itself was not a trade union, but a federation of trade unions, industrial leagues, shop councils, committees of action and opposition groups in the Trade and Labour Congress and the All Canadian Congress of Labour unions. These bodies provided the funds for the W.U.L. through affiliation dues. The League also relied on donations.

The four largest unions in the W.U.L. were the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union (L.W.I.U.) with locals in British Columbia, Northern

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4.

2. Ibid.

3. Labour Organization in Canada, 1930, p. 162.

and Western Ontario; the Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers (I.U.N.T.W.), comprised of radical garment workers in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg; the Mine Workers' Union of Canada (M.W.U.C.) with locals in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia; and a unique W.U.L. creation--the National Unemployed Workers' Association (N.U.W.A.).

The Lumber Workers' Industrial Union affiliated to the W.U.L. in 1930. Rejecting the T.L.C. and the A.C.C.L. as ineffective in the depression, the L.W.I.U. advocated militant action. Among its demands was a seven-hour day, a five-day week and eighty dollars a month minimum. By 1932, it had seven thousand members.¹ The L.W.I.U. engaged in numerous strikes over Northern Ontario and, in 1932 alone, paid out strike benefits totalling two thousand dollars.² The Industrial Union of Needle Trades Workers affiliated to the W.U.L. in 1931. At the time it had one thousand members but after reorganization by the end of the year the union totalled twenty-five hundred members.³ The Mine Workers' Union of Canada was originally an affiliate of the A.C.C.L. but in a rank and file revolt in 1930 it threw out its old leadership, repudiated the A.C.C.L. and the Canadian Labour Party and joined the W.U.L. with an overwhelming majority.⁴ In Alberta and British Columbia, the

1. Ibid., 1932, p. 85.

2. Ibid., p. 113.

3. Ibid., 1931, p. 247.

4. Ibid., 1930, p. 164.

M.W.U.C. affiliate locals of the W.U.L. totalled fifteen, nine in Alberta and six in eastern British Columbia and Vancouver Island. These constituted ninety per cent of the work force in the coal mining industry in these two western provinces.¹ In early 1930, a new M.W.U.C. local was organized in the Estevan strip mine in Saskatchewan which was destined to experience a tragic strike in which three miners were shot to death by the R.C.M.P. and many arrested.

The W.U.L. was the only union that seriously undertook the organization of the unemployed. Through the National Unemployed Workers' Association, the W.U.L. campaigned for programmes of immediate emergency relief for all unemployed to be paid from municipal, provincial and federal funds, insurance for all workers against unemployment, no disqualification from relief because of refusal to accept a pay cut or work below union rates and no eviction of unemployed from their homes because of non-payment of rent. The campaign did have some measure of success. As part of the International Day against unemployment, organized under the auspices of the Comintern, the N.U.W.A. distributed 122,000 leaflets and persuaded 76,150 Canadians to demonstrate on the streets on 25 February 1931.² By June 1931, the N.U.W.A. had issued sixteen

1. Tom McEwen, The Forge Glows Red: From Blacksmith to Revolutionary, (Toronto, 1974), p. 147.

2. In Toronto, 13,000 individuals demonstrated; in Winnipeg 12,000 turned out while in Montreal and Vancouver, approximately 5,000 demonstrated in support of the unemployed. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 77.

thousand membership cards across Canada.¹ Working in conjunction with the C.L.D.L., U.L.F.T.A. and F.O.C. in 1931, the N.U.W.A. confronted R.B. Bennett with a 94,000 signature petition for non-contributory unemployment insurance, a five day week with a seven hour day and minimum wage of twenty-five dollars per week for men and women employees across Canada. Smith, who was a member of the N.U.W.A. delegation which interviewed Bennett, commented on the event:

...the prime minister arose in stiff formality as if to deliver judgement in court....We were informed that the destitution which prevailed among the working people was due to "wasteful living" and "unwise investments." He denounced unemployment insurance. It would undermine the "free institutions" of Canada. 2

Despite its setbacks, the W.U.L. did enjoy limited success. In many cases, contrary to the T.L.C. and A.C.C.L. arguments that wage gains could not be won in periods of depression, the W.U.L. did procure increased benefits for its members.³ Despite desperate financial difficulties, in its first year of existence the W.U.L. had spent more than \$1,674.00 just on the organization of various unions.⁴ Although some of its accomplishments have been exaggerated

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B10-E18.

2. Smith, All My Life, p. 120.

3. McEwen, Op.Cit., p. 157.

4. Calculated from the W.U.L. expense sheet, P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B10 E18.

by its supporters,¹ undoubtedly, the W.U.L. did generate a great deal of publicity. Through its published bulletins such as the Unemployed Worker and the Relief Camp Worker, the League's message did reach a large segment of the Canadian populace. It continued to organize around a faithful and militant nucleus of experienced party members and provide substantial opposition to corporations and governments until 1935 when it was dissolved as part of the Comintern's and the C.P.C.'s plan to establish a broad People's Front in the struggle against "fascism" and the danger of war.

Meanwhile, the communists were also active among prairie farmers. In the West, sagging world wheat prices were overshadowed by natural disasters. By a coincidence, the 1930s were years of drought and grasshopper plagues as well as depression. In some areas of southern Saskatchewan, there were nine successive years of almost total crop failures.² In these areas, farmers were faced with foreclosures on their mortgaged farms.

The C.P.C. organized the Farmers' Unity League (F.U.L.) in Saskatoon on 11 December 1930 to serve as an extension of the party's apparatus in the agrarian sector. The formation of the

1. Op.Cit., p. 157. Tom Ewen, the national executive secretary of the W.U.L., claimed that between 1933-36 the W.U.L. organized and led approximately 90% of all strikes in Canada. However, according to Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 74, the W.U.L. during its existence did not organize more than 40,000 workers and its membership rolls were padded with other communist organizations.

2. H. Blair Neatby, The Politics of Chaos: Canada in the Thirties, (Toronto, 1972), pp. 30-31.

F.U.L. was the result of insistent demands from the Comintern for a "turn" in the application of agrarian policy in Canada. In October 1930, the political secretariat of the Comintern wrote to the C.P.C. executive: "in the agrarian field, the party must energetically undertake mobilization of the masses of poor farmers around the immediate struggles against evictions, taxation, and for immediate state relief and subsidy...."¹ The programmes and the slogans of the F.U.L. reflected the communist position on major issues. It emphasized organized resistance to evictions, the cancellation of debts and arrears, free education, medicare and "an income of not less than \$1000 per year for all poor farmers" and of course the "unity of the oppressed farmers with the industrial workers for a revolutionary Workers' and Farmers' Government."²

Although the F.U.L. was organized to serve as a vehicle of communist agitation among the Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Teutonic section of the agrarian populace in the prairies, the strongest support for the movement came from those Ukrainian and Finnish farmers who were already associated with the communists via the U.L.F.T.A. and the F.O.C.³ Largely confined to Alberta and Saskatchewan, the membership of the F.U.L. never exceeded five

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4.

2. Ivan Avakumovic, "The Communist Party of Canada and the Prairie Farmer: The Interwar Years," cited in Western Perspectives I: Papers of the Western Studies Conference, 1973, (Toronto, 1974), p. 81.

3. Ibid.

thousand individuals.¹ Although not as successful as the W.U.L., led by such hard working people as Carl Axelson and H.N. Bartholomew --both of whom had organizational experience either in the Socialist Party of Canada or the Industrial Workers of the World, the F.U.L. did contribute to the radicalization of a segment of the agrarian populace who were disappointed by the performance of non-communist farm organizations.² Like the W.U.L., the F.U.L. was disbanded when the Comintern, in July and August 1935, decided it was time to co-operate with "bourgeois democracies" against "fascist dictatorships."

II

The C.L.D.L. was inextricably bound to the activities of the W.U.L. and the F.U.L. Smith and the N.E.C. of the League supported the two organizations and in many instances worked in their behalf. There was an interchange of membership among the three bodies; individuals could and often did belong to all three. They were part and parcel of the C.P.C.'s overall attempt to saturate the Canadian populace with the communist doctrine.

In western Canada when the F.U.L. organized hunger marches or demonstrations against tax sales, evictions or foreclosures, the

1. P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C. B28 E4.

2. Op.Cit., p. 84.

C.L.D.L. was always called in case of arrests. Indeed, the C.L.D.L. attempted to establish League committees in every F.U.L. unit.¹ By 1933, there were twenty-seven rural branches of the C.L.D.L. in Alberta, fourteen rural branches in Manitoba and a handful in Saskatchewan.² The C.L.D.L. also endeavoured to publicize the "main issues" in the farming areas and promote The Furrow, the F.U.L. newspaper.³

The interplay of activity between the C.L.D.L. and the W.U.L. was illustrated in the case of Annie Buller.⁴ Buller was an organizational secretary in the N.E.C. of the League. She had been on the provisional committee when the League was initiated in 1925 and remained on the national executive throughout its existence. Smith considered Buller's "magnetic personality...intelligence and organizational ability indispensable to the C.L.D.L."⁵ This,

1. Report of First Representative National Convention, 14-17 July 1933, Toronto. Resolutions were passed that C.L.D.L. committees be established in every unit of the F.U.L. at the F.U.L. District Conventions held in the three prairie provinces during the summer of 1933.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Annie Buller (her real name was Anna Gurinick) was a Russian Jewess, who emigrated to Canada sometime in the 1900s. She studied, for a time, at the Rand School of Social Sciences in New York where she became well versed in socialism. Returning to Canada, she immediately became active in trade union and radical circles, becoming vice-president of the O.B.U.'s Montreal executive in 1920. She shifted to the Workers' Party of Canada when it was formally organized. Later, she became the business manager of The Worker. She joined the C.L.D.L. on its inception (P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 139, R.C.M.P. Report; and Rodney, Op. Cit., p. 164.)

5. A.S.C.T., 16 Mar. 1946.

however, did not preclude her from activity within the W.U.L. Because of her "organizational ability," in September 1931, she was sent by the W.U.L. executive to the little town of Bienfait, located on the Estevan strip mine in Saskatchewan. Her purpose was to "radicalize" a Mine Workers' Union of Canada local which had struck for better wages and working conditions. Buller accomplished her task well. On 27 September, she made a number of "inflammatory" speeches imploring the miners to fight or "your wives and children go hungry and barefooted."¹ Two days later, she was instrumental in organizing a parade of miners from Bienfait to Estevan. By means of the parade it was hoped to publicize a mass meeting scheduled for that evening in Estevan; Buller was to be the main speaker.

However, no application for a parade had been made to Estevan officials and the town's police force and twenty-two R.C.M.P. officers attempted to prevent the three to four hundred miners and their families from completing the procession. A riot ensued; three miners were killed, eighteen were wounded and there was sixty thousand dollars worth of damage done to store fronts in the town. Dozens were arrested, including Buller for inciting the miners "in a manner causing...disturbance of the peace."²

1. Anon., Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts, (Pamphlet published by the C.L.D.L., Toronto, 1932), p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

The C.L.D.L. rushed to the defense of Buller and the militant miners. When the trials began in October, Smith travelled to Estevan "to give assistance at the hearings, to advise the accused, and to direct, in some measure the manner in which counsel for the workers' defense, under the C.L.D.L. would proceed."¹ The League hired Wilfred Hefferman--a barrister from Regina--as defense counsellor. Despite the League's efforts, sixteen miners were found guilty of rioting, assault and unlawful assembly and were given sentences of hard labour plus fines. Buller was convicted for unlawful assembly and inciting to riot on the basis of the speech she made 27 September. She was sentenced to one year plus six months if she failed to pay the \$500 fine imposed.² Buller appealed her case, won a new trial at which she conducted her own defense: The appeal was lost and she was incarcerated for one year in the Battleford Jail, Saskatchewan.

The Estevan affair illustrates not only the interrelation of personnel between the C.L.D.L. and the W.U.L., but makes clear an important function of the Defense League; while the W.U.L. and the F.U.L. sought to organize "workers" and "farmers" respectively into militant groups, the C.L.D.L. acted as a legal protective agency for the "organizers." The League came to the rescue of hundreds of communist agitators who appeared before the courts because of their

1. A.S.C.T., 23 Feb. 1946.

2. Also arrested and sentenced to a one year jail term was another W.U.L. organizer Sam Scarlett.

activities. This was not to deny the League's professed function in terms of the "workers" as well. In defense of the Estevan miners, most of whom were not communists, the C.L.D.L. spent \$2,650.00¹ in the three week trials. For the miners on trial, who could not afford the exorbitant legal costs involved, the League was most welcome. According to Smith:

The role of the Defense League was never more deeply appreciated than it was during those days by the miners and their wives and families. They regarded my presence in that court room as a very substantial guarantee that they were not fighting alone.... 2

Annie Buller and the Estevan trials personified the League's double-edged role in the thirties. Its "defender" role was an integral component of the communists' "agitator-instigator" role. One fed on the other. Taken in toto, it represented part of the C.P.C.'s overall strategy for "revolution" in Canada.

Buller was one of two organizational secretaries in the national executive of the C.L.D.L.; the other was Rebecca (Beckie) Buhay. A long time C.P.C. member, Buhay joined the League in 1929. According to Smith, she walked into the League's office at 331 Bay Street and bluntly stated: "A.E., I have come to help you in this office." For Smith, she was "the right woman in the right place that day

1. In addition, the League was sued for another \$400 by Wilfred Hefferman in 1933 for his work at the trials. The Toronto Globe and Mail, 4 Mar. 1933.

2. A.S.C.T., 23 Feb. 1946.

...[she]...complimented the heavier formality of my older years."¹

Buhay remained for the next eleven years the League's organizational secretary. Although she was "skilled as a photographic artist" and had a chance to secure a "lucrative position" elsewhere, Buhay chose to write reports, lead delegations and generally aid in the work of the League. She earned a meagre salary of \$320.50 per year, which was slightly more than half of that of Smith who received \$496.45 per year as general-secretary.²

Besides individuals such as Buhay and Buller in the N.E.C., the League was served by a coterie of tireless organizers throughout the country. These included Stewart, Smith's son, who quite frequently helped his father organize speaking tours and plan campaigns; W.H. Dekker, secretary of the Toronto District; Frank Lucas, secretary of the Vancouver District; Jeannie Corbin, a member of the N.E.C. and secretary of the Timmins District; and Charles Marriott, the Winnipeg District organizer.³ They had their travelling expenses for tours and meetings paid out of the C.P.C. and C.L.D.L. treasury. The League also, throughout its existence, employed hundreds of "temporary organizers."⁴

1. Ibid., 16 Feb. 1946.

2. Report of the First Representative National Convention of the C.L.D.L., (Toronto, 14-17 July, 1933). Even in the depression, this sum was hardly sufficient to support Smith and his family. Consequently, Mrs. Smith helped the household out by working as a dress-maker. (Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976).

3. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

4. Report, Op.Cit.

Without question, however, the linchpin of the C.L.D.L. was Smith. The general secretary of the League crisscrossed the country a number of times, seeking to demonstrate to Canadians that the period of stability in the capitalist world was coming to an end and that the proletariat was entering a stage of revolutionary struggle--a struggle in which the C.L.D.L. was vital because only it could defend the proletariat from capitalist injustice.

Smith's revolutionary zeal was most evident in a series of letters he wrote to Woodsworth in 1931. Somewhat like St. Paul, who wanted to lay hold of the prize because a higher power had laid hold of him, Smith wanted to grip Woodsworth, who he still respected, with communism because it had so tremendously gripped him. To Woodsworth he wrote:

The resources of communism...are as yet unexplored...communism will be victorious....There is only one course to follow in a critical period such as we are now passing thro (sic) that is, to become more radical....This is my message to you as a public man....turn left.

Woodsworth was equally firm in his response:

For old times sake I regret very much indeed that we should have apparently drifted so far apart....

I, too, recognize the seriousness of the situation. We differ as to the means to be employed....Our difference is pretty fundamental.

1. P.A.C. Woodsworth Papers, Box 8, Smith to Woodsworth, 22 Apr. 1931.

Woodsworth then reminded Smith of his attitude toward the First World War:

It is no narrow spirit but rather that we may understand something of that difference that I recall to you that during the last Great War, you helped to recruit for the Imperialist Capitalist armies. You were still President of the Manitoba Conference when I sent in my resignation, based largely on my refusal to have anything to do with the war...while I have every sympathy with the great experiment that is being worked out in Russia, I believe that the Communist Party of Canada is not doing the best to promote the success of that experiment by its present tactics, nor do these tactics...assist in fighting capitalism in Canada.... 1

Smith admitted that "I was wrong at the time of the Great War," but chided Woodsworth for maintaining "a semi-liberal labour attitude and policy in regard to the problems of the working class." He reiterated his argument that "there is no place wherein the working class can co-operate with the capitalist class to bring about a new social order..." and again urged Woodsworth to "turn left."² Woodsworth remained unconvinced.

Despite a great deal of inflammatory and revolutionary rhetoric, there is no evidence that Smith and other communist leaders sought to overthrow the nation's socio-political system through force and violence. Indeed, through such organizations as the W.U.L., the F.U.L.

1. Ibid., Woodsworth to Smith, 23 Apr. 1931.

2. Ibid., Smith to Woodsworth, 25 Apr. 1931.

and the C.L.D.L., the communists pursued their goals in a militant but essentially reformist and legal fashion. The political authorities, however, thought otherwise and reacted accordingly.

III

In dealing with communist activities, there was a certain amount of fear in the news media and among the authorities. The Toronto Globe, for example, editorialized throughout the thirties that communism in Canada had to be suppressed, otherwise, it would permeate Canadian democratic institutions and destroy them. The Globe, in reporting communist activities, always appealed to its readers' sentiments; to be faithful and loyal to the British Crown and to respect the institutions that Canada had inherited from Britain. The paper exemplified the notion that the C.P.C. was an un-British entity because the Party owed its allegiance primarily to the Soviet Union and because the Party did not respect the sanctity of the Anglo-Saxon institutions that were an integral part of Canada's heritage.¹ Taken in this light, the communist menace appeared a dangerous threat to Canada's well-being. Implicit in the Globe's anti-communist editorials was the fear of ideological subversion. It was a fear widely held. The Montreal Gazette, for example, succinctly captured the phobia when it stated "what

1. See, for example, the Toronto Globe, 16 Jan., 1930.

happens to a man's mind in times of depression is just as important as what happens to his body, and therefore it is incumbent upon the authorities to safeguard the individual mind from corruption when it is threatened by the spread of revolutionary doctrine." To the Gazette, the communists were guilty not only of spreading revolutionary propaganda, but also of developing "militant organizations" dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a "workers' republic." It concluded that the economic situation afforded them the perfect opportunity to "prosecute their nefarious work" and therefore federal and provincial intervention was imperative if Canada was to escape a "class war."

The federal government and most of the provincial administrations agreed with this analysis of the communist threat to Canadian society. R.B. Bennett, from the day he became prime minister, roundly denounced socialism and communism. In a speech at the eleventh annual convention of the Ontario Conservative Association, for example, he declared that the communists

are sowing their seeds everywhere... Throughout Canada... propaganda is being put forward by organizations from foreign lands that seek to destroy our institutions... We ask every true Canadian to put the iron heel of ruthlessness against a thing of that kind: . . . 2

Bennett was convinced that communism was "a social cancer to be excised;

1. Montreal Gazette, 13 Aug. 1931, cited in the Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1932, p. 425.

2. Ottawa Evening Citizen, 10 Nov. 1932.



an "adder's blood to be penned up and stamped out if possible."¹
 The provincial attorneys-general were no less certain that a "war on communism" was necessary. W.H. Price, attorney-general of Ontario, for example, had a pamphlet published to warn the Canadian worker that

it is the task of the Communist Party of Canada to do its share towards bringing on world revolution, by creating class antagonisms and generally fermenting discord. It is their theory that petty grievances can be magnified until serious situations are created; that by means of strikes and demonstrations, through appeals to real or imaginary class prejudices the stage suitable for the preliminaries of open revolution will be reached. 2

Clearly, the authorities believed the communists to be "unscrupulous schemers" engaged in a vast conspiracy to subvert Canadian institutions. Although the implicit conspiratorial theory was a simplistic interpretation of Canadian Marxism, communist rhetoric left no doubt that, at least in principle, communists were committed to the overthrow of the existing order. Moreover, they were active, seemingly well-organized, and freely and lustily denounced the nation's institutions.

1. Michiel Horn, The Dirty Thirties: Canadians in the Great Depression, (Toronto, 1972), p. 390.

2. Agents of Revolution: A History of the Workers' Unity League, Setting Forth its Origins and Aims, (published by direction of Hon. W.H. Price, K.C., Attorney-General for Ontario, n.d., probably 1931), p. 1.

-IV

The C.P.C. was founded and supported by persons who, for the most part, were not native Canadians but were of Eastern European background. This furnished in the minds of many native Canadians an identifiable correlation between communism and the foreign-born. Somewhat reminiscent of the national "Red Scare" of 1919, when Canadians, engrossed with labour unrest, inflation and the belief that the world's social order was under siege, blamed the foreign-born; the depression and "hard times" again exposed latent fears and prejudices against the immigrant. Beginning in the early 1930s, anti-alien sentiments grew and pressure was exerted on the government for action. Deportation was advocated as the chief means to get rid of undesirables. People such as Major-General James H. MacBrien, commissioner of the R.C.M.P. and Ralph Webb, mayor of Winnipeg genuinely believed and propagated the theory that large scale deportations of the foreign-born, would remove the major source of turmoil and unrest that existed in the nation. Webb, for example, declared that "bolshevism...is getting a grip on Canada's recent immigrants." He proposed that "the Dominion...maintain a secret service expressly for combating the bolshevik menace" and that any recent immigrants who exhibited communist tendencies "ought to be just spirited out of the country and back to where they came from."¹ McBrien concurred with Webb

1. Interview given by Webb to the Montreal Gazette,

and blamed the communists for the nation's unemployment problem:

It is notable that 99% of these fellows [communists] are foreigners and many of them have not been here long. The best thing to do would be to send them back where they came from in every way possible. If we were rid of them there would be no unemployment or unrest in Canada. 1

The demand for a speedy deportation policy grew, as the depression wore on. Alfred Cuddy, assistant commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police captured the prevailing opinion in an address to the Chief Constables' Association of Canada:

It would seem to be beyond dispute that the deportation of undesirables from foreign lands, back to their own countries, should not be dependent upon the length of time they have been resident in Canada....There should be no time limitation if this country is to develop as it should, and to bring up a race of which all can be proud.... 2

The Vancouver Board of Police concurred with Cuddy, passing the following resolution:

We...strongly recommend to the Prime Minister that the Immigration Act be amended...[so that]...provision [be]

23 July 1931, cited by Woodsworth in the House of Commons Debates, 29 July 1931, p. 4295. Also P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 141, Webb to Bennett, 25 Feb. 1931.

1. Cited in Lorne and Caroline Brown, An Unauthorized History of the R.C.M.P., (Toronto, 1973), p. 63.

2. P.A.C. Woodsworth Papers, Box 8, Chief Constable's Association of Canada 25th Annual Conference Report, p. 14.

made for the immediate deportation
of...undesirable aliens....Deportation
proceeds should be speeded up. 1

City and town councils across the country also favoured deportation policies for "undesirables." At a regular meeting held in April 1931, the city of Sudbury passed the following resolution: "that the city of Sudbury go on record asking the Dominion government to deport all undesirables and communists and a copy of resolution be forwarded to the government at Ottawa, also to all municipalities in the Dominion, asking them to endorse Sudbury's action." Over eighty municipalities across the country endorsed the resolution and sent telegrams to R.B. Bennett urging immediate action.² Bennett sympathized, but pointed out the difficulties in implementing such a policy: "...deportations are not at all easy to arrange, for the reason that the countries from which these agitators come are not always willing to receive them again."³

Nevertheless, a vigorous effort was made to deport "undesirables." The vehicle was the Immigration Act. Under Section 41--an amendment dating back to 6 June 1919--anyone not born in Canada, regardless of how long he had lived in the country, could be deported for advocating the overthrow of constituted

1. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 139, Vancouver Board of Police Resolution to Bennett, 23 Dec. 1932.

2. Ibid., Vol. 141. Compiled from telegrams sent to Bennett.

3. Ibid., Vol. 141, Bennett to R.S. Hooton, 28 Apr. 1931.

authority by force. Under Section 42 of the Act, immigrants who had been in Canada less than five years could also be deported if they became "public charges." Moreover, public trials were not necessary; cases of individuals charged under the provisions of the Act were heard in camera. The services of lawyers and other assistance were difficult to obtain in such conditions.¹

In the thirties, the conservative government used the provisions of the Immigration Act with dogmatic determination. Between 1903 and 1928 a total of 17,600 immigrants were deported-- an average of slightly more than one thousand annually. Thereafter, there were 4,025 cases of deportation; the following year the figure stood at seven thousand.²

"Public charges" were the most common cause for deportations. Municipalities saw this as a method to reduce relief payments. In Montreal, for example, a plan for the deportation of jobless aliens was proposed at the final meeting of the Montreal city council in 1931 and the director of city services was instructed to write to mayors of principal Canadian cities to discover whether they favoured a conference to formulate such a policy for presentation to the Dominion government.³ In Edmonton, Thomas Magee, superintendent

1. Brown, Op.Cit., p. 64.

2. Canadian Forum, July 1932, p. 368. Also see the Canada Year Book for the years 1929-1931 for confirmation of the figures.

3. Oscar Ryan, Deported, pamphlet published by the C.L.D.L., 1932, p. 4.

of the city's relief department announced that the city would begin wholesale deportations of the immigrants who had become a charge on the city. Over fifty per cent of those drawing relief from the city were affected.¹ Regina, meanwhile, deported 150 of its residents in the winter of 1931; Port Colborne deported 130 while Oshawa got rid of 170 men.² The list continued in other communities. The prevalence of deportations prompted the Canadian Forum to remark that "...the most serious crime that an immigrant can commit is the negative one of failing to make good, as nearly 2/5 of the cases were those people who had become a public charge...."³ Statistics illustrated the validity of the Canadian Forum's assertion. Out of the 4,025 cases of deportation in 1930, 1,806 were deported because they were "public charges."⁴

More decisive action against the communists, per se however involved joint cooperation between Queen's Park and Ottawa. Early in 1931, the Attorney-General of Ontario, W.H. Price, interviewed Hugh Guthrie, Canada's Minister of Justice, to discuss the

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Canadian Forum, July 1932, p. 368.

4. Canadian Labour Defense League Plenum Report 1931,

elimination of communism.¹ With the aid of the R.C.M.P., who under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Department of Justice, had gathered a wealth of information on communistic activities, legal action against communists was instituted. Joseph Sedgewick, Inspector of Legal Offices of the Attorney-General's Department was instructed by Price to collaborate with Ottawa officials in the preparation of documents for a case against the communists. For several months before the actual raid on communist properties and the arrest of eight communist leaders, Sedgewick collected and categorized the necessary evidence.²

The actual details for the raid were planned by Sedgewick in cooperation with General Williams, commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, Major Jennings, the local Superintendent of the R.C.M.P., Vernon LaChance, director of Records for the R.C.M.P., and Chief Constable Draper of the Toronto police force.³ On 11 August 1931 police from all levels of government, raided the offices of the C.P.C., the Workers' Unity League, The Worker and the homes of Tim Buck, Tom McEwen and John Boychuk. Those taken into custody were Tim Buck, political secretary of the C.P.C. and the acknowledged leader of the communist movement in Canada; John Boychuk, organizer of Ukrainians for the C.P.C.; Tom Ewen (McEwen),

1. Toronto Globe, 12 Aug. 1931.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.

general secretary of the W.U.L.; Malcolm L. Bruce, ex-editor of The Worker; Samuel Carr (Cohen), chief assistant to Buck; Amos T. Hill, communist organizer among the Finns and former editor of Vaupaus; Matthew Popovich, Ukrainian organizer for the C.P.C. and former editor of Robochyj Narod; and Thomas Cacic, organizer of the "Jugo-Slavs" for the C.P.C.¹

The number of arrests was higher than had been originally planned. Vernon LaChance, the director of Records for the R.C.M.P. suggested to the Ontario Attorney-General the prosecution of only three key figures--Tim Buck, Tom Ewen, and Malcolm Bruce. Imprisonment of these individuals, it was hoped, would frighten the party's membership into inactivity and throw the communist movement into disarray. As the investigation proceeded, however, it became readily apparent that cases could be made against the others, who held prominent positions within the C.P.C. The prosecution of these others, it was believed would ensure a severe depletion of leadership within the party's ranks. Two others, Stewart Smith and Charles Sims were included on the list but were deleted, presumably because they were in the Soviet Union at the time and warrants for their arrests would have been difficult to enforce.²

1. A certain Mike Golinsky was also taken into custody but was later released because there was not sufficient evidence to connect him with the C.P.C. See Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1932, p. 425.

2. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.

Smith, although the general secretary of the C.L.D.L., was not included on the prosecution list. It is difficult to ascertain the reason for this omission. Certainly he was well-known to the R.C.M.P. and the Department of Justice. The R.C.M.P. had monitored his increasingly militant activities from the time he had still been a Methodist minister and, earlier, in 1931, the Alberta attorney general had inquired of the Ontario attorney-general as to the advisability of prosecuting Smith and the League, for disseminating "seditious" literature.¹ At the time, however, no action was taken. One can only speculate that it was thought that Smith's indirect relationship to the C.P.C.² via the C.L.D.L. did not warrant his arrest with Tim Buck and the others who were leaders of the C.P.C. and the W.U.L. None of the eight arrested were closely connected with the C.L.D.L.

The eight men were charged under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Under this section "any association, organization, society, or corporation whose professed purpose...is to bring about any governmental, industrial or economic change within Canada by use of force, violence" was declared an unlawful association. Similarly, "any person who acts or professes to act as an officer of any such unlawful association and who shall sell, speak, write, or publish anything as the representative...of any such unlawful association

1. P.A.O., Attorney-General Papers, 1931, File 536.

2. Unlike the eight individuals arrested, Smith was never a member of the politbureau of the C.P.C.

or become and continue to be a member thereof...shall be guilty of offence and liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years."¹ Section 98, was specifically resurrected to deal with the perceived communist threat in Canada.

For the Ontario government, the arrests under Section 98 were an experiment to determine the legality of the C.P.C. in Canada. If the Crown's case was upheld by the courts of Ontario, then the way was clear for total destruction of the C.P.C.² For Smith,

1. The Revised Statutes of Canada, 1927, (Ottawa, 1929) I, p. 693. The act which established Section 98 was given assent on 7 July 1919. The following are extracts from this particular section of the criminal code which define an "unlawful association" and the various infractions an individual can be imprisoned for in supporting such an association.

- a. Any association, organization, society or corporation, whose professed purpose is to bring about any governmental, industrial or industrial or economic change within Canada by the use of force, violence or physical injury to persons or property, or by threats of such injury, or which teaches, advocates, advises or defends the use of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to persons or property, or for any other purpose, or which shall by any means prosecute or pursue such purpose or professed purpose, or shall so teach, advocate, advise or defend, shall be an unlawful association.
- b. Any person who prints, publishes, edits, issues, circulates, sells, or offers for sale or distribution any book, newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, picture, paper circular, card, letter, writing, print, publication or document of any kind, in which is taught, advocated, advised, or defended, or who shall in any manner teach, advocate, or advise or defend the use, without authority of law, of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property, or threats of such injury, as a means of accomplishing any governmental, industrial or economic change, or otherwise, shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.

2. Winnipeg Free Press, 12 Aug. 1931.

it represented an intensification of the "class war" in Canada:

In reality, the design and intention of the attack was to destroy the militant political development advancing amongst the whole working class of Canada in which the Communist Party secured a position of leadership. It was a piece of class strategy in the class war. 1

The arrests marked the beginning of the most significant Canadian political trial in the interwar period; it also marked the beginning of a three-year campaign by Smith and the C.L.D.L. to save the communist movement in Canada.

1. A.S.C.T. 11 May 1946.

CHAPTER VII

Communists, Courts, and Campaigns 1931-1933

Following their arrests, the communists were arraigned at the police court, Toronto, where their cases were remanded for hearing at the Fall Assizes in November. The C.L.D.L. furnished the bail, which was set at \$15,000 for each man.¹ Upon arraignment, the accused did not enter a plea, pending the disposition of a motion submitted by their lawyers which sought to quash the indictment on the grounds of an insufficient statement of the offense. When that motion was disallowed, the trial began 2 November. The trial was a cause celebre in Canadian history. It was the first time that any group of individuals actually were tried for violating Section 98 of the Criminal Code. The trial and its subsequent outcome made the League much more apparent to Canadians, as it endeavoured to defend the communists and change the law.

1. A.S.C.T., 4 May 1946.

I.

The trial commenced in the Supreme Court of Ontario, Fall Assizes, at the Toronto city hall with Justice Wright on the Bench. Norman Sommerville, K.C. was the chief prosecutor, assisted by Joseph Sedgewick and Vernon LaChance. The C.L.D.L. retained Hugh J. Macdonald, K.C. as chief of defense, assisted by Onie Brown and J.A. McNaughton. The first objection that the League's lawyers raised was in regard to the selection of the jury. Out of ninety-nine names presented by the Crown for jury duty, Macdonald rejected seventy-five; Sommerville, meanwhile, dismissed twelve prospective jurors--which was the Crown's maximum. For both parties concerned, the selection of the jury was crucial for the "proper" verdict. Smith was disappointed at the twelve individuals finally picked. He believed that

there was not a man on the jury who had any knowledge of what the left-wing labour movement was in Canada. There was not a man who had any idea as to the forces of change that were at work in human society. ...[The jury was]...ignorant as children. 1

In an attempt to point out the "deficiencies" of the jury, the League, in a rather futile effort, picked its own parallel "workers' jury." This was selected by "workers," who had assembled in various conferences organized by the C.L.D.L. The twelve individuals on this jury consisted of two miners, one from Nova Scotia, the other,

1. Ibid., 15 June 1946.

from northern Ontario, a lumberjack, a machinist, an auto-mechanic, a draftsman, a printing pressman, a carpenter, a "labourer," one woman laundress, a farmer and an unemployed worker from the Unemployed Association.¹ The "workers' jury" was charged with "getting into the court as best and as often as they could,"² to hear the evidence. At the end of the trial, they published a pamphlet which was distributed to the C.L.D.L. districts throughout Canada. Not surprisingly, the pamphlet, entitled Not Guilty, pronounced the communists innocent. It proved to be, however, an empty gesture.

Somerville established the thrust of the Crown's case on the second day of the trial:

'Evidence would be shown,' he declared, 'that by means of a deliberate, subtle plan, directed and controlled by Moscow, the communist octopus thrived on force and violence and bloodshed. It insinuated its tentacles into mass organizations, trade unions, farmers' organizations. It received telegrams and letters from Moscow and Berlin. Not only telegrams and letters, but orders as well.'

Somerville hoped to prove that by "creating a feeling of discontent and antagonism, the Party believes it can bring about revolutionary feeling, and then a small group of well-trained men can step into

1. Ibid., 8 June 1946.

2. Ibid.

the lead and bring about revolution."¹

The chief witness for the Crown was Sergeant John Leopold of the R.C.M.P. Many years before, in 1921, he had received instructions "to enquire into the ramifications of the revolutionary movement in western Canada." In that year he had joined the Communist Party under the alias of J.W. Esselwein and until 1928, he had acted as R.C.M.P. spy. He had been present at the second convention of the Workers' Party in 1923 and at the Communist Party Convention of the same year, as well as at the third, fourth and fifth conventions of the C.P.C. He declared:

The aims and objectives of the Party... is to organize the working class of Canada for the overthrow of the existing conditions in this country. By existing conditions I mean the economic institutions, the state and the social order in general. This was to be done by the application of violence and force. 2

Leopold also testified that \$3,000 had been given to the Canadian Party by the Communist International and that "Moscow was dictating the policies of the Ukrainian and Finnish workers' cultural and benefit societies as well as the policies of farmers' organizations and a few other organizations."³ Bolstered by 103 exhibits,

1. The Story of the Trial of the Eight Communist Leaders, pamphlet published by the C.L.D.L., 1931, p. 9. For proceedings during the trial see Rex vs. Tim Buck et al, P.A.O. A.G. C.P.C.

2. Ibid., p. 12.

3. Ibid., p. 13.

including the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Bukharin, Kuusinen, Zinoviev and Radek to prove the Party's advocacy of force and violence, Leopold laid before the court the substance of the Crown's case.

The Defense argued that the case was of a nature new and unprecedented "not only in this court but in any court in the British Empire." Hugh J. Macdonald noted that "this trial involves not so much the guilt or innocence of these men as the guilt or innocence of the Communist Party."¹ He stressed that the accused had been open in their activities, avowing their principles and beliefs, running candidates in federal, provincial and municipal elections, carrying on activities among the workers and otherwise pursuing their work for the past ten years. "They had," he insisted, "functioned openly, frankly, telling what they sought:"

Why had they not been arrested before for fermenting the alleged sinister conspiracy against the country's institutions?... You cannot stop opinions and convictions and desires to further a cause by a court verdict or legal proceedings.

Macdonald concluded on a despairing note: "there is the possibility in this trial...that its outcome may bring liberty into jeopardy to and extent beyond that to which it has ever been threatened in British territories."²

1. Ibid., p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 24.

On 13 November, after ten days of testimony, the lawyers summed up their arguments and the judge charged the jury. In less than two hours a verdict was reached--guilty on all three counts of being members of an unlawful association, being officers of an unlawful association and being parties to a seditious conspiracy. Justice Wright sentenced the men to five years on the first two counts and two years on the third count, the sentences to run concurrently. Deportations where possible¹ were also ordered and all communist property was confiscated.

The results of the trial had national significance. Frank Scott, the noted constitutional and civil rights lawyer from McGill University, wrote:

Only in Italy, Japan, Poland and some of the more reactionary Balkan states is the Party completely outlawed. By the Toronto verdict Canada allied herself with this group of select reactionaries. She is the only country amongst them which claims to be a democracy. 2

Scott argued that "Section 98 creates so many new crimes and establishes so many presumptions of criminality that...people who are not actually communists are liable to prosecution." Scott maintained that

1. Tom Cacic was the only one eligible for deportation because he was the only one that was not a Canadian citizen.

2. F.R. Scott, "The Trial of the Toronto Communists," Queen's Quarterly, Vol. 39, 1932, p. 512.

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All the police need do...is to show that you once attended a communist meeting, perhaps through curiosity, or spoke publicly in advocacy of the party, or distributed literature (presumably any kind of literature) of the party, and at once the Canadian legal machinery gets to work and says you are a criminal liable to twenty years. You won't escape gaol unless you can prove that you are not a member of the party. 1

To prove one's innocence was difficult because "no member of the party will dare to testify that you are a non-member,...by coming forward he would at once give notice to the police that he is a criminal."²

Although somewhat overstated by Scott, the convictions did set the procedures by which the authorities could dispose of any individual which they believed harboured "dangerous thoughts" to the welfare of the state. According to Norman Sommerville, Crown prosecutor, "every person who was or still is a member of the Communist Party of Canada is liable to conviction on charges of being a member of an unlawful association." Further "...the name and address of every member of the Communist Party of Canada are in the hands of the authorities and such information would be available to the attorneys-general of other provinces who desired to prosecute members of the organization in their particular provinces."³

1. _____, "Communists, Senators, and All That," Canadian Forum, Jan. 1932, p. 128.

2. Ibid.

3. Labour Organization in Canada 1931, p. 167.

Despite the convictions, Smith and other communists could rejoice that the declaration of illegality was confined only to the C.P.C. Although the activities of the W.U.L. and to a lesser extent the C.L.D.L. were canvassed during the trials and the Crown sought a broader interpretation of Section 98 to include the W.U.L. and other communist organizations, Justice Wright ruled that the section pertained only to the C.P.C. The result was that the C.L.D.L. along with the other communist organizations continued to function legally.

Immediately after the convictions, the C.L.D.L. lodged an appeal on behalf of the men, putting forth \$160,000 bail for their temporary release until the hearing, set for January 1932. The League also initiated a nation-wide campaign for the repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code.

II

Except for a few muffled protests from intellectuals such as Frank R. Scott and journals such as the Canadian Forum, the immediate reaction to the conviction of the communists under Section 98 was one of general approval. Although there was wide acknowledgement that the whole theme of the law was contrary to British principles of justice, the major dailies of central Canada, gravely concerned with communism, welcomed the convictions. The newspapers of western Canada tended to be more cautious in their approval; however, there

was no explicit condemnation of Section 98.¹ Most editorials agreed with the Toronto Mail and Empire that the government was to be congratulated for "acting quietly and effectively in the interests of citizens at large."² Such a response, however, was only the first round of a series of reactions.

Before the attack on the C.P.C.; Smith and the C.L.D.L. had concentrated on defending in the courts those, who had been arrested in demonstrations and in strikes. After the convictions, the C.L.D.L. shifted its priorities from defending people to changing the law. The League organized Repeal Conferences throughout Canada. These conferences were a means of circulating many thousands of petitions as well as a method of applying pressure upon the given member of parliament in whose constituency the conference was held, forcing him to declare himself on the questions of Section 98 and deportations. Meetings were convened in the following ridings.³

Place of Conference	Constituency	Member of Parliament
1. ONTARIO		
a. Ottawa	Ottawa	T.F. Ahearn
b. Timmins	Timiskaming North	J.A. Beaudette
c. Toronto	Toronto South	G.R. Geary
d. Toronto	Scarboro	J.H. Harris
e. Kirkland Lake	Timiskaming South	Hon. W.A. Gordon

1. See S.M. Breeze, Editorial Response to Communism in the English Language Press, (M.A., Carleton University, 1972). chapter II.

2. Toronto Mail and Empire, 12 Aug. 1931.

3. This information is courtesy of Mr. R. Kenny, Toronto.

f. Fort William	Fort William	Hon. R.J. Manion
g. Port Arthur	Port Arthur-Thunder Bay	O.J. Cowan
h. Sudbury	Nipissing	J.A. Hurtubise
i. Hamilton	Hamilton East	H. Mitchell
j. Thorold	Welland	G.H. Petit
k. Brantford	Brantford	R.E. Ryerson
l. London	London	J.F. White
m. Kitchener	Waterloo North	W.D. Euler
n. Guelph	Wellington South	Hon. H. Guthrie
o. Windsor	Essex West	S.C. Robinson
2. QUEBEC		
a. Montreal	Cartier	S.W. Jacobs
b. Montreal	St. Lawrence	C.H. Cahan
3. MANITOBA		
a. Winnipeg	Winnipeg North Centre	J.S. Woodsworth
b. Brandon	Brandon	D.W. Beaubien
4. SASKATCHEWAN		
a. Saskatoon	Saskatoon	F.R. McMillan
b. Regina	Regina	F.W. Turnbull
5. ALBERTA		
a. Calgary	Calgary West	Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett
b. Edmonton	Edmonton West	Hon. C. Stewart
c. Coleman	McLeod	G.G. Coote
d. Lethbridge	Lethbridge	J.S. Stewart
6. BRITISH COLUMBIA		
a. Vancouver	Vancouver South	A. McInnis
b. Victoria	Victoria	D. Plunkett

The Port Arthur conference provides an example of such meetings.

The conference, which was translated into Finnish and Ukrainian,

discussed not only the "sinister" implication of Section 98, but

also expressed concern over Section 41-42 of the Immigration Act

dealing with deportations. Three resolutions were passed. The

first called generally for the repeal of Section 98 and Sections

41-42. The second was directed to the city council of Port Arthur and condemned city authorities for carrying out the deportation policy of the Bennett government in the case of all workers forced to ask for relief. The third, forwarded to the Minister of Immigration, protested the federal government's deportation policy.¹ Through these conferences the C.L.D.L. attempted to portray the authorities' "double-barelled" weapon for getting rid of "undesirables." The Immigration Act applied to those who had not acquired citizenship, while Section 98 was reserved for the treatment of citizens. During these conferences, 876 organizations (including the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the United Farmers of Alberta) representing 171,315 people passed resolutions demanding the release of those imprisoned under the provisions of Section 98.²

The League's anti-deportation campaign was especially energetic, because of the large "foreign-born" proportion of its membership. Through leaflets, pamphlets, and petitions, the League argued that deportations were

the deliberate policy of the ruling class of Canada...used for the purpose of terrorizing the foreign-born workers in order to reduce them to servility. It is designed to split the working class along nationalist lines; to develop national hatreds

1. Minutes of Port Arthur Constituency Repeal Conference, 11 Sept. 1932.

2. Eastern Canada Conference for the Repeal of Section 98, Hamilton, 6-7 Feb. 1932.

by suggesting to the native born worker that the foreigner has stolen his job and has become the cause of misery for the native worker. 1

The literature issued by the League described the effects of such a policy:

The threat of deportation is brandished like a lash across the backs of tens of thousands of foreign-born Canadian workers....Families are broken up. Fathers are locked up and their families cannot see them. Homes are smashed. Parents are exiled and the children left behind.....

Jobless workers, subsisting on a miserly relief-are browbeaten by threats of mass deportation. To avoid deportation they flee to other cities and try to get relief there. Hounded like animals from pillar to post, they live in daily dread of deportation. 2

By the end of 1931, almost every affiliated ethnic organization had a C.L.D.L. functionary working within it, to establish "Foreign-Born Defense Councils" in major cities towns and mining camps. The purpose of the councils was to solicit the aid of sympathetic bodies, conduct intense and widespread agitation on specific local cases of deportations or persecution and to organize demonstrations, deputations and petitions to provincial and federal authorities for the repeal of sections 41 and 42 of the Immigration Act.³ Throughout

p. 24. 1. Canadian Labour Defense League Plenum Report, 1931

2. Ryan, Op.Cit., p. 3.

3. Op.Cit., p. 25.

the early thirties, Bennett was bombarded by thousands of petitions, postcards, and delegations from hundreds of organizations affiliated to the C.L.D.L. demanding an end to deportations and other measures considered repressive.¹

Smith, in his capacity as general secretary of the League, made frequent trips to Halifax, the detention centre of men who were slated for deportations. He appeared before the Immigration Department's Board of Inquiry on a number of occasions to plead the cases of men about to be deported. Writing in the Canadian Labour Defender, he noted the procedures:

[The] board of inquiry is composed of three persons all with the Department [of Immigration]. This board conducts its sessions in camera. The chairman functions as prosecutor, witness, jailer and judge all at the same time. The other members are there to move and second the decisions of the chairman. The only witnesses admitted to the hearing are [the] R.C.M.P. 2

For Smith, the Board of Inquiry by its very nature was blatantly unjust:

Imagine the vicious circle in which a worker threatened with deportation under the Immigration Act of Canada finds himself! The warrant for his arrest is issued by the Deputy Minister of the [Immigration] Department and is put into effect through the R.C.M.P. ...which lays the first complaint against the worker on information

1. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 139-146.

2. The Canadian Labour Defender, (June 1932.)

furnished. The charges are then investigated by a board of inquiry and... [those] who laid the complaint are the only witnesses before the compounded jailer-judge-presecutor chairman. The appeal of the worker is then made to the Minister of Immigration whose Deputy issued the warrant in the first place. 1

The best that Smith and the C.L.D.L. lawyers could do, as a rule, was to delay deportations. When the R.C.M.P., for example, rounded up ten alleged communists² in early May 1932, and shipped them to Halifax to appear before the board, the C.L.D.L. was able to halt the deportation proceedings for four-and-one-half months. It initiated mass protests and demonstrations on behalf of the incarcerated men and carried a habeas corpus appeal to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia and to the Supreme Court of Canada. The ten Halifax prisoners, however, were ultimately deported.

There are no figures available on how many men the C.L.D.L. defended before the Board of Inquiry, but given the secrecy of the government's investigations and the League's limited resources, it could only have provided legal support to a small fraction of the total number deported. Smith was dismayed at the increasing number of deportations the government was able to carry out almost at will and expressed grave concern over what would happen when "radical workers" were deported to such countries as Poland,

1. Ibid.

2. They were Martin Parker, Arvo Vaara, John Stahlberg, S. Worozbet, J. Farkas, Dan Holmes, Conrad Cessinger, J. Sembay, Hans Kist, and Frederick Zurcher.

Hungary, Juco-Slavia or Bulgaria. He noted that "in such countries the last vestiges of free speech, have long ago disappeared" and although Canada was repressive enough "the horrors of the Canadian third degree pale into insignificance before the bestial sadism of the European jailers."¹ It is not known how many deportees eventually ended up in the prisons of their respective native countries.

The League's anti-deportation agitation was fruitful, however, especially during May Day demonstrations, for it sparked comment in most Canadian newspapers. In an editorial entitled "The Canadian Cheka," the Toronto Daily Star urged fair trials for men about to be deported:

Evidently the lettre de cachet method of the time previous to the French Revolution has been brought to use here....The Canadian Cheka will, it is hoped, not grab any citizen whose looks it does not like and whisk him 2000 miles away to give him a fair hearing. 2

It urged a thorough investigation of immigration criteria and deportation proceedings. The majority of editorials agreed with the Star. The Halifax Chronicle commented:

Canada believes in representative responsible government, after the pattern of the Motherland where freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent. It dislikes

1. Cited in Ryan, Op.Cit., p. 11.
2. The Toronto Daily Star, 2 May 1932.

anything in the nature of secrecy in dealing with an individual accused of any crime. It believes in the old maxim, that a man is innocent until he is proven guilty. Just now a number of individuals have been gathered together in Halifax from different parts of Canada. They have been brought here, some of them 2000 miles. Here an investigation proceeds... which unlike a court of law, is not open to the public, and an adverse verdict means the deportation of the individual. 1

To the Minister of Justice's argument that the federal authorities were rounding up a few alleged communists who had no place in this country,² the Regina Leader-Post had a reply:

The nonsensical slanting of the Ottawa authorities in handling deportation cases of alleged "Radicals" is illustrated by the fact that a Winnipeg man who was rushed off to Halifax to be tried there on a deportation charge has been able to establish the fact that he was born in Canada, and therefore cannot be deported. He is now to be given free transportation back to Winnipeg. 3

The Winnipeg Free Press was in total agreement:

No matter what the public feeling may be regarding certain offences, British justice demands that those charged with certain offences shall have all the protection of a fair trial before they are assumed to be guilty. 4

1. Halifax Chronicle, 2 May 1932.
2. Toronto Mail and Empire, 9 May 1932.
3. Regina Leader-Post, 3 May 1932.
4. Winnipeg Free Press, 9 May 1932.

The newspaper then demanded the repeal of the deportation procedures of the Immigration Act. Frank R. Scott, writing in the Canadian Unionist noted that "as there were 2,307,525 immigrants in Canada according to the census of 1931, this means that some 23% of the population of this country is liable to be exiled for the expression of certain types of opinion, without any protection from the ordinary law courts or any proper trial." He concluded that "it would be hard to find a parallel degree of bureaucratic control in any country on the face of the globe."¹

The outcry against deportations was the first indication that public opinion had become increasingly concerned with civil rights. Communism per se was relegated to a secondary position, regarded more as a "boqey" employed by the federal government to justify disregard for the normal precepts of British justice while giving the appearance of preserving respect for law and order.

As the depression neared its zenith, communist propaganda and agitation increased. Led by Smith and his colleagues in the C.L.D.L., the discontent prevailing throughout the nation, was channelled on to the political leaders of the country. At repeal conferences, hunger marches, unemployed relief strikes and May Day demonstrations, League organizers argued that the state was stifling the "working class movement" and negating their right to

1. F.R. Scott, "Freedom of Speech in Canada--Part II," The Canadian Unionist, Sept. Vol. VII, no. 9, 1933, p. 58.

a decent living. They pointed to Section 98, the continuing deportations and the convicted communists in Kingston as proof that "capitalistic repression" existed in Canada.

The authorities reacted predictably; throughout the nation, communists and their sympathizers were harassed and in many cases thrown in jail for their attacks on the state. In Montreal, for example, on 19 January 1932, F. Rose, D. Chalmers, T. Miller, D. Kashton and P. Richard--all members of the Young Communist League--were arrested and convicted for "sedition," "unlawful assembly" and "inciting to riot." The incident stemmed from a meeting of three hundred unemployed, called by the Unemployed Council of Montreal, to discuss a set of immediate demands to be presented to city officials. The five arrested were the main speakers; each received one year of hard labour for their utterances. Four days later in Port Arthur, police dispersed twelve hundred persons who had gathered in the Port Arthur Hall to "commemorate the death of Lenin." At the close of the meeting a detachment of "plainclothesmen" marched down the aisle and arrested the speakers. Leslie Morris and Philip Halperin, "two young communists," were charged and convicted of "sedition," eight others with police "interference" and eight with obstructing the sidewalk. The Port Arthur District C.L.D.L. called a meeting to protest the arrests

1. Sedition: The Bosses' Weapon to Stifle Protest Against Hunger, Exploitation and War. pamphlet printed by the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L., Toronto, n.d.

seven days later. The gathering at which there were fifteen hundred people only covered a brief introduction by the chairman, when the police intervened and took into custody the proposed speakers. They were subsequently charged with "sedition" and "unlawful assembly."¹ The total arrests within the three weeks covered by the Montreal and Port Arthur meetings numbered twenty-nine, for which the national executive of the League secured \$12,000 in bail bonds.²

In British Columbia, meanwhile, Arthur Evans, a W.U.L. organizer was arrested during a coal miners strike in Princeton. He was charged under Section 98 with "being a member of an unlawful association." He was convicted and sentenced to one year hard labour. The Vancouver District C.L.D.L. mobilized to defend him. A delegation parked itself near the magistrate's chambers until bail for Evans was set. The district executive raised \$100,000 for Evan's bail and after a six month delay obtained his release pending an appeal. The appeal court upheld the conviction on 7 March 1934.³ Meanwhile, provincial police raided the C.L.D.L. branches at Princeton and Cranbrook and seized their literature and office supplies.⁴

1. Ibid.

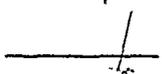
2. Ibid.

3. Section 98: Its Application to the Evans Case, pamphlet printed by the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. (Toronto, n.d.) pp. 8-18.

4. C.L.D.L. bulletin concerning Section 98: A Summary of the Cases Smith Papers, p.c.

The aforementioned examples illustrated the nefarious warfare carried on throughout the country by the authorities and the communists. In some instances it reached ridiculous proportions. In January 1932, for example, two unemployed men, J. Melnyk and J. Duska of Port Colborne were arrested and charged under Section 98 for selling coupons with photos of the eight incarcerated communists on them; in November of the same year, G.W. Kellog was arrested in Edmonton for distributing C.L.D.L. pamphlets while in May 1933 two Guelph residents violated Section 98 by handing out communist leaflets. Indeed, from January 1932 to January 1934, the League defended over thirty individuals who had been arrested under Section 98¹ for seemingly petty offences. The rather indiscriminate use of Section 98 reflected the exasperation of the authorities' attempts to curb communist agitation and propaganda.

In January 1932 Smith requested an interview with Bennett to discuss the repeal of Section 98.² The request was denied; the prime minister felt that "as the government has no intention of repealing Section 98 there is no reason why any formality should be observed in the presentation of the petition."³



1. Ibid.
2. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Smith to Bennett, 20 Jan. 1932, Vol. 142.
3. Ibid., A.W. Merriam (Private Secretary to the prime minister) to Smith, 5 Feb. 1932, Vol. 142.

Undaunted by the refusal, on 22 February 1932, Smith led a delegation to Ottawa, composed of representatives from Windsor, Welland, Hamilton, Port Arthur, Oshawa, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa to confront Bennett with a petition.

Although repeated efforts were made for several days to appear before the prime minister, this proved impossible. The reasons advanced were "pressure of important business" on the part of Bennett. Instead, W.A. Gordon, in his capacity as Minister of Labour and Immigration, officially received the delegation. Smith presented to Gordon an affidavit which declared that 876 organizations representing 171,315 persons had placed themselves on record for the repeal of Section 98, and a petition had been signed by 66,617 persons for Workers' Rights and Anti-Deportation Bill.¹ Gordon assured the delegation that the matter would be brought to the attention of the prime minister, but refused to make further commitments.

The debate on Section 98 and deportations spilled over into the House of Commons. Woodsworth, who had been opposed to Section 98 since its enactment in 1919, "flooded" the pages of Hansard with a barrage of motions to amend the criminal code and the Immigration Act: to strike out Section 98 of the code, to safeguard freedom of assembly and to eliminate the power of

1. Eastern Canada Conference for the Repeal of Section 98, Hamilton, 6-7 Feb. 1932.

deportation after ten years residence in Canada.¹ For Woodsworth, Section 98 was bad legislation. He observed that Buck and the other communists had been convicted not of using or of advocating the use of force, but of entertaining "certain" ideas. The section, Woodsworth maintained, did not define the use of force-- it might apply to moral as well as physical force.² Moreover, contrary to British principles of justice, those accused under Section 98 were assumed guilty until proven innocent. Woodsworth's observations and amendments were little more than annoying to the government. In the House of Commons, Hugh Guthrie, the Minister of Justice, flatly stated:

Section 98 is not in any sense a hindrance to any right thinking person. Section 98 places no restriction upon any citizen of this country who is worthy of the rights of citizenship.... 3

Guthrie concluded that Section 98 was necessary because "there is very serious unrest in the Dominion of Canada to-day."⁴

Woodsworth also vehemently attacked the deportation provisions of the Immigration Act. "It seems to me," he declared, "an extraordinary thing...that we should adopt secret police methods and

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1. McNaught, A Prophet in Politics, p. 244.
 2. Ibid., p. 245.
 3. House of Commons Debates, 14 Feb. 1933, p. 2102.
 4. Ibid.

spirit...people out of the country without a trial...."¹ He accused the government of becoming "hysterical" and of using "bolshevist methods" in combatting communism.

Mackenzie King, who knew where to find an issue that would help his political fortunes, supported Woodsworth. He denounced Section 98 as "shocking" because it denied the "British principle of Free Speech and Free Association." He also attacked Bennett for seeking "dictatorship."² King promised that if he were elected, he would repeal Section 98 of the criminal code; it was a commitment he honoured in 1936.

Woodsworth and King were supported in their stand by the United Farmers of Alberta, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and a host of church and social groups throughout the country. All wanted a repeal of the obnoxious act. The government, however, remained adamant.

III

While the campaign for the release of the eight communists and the repeal of Section 98 of the criminal code was mounting, Smith, in October 1932, was compelled to take a three-week trip abroad to attend the first I.R.A. World Congress held in Moscow:

1. Ibid., 29 July 1932, p. 4295.

2. P.A.C. Mackenzie King Papers, Vol. 156, File 1400.

Although reluctant to leave with the domestic situation as it was, he looked forward with some excitement to his first trip abroad and particularly to visiting the world's "first socialist state." On his sixty-first birthday, 20 October, he set sail from Montreal bound eventually for Moscow. Accompanying him were three other communists, Fred Hackett of the Seamen's Union, W.S.D. St. Pierre of the Vancouver District Defense League and Beckie Buhay. They had been elected by the N.E.C. of the C.L.D.L. as delegates to the I.R.A. World Congress.

The first major stop for the group was London, England. There Smith took the opportunity to visit the grave of Karl Marx in Highgate cemetery. His commitment to communism was personified in his deeply felt reverence for the philosopher:

I stood in silence before this humble plot
of earth marked by the greatest name in
modern history. With clenched fist raised
I renewed my devotion to his cause. 1

After a brief stay in London, the delegation left for the continent, travelling overland through Germany and then on to the Soviet Union. In Hamburg, Smith noted the "rival flags of the hammer and sickle and the swastika," which bedecked the streets. It was an omen of events to come. In Berlin, the delegation made a lengthy visit to the headquarters of the I.R.A. where fears of political turmoil in Germany were of great concern to the leaders of the organization.

When the train finally crossed the Soviet border, the emotional

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 153.

Smith could not restrain himself; he had reached his utopia:

Tears of joy, which I could not repress, streamed down my face....It overwhelms me to realize that I have lived to the day when my old eyes shall see the Land of Socialism....

I will never forget that moment. It was at that moment I had a new sense of the purpose of my life. I had a new comprehension of the purpose of the universe. The Soviet Union, in abolishing, once and for all, the exploitation of man by man, had advanced the well-being of modern human society to a greater degree than any other single event in history.

Moscow--the "citadel of working class power"--enthralled him. He marvelled at the "House of the Trade Union" where 219 delegates from seventy countries had assembled for the Congress. The "beautifully illuminated Hall of Columns" which formerly had been a "great House of Nobles" under the Czars now represented a "magnificent Palace of Labour." The gathering of the "world's toilers" left an indelible impression on the idealistic Canadian:

White, yellow, and black toilers meet together from the farthest ends of the earth. Negroes from South Africa, from West and Central Africa, mingle in solidarity with British, German, French and Dutch white toilers. Jointly they plan the struggle against their common oppressors. Japanese and Chinese workers clasp hands in solemn vow of unity against their Japanese and Chinese masters. From all parts of Latin America, from Turkey...workers and peasants have been drawn together

1. Ibid., p. 154.

in the land of the toilers... Many
tongues speak but there is one common
language, the language of struggle
against capitalism and all its
fiendish deeds. 1

Although Smith was not called upon to deliver a speech, he listened intently to the proceedings of the Congress. The main report was given by Helena Stassova, international secretary of the I.R.A. In glowing terms she reported that the membership of the I.R.A. had grown from 6,032,432 in 1926 to nearly 14,000,000 in 1932. She implored the delegates to renew their efforts and make the I.R.A. the "largest and broadest mass organization of toilers in the world."² There followed a procession of speakers from the world over, relating the horrors of capitalism in their countries and their resolve to build socialism. The carefully planned congress impressed the Canadian delegation as it did others who attended. Most reassuring to Smith was "the marvellous achievements of the U.S.S.R.;" he noted "that representatives from factories, collective farms, the Red Army, the Young Friends of the I.R.A.--from practically every phase of Soviet life, greeted the Congress and brought tokens of appreciation." One of the most inspiring events of the Congress for Smith, was a speech delivered on the "tremendous success of the five-year plan," where a "graphic

1. Beckie Buhay, A.E. Smith, The World Defense Congress: Its Lessons for Canadian Workers and Farmers, (pamphlet issued by the C.L.D.L., Toronto, 1932), p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 7

picture" was presented "of the enormous strides made in building socialism in the Soviet Union, despite all difficulties."¹

Smith and the other delegates were carefully isolated from the horror, starvation and oppression which actually existed in the land of socialism in 1932. Blinded by idealism, he and his comrades accepted the speeches at their face value.

After the conclusion of the fifteen-day affair, the participants were informed that the Soviet government had arranged for sight-seeing tours to various parts of the country.² Smith and his Canadian counterparts toured the Trans-Caucasian Soviet Republic, stopping in Tiflis, the capital of Georgia and proceeding to the Armenian Republic. The selected tour convinced Smith that "in twelve years of socialism there had been more accomplished for the peace and progress of the people than had been even attempted in the many centuries of the past."³ On his return to Canada he resolved to take up with "renewed vigor" the campaign for the release of the eight incarcerated communists.

IV

The appeal hearing--13-14 January 1932--for the eight convicted

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1. Ibid., p. 9.
 2. A.S.C.T., 15 Mar. 1947.
 3. Smith, All My Life, p. 162.

communists resulted in a status quo decision. Chief Justice William Mulock and four of his associates quashed the conspiracy conviction; but left intact the harsh sentence of five years in the Kingston Penitentiary. Nor did matters end there. In less than eight months, Tim Buck was charged with "inciting to riot" in the October Kingston Penitentiary uprising.

The disturbance involved over 450 of the prison population. It was the climax of a series of complaints against intolerable conditions--including the nine to ten hours of labour a day without wages, the recreation period of only fifteen minutes a day in open air and a general condemnation of the institution's programme, the whole objective of which was punishment by every means and every item in the prisoners' lives.¹ For his participation in the riot, Buck received an additional nine months to his five-year term.

Smith and the C.L.D.L. intensified their campaign, adding to their agenda the demand for an investigation into the penitentiary system to remedy the "vile conditions therein." Five hundred thousand pamphlets and leaflets were issued and distributed throughout Canada; and fifty thousand printed postcards addressed to Guthrie, the Minister of Justice, were circulated, signed and sent to Ottawa.² Delegations were organized to appear before city councils, provincial government, church courts, and at mass

1. A.S.C.T., 3 Aug. 1946; also 14 Aug. 1946.

2. Ibid., 20 July 1946.

meetings pressing the League's demands.¹ Monster petitions were organized, including one which carried 459,000 signatures and another with 200,000.²

The renewed efforts made an impact. Guthrie, in answer to J.S. Woodsworth's motion for repeal of Section 98, let it be known in the House of Commons that the C.L.D.L. had wide support:

...I learn of the activities of this association through petitions from every quarter of this dominion. I am not overstating the case when I say that I have hundreds and hundreds of them. I have now ceased to acknowledge receipt of them. I merely hand them over to the mounted police in order that a record may be kept of the names and addresses of the people who sign them, and I make this statement so that the petitioners may know what I do with them....I can assure the house that in long petitions there does not appear a single Anglo-Saxon or French-Canadian name--nothing but names of foreigners, unpronounceable names for the most part....

No sooner did the disturbance take place in Kingston penitentiary...than I was flooded with telegrams and petitions from every quarter of Canada almost before the riot was well under way. 3

Among the reasons Guthrie gave for not favouring a second reading of Woodsworth's motion but placing it on the "six-month hoist" was that the C.L.D.L. was a "dangerous communist society formed only

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. House of Commons Debates, 14 Feb. 1933, pp. 2101-2102.

after 1931 when the Communist Party was banned in the Dominion of Canada by the courts of Ontario." He further elaborated:

I know that the Canadian Labour Defense League...[has] affiliations outside the Dominion of Canada. I know this from threatening telegrams which I have received myself. I have been informed by telegram that 150,000 communists in New York are watching me....I do not know where the League gets its financial support, but financial support it certainly has,...nor do I know...all the ramifications of the C.L.D.L., but the League is operating today in a most insidious manner. 2

The Minister of Justice concluded that Section 98 had to be retained because of organizations such as the C.L.D.L.

The League's campaign for reform in the prisons and Guthrie's assertion that the riots in the penitentiary were caused by communist agitation produced sharp editorials throughout Canada. The Winnipeg Tribune, a Conservative Party supporter flatly stated:

Mr. Guthrie should have learned by this time that the childish delusions of communism and anti-communism are very much a side issue in this penitentiary matter....His political instinct would tell him that the people of Canada are not going to be thrown off the track of penal reform by his excited cries of "Red, Red"....

If it is the communists who have brought it to a head, then it is the only contribution they have made to the advance of civilization in Canada.

1. Ibid., p. 2102.
2. Ibid.

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The communists did not invent the black hole and the blister paddle and other barbarities.... 1

The Winnipeg Free Press concurred:

Mr. Guthrie had much to say about communist agitation regarding the penitentiaries, but he is aware that, apart from the communists, there is a strong public opinion demanding a more enlightened prison administration..... 2

The Canadian Forum sarcastically remarked that "for Mr. Bennett, God is in his heaven and all is right with the world he rules, even if that world includes Kingston, Stonev Mountain, St. Vincent de Paul, and all the other little hells where criminal traits are carefully tended to their finest flowering."³ Thus as with deportations, communism once more occupied the editorial pages, this time as part and parcel of a humanitarian cause--penal reform.

The "riot trial," 17 October 1933, added fuel to the campaign. Not only did Buck receive an additional nine months to his five year term, but it was revealed that an attempt had been made on his life by an "unknown" prison guard three days after the disturbance.⁴ Smith, in an angry letter to Bennett, noted the

1. The Winnipeg Tribune, 15 Feb. 1934.

2. The Winnipeg Free Press, 23 Feb. 1934.

3. Canadian Forum, Dec. 1933; p. 84.

4. See Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada, (Ottawa, 1938), pp. 74-75, for a description of the disturbances at Kingston in which Buck was involved: pp. 81-97 for a description of Buck's evidence. The Commission concluded that indeed Buck was shot at.

event:

On the evening of 20 October 1932, five shots were fired into Tim Buck's cell ...by guards of Kingston Penitentiary ...this murderous attempt must be placed not only against the prison guards, who were carrying out the orders of their superiors, but against the prison administration and the Department of Justice--the only possible source of such a plan.

Smith rather hysterically concluded that "your government stands indicted before the Canadian working class as the instigator of this murderous plot."¹

In November 1933, Smith led a delegation to Ottawa to press for the League's demands which included a public investigation into the disturbances at Kingston Penitentiary; that the eight communists be regarded as political prisoners with special treatment; and the prisoners and their leaders be exempt from punishment because they were seeking long overdue reforms.² This time he was accorded an interview with Bennett and three of his cabinet ministers. Bennett's answer, as reported by Smith, was stiff and uncompromising:

There will be no investigation into the system of prisons....There will be no repeal of Section 98. It is

1. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 145, Smith to Bennett, 13 Nov. 1933.

2. Ibid., Smith to Bennett, 21 Feb. 1933. Other demands included the release of Sam Carr who was seriously ill and the revoking of deportation proceedings against Tom Cacic.

needed on the statute books. And finally there will be no release for these men. They will serve every last five minutes of their sentences. That's all there is to be said.

After a heated verbal exchange between Bennett and Smith, Smith and his followers were ordered to leave. Later, Bennett vented his feelings in a letter to a friend: "I did not have any trouble whatever with the communists who came to see me, but as Smith is the instigator of most of the trouble, I did not see any reason for handling him with gloves."²

In the two years after the raids and arrests of the communists, the C.L.D.L. distributed five million pieces of literature--pamphlets and manifestos.³ For the actual trial of the eight, three booklets and one book had been printed with a circulation of sixty thousand copies.⁴ As well, the League sold hundreds of coupons for twenty-five cents, fifty cents and one dollar with pictures of the imprisoned men on them. These were mailed to Bennett.⁵ Hundreds of protest demonstrations and meetings were organized from coast to coast.⁶ By the end of 1932, Guthrie

1. A.S.C.T., 20 July 1946.

2. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 145. Bennett to Gerard Kuel, K.C., 18 Nov. 1933.

3. Report of First Representative National Convention of the C.L.D.L., Toronto 14-17 July 1933.

4. Ibid.

5. Many of these coupons can be found in P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 145.

6. Report, Op.Cit., p. 3.

begrudgingly admitted "that the C.L.D.L. had managed to build up a huge protest movement with even the churches committing themselves against Section 98."¹

The Report of the First Representative National Convention of the C.L.D.L., 14-17 July 1933, supported Guthrie's claim. From the time of an earlier Repeal Conference, held in Hamilton 6-7 February 1932, to the 1933 National Convention, the C.L.D.L. had increased its membership from ten thousand to over seventeen thousand individuals, and its branches throughout Canada from 233 to 350.² According to financial statements, membership dues paid during the first six months of 1933 averaged \$8,000 per month, compared to \$4,000 for the first six months of 1932.³

The first representative convention of the C.L.D.L. was held in Toronto. It was attended by 161 delegates representing ten C.L.D.L. districts throughout the country. The districts and memberships were listed as follows: Vancouver 3,437, Calgary 3,000; Winnipeg 1,032, Saskatchewan 775, Port Arthur (which included the Thunder Bay and Rainy River area) 1,125, Timmins 1,025, Montreal 1,200, Toronto 3,800, Sudbury 300, and Nova Scotia (confined largely to the Cape Breton and Halifax areas) 325.⁴

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1. Cited in Ibid.
 2. Ibid., p. 4.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Ibid.

As well it was reported that there were twenty members belonging to the C.L.D.L. in New Brunswick and 352 members that were not attached to any district.¹

At the conference it was noted that since April 1933, ten district conventions had been held with a total of approximately six hundred delegates attending. For his part, Smith had in that period, made another national tour holding forty-five public meetings in twenty-eight different places with a total attendance of 25,320. Besides this tour, he and Buhay also participated in fifty other meetings, in Montreal and southern and western Ontario which attracted a total of forty thousand persons. It was therefore with some justification that Smith could boast that "from a tiny nucleus organized to defend the Drumheller miners in 1925 the C.L.D.L. emerged suddenly as a nation wide organization,"² unyielding and persistent in its opposition to Section 98, to deportations and to harsh penal practises--issues which were all part and parcel of its campaign to save the communist movement in Canada.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

The Sedition of Smith 1934

I

By the end of 1933, the C.L.D.L.'s propaanda and agitation tactics had reached a sophisticated level of operation. In September, Smith, in a widely distributed open letter sent to Ontario's Attorney-General Price, challenged him to a public debate on the question whether Tim Buck should be considered a "political Prisoner," or a "Criminal." The letter, in part, read:

The Toronto Press of September 11th reports a speech you delivered to the Liberal-Conservative Summer School, Newmarket, Ont., on September 10th, in which you stated...that Tim Buck is not a political prisoner but a criminal. You further stated that Section 98 merely serves notice that we in this country desire to continue the British method of growth and advancement, and you go on to say that you favour freedom of speech with just one exception--the advocacy of force and violence--and that if such freedom of speech is not exercised

in certain parts of Ontario, it is the fault of those immediately in charge of the discharge of the law itself.

In the name of the National Executive Committee of the Canadian Labour Defense League, I challenge you, to prove the correctness of these assertions on a public platform. It is evident that these utterances on your part are the result of the enormous sentiment that exists throughout the country against Section 98 and...that you can no longer remain silent under this pressure. 1

Price understandably declined to participate in such a public debate with Smith.

On 4 December 1933, the League unleashed a new tactic in its arsenal against the authorities. That day in the Standard Theatre, Toronto, the League, in conjunction with the Progressive Arts Club,² presented a new play, "Eight Men Speak," to a capacity house. The play, in a pointed manner, exposed alleged persecution of the eight communists in Kingston, lenience to rich prisoners, the negative attitude of government and prison officials and the "frame-up" of Buck during the October disturbances. As well, the play made references to the "murder of the three Estevan miners by the R.C.M.P.; the insidious character of Section 98 and the attempt to

1. This letter in pamphlet form was given to the author courtesy of Mr. Robert S. Kenny, Toronto.

2. The first Progressive Arts Club was formed in December 1931. It organized readings, symposia, and exhibitions, published a small anthology of working-class songs and sponsored the Workers' Theatre, which produced short plays and sketches by Canadian and foreign playwrights. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 126.

murder Buck on 20 October 1932." After its first successful debut, a second performance was prepared. Four days before it was to be presented, the Toronto Police Commission banned it because it was "distasteful."¹

One of the play's most adamant critics was R.B. Bennett. He asked for a copy of the script. His reaction was recorded by A.E. Millar, the prime minister's secretary, in a letter to R.C. Matthews, Minister of National Revenue: "Mr. Bennett has read the file and thinks that appropriate action should be taken through the Attorney General of the province to protect society against these attacks...."² Bennett's reaction was predictable. He hated communism and especially detested Smith, describing him as "an agitator who stands behind other people and saves his own skin."³ Bennett firmly believed that "the time has come when we must no longer allow Smith and his followers to spread propaganda of gross misrepresentation, deluding the people whom they exploit. I...am of the opinion that we should not permit liberty to degenerate into license."⁴

1. The Sediton of A.E. Smith, a pamphlet published by the National Executive Committee of the C.L.D.L. (n.d.), p. 9.

2. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 146, A.E. Millar to R.C. Matthews, 2 Jan. 1934.

3. The Sediton of A.E. Smith, Op.Cit., p. 15.

4. P.A.C. Bennett Papers, Vol. 145, Bennett to H. Ferland (Mayor of Verdun), 22 Nov. 1933.

The opportunity to silence Smith arose early in 1934. On 17 January, the Progressive Arts Club held a protest meeting in Hwqeia Hall, Toronto, protesting the banning of the play. Smith was the main speaker. In his speech, Smith dealt with the motives behind the banning of the play and with the attempt on Buck's life. Two weeks later he was indicted for sedition on the basis of that speech--more specifically, according to the police report, for stating that "I say deliberately that Bennett gave the order to shoot Buck in his cell in cold blood with intent to murder him."¹ It was an order allegedly given from Bennett to Guthrie and from Guthrie to the warden of Kingston Penitentiary. The indictment of Smith was presented by Peter White, K.C., special Crown prosecutor, to Mr. Justice Kingstone and a grand jury. The document was sworn out by members of the radical squad of the Toronto police force--Detective-Sergeant William Nursey, Detective-Sergeant Norman Tinsley and Detective Daniel Mann.² The grand jury returned a true bill on the indictment against Smith.

The first to learn of Smith's indictment was his wife Maude. She had been a silent supporter of Smith's career--whether it was preaching or agitating--since their marriage in 1898. Defiantly, she declared to a reporter that "his family and friends would back him to the last ditch," that her husband was "not afraid to

1. The Sedition of A.E. Smith, Op.Cit., pp. 17-18; also Toronto Star, 31 Jan. 1934.

2. Toronto Daily Star, 21 Jan. 1934.

face the charge" because "he knows he has the support of all workers."¹ When Smith was informed of the indictment, he was stunned. He denied emphatically the statements attributed to him which formed the basis of the sedition charge, maintaining that "my attack toward the government is of a completely political character and not in any sense personal."² He then speculated on the reasons for the indictment:

The facts which lie at the basis of all this...are the imprisonment of the leaders of the Canadian working class in Kingston--which we believe was wrongfully done; the charges we have repeatedly advanced, that these men were being harshly treated; the frame-up...against Tim Buck by which he was given nine months extra sentence; the attempt to murder Buck...when some five shots were fired through the small window of his cell; the demand for investigation into this alleged crime, which we have steadily pressed on the government and the reluctant and fearful attitude of the government, accompanied by the unreasonable treatment accorded to our representatives; Premier Bennett on November 17 ordering us from his office. 3

The authorities, Smith believed, were attempting to prevent him and by implication the C.L.D.L. from making any further protests on behalf of the incarcerated communists.

On 2 February, Smith and his counsel, Onie Brown, appeared

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1. Ibid.
 2. Ibid., 1 Feb. 1934.
 3. Ibid.

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before Justice Kingstone in assize court. A plea of not guilty was entered. Brown sought a two month adjournment to enable him to prepare his case, but after strenuous objections from Peter White, K.C., on behalf of the Crown, his lordship allowed only two weeks, naming 19 February as the trial date. Bail was set at \$10,000, \$5,000 of which was provided by the accused and the remainder by Anthony Markus, a member of the Toronto District C.L.D.L.¹

Immediately after the indictment a campaign was inaugurated to protest the charge and appeal for funds to defend Smith. Over three thousand people attended an inaugural meeting in Massey Hall 4 February. The main speakers included Smith himself, the Reverend Ben Spence, a noted prohibitionist, A.H. Downs, secretary of the Socialist Party of Canada, and T.C. Sims, secretary of the W.U.L.² In passionate tones Smith declared that "Canada was on the road to fascism and that Bennett was leading the way."³ In reference to his own activities, he reiterated his innocence on the specific charge and again berated the prime minister:

Bennett hides behind stool pigeons and spies...and behind his place in parliament....The best way to suppress us would be to examine into (sic) Kingston and prove we are telling lies--but he

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1. Ibid.
 2. Toronto Globe, 5 Feb. 1934.
 3. Toronto Daily Star, 5 Feb. 1934.

dafe not do it. He swallows an attempt at murder--gulps it down--and then he chokes on a few words that I utter at a public meeting. He flies to the courts and lays a charge of sedition....

He concluded in a polemical vein:

I am an agitator but agitators do not make movements. Conditions set class against class....You have no future as individuals--you only have a future as a class....[On behalf of the working class]...I stand here to-night to ask you for support.... 1

Following Smith's speech, a collection was taken and \$269 in cash and \$50 in pledges were raised towards Smith's defence. In the two weeks before his trial, Smith gave numerous inflammatory speeches, maintaining his innocence and attacking the government.²

Meanwhile, Smith's case had been receiving wide publicity throughout North America and offers of aid began to come in from outside Ontario. From Manitoba, E.J. McMurray, K.C. of Winnipeg and a former solicitor-general of Canada, expressed great interest in the case. He wrote to a friend in Toronto stating that he would like the opportunity to defend Smith. Smith was contacted and gladly accepted McMurray's offer. McMurray was well known in radical circles; he had been the chief counsel in the trials of the Winnipeg strikers in 1919 and had just recently successfully

1. Ibid.

2. See for example, The Border City Star, (Windsor, 12 Feb. 1934.)

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defended the Workers' Benevolent Association of Winnipeg against the attorney-general of Manitoba, who attempted to curtail the activities of the organization.¹ Legal aid was forthcoming as well from the International Labour Defense League (I.L.D.L.), New York. William L. Patterson, secretary of the American communist organization, was denied entrance into Canada to attend the Smith trial but stated that no expense would be spared in behalf of the Toronto clergyman." He added:

The whole affair shows how Fascism is developing in Canada under the Bennett influence. The astute Roosevelt would never allow himself to be jockeyed into the crude Bennett position of brow-beating a man of the cloth. 2

To aid in the defense of Smith, the I.L.D.L. retained Leo Gallagher, an American lawyer who was banished from Germany after defending the communists in the Reichstag fire. Gallagher was first denied entry into Canada by immigration officials, but later was granted a visa and took his place in the court room as an advisor to the chief defense counsel, M. McMurray.³ Also included in the coterie of defense lawyers were Glen Milton and Smith's original counsel, Onie Brown, both of Toronto.

1. Toronto Daily Star, 5 Mar. 1934.

2. Ibid., 23 Feb. 1934.

3. Ibid., 24 Feb. 1934; and Mail and Empire, 26 Feb. 1934.

Smith's lawyers managed to postpone the trial to 23 February "on the grounds that the accused had not proper opportunity to prepare a defense."¹ Justice Kelly, in granting the adjournment set an additional \$9,000 bail and stipulated that "Mr. Smith must not attend public meetings between now and...[February 23]...or discuss matters relevant to the charge either in writing or orally."² Although Smith agreed to these conditions the agitation on his behalf continued under the auspices of the C.L.D.L.

From the outset, the Crown had found itself on the defensive in terms of public opinion. Smith, in his public life, had built up a reputation as a respected, well-meaning--even if somewhat misguided--individual who had dedicated his life to the betterment of his fellow man. This image was reflected in the Toronto press. The Toronto Telegram, for example, had wondered why Smith's lawyer, Onie Brown, was given only two weeks to prepare his case when he had asked for two months.³ The Mail and Empire, after reporting that three thousand people had thronged Massey Hall in support of "Rev. Smith," printed an excerpt from Smith's address to that meeting:

I am charged with sedition because I criticize our leaders. Why is Mitchell Hepburn not so charged? Does he not seek to create disaffection against

1. Ibid., 19 Feb. 1934.
2. Ibid.
3. Toronto Telegram, 2 Feb. 1934.

the government? I am charged because Bennett is in an unstable position. After our delegation to see him... frenzied with rage and fear, he ordered me from his office....

My position is that those men who attempted to murder Tim Buck were not acting on their own initiative but they drew their actions... from a higher authority....1

The Toronto Daily Star put the whole matter more openly:

If a man slanders the prime minister he can be tried for slander. Why should he be charged with sedition which is in a wholly different category? 2

Smith received support from all parts of Canada--from persons such as Rev. Ben Spence to Tom Moore, President of the Trades and Labour Congress.³ Support was also forthcoming from certain sections of the C.C.F.--support which was to cause a split within the party's ranks in Ontario.

II.

The C.C.F. had decided from its inception to have nothing to do with the Communist Party or any of its front organizations such as the C.L.D.L. During the Regina Convention of the C.C.F.,

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1. Toronto Mail and Empire, 5 Feb. 1934.
 2. Toronto Daily Star, 14 Feb. 1934.
 3. Ibid.

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July 1933, Buhay sent a telegram to Woodsworth calling for a united front action for the release of all "class war prisoners" in Canada and the repeal of Section 98. She suggested that representatives of the two executive committees discuss plans for demonstrations, mass meetings and delegations organized jointly to promote this objective.¹ Woodsworth's reply to this proposal was negative. An official statement issued by the executive of the C.C.F. refused the suggestion for "united front" action for two reasons. First, the C.C.F. executive contended that working class demonstrations, mass meetings, deputations, etc., were useless and that the objective for which the C.L.D.L. proposed united action could only be attained by the C.C.F. securing control of the government. Secondly, after asserting that the "leaders of the C.L.D.L. believed that civil strife is inevitable," it went on to show the difference between this and the position of the C.C.F.:

We believe that these ends cannot be achieved except by acquiring control of the government. We believe in constitutional means to achieve this result. At that point there is a fundamental cleavage between us and the leaders of your organization, who maintain civil strife is inevitable. This policy in our opinion would result in the intensification of

1. William G. Godfrey, The 1933 Regina Convention of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, (M.A. University of Waterloo, Sept., 1965), p. 54.

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political oppression. We, therefore, are unable to see that any useful purpose could be served by just joint mass meetings, delegations and demonstrations as you suggest. 1

There the matter rested until Smith's indictment.

On 17 February 1934, representatives of the C.C.F., United Farmers of Ontario, and the Canadian Labour Party held a conference in London, Ontario, to discuss provincial and federal election matters. At this conference the labour section of the organization presented a resolution protesting the indictment of A.E. Smith and proposing that the C.C.F. should cooperate with the C.L.D.L. in his defense.² After a lengthy debate, the C.C.F. clubs and the U.F.O. took a firm stand that, while they might be opposed to needless railroading of any man to prison, the party could not afford to be linked up with these left-wing bodies in any joint actions.³ When the vote was taken, the labour section's resolution was defeated.⁴

Three days later, Mrs. Elizabeth Morton, before the Forest Hill-Humewood C.C.F. club, Toronto, declared that the labour section of the C.C.F. would defy provincial council rulings and support

1. Cited in Walter D. Young, The Anatomy of a Party: The National C.C.F. 1932-1961, (Toronto, 1969); p. 259.

2. Toronto Daily Star, 18 Feb. 1934.

3. The Evening Telegram, 18 Feb. 1934.

4. Ibid.

Smith.¹ This statement prompted Elmore Philpott, president of the association of C.C.F. clubs, to retort that any individual or individuals in the C.C.F. would be expelled if they continued to disregard the London resolution which banned protest activities on behalf of Smith. "We are not trifling with this affair," Philpott declared, "the entire membership of the C.C.F. had either got to get in line with official rulings or the rebels will have to get out no matter how influential or numerous they may be."² To reinforce this statement, Philpott demanded the expulsion of W. Jones, secretary of the St. Paul's C.C.F. club in Toronto, because he had taken an official part in a Workers' Unity League meeting at Massey Hall in support of Smith.³

The rupture between the "left-wing members" in both the labour and club sections of the C.C.F. widened rapidly when the St. Paul's Club, largely labour in membership, refused to expel Jones.⁴ Having this defiance thrown at him, Philpott and the provincial executive requested the national C.C.F. headquarters to expel the entire Ontario labour conference from membership in the C.C.F. Although Woodsworth was reluctant to do so, and expressed surprise at the drastic action of the Ontario executive,

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1. Toronto Daily Star, 22 Feb. 1934.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid.
 4. The Evening Telegram, 26 Feb. 1934.

on 26 February 1934, the "house cleaning" of the C.C.F. was made official by the ousting of labour affiliations.¹

Fully incensed, the expelled labour section held a conference 4 March in Hamilton in a determined effort to maintain its position as an integral part of the C.C.F., despite the actions of the other two sections to the contrary. The provincial executive of the labour section argued that each section was autonomous with the right to carry on its own activities. At the same time, he contended that the appeals of the U.F.O. and club sections to the national executive for the expulsion of the Ontario Labour section were absolutely unconstitutional, not having been preceded by appeals to the labour section for the removal of offending members.² Finally, the Conference passed the following resolution: "that participation in A.E. Smith prosecution protests, or participation in protests to prosecutions under Section 98 and other anti-labour sections of the criminal code be not considered contrary to the best interests of the C.C.F. having regard to the national constitution of the C.C.F."³

The disarray of the C.C.F. over the Smith affair was best summed up by the Toronto Herald:

The fact that the leaders have forbidden

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1. Toronto Daily Star, 26 Feb. 1934.
 2. Mail and Empire, 5 Mar. 1934.
 3. Ibid.

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their followers to participate in demonstrations in favour of Rev. A.E. Smith brings them pretty close to the lines of the old time politician. Personally, we know quite a few members of the C.C.F. and most of them are quite open in espousing the accused minister's cause. But the leaders evidently believe that the public avowment of such principles is not good politics. It is sure hard to play with fire without being scorched a bit. 1

Ultimately, the Smith affair led to a total reorganization of the C.C.F. in Ontario. The labour conference and the association of clubs were abolished and labour parties and clubs became affiliated with the Ontario C.C.F. on an individual basis. These gradually gave way to constituency associations and a few clubs.² The tactics of the C.L.D.L. in defense of Smith had thus not only annoyed the authorities but also had disrupted the C.C.F. in Ontario.

III

Unlike the trial of the eight communists in 1931, the selection of the Smith jurors was not a point of contention. It took only fifteen minutes with McMurray challenging only four individuals on behalf of the defense. The jury included a real estate agent,

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1. Toronto Herald, 22 Feb. 1934.
 2. Young, Op.Cit., p. 145.

a piano action maker, a cabinet maker, four clerks, two salesmen, and three Markham farmers.¹ On 23 February, the trial began as scheduled. Smith, wearing a familiar blue serge suit, hard white collar and dark tie, entered the court at 10:40 a.m.; he was directed to take a seat at the left of the prisoner's dock by a court constable. He sat down quietly, seldom gazed around but kept his eyes on the floor ahead, while his fingers meditatively stroked the bridge of his nose. It must have been a traumatic experience for the sixty-three year old revolutionary. The three Crown witnesses, Detective-Sergeant William Nursey, Detective Daniel Mann and Detective-Sergeant Norman Tinsley entered the court room a minute later and chose seats at the extreme right of the press tables, behind the jury box.²

E.J. McMurray scored a tactical victory when he demanded that Buck be brought from Kinaston Penitentiary as a material witness. He argued "...that the testimony of the said Tim Buck is of paramount importance to the defendant, A.E. Smith, as it would show there did exist an error in the administration of justice in Canada, which the defendant was attempting to alter by lawful means...."³ This was an astute maneuver on the part of the

1. Toronto Daily Star, 5 Mar. 1934.

2. Ibid., 9 Feb. 1934.

3. Mass Unity Wins: The Story of the A.E. Smith Trial, pamphlet issued by the Canadian Labour Defense League (n.d.), p. 10.

defense, designed not only to widen the scope of reference for the trial, but to broaden its appeal and propaganda value. Over Peter White's objections, McMurray's request was granted. There was a one week adjournment to allow Tim Buck to be transported from Kingston to Toronto.

The League, meanwhile, attempted to exploit the sympathetic climate of opinion by publishing a number of pamphlets which portrayed Smith as the courageous, unflinching leader of the suffering working class in Canada. In contrast, Bennett was shown to represent the ruthless capitalist class, who hated and feared Smith and was attempting to do away with him. One such pamphlet described Bennett's life thus:

On July 3rd 1870, the ocean seethed.
At Hopewell, N.B. the heavens parted
in fire. A babe was born into the
comfortable household of Mr. and
Mrs. Bennett. All who saw the little
creature marvelled not so much at
its beet-red face and bellowing voice
but because of a strange phenomenon:
for in one pudgy fist the child
grasped a bag of gold and on one
pink foot there grew a cast iron hell....

Richard rose in the world, to fame
and fortune...with the aid of the
Eddy millions bequeathed to him....
He gave his party a million to get
into office....He gave a Saskatchewan
farmer a cool fifty bucks when the
whole country denounced him as a
starver of the unemployed....He says
that poverty is a wonderful thing for
developing character and various
virtues.... 1

1. The Seditious of A.E. Smith, Op.Cit., pp. 3-4.

Although ludicrous, the imagery was 'sinisterly effective.

When the trial resumed on 5 March, the court room seethed with excitement; hundreds who sought entry were turned away by police. Indeed, the police force had taken extraordinary precautions in barring the way into the court room. The Toronto Star commented that

Fifty-five policemen guarded the environs of the city hall where Smith faced trial. Nobody knew what, if anything might happen, but the police were massed there to stop it. Even if all the Smiths of the city had tried to storm the city hall trained forces were ready to repel them....

The Star then sarcastically added: "Estimates as to how the police staging of this trial will compare with Hitler's stage work at Berlin in the famous case in connection with the burning of the Reichstag cannot be made at this early date, but certainly Deputy-Chief Pogue...has begun well, conveying the impression that he is handling a cause celebre."¹

Meanwhile, McMurray again attempted a tactical legal manoeuvre; he put forward a motion that the indictment against Smith be quashed because "the Crown had failed to show seditious intent." McMurray argued that White had given no particulars, but a recital of the definition of sedition. He stated

The indictment speaks of exciting

1. Toronto Daily Star, 21 Feb. 1934.

dissatisfaction against the government of Canada, of exciting His Majesty's subjects and trying to raise discontent. They are all in the alternative and I don't know what I've got to meet-- all or one of what?....We're charged with an offence, whatever it is. I don't think he should be allowed to make a mass statement like that...."

White argued that "the Crown was not bound to furnish particulars. What I have done is plead simply that the accused uttered seditious words." He further pointed out "that Section 132 of the criminal code defines seditious words as words issued with seditious intent." White concluded:

I need not go any farther. My indictment is complete when I set out the words of which I complain. The seditious intent is inferred or possibly presumed.

Justice Rose concurred with White, arguing that common law must be invoked in a determination of what constitutes seditious utterances and that the relevant definitions were clearly set out on page 149 of Rogers' Tremear fourth edition defined in Halsbury, Volume 9, page 463, paragraph 909.² The judge concluded

1. Ibid., 5 Mar. 1934.
2. They were summed up as follows: A seditious intention is an intention:
 - i. to bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection, against the King or the Government and the constitution of the United Kingdom or either Houses of Parliament or administration of justice or,
 - ii. to excite the King's subjects to attempt, otherwise than by lawful means, the alteration of any matter in church or state by law established or,

that what the indictment said was that Smith spoke seditious words as defined by common law under Section 104 of the criminal code.

The motion of McMurray was, therefore, turned down and the trial proceeded.

The first day of the resumed trial was preoccupied with the testimony of Detectives Nursey and Mann, who had been at the meeting and had allegedly written down everything Smith had said. The two detectives' testimony was almost identical--word for word. The defense counsel had no difficulty in mixing them up. The improbability of the detectives' statements was further shown when Charles Talbot, a police stenographer, stated he could not write out Smith's whole speech at the meeting in long hand. Nursey had presented to the court two sheets of long handwriting as a full text of Smith's speech.

A number of exchanges between McMurray and Mann proved enlightening. McMurray asked:

- You belong to what is known as the Red Squad.
- Yes.
- And is your duty to keep track of any progressive talk that is brought to your attention?
- Yes.
- And in pursuit of that you go to all

- iii. to incite any person to commit any crime of breach of the peace or
- iv. to raise discontent or disaffection among His Majesty's subjects or
- v. to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of such subjects.

1. Toronto Daily Star, 21 Feb. 1934.

public meetings held in Toronto?

ALL.

You keep the words of public speakers under surveillance?

Yes.

As evident from the above, the Toronto "Red Squad," as a matter of course, had sent observers to the meeting at Hygeia Hall where Smith spoke. According to Mann the speech was reported the next day to his superiors and two weeks later the charge of sedition was laid.

The members of the Toronto Police Commission were indirectly responsible for the prosecution of Smith. The attention of the commissioners was drawn to the Hygeia Hall speech when police chief Draper, at a meeting of the commission placed a report of the Hygeia Hall meeting before the commissioners. In perusing the words attributed to Smith, one of the commissioners, Judge James Parker, drew attention to the words on which the prosecution was based with the remark, "this looks serious." Crown attorney J.W. McFadden was then telephoned and was asked to come up to the Stewart building and discuss the matter with the commission. When McFadden arrived, the criminal code was examined and the commission came to the conclusion that the statements were seditious on the basis of Section 132 of the criminal code. McFadden was asked to take the matter up with Peter White and take whatever action they should decide upon. The police commission, it was later revealed,

1. Ibid., 6 Mar. 1934.

did not communicate in any way with R.B. Bennett, although they knew of Bennett's fervent desire to have Smith's activities curtailed.¹ The whole matter was left up to the Crown attorney who proceeded with the prosecution.

On the second day of the trial, Buck was brought in as the first defense witness. While Buck was giving his testimony, a demonstration of over four thousand people was taking place in Queen's Park in defense of Smith. McMurray, in fine rhetorical form, asked Buck if he remembered 20 October 1932?

"I remember-it very well," replied Buck.

"What particularly impressed it on your mind?"

And the answer, "I was shot at"--brought White to his feet in objection to the evidence. For twenty minutes he argued the point and won approval from the Bench. Buck after remaining in court for a short while, was led out to be returned to Kingston, after coming to Toronto at the expense of \$100 to the C.L.D.L.² Undaunted, the defense proceeded to call witnesses who testified that they were at the Hygeia Hall meeting at which Smith spoke and denied the allegations of the Crown and its police witnesses.

The next day Smith took the stand, for three hours outlining his speech at the Hygeia Hall protest meeting. He referred to the statements he had made then, regarding the great value of the

1. Ibid., 9 Mar. 1934.

2. Mass Unity Wins, Op.Cit., p. 12.

Progressive Arts Club and the political implications of the play. "The play," he argued, "was an expression of the feelings of the workers regarding suppression and the capitalist class offensive against all workers' organizations that exhibit militancy." He continued to recall his remarks regarding the demand for appointment of a popular commission to investigate the attempt on Buck's life; that in February, 1933, two hundred thousand signatures were obtained for this demand which by 17 November had swollen to 459,000 signatures:

We asked for a popular commission, not of professionals or parliamentarians or officials or the institution... We had presented petitions and resolutions by the thousands. I undertook to place the responsibility, the moral and political responsibility for this situation on the government because they had stoutly and categorically refused investigation. 1

It was an eloquent speech of righteous indignation and contempt for the government.

On 7 March, came the addresses to the Jury. McMurray's concluded that:

If you punish Smith then you are going back to the Spanish inquisition. Certain reactionary forces will be pleased if Smith is taken away. But out over Canada today this case is attracting wide attention. This is a state trial. This is a political trial. I often wonder, gentlemen,

1. Ibid., p. 17.

whether jails were built for labour leaders. Smith's fate is being watched in B.C., in the shanties among the miners in Alberta, in Brandon where he laboured as a young man, all over among the poor and the working people, among people of the universities all interested in the fate of this man. 1

White, on the other hand, in his address to the jury, asserted that there was no attempt to suppress free speech. He argued that Smith was a scandalmonger "who gets up on a soap-box to say the prime minister is a murderer. The object of the prosecution is to mete out proper punishment to this man so that the people of Ontario can see this is a place of law and order."²

On 8 March, Justice Rose charged the jury explaining that the indictment alleged that "wrong has been done to the state."

Get out of your minds any idea that this is a struggle between individuals, that there is any idea of avenging a person who has been wronged. You are to consider whether words spoken are words which are wrong to the state. 3

On this note the jury was allowed to retire. For six hours it deliberated, finally ushering its way into a tense court room. The foreman rose and announced the verdict--Not Guilty.

It was an important verdict. It was welcomed almost unanimously by the press of the day. Perhaps the best summation of the whole

1. Ibid., p. 19.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

3. Ibid.

affair was voiced by the Toronto Herald in an editorial entitled "A Good Day's Work:"

The jury which handled the case of the Crown against Rev. A.E. Smith charged with sedition, did a good day's work for Canadian freedom and common sense when they found the accused not guilty. The Rev-gentleman is no friend of ours --not even an acquaintance and he seems to harbour a lot of views on life and its problems which we entirely disagree with....But we are glad the jury squelched the proposal to send him to jail for venturing to air his opinion. If we are going to send every man to the pen who holds views contrary to our own or who ventures to severely criticize the government in power we will have to build bigger and better jails to hold them all.... 1

Most editorials concurred with the Herald believing the prosecution to be ill-advised and "un-Canadian" in spirit.² Smith, who had "slept placidly on the bench while the jury deliberated" hailed the acquittal as a "victory for the workers and for free speech." He reiterated his determination to gain the release of the imprisoned communists and to fight for the repeal of Section 98.³

The acquittal was a moral as well as a legal victory for Smith. In the end, the verdict not only undermined the authorities' ability to successfully prosecute other communists for "seditious"

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1. Toronto Herald, 9 Mar. 1934.
 2. See for example Toronto Daily Star, 10 Mar. 1934.
 3. Ibid., 9 Mar. 1934.

activities against the state, but also put into question the convictions of the eight C.P.C. leaders for sedition.

CHAPTER IX

Toward the Abyss of War 1934-1940

The most gratifying period in Smith's career came between 1934 and 1940 when most of the objectives he had fought for were realized. The constant agitation for the release of Buck and his comrades finally bore fruit--by the end of November 1934, the last of the incarcerated men had regained their freedom after serving half their terms. This was followed by the defeat of the Bennett administration in the 1935 federal election and the repeal of Section 98 in June 1936, by the King government. Yet, these events were eclipsed by unforeseen developments at home and abroad.

I

Believing that the C.L.D.L. could be given a boost by his own trial and subsequent acquittal, Smith immediately began a tour of Ontario, giving numerous speeches on "My Trial for Sedition." His talks consisted of tirades against the police, the federal

government and Bennett personally. He challenged the right of the Toronto police officers to be present at League meetings. "Steps will be taken," he warned "to prevent their presence at future meetings."¹ He was, however, vague as to exactly what the League would do. He reiterated the C.L.D.L.'s pledge to free the incarcerated communists: "We have no intention of dropping the Tim Buck case....The League will press the government for the release of the...communist leaders in Kingston Penitentiary."² And he bitterly attacked Bennett, calling him a "typical fascist" and predicting that "war was coming" and in that war "...Bennett will declare a state of national crisis and set up a Fascist State."³ The speaking tour drew substantial crowds in Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, and in other major cities.⁴ Early in April, Smith journeyed to Halifax and on to Cape Breton in an effort to promote the C.L.D.L. among the miners. He was enthusiastically received in Glace Bay, for example, where an estimated two thousand miners jammed a local hall to hear two hours of inflammatory rhetoric from the general secretary of the League.⁵

1. Toronto Mail and Empire, 12 Mar. 1934.

2. Toronto Globe, 21 Mar. 1934.

3. Toronto Daily Star, 24 Mar. 1934.

4. See for example Ibid., 29 Mar. 1934; Toronto Globe, 19 Mar. and 10 April 1934.

5. Toronto Globe, 12 Apr. 1934.

During his speaking engagements, Smith was flamboyant and optimistic that the communist movement would "surge ahead" in Canada.

Following his trip to the Maritime provinces, Smith, in mid-May, announced that he would run as one of fifteen communist candidates in the 1934 provincial election. He was nominated in East York, the riding of the provincial premier, George S. Henry. Opposing the premier ensured further publicity for Smith and the C.L.D.L. Indeed, during the course of the campaign, Henry wrote a letter to Smith stating that he was in sympathy with the communists in Kingston penitentiary and would support demands for their release.¹ Smith was not overly successful in East York; on 19 June, election day, he received 644 votes which constituted 2.2% of the total votes cast.² Undaunted by his poor showing, in January the following year, he again sought political office entering the Toronto mayoralty race as a candidate of the "Tim Buck election committee." On this occasion he received 8,825 votes compared to the more than 55,000 votes which went to James Simpson--the newly elected mayor. The Ottawa Journal, commenting on the number of votes cast for Smith and other communist candidates in the municipal election, believed that "these figures

1. Toronto Daily Star, 14 June 1934.

2. Calculated from History of the Electoral Districts, Legislatures, and Ministries of the Province of Ontario 1867-1968, (Queen's Printer, 1968), p. 489.

[votes cast] may exaggerate the real strength of this [communist] movement, because undoubtedly such candidates receive "protest votes" from citizens who would consider their election a calamity."¹

This was probably true, nevertheless, Smith was pleased with his performance: "The vote is higher than I personally expected." He then expressed his attitude toward the election.

We are fighting a class fight not for personal aggrandisement. We are not defeated. Our vote represents an inroad into the territory of the enemy. 2

In October 1935 he participated in the national general election running as the communist candidate in the Port Arthur constituency. In a five man race, he was able to garner 1,167 votes.³

Meanwhile, the agitation for the release of the imprisoned communists finally bore fruit. On 6 July 1934, Matthew Popovich and Samuel Carr were released from Kingston because of ill health; the others, with the exception of Cacic--who had been deported⁴-- and Buck, because of his additional nine-month sentence was not set

1. The Ottawa Journal, 3 Jan. 1935, clipping found in the James Simpson Papers, Toronto Public Library.

2. Toronto Daily Star, 2 Jan. 1934.

3. A.L. Normandin, (ed.), The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, p. 318.

4. Despite the efforts of Smith and the C.L.D.L., in the fall of 1933, Cacic was deported to his native Yugoslavia. Op.Cit., 31 Jan. 1934.

free until 24 November, his parole date. Thus it appears that Bennett, who had vowed to Smith that the communists would not be released until they had served their full terms, and his cabinet, had relented in the face of the constant pressure exerted not only from the C.I.D.L. but from various organizations and political parties who had attacked the use of Section 98 against the communists.

Bennett, nevertheless, did not repudiate Section 98 and remained determined as ever to "stamp-out communism." Indeed, by this time, the prime minister had developed an acute paranoia toward communists. This was illustrated by his reaction to the "Onward to Ottawa Trek" and the subsequent Regina Riot. Because the trek was organized by the W.U.L. and some of the leaders were communists, Bennett interpreted the march as a communist plot upon which the "iron heel of ruthlessness" had to be used. This judgement was in marked contrast to that of most commentators, who examined the affair in the light of the real issue--the problems of the single unemployed. As the Canadian Labour Defender in one of its more sober editorials noted:

The Trekkers had left the British Columbia relief camps...[because] they were tired of the weary months in isolation, cut off from all normal social intercourse of the cities and towns, cut off from all association with the opposite sex. They were "fed up" with working at hard labour, under the supervision of semi-military supervisors, for twenty-five cents per day. They were in revolt against

revolting conditions. 1

Bennett's mediation attempt failed when he interviewed eight leaders of the march in Ottawa. He ended by verbally abusing Arthur Evans, the delegation spokesman, because he had been a communist and had been in prison for his activities. The frustrated delegation returned to Regina, where the trekkers were stopped, more determined than ever to proceed with the march. Bennett, however, decided to halt them there and ordered the R.C.M.P. to arrest seven of the trek leaders. In the attempt, a riot ensued and the trekkers were fired upon. Finally, the premier of Saskatchewan, J.G. Gardiner, persuaded the unemployed army of men to vacate Regina at federal expense and return to British Columbia.

There was general disapproval throughout the country at Ottawa's handling of the trekkers. Many believed that Bennett, in his quest to destroy communism, had disregarded basic civil and humanitarian rights and had stifled legitimate dissent on behalf of the distressed and the unemployed. The Toronto Daily Star flatly stated:

1. The Canadian Labour Defender, Vol. 5, no. 12, - Sept.-Oct. 1935, p. 6. Smith and the C.L.D.L. had no direct connection with the organization of the "Onward to Ottawa Trek" other than collecting funds (over \$400.00) for the trekkers and giving them moral support, as witnessed above, through the columns of the Canadian Labour Defender. After the Regina Riot the League aided Evans and other trek leaders who were charged under Section 98 of the criminal code. The charges were subsequently dropped.

No one can read the dispatches from Regina without being impressed by the singular lack of tact which has been exhibited, by the arrogance and intolerance which has made it a crime even to give food to hungry men. It is particularly unfortunate that at a time like this the government of Canada should be in the hands of a man who holds such views, whose arbitrary and non-conciliatory actions in the face of a grave crisis are those of a dictator rather than the head of a great and free people. 1

The Vancouver Sun concurred:

When Prime Minister Bennett told the delegates of subsistence camp workers in his office to go back to their camps and forget their appeal, he did the cruelist and least worthy thing ever done by any leader anywhere. 2

As for Bennett's contention that the trek was a communist plot, the Winnipeg Free Press adamantly declared:

Mr. Bennett becomes rhetorical in his description of the plot to overthrow organized government in Canada. His picture is complete with the usual melodramatic features of the master mind in Moscow and an international conspiracy. But this account ... appears to be pure surmise on Mr. Bennett's part. He produced nothing a judicially minded person would recognize as evidence. 3

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1. Toronto Daily Star, 5 July 1935.
 2. Vancouver Sun, 25 June 1935.
 3. Winnipeg Free Press, 3 July 1935.

The Regina Riot, with such assistance from the Liberal press, underlined an image of Bennett that the communists had been fostering throughout the nation since 1931; the prime minister was portrayed as being arbitrary, dictatorial, callous, indifferent, and ultimately "a failure as a human being."¹ Smith coined him as a "typical fascist;" this label stuck. A month before the general election John Dafoe, for example, solemnly warned: "There is in our system of government... a latent germ of Fascism and sometimes, if the political atmosphere is favourable, it shows signs of coming to life."² He intimated that, under Bennett's stewardship, there were fascist tendencies. The argument, however, became an academic one, for on 14 October, 1935, an alienated electorate repudiated the Conservative Party and politically destroyed the man who had failed them.

No one was more pleased with this event than Smith; he and Bennett had had a bitter personal feud since 1931. Now it appeared that his main antagonist had been subdued. Yet, by this time, the C.L.D.L. had problems of its own.

1. Saturday Night, 19 Oct. 1935.

2. John W. Dafoe, "Freedom of Public Opinion", cited in the Canadian Forum, (Aug., 1935), p. 341.

II.

Paradoxically, while Smith's trial marked the high point of the League's influence and prestige, it also signalled the beginning of its decline. Immediately prior to his trial the organization enrolled five thousand new members boosting the individual membership to twenty thousand.¹ However, with Smith's acquittal and the immediate issue set aside, many of these new members drifted away. By July 1934, almost sixty per cent of the new members were gone. Smith noted:

New branches are created and disappear within a few weeks, thus many of the 50 new branches established this year have disappeared and despite the fact that we have recruited 85,000 members this year we have at the present time less members than in July of last year. 2

Defections from the League increased with the release of the last communist from Kingston Penitentiary in November 1934. The government, in freeing the communists, eliminated another exploitable issue. As one C.L.D.L. member noted, because the communists were released "the workers of Canada had dropped the vigilance and mass action that had been raised to tremendous

1. Document on Tasks and Role of the Canadian Labour Defense League, 29-30 Sept. 1934, Toronto. Pamphlet issued by the C.L.D.L., (n.d.), p. 6.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

levels by the C.L.D.L. demanding the release of our comrades."¹

By the time the League held its third national Convention, 19-20 October 1935, in Toronto, its individual membership was down to approximately ten thousand.²

This convention was significant for it signalled a change in the C.L.D.L.'s tactics. Fifty-three delegates heard Smith blaming the League's loss of membership on its sectarianism and its label as a "red" organization which "tended to narrow down the scope of our defense movement." "From the very beginning," Smith declared, "it has never been the intention that the C.L.D.L. shall constitute a sectarian movement or be an auxiliary or appendage of a political party...it was open to all, regardless of political opinion or creed."³ The League, however, had become "too strongly identified as a red organization and the C.L.D.L. must now endeavour to extend and operate on the broadest kind of association of people who were willing to struggle on the defense front."⁴

Those that were politically aware at the convention would have realized that Smith, in effect, was echoing the change in Comintern policy which was announced at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern

1. Speech of A. Campbell at the Proceedings of Annual District Convention C.L.D.L., Toronto District, 14-15 Sept. 1935, p. 2.

2. Minutes of Third National Convention of the Canadian Labour Defense League, held in Toronto 19-20 October 1935.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

in July and August 1935. Instead of pursuing a militant revolutionary course as they had done in the first half of the 1930s, communists now were to create "popular fronts" and co-operate with non-communists who feared the spectre of "fascism" and the curtailment of "civil liberties." The C.L.D.L. was directed to broaden its character, inviting people from various sections of society and movements to enter the C.L.D.L. and assist it in overcoming its too narrow sectarian base. The main report emphasized the new Comintern line:

Our opponents tell us we are a revolutionary organization... It is undoubtedly true that we do give color to the claim of our opponents, and as long as we maintain the face and character of a "red" organization, we will never achieve our objective of being a broad organization in defense of the struggle for the civil liberties of the people. In our speeches, leaflets, publications, etc., all these tend to narrow down the scope of our defense movement... [and] alienate people who would otherwise join with us in the defense struggle. The question is not only that we welcome people who do not entertain revolutionary ideas, people who do not agree with some of our members as respects the authority of a certain political party or other, but we must make our movement congenial to them so that their particular opinions will have some scope within the organization, so that they do not feel that they are captives in an alien ideology. ... If we can persuade some prominent people who are connected with political organizations of various types, if we can draw them into our National Committee,

in itself, perhaps it will not constitute such a great advantage, but it will at least prove that at the top we are making a beginning in broadening out our leading committee in the hope that the District Executive Committees will broaden out and become more representative of the Canadian people as a whole. 1.

Despite the efforts at the convention to broaden the C.L.D.L. and appeal to a wider segment of society, the C.L.D.L. continued to experience difficulties in maintaining the dynamic atmosphere which had conscripted to its cause people from all sections of the country. This was especially true after the 1935 federal election. With the removal of Bennett and the Conservative Party from office, the new prime minister, Mackenzie King, was free to carry out his promise of repealing Section 98 of the criminal code. On 24 June 1936, the King government replaced Section 98 with a less obnoxious subsection, to section 133 of the criminal code.² Although Smith rejoiced at the repeal of Section 98, its eradication undermined another major issue by which the League had been able to gather support. On 24 October 1936, a revealing bulletin was issued by Smith to all D.C.C.s, L.C.C.s, to League branches, to trade unions and to all former members of the League. It stated:

The developments of the past two

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1. Ibid.
 2. See Appendix III.

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years [with respect to the C.L.D.L.]
have not become as coherent and steady
as was expected....The permanent
Defense movement...has not been realized.
....For the moment the political
situation in Canada seems somewhat
quieter and the political reaction, in
its more arrogant methods has been
temporarily defeated.... 1

Given such a situation, Smith posed the question whether the League should suspend all activity. He provided his own answer by stating that "the proper course to follow is for the C.L.D.L. to maintain the machinery we have...and to be prepared, whenever possible, to build the broadest forms of defense around the cases which may arise locally as well as nationally."²

However, from this memorandum until 1939, the League collapsed into dormancy. Smith, for his part, became preoccupied with events outside the country and the approaching war.

III

By 1935, Soviet-German relations had altered from uneasy tolerance to profound distrust. The actual cause of the turn in the two nations' relations was not ideological, but political. On 26 January 1934, Hitler and Pilsudski concluded a ten-year

1. C.L.D.L. National Executive Bulletin, 24 Oct. 1936.
Courtesy of Mr. R. Kenny, Toronto.

2. Ibid.

non-aggression pact. The German-Polish rapprochement, which threatened the Soviet Union's borders, brought about a shift in Soviet foreign policy toward an effort to draw closer to the Western powers. After Germany left the League of Nations in October 1933, Stalin, fearing isolation, sought to join the organization. His overtures proved successful and on 18 September 1934 the Soviet Union became a member of the world body.

Meanwhile, Hitler's territorial ambitions and his anti-communist posture at home and abroad dictated a change in Comintern tactics. As noted above, at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in July and August 1935, new directives were issued to communists throughout the world. The thesis that fascism and social democracy were twins was filed away; instead, the defense of democracy against fascism was declared to be the most important task of the workers' movement.¹ Social Democrats and communists were asked to stand together and form so-called popular fronts--a catch all for every party, including conservatives and liberals, which was ready to fight against fascism.² This meant "co-operation with all non-communists who were also worried about Hitler, Mussolini

1. When Hitler's National Socialist Party assumed power in 1933, Moscow was not greatly alarmed. Indeed, it was thought that he was a pacemaker for communism. Stalin was convinced that Hitler represented but a stage on the road to a Soviet Germany. The situation dramatically changed with the German-Polish non-aggression pact, Georg. Von Rouch, A History of Soviet Russia, (New York, 1971), pp. 261-266.

2. Ibid., p. 266.

and the various fascist and semi-fascist movements in the West."¹ Canadian communists responded enthusiastically to this turn in Soviet foreign policy. The C.P.C. decided to soft-pedal socialism and gain potential allies among non-socialists and anti-socialists rather than to argue that "Canada was ripe for socialism."

Smith, for his part, became increasingly concerned with the "march of fascism in Europe." In an effort to acquire first hand knowledge of the situation in Europe, he resolved to visit the continent. The opportunity came in March 1936, when he received an invitation from Edward Haskell, son of the Rev. D. Haskell, American missionary to Bulgaria, and from Smelja Voydanoff, president of the Macedonian Peoples' League in the United States to accompany them to Bulgaria. Their purpose was to attend the trial of the "central committee of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization"--members of the Bulgarian Young Communist League--who had run afoul of the Bulgarian regime, and to do "everything we could to develop international protest against the terror in Bulgaria."² Smith was to spend several months in Europe visiting the Balkan states, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. The trip left an indelible impression on him.

1. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 96.

2. Smith, All My Life, p. 181. Nelson Daily News, 24 Nov. 1936.

In Bulgaria, the delegation was not permitted to attend the trial; they were informed that it had been postponed indefinitely.¹ After touring a number of prisons, Smith left that "Nazi-dominated" country for Rumania, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans. He later recorded his impressions:

...the influence of the German Nazis is predominant over all the Balkan states. German newspapers outsell 10 to 1 all other papers. The German mark is the chief factor in financial transactions of the land and both import and export trade is largely in German Channels. The German debts to this land now have reached the enormous figure of 1,000,000,000 marks, and it is insisted by Germany that this be worked out in trade, which means influence and power for the Nazis. 2

Smith noted that the chief slogan of the Nazis was "drive to the east" which for Smith meant "war with the Soviet Union." "The struggle," he prophetically declared, "would involve the whole world."³

After his tour of the Balkans, Smith travelled to the "beautiful" city of Paris where he attended a rally to celebrate "the victory of the Front Populaire." He visited the cemetery of Paris in which stood the Wall of the Commune, commemorating

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1. Smith, Ibid., p. 183.
 2. Nelson Daily News, 24 Nov. 1936.
 3. Ibid.

the communists who were slain in 1871. It was an emotional experience:

I stood at this sacred spot for several minutes with uncovered head while I tried to recollect the scenes that were enacted here some 65 years ago. A few days later, I marched with many tens of thousands to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the commune. 1

On 5 June, Smith passed through Dieppe bound for London where he boarded the "Felix Dzerzinsky" for Leningrad. After visiting that "historic city," he proceeded to Moscow where on 14 June, he took part in conferences with Helena Stassova of the I.R.A. and Vasil Kolaroff of the Bulgarian Communist Party. They tried to develop plans for an appeal to world opinion on behalf of the incarcerated Bulgarian communists.

Smith's admiration for the Soviet Union had not waned since his last visit in 1932; it remained romantic and mystic:

As it stand to-day, the U.S.S.R. is the first state ever established in the history of mankind based on the Communist principle of production for use and not for personal gain. There exist no private-property interests in the social production of the Soviet. It has created the sole basis for Brotherhood among men. 2.

He attended the funeral of Maxim Gorke, the famed Russian writer

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 185.
2. Ibid., p. 189.

and marvelled at the "upheaval of strong emotion in Moscow." His only regret was that he did not have the opportunity to meet Joseph Stalin.

Smith completed his stay in Moscow and on 22nd July boarded a plane for Paris. In the French capital he did "as much as I could with the government to assist the Bulgarian situation." From Paris he travelled to Geneva to present a petition to the League of Nations on behalf of the Bulgarian minority in Rumania and the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.¹ On 5 August, he left for Brussels to pay a visit to the offices of the Second International of Socialist parties. He arrived in London, 9 August, and shortly thereafter boarded a ship for Canada.

Smith's tour of the continent convinced him of two developments--that Europe was on the verge of a "mighty war" and that fascism was the greatest enemy not only of socialism but mankind. His fears seemed about to be realized with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

This conflict erupted in 18 July 1936 when a military junta mobilized to overthrow the incumbent Republican government. During the next two years of bitter fighting, it had escalated into an extremely serious international problem. Hitler and Mussolini pledged men and arms in support of the insurgents--the "Nationalists"--while the Soviet Union, after some hesitation, began to

¹ Ibid., p. 190.

contribute advisors and equipment to the "Republicans" and to organize an International Brigade of volunteer combatants. The reasons for German, Italian, and Soviet involvement in the conflict went beyond humanitarian or altruistic motives. As Victor Hoar, in his volume, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, noted:

For the fascists, a victory in Spain would mean a monopoly of the Mediterranean that would be all but invulnerable. And the menace to France alone would be worth the risk and the sacrifice. Mussolini publicized, as did the Germans, the need to destroy communism in Spain, but there is also evidence that the dictator had an extraordinarily crass interest: the desire to maintain Italian military units at fever pitch by submitting them to periodic combat. Berlin had good cause to dread seizure in Spain, but Goering made it clear to his Fuhrer that Spain also represented a grand opportunity 'to test my young Luftwaffe in this or that technical aspect.'

The Russians intervened for different and more subtle reasons. Although a fascist Spain did not threaten Russia's borders, the overall intimidation of the Mediterranean could not go unnoticed. Another ally for the axis powers was certainly good will to be obtained from the defense of democracy. 1

The Soviet Union, therefore, decided to recruit a force of inter-

1. Victor Hoar, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil War, (Toronto, 1969) p. 4.

national volunteers to fight for the Republicans.

In this war of "Democracy versus Fascism," the Comintern directed various communist parties in Europe and the Western Hemisphere to organize and dispatch the men. Before the war was over, over forty thousand international volunteers would come to Spain. Canada supplied an estimated 1,250 of which only half would return.¹

In Canada, the search for volunteer soldiers was conducted by the C.P.C. The party established a special network to recruit and transport the volunteers. The first group of volunteers recruited by the Party departed from Canada in December 1936, and upon arriving in Spain joined the International Brigades set up under the auspices of Comintern and the Communist Party of Spain.² In June 1937 the Canadians were formed into a separate unit--the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

The communists endeavoured to publicize and secure funds for the Canadian "anti-fascists" fighting in Spain. Two committees were formed for this purpose--the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, and Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Smith plunged heart and soul into organizational work of both. Along with Beckie Buhay and other members of the C.L.D.L., he made speaking tours and solicited donations for the "Mac-Pap" Battalion. His reasons were clearly stated in a speech in Toronto, 1937:

1. Ibid., p. viii.

2. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 129.

[The Spanish Civil War]...is political.

It is to conquer Spain for Fascism--

to secure possession of the rich minerals in Spain for Fascism....

That also would encircle France with Fascism. If they win Spain, France would be next....

The objective of the Fascists is to dominate the Mediterranean Sea and when this domination is secured, to gain concessions in Great Britain in order that their interests will not be violated. Ultimately, their objective is to conquer Czechoslovakia and the Balkan States and prepare a war route to the Soviet Union in order to attack the Soviet Union.... 2

For Smith, fascism was not only affront to his socialist ideals but a menace to "civilization, the fate of science and culture of mankind."³ It had to be stopped in Spain.

In June 1937, Smith was asked by the "Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion" to go to Spain as their emissary. The chief purpose of the trip was to "visit the wounded comrades in Hospitals and to distribute goods to soldiers in the Battalion." Smith readily agreed. In early July, 1937, he set sail for Spain in charge of thirty-two tons worth of goods--cigarettes, tobacco, soap, socks, first-aid kits, books and other useful items valued at \$25,000.⁴

1. Spain possessed a large proportion of the world's mercury deposits which was an important factor in producing steel for manufacture of war implements.

2. Smith Papers p.c., a collection dealing with the Spanish-Civil War.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., Also Smith, All My Life, p. 195.

Smith arrived in Paris, 9 July; there he was unable to secure proper papers to enter legally into Spain. Prior to his departure, he had written to O.D. Skelton, the under-secretary of state advising him of his trip and asking the Dominion government to sanction his journey to Spain,¹ but discovered that "no advice had been received from Ottawa about my papers." He remained in Paris for twelve days while the matter was investigated. Although the reply from Ottawa refused to acknowledge even the existence of an A.E. Smith, he was finally allowed to continue to Spain. Ottawa's reaction was not unexpected and reflected prime minister King's opposition to Canadian involvement in European affairs.²

Smith set foot on Spanish soil at Port Bou, 3 August with an international delegation of two women and eleven men. From the port they proceeded to Figueras and then on to the city of Albacete-- the headquarters of the International Brigade. At Albacete, Smith toured the hospitals where wounded Canadian soldiers were brought. Later, he drove to Madrid and other cities and towns along the way, distributing his goods. In all, he visited over a dozen hospitals

1. Smith Papers, p.c., Smith to Skelton, 30 June 1937.

2. The Foreign Enlistment Act of 1937 was an expression of this policy. Section three of the Act stated: "Any person who, being a Canadian national within or without Canada, voluntarily accepts or agrees to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with any friendly foreign state... is guilty of an offense under this Act." Cited in Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, pp. 124-130; also see Hoar, Op.Cit., pp. 249-255. Although Smith certainly had not enlisted, he claimed to represent those Canadians who had gone to war illegally.

and children's refugee homes, intermingling at various points with the "Peoples' Army." Throughout his travels through the Spanish countryside, Smith made extensive notes in preparation of a tour he planned on his return to Canada to inform Canadians of the Spanish struggle and to involve the populace morally, politically, and financially in support of the Spanish Republicans. He summed up his admiration of the "Mac-Pap" Battalion thus:

These men were unique in history. They represented Canada, the people of Canada. They were part of the first military force ever gathered from countries all over the world to fight for the peoples' cause against fascism and for democracy.

This was the message he brought home when he undertook his speaking tour from British Columbia to Quebec.

When Barcelona fell to Franco in 1938 and the Republic had been lost, Smith became bitter. He was pained at the "indifference" exhibited in Canada towards the war and berated the government's "cold and hostile" attitude toward the returning veterans. In his criticism of the government, Smith had some justification. The American and British volunteers came out at least a month before the Canadians.² Canadians had to wait as the R.C.M.P. and the Department of Immigration and the Department of External Affairs haggled over the legal rights the volunteers would have with respect

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 197.
 2. Hoar, Op.Cit., p. 225.

to re-entry into Canada. The delays in repatriation of the survivors of the Canadian force and transportation of the men, left a bitter taste for those who supported the war effort. For Smith "there would have been no war in Europe in 1939 if Franco had been defeated in Spain in 1936."¹

Yet, world events had another ironical twist for Smith and the communists in 1939.

IV

With the recognition of the fascist threat by the Comintern in 1935, communists the world over mobilized against fascism. However, by 1939, the Soviet Union's relationship with the Western powers had become strained and the Comintern sought to redefine its position vis a vis Germany. To the Western powers, the increase in bolshevik ideological propaganda, the sensational show trials in Moscow and the purging of the Red Army led to a profound distrust of the Soviet Union and a belief that Russia could not be considered an effective partner in international affairs. The collapse in the policy of "collective security" between the Kremlin and the Western powers progressed measurably when Hitler unilaterally terminated the German-Polish pact on 28 April 1939. The way was now clear for a Berlin-Moscow agreement. In a small Berlin restaurant

1. Op.Cit., p. 199.

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on 26 July the two totalitarian nations divided Eastern Europe: Poland being apportioned to Germany and the Baltic States, Finland, and Rumania, to the Soviet Union. On 23 August, German-Soviet designs on Eastern Europe were confirmed with the signing of a ten-year non-aggression pact in Moscow.

The news of the Hitler-Stalin pact, temporarily confused communists throughout the world. The C.P.C. in order to justify and explain the treaty, insisted that the pact did "not make the slightest change in Soviet foreign policy" and that it "is seriously weakening Hitler's hold upon the German people."¹ Generally, the arguments now put forth were to the effect that the pact had actually strengthened the cause of peace in Europe and had saved the U.S.S.R. from getting involved in a war with Germany, into which anti-communist politicians in London and Paris were trying to divert the Fuhrer.²

On 1 September, German troops invaded Poland; on 3 September, England and France broke off diplomatic relations with Hitler. With the declaration of war 10 September, Canada became inextricably bound in the conflict. The communists supported the war effort for the first few days. Tim Buck, for example, urged "full support of the Polish people" in a telegram to Mackenzie King.³ The

1. The Clarion, 26 Aug. 1939, cited in Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 140.

2. Ibid., p. 140.

3. Ibid.

communists, however, quickly reversed their policy when the Soviet Union joined Germany in the attack on Poland, 17 September 1939. In faithful mimicry of the Comintern, which was denouncing the "warmongers" in London and Paris, the Canadian communists declared that the war was an "imperialist one," and began a campaign to "withdraw Canada from the Imperialist War" and called on Canadians "to make it abundantly clear to the King Government that the Canadian people are more interested in an early peace than in the prosecution of the war."¹

The communists' position did not endear them to the heart of the federal government or the majority of Canadians. Ernest Lapointe, the Dominion's minister of justice, by 1939 was under tremendous pressure from Quebec and other parts of the country to abolish "communism and Fascism in Canada."² The government, fearing subversive activity in Canada, during the war, enacted the "Defense of Canada Regulations" pursuant to the "War Measures Act" (originally passed in 1914) which empowered the Governor-in-Council --in reality the government-- to "do and authorize such acts and things, and make from time to time such orders and regulations, as he may by reason of real or apprehended war, invasion or insurrection deem necessary or advisable for the security, defense, peace, order, and

1. Ibid.

2. Numerous letters advocating the outlawing of communism and fascism are contained in P.A.C. Lapointe Papers, Vol. 16, Files 40-41.

welfare of Canada."¹ This, in effect, gave the government drastic arbitrary powers in dealing with "enemy aliens and also with persons engaged in subversive activities of various kinds and in all their ramifications."² Through the Act, the government secured control of censorship, arrest, detention, deportation, appropriation, forfeiture and disposition of property for the duration of the war. The Act descended on Canadians very quickly. It had been drawn up by an interdepartmental committee in the spring of 1939 and had been approved by the cabinet. Although parliament met from 7-13 September, the regulations were not discussed.

Smith, in full accord with the twists and turns of Comintern policy, saw the Act as a threat to civil liberties in Canada or more precisely as a direct threat to the C.P.C.'s anti-war activity. "Parliament," he declared, "had given to the Governor-in-Council, for the duration of the war, virtually as much authority as the German Reichstag in 1933 surrendered to the government of Herr Hitler."³ On 26 November 1939 Smith announced his intentions to fully reactivate the C.L.D.L. in a campaign against the War Measures

Act:

For some two years or less, it is true, there has been a decrease in

1. Revised Statutes of Canada, 1927, Chapter 206.
2. Ibid.
3. Smith Papers p.c.

the number of political prisoners in Canada. The political situation became somewhat equilibrated. But to-day we cannot fail to be impressed with the facts that stare us in the face in regard to the situation. Reaction has assumed a boldness which is alarming to every liberal minded person. War has spread out in Europe between great powers. Canada has become involved in this war.

The Government of the day has adopted a policy which is thought to be necessary in the time of war. Under this procedure the changes made in the laws of the Dominion and the events which have arisen from the application of these laws has forced to the front the burning question of the civil rights of citizens of this country. In this situation there is a need which amounts to a call, for the return of the C.L.D.L. to public activity. 1

Shortly thereafter, a petition entitled "Resolution in Defense of Civil Rights in Canada During the War" was issued by the N.E.C. to be circulated by all districts and branches. It in part read: "we desire to urge the removal of the following section of the Canada Regulations:"

(Sec. 15), which provides for destructive censorship of the press; (Sec. 21), which embodies 'preventative arrest,' the deadliest blow that can be aimed at the institutions of a free country; (Sec. 39), which destroys freedom of speech; (Sec. 39a), which crushes the workers' press and bans all printed opinions contrary to reaction; (Sec. 61), which alleges an offense before

1. Ibid., a bulletin issued to all C.L.D.L. districts and branches.

there has been submitted evidence thereof in a court of law; (Sec. 62), 4 and 5, which are designed to crush organizations, etc., and which embodies the un-British principle of 'guilty' before any charge has been proven against the accused....1

The League's revived activity did not go unnoticed by the authorities. On 4 June 1940, by order-in-council, the King government declared all communist and pro-nazi organizations illegal. On 6 June, Smith learned through the pages of the Toronto Daily Star, that the Canadian Labour Defense League was included in the sixteen organizations declared illegal. That day he issued this bulletin to the districts and branches of the C.L.D.L.

It is necessary at this time to formally advise you that the C.L.D.L. has been declared by the Federal Government to be illegal....pursuant to the provisions of an order-in-council amending the Canada Regulations. ...The immediate effect of this is to disband our former organization. The former National office has been closed. The same applies to all former local branches and district offices. No further correspondence can be conducted as an organized body. Any matters of a personal character should be sent to me personally.... 2

Thus all forms of C.L.D.L. activity ceased.

Smith also wrote a letter to the Toronto Daily Star protesting the banning of the C.L.D.L. and asking the paper to investigate the

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

matter. He argued two points: first, that the League was not a "subversive" or "disloyal" organization but one which endeavoured to provide legal defense for people arrested because they had dared "speak out" against the injustices of the day. "Has it come to pass," he declared, "that the common people, the poor and lowly, will now not merely meet with...repression, but will be unable even to procure that legal defense that every person...is entitled to?" For Smith, this was what the outlawing of the C.L.D.L. meant. Secondly, he argued that the declaration of illegality of the C.L.D.L. and fifteen other organizations was a threat to the civil liberties of everyone in Canada:

Ask yourself: Whose organization will next come under the ban? Where will this witch hunt end? Is it an acceptable thing to Canadians that without a charge, without a hearing, on the basis of police suspicions, organizations should be outlawed and human rights destroyed? 2

Smith received no response to his questions from the newspaper.

Smith's viewpoint was, of course, biased, but an epitaph for the C.L.D.L. would take into account in some measure Smith's observations. The C.L.D.L.'s emergence as a national organization with substantial support throughout Canada underlined not only the feverish activities of the communists, but also exposed the violence and strife which existed in the nation in the interwar years. In the

1. Smith Papers p.c., draft of the letter.
2. Ibid.

tense atmosphere of the depression, it became easy for political authorities, under the pretext of preserving respect for law and order, to disregard the normal precepts of "British justice" in the name of saving British institutions. The dramatic increase in deportations, the use of Section 98 of the criminal code on the leaders of the C.P.C., and the indictment of Smith for sedition were all manifestations of the state's fervent desire to mute any movement or party which sought in times of crisis to forment dissatisfaction toward the state. Conversely, in the turmoil of the depression, it also became relatively easy for the C.L.D.L. to pose as a vehicle of legitimate dissent against the "apparent" submergence of democratic values and personal liberties. Through campaigns, demonstrations and the courts, the C.L.D.L. inextricably intertwined civil and humanitarian causes with communism, a process which generated a great deal of publicity and sympathy, two ingredients which the communist movement normally would not have received. Indeed, the C.L.D.L. did conscript into its ranks individuals who normally would have had nothing to do with the communists. Through its activities, the C.L.D.L. saved from prolonged disarray the communist movement in the 1930s. Like the C.P.C., however, the C.L.D.L. reflected once too often the "Real Politik" inside the Kremlin rather than the indigenous forces within the country. This ensured its suppression by the political authorities in 1940.

Although the C.L.D.L. had been banned, Smith did not remain

an unemployed communist for long. On 22 June 1941 Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. The C.P.C. in its numerous reversals of policy informed the Canadian people by underground pamphlets that the national interests of Canada demanded full, immediate aid to the Soviet Union, the fullest united effort of all democratic states to smash fascism "forever." Canadian democracy, the Party now patriotically argued, "depended on a complete victory against fascism." As Tim Buck put it:

Canada is in mortal danger. The future of our democracy and the safety of our homes and families depend on the battle raging on the Eastern Front. At this critical hour, the thoughts of all Canada are with our Soviet Allies. To defend Canada and save world civilization, to keep faith with our Soviet and British Allies, to press for immediate invasion of the continent.... 1

With this reversal in C.P.C. policy, Smith immediately started a new organization--The National Council for Democratic Rights-- which had as chief among its aims the legalization of the Communist Party of Canada. Operating from the League's old office, 331 Bay Street, Smith once again undertook a speaking and organizing tour across Canada.

1. Cited in Ralph Allen, "The Case History of Comrade Buck," Maclean's Magazine, LXIV:6, 1951, p. 51.

CHAPTER X

Toward the New Millennium 1940-1947

Hitler's surprise attack on the Soviet Union and the beginnings of Soviet Russia's "great patriotic war" released the communists from an unenviable position. The communists changed their slogans. What had been described as an "imperialist" war became "a just war, a peoples' war of national freedom and liberation."¹

I

Smith now set about to inform Canadians that communists were ready to participate in an all out effort to defeat Hitler and his allies. The first step in this direction was to legalize the C.P.C.; the National Council for Democratic Rights (N.C.D.R.) was the instrument by which Smith hoped to accomplish this goal. He described its beginnings:

1. Canadian Tribune, 18 Apr. 1942, cited in Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 148.

...I opened a downtown office for the National Council for Democratic Rights. It was our old location of 331 Bay Street...We moved a table and a couple of chairs into the office. We sat there--Beckie Buhay and I--waiting for the R.C.M.P. to come and dislodge us. At the end of two weeks, still unmolested, we went active. A phone was installed. We bought a mimeo machine. We secured materials. We prepared a short public statement. We called together all who could come of the former labour defense committee...We borrowed some funds--three hundred dollars.... 1

The general aim of the N.C.D.R. was stated as "unconditionally to mobilize and unite the Canadian people for the greatest possible war effort" and to "release...all anti-fascists [which would] tremendously strengthen the government in this great task."² A campaign was initiated for the release of interned communists,³ for the removal of the ban on the C.P.C. and for the return of all U.L.F.T.A. property which had been confiscated by the government.

The N.C.D.R. launched its inaugural conference on 28 September 1941 in Toronto. One hundred and sixty-five delegates from twenty-two cities attended, among them sixty-five trade unionists. In the report of this conference Smith called for "unconditional unity in the war of liberation against Nazi Germany." He endeavoured to show

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 205.

2. National Conference for Democratic Rights Proceedings 22-23 February 1942, Ottawa, Ontario, p. 2. Statement by Smith.

3. Over ninety members of the C.P.C. had been incarcerated.

that the internment of communists, which was proceeding apace, ran counter to the interests of the war effort.¹ On 9 November 1941 Smith organized a meeting at Massey Hall in celebration of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. At the meeting, the N.C.D.R. unveiled its new slogans: "Restore Production to: Defeat Hitler," "Create a Second Front," and "Release all Anti-Fascists and Let Them Fight Hitler." Three days later, he led an eighteen-man delegation to Ottawa to present prime minister King with a petition "concerning the legalization of the C.P.C." Although King refused to meet the delegation, Smith presented the petition to a "junior" member of the Department of Justice. Shortly thereafter, he travelled west to promote the N.C.D.R. By the end of 1941, committees were established in major Canadian centres from Montreal to Victoria.²

As general-secretary and founder of the N.C.D.R., Smith endeavoured to explain and justify the twists and turns of the C.P.C.'s attitudes toward the war. In a pamphlet entitled Should the Communist Party be Illegal? he stated his views. The communists' denunciation of the war, he declared, was justified because the allied powers were attempting to divert Hitler against the Soviet Union and communism. "The Communists," he maintained, were "fighting against the efforts to turn the war against the Soviet Union."

1. Smith, All My Life, p. 206.

2. Ibid., p. 207.

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However, with Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, the character of the war changed. "It is clear," he argued,

that everything that weakened the Soviet Union weakened Canada and everything that strengthened the Soviet Union to be able to meet and defeat the Nazi attack strengthened Canada....

Those who were "fair-minded" and "far-sighted" understood that "our country's national interests are inextricably bound up with the Soviet Union and its battles against Naziism."¹ Smith's rhetorical argument, made no mention of the Soviet Union's see-saw foreign policy which drove communists throughout the world into equivocal and contrary positions. Instead, he emphasized that "from the standpoint of success of our struggle against Naziism, it is self-evident that to fail to recognize the great change in the war which took place on 22 June [Hitler's attack on Soviet Russia] would be disastrous."²

Another point which needed clarification was the Soviet-German non-aggression pact of 1939. Smith argued that

This was a non-aggression pact such as the Soviet Union proposed to every nation. It was not in any sense an alliance as the anti-Soviet circles claimed. All the propaganda about communism and Naziism being hand in glove was a tissue of lies....

Smith maintained that the attempts to substantiate "these lies" by —

1. A.E. Smith, Should the Communist Party be Illegal? pamphlet published by the N.C.D.R. (n.d., Toronto), p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

references to Soviet-German trade were fallacious; that during the period of the pact the Soviet Union shipped no decisive war material to Germany and, in fact, received from Germany better than she gave. He concluded "if there is to be any question about such trade then one would have to raise the fact that the war materials shipped by Canada to Japan constituted a far greater assistance to the Axis than any trade carried on between the Soviet Union and Germany."¹

Smith's analysis of the Soviet-German Pact was inaccurate. For while the Soviet Union endeavoured to live up to the terms of the pact, Hitler distrusted Stalin. For example, he turned down the proposal that German submarines be built in Russian docks or be purchased by the Russians, he refused to sell the heavy cruiser Seydlitz and did not give permission for the blueprints of the battleship Bismarck to be passed to the Russians.² According to the major economic agreement concluded in the pact, the Soviet Union was to provide Germany with goods valued at eight hundred million marks in the course of the first twelve months, including 900,000 metric tons of petroleum, 100,000 metric tons of cotton, 500,000 metric tons of iron ore, 300,000 metric tons of scrap and pig iron, and 2,400 kilograms of platinum. Also, by the end of 1940, the Soviet Union had supplied almost one million metric tons of grain

1. Ibid., p. 12.
 2. Georg. Von Rauch, A History of Soviet Russia, (New York, 1971), p. 288.

alone to Germany.¹ Thus, although Smith could not have known the exact terms of the pact, he was less than candid about its significance. His idealistic commitment to communism and the Soviet Union blinded him to Russian-German "Real-Politik."

Smith also sought to justify the Finnish-Soviet war, to refute the argument that in the Soviet Union there was a terrorist dictatorship and that in Canada the communists had been engaged in national sabotage. Of the Finnish-Soviet war, he flatly stated "the Soviet Union offered Finland the most favourable agreement, giving Finland more territory and better territory than the Soviet Union asked in the interests of her absolutely essential security."² Of the charge that there existed a dictatorship of terror in the world's first socialist country, Smith adamantly maintained that "there is no fifth column in the Soviet Union because the fifth column agents of German Naziism were put on trial in a peoples' court, were given a fair trial and were dealt with by the most democratic and highest of justice, Soviet Justice."³ Finally, in answer to the charge of communist sabotage in Canada he stated:

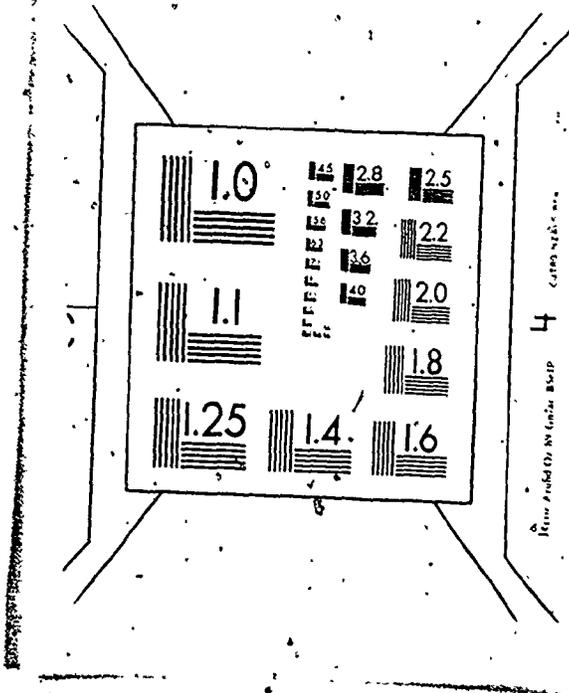
The truth is that, the Communist Party and the left-wing labour movement are opposed in principle to sabotage. There have been repeated trials in

1. Ibid.
2: Should the Communist Party Be Illegal? Op.Cit., p. 12.
3. Ibid.

4

4

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Canada of Communists but there has never been produced a single piece of evidence to show that any communists ever engaged in any form of sabotage. The only thing that the communists could be charged with is that they have put forward their views...and they are now to be denied legality because powerful circles did not agree with the views which they have put forth in the past... 1

Having thus defended the communists' seemingly incomprehensible reversal of policy during the outbreak of war, Smith attempted to educate the Canadian people to the significance of the communists to Canada's total war effort. In a pamphlet entitled Remove the Ban: The Communists Are Making a Vital Contribution to the War Effort, of which copies were sent to every member of parliament, he delineated his views. "The historic contribution of the communists to our war effort," he asserted, "lies in the fact that they did the foundation work for the two cardinal principles of our national policy."

First the principle of friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union as decisive for our national survival. Second, the principle that Nazi Germany, with her Axis partners is the greatest menace to our nation. 2

These two principles, he argued, were illustrated by the twenty-year

1. Ibid., p. 13.

2. A.E. Smith, Remove the Ban! The Communists Are Making a Vital Contribution to the War Effort, published by the N.C.D.R., 5 July 1942, Toronto, p. 10.

Mutual Assistance Pact between Great Britain and the Soviet Union and the Moscow-Washington treaty. The removal of the ban on the C.P.C. would be a good-will gesture which would reaffirm the Soviet-Allies alliance. He pointed out that Canada had the distinction of "being the only nation outside the Axis countries which interned communists without a trial."¹

In another, rather inconsistent statement, Smith assured the Canadian people that national interests would not be sacrificed by the removal of the ban on communists. With patriotic fervour he asserted:

The Communist Party has nothing whatever to do with the Soviet Union, except as part of the Canadian nation allied with the Soviet Union in war against Hitler. It does not and never has, advocated "force and violence." It is 100 per cent Canadian and an outgrowth of Canadian life. ²

Finally, Smith promised that the communists would work with the liberal, conservative and C.C.F. party representatives in the war effort. He supported "conscription for total war" and made a plea for opening a second land front in Europe³ to alleviate the pressure on the Red Army.

Thus Smith and the communists had come full circle in their

1. Ibid., p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Ibid., p. 8.

attitude toward the war: from a campaign against fascism in 1936-1939, to a tirade against the "imperialist warmongers" in Canada, Britain and other allied powers, and finally, to support for total war against Hitler and Naziism. Smith and the communists had managed with some difficulty to stay in step with the vagaries of Soviet foreign policy.

II

By 1942, the campaign initiated by the N.C.D.R. was gaining momentum.¹ Events abroad helped to maintain the N.C.D.R.'s campaign in non-communist circles. By the end of 1942, the Red Army, after its initial setbacks in 1941 had been rejuvenated with the aid of the American Lend-Lease Agreement, and started counter-offensive against the Germans. The gallant fighting spirit of the Russian troops won them supporters in Canada. The T.L.C., the C.C.L. and Mitchell Hepburn all put forward demands for the release of interned communists and the lifting of the ban on the C.P.C.

On 22-23 February 1942, 173 delegates from cities across Canada,

1. "Those who lent their names to the cause included individuals who had sided with the communists in the past, as well as a fairly large number of educators, lawyers, clergymen, and trade union leaders who felt that the federal government was being obstinate, petty minded, and unreasonable." Included were well-known personalities such as Morley Callaghan, the novelist, Clifford Sifton, the newspaper owner, F.A. Brewin, a well-known C.C.F. member and Watson Kirkconnell, a professor, who argued that the ban on the C.P.C. was a "bad law that is imperfectly enforced" and "a symbol of repression of opinion." Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 151.

representing 140,000 people gathered at the Château Laurier Hotel in Ottawa.¹ It was the first national conference of the N.C.D.R. Smith made the key speech appealing for support of the government's war programme and calling for lifting the ban on the Communist Party and other "anti-fascist organizations." Three resolutions were adopted. First, that a petition for the lifting of the ban on "anti-fascist organizations" and the release of "anti-fascists" be prepared for endorsement throughout Canada and be sent to all unions, organizations, and meetings. Secondly, that a "wide-spread drive" on members of parliament, public officials and newspapers, be inaugurated toward the realization of the objects of the conference. And thirdly that a fund of \$10,000 be raised on a national scale for the N.C.D.R. to carry forward this campaign and that a special month be set aside for this financial drive.² As well, the N.C.D.R. pledged to do "special war work" which included recruiting for the armed forces, active support of all locals and individuals with regard to the current victory loan campaign, aid for the Red Cross and help in providing hospitality for armed forces on leave, and in raising comforts for them.³ A national committee of twenty-five representatives was elected to carry on as the N.C.D.R. executive. Smith was reaffirmed the general-

1. National Conference for Democratic Rights Proceedings 22-23 February 1942, Ottawa, Ontario, p. 1.

2. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

3. Ibid.

secretary while Beckie Buhay was elected organizational secretary.

Immediately following the conference, on 25 February, Smith led a delegation to meet Louis St. Laurent, who had taken over the Justice portfolio from Ernest Lapointe. Smith and his colleague were accompanied and supported by four members of parliament-- Mrs. D. Nielson, M.P. North Battleford, Saskatchewan; V. Quelch, M.P. Arcadia, Alberta; Honourable A.W. Roebuck, M.P. Bellwoods, Toronto; and C.E. Johnston M.P. Bow River, Alberta.¹ Smith introduced the delegation and pledged to St. Laurent the complete support of the 140,000 people which the delegation represented. Nigel Morgan of the British Columbia Lumber Workers' Union presented the N.C.D.R.'s brief, outlining an all-out war programme, support of a "yes" vote in the impending referendum on conscription and a demand for the release of the interned "anti-fascists."² St. Laurent listened attentively to the delegation, promised to review the matter but refused to commit himself or the government any further.

Following his meeting with St. Laurent, Smith organized yet another conference in Toronto. On 17 May 1942, at the "luxurious trappings" of the Royal York Hotel, 204 N.C.D.R. delegates met to

1. Brief presented to the Hon. J.E. Michaud, M.P. and the Parliamentary Committee of 15 Reviewing the Defense of Canada Regulations by the N.C.D.R., 8 June 1942, pp. 1-2.

2. For a list of those interned that the N.C.D.R. wanted released see Appendix IV.

discuss "civil rights" and the war effort against Hitler. Pictures in the hall emphasized the sentiments of those who had gathered. Portraits of Roosevelt, King, Churchill, and Stalin decorated the walls. Under each portrait was a quotation. Roosevelt: "We are bound with strong ties to the Russian people." King: "One vast brotherhood of freedom." Stalin: "In this war of liberty we shall not be alone." Churchill: "No barrier must stand in the way of aid for Russia." At this conference it was decided to present a brief to the "defense of Canada Regulations Committee of the House of Commons" which had been established by the government to review Canada's defense regulations during the war. The delegation authorized to present the brief consisted of Smith, Rev. F.A. Sayles of Welland, A.J. Menard, a member of the executive of Local 200 of the United Automobile Workers' Union, Windsor, Maurice Hay, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America, London, Harold Peace, executive of District five of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers' Union, Toronto, A.A. McLeod, editor of the Canadian Tribune, Rev. Morton Freeman, Toronto, Mary Birchard, school trustee, Toronto and J.L. Cohen, who agreed to become legal counsel for the N.C.D.R.

The brief was presented to the Honourable J.E. Michaud, Minister of Fisheries and chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on 8 June 1942. It consisted of four recommendations. First, "That the

1. Smith, All My Life, pp. 211-212.

Defense of Canada Regulations be amended to safeguard the rights of the subject by specifically referring to overt actions as constituting a danger to the safety of the state, thus removing the present injustice of making possible the internment of citizens solely for holding political opinions which are not those of the Government...." The delegation, in other words, wanted the Regulations precisely aimed at pro-fascists and not communists who were supporting the war effort. Secondly, that all outstanding orders for the internment of men like Tim Buck be cancelled. Thirdly, that all those men and women of the "left-wing labour organizations" held in internment be released by executive order. And fourthly, that all "left-wing labour organizations" and newspapers which were declared illegal in 1940 be now declared legal.¹

The brief presented by the N.C.D.R. did have some impact. On 23 July, the Defense of Canada Regulations Committee recommended to the government the removal of the ban on the communists. St. Laurent, however, told the committee to reconsider. In an address to the House of Commons he outlined the government's position:

...if the ban in the defense of Canada regulations were removed, it would be asserted all over Canada, and believed by a great many people, that the aim of the National Council of Democratic Rights had been achieved; that the

1. Brief presented to the Hon. J.E. Michaud M.P. and the Parliamentary Committee of 15 Reviewing the Defense of Canada Regulations by the N.C.D.R., 8 June 1942, pp. 1-2.

great issue of democracy which they have stated in a number of their publications had been realized and that the legality of the Communist Party had been asserted affirmatively by the Parliament. I think that would be giving serious encouragement to propagating a doctrine which now is contrary to the criminal code.... 1

St. Laurent pointed out that although Section 98 had been deleted from the criminal code, section 133 had been amended to read:

"without limiting the generality of the meaning of the expression 'seditious intention' everyone shall be presumed to have a seditious intention, who publishes, or circulates any writing, printing, or document in which it is advocated, or who teaches or advocates, the use without the authority of the law, of force as a means of accomplishing any governmental change within Canada."²

For St. Laurent and the government, therefore, the C.P.C. was still a seditious organization and the removal of the ban would invite the conclusion that parliament had declared their ideology to be legitimate.

Despite St. Laurent's negative attitude, Smith and the N.C.D.R. continued their agitation. The organization was sound financially--it raised over \$18,866 in a year³--and had substantial

1. House of Commons Debates, 22 Feb. 1943, p. 631.

2. Ibid., p. 630-631.

3. For a statement of receipts and payments of the N.C.D.R. for the year ending 31 July 1942 see Appendix V.

support from all parts of the country. In an endeavour to force the government's hand, Smith convinced Buck who was wanted by the R.C.M.P., and who was in hiding, to surrender to the authorities.¹

On 25 September 1942 Buck and thirteen of his comrades surrendered to the R.C.M.P. During their stay in jail, J.M. Coldwell, David Lewis and Professor F.R. Scott visited the Department of Justice in Ottawa to urge their release.² The government relented; Buck and his colleagues were released in October after signing a declaration promising to refrain from political activity.³ The C.P.C., however, as a party remained illegal.

III

In an effort to circumvent the ban on the party, Smith, Buck and other stalwart party members decided to regroup their forces by, in effect, forming a new party. In Toronto, 21-22 August 1943, a convention was held and the illegal C.P.C. was transformed into a new Labour Progressive Party (L.P.P.). Tim Buck was elected national leader and the party adopted a revised set of party statutes. To placate the government and reassure those who were "frightened off by the term communist, the L.P.P. asserted

1. Smith, All My Life, pp. 211-212.

2. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 151.

3. Ibid.

its opposition to "violence, conspiracy and secrecy" and insisted that it was not going to use force "as a means of imposing any form of government or economic reform on the Canadian people."¹ The presentation of the old party in a new bottle undermined the N.C.D.R.'s function, and, shortly thereafter, it was dissolved.²

By this time, Smith was feeling the effects of his long and at times arduous career. His health was in general decline and he was suffering from throat cancer.³ Yet, he continued to work. In August, 1944, he was asked by J. Weir, the editor of the Canadian Tribune to write a special column in the newspaper "dealing with the events and experiences in which I have been involved during the past fifty years in Canada."⁴ He readily accepted; it was an opportunity for the aging communist "to serve the party and the people" by recalling "comrades, places, events, and experiences" of the communist movement during his lifetime.⁵ For the next two years he wrote a weekly column, "The Years March On," for the Tribune. He also, once again, sought political office. In the 1945 federal election, he ran as an L.P.P. candidate in Brandon where he had lived for ten years and where he had been

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1. Ibid., p. 152.
 2. Interview with Stewart Smith, 25 June 1976.
 3. Ibid.
 4. A.S. C.T. 19 Aug. 1944.
 5. Ibid.

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elected M.L.A. in 1920.¹ Despite a vigorous campaign in which he held numerous public meetings throughout the city and even gave radio addresses, he did not do well in his old constituency. When the votes were counted, the Liberal candidate had over six thousand votes, the Conservative five thousand six hundred votes, the C.C.F. five thousand two hundred votes while Smith managed to capture only 447 votes.²

To the end of his life, Smith kept his faith in communism. Although he regretted the beginnings of the Cold War in 1945 and was disturbed by the uncovering of a Soviet spy ring in Canada, he staunchly maintained that "there need be no fear of Soviet subversion or aggression." His deeply felt sentiments were clearly expressed when it was reported in November 1946 that Stalin was gravely ill. In his small Toronto flat, he composed the following poem;

To-Stalin³

Whenever your eyes close
The World's heart holds its breath
And wants to know--to sob its woe
Whenever your eyes close in death.

Whenever your eyes close
O matchless leader of the Earth
The masses droop in bitter grief
Whenever your eyes close in death...

1. Brandon Daily Star, 8 Nov. 1944, Smith was nominated on 7 Nov. 1944 in Brandon with Gavin Broadhurst as his sponsor.

2. Parliamentary Guide 1944, p. 263.

3. Smith Papers, p.c.

Whenever your eyes close
Great comrade of our class
Your name my heart will bless
Whenever your eyes close in death.

Smith did not live long enough to mourn Stalin's death. In January 1947, he became seriously ill; weakened by years of public life, he died of cancer on 11 April 1947.

The funeral was attended by hundreds of his comrades. Included were A.A. MacLeod, Labour-Progressive members of the Ontario legislature, Leslie Roberts, editor of the Daily Tribune, Stanley Ryerson, a Marxist historian and Beckie Buhay, his life long associate. With unrestrained emotion Buhay gave the last eulogy:

We honour to-day a great Canadian. As one who worked many years as his colleague in the Canadian Labour Defense movement, I know of the great inspiration thousands of his fellow-Canadians got from Mr. Smith in the courageous and valiant fight that he put up for justice and civil liberty. Canada is richer for his having lived.

With these words, Smith was borne to his last resting place in the Prospect Cemetery, 14 April 1947. He was survived by his wife and four children.

In the course of his career, Smith had travelled a long oscillating road which took him from the embrace of the Church to the clutches of communism. It was a journey in which he crossed the Rubicon three times. Indeed, upon reflection in the twilight of his life, Smith realized this. He described it as an "evolutionary process" during which he was "converted" three separate times.¹

The first came in his teens when he fell sway to the "fanciful, but vague, religious emotionalism and sentimentalism induced...by...dramatic evangelism." In this period of his life, he sincerely believed that the world could be saved from the wretched conditions he saw and experienced by the "miracle of salvation." It was this belief which took him to the bleak prairies as a missionary student of the Methodist Church.

The second conversion came when Smith realized that not only the individual but also society needed salvation; that a just physical as well as moral order had to be established among men. He reread and rediscovered the message of Jesus and the old Hebrew prophets. For Smith, Jesus was no longer an evangelist dividing humanity into the "saved" and the "unsaved," he now became a socialist who preached that "economic robbery, injustice, and poverty" were human inventions that had to be overcome. With this realization

¹ Smith Papers p.c., also, Smith, All My Life, pp. 221-222.

he became acutely conscious of the horrors of the emerging industrial and urban society in the prairies and critical of the Methodist church as a social institution. Although assured of a promising career with the church, Smith was unable to abandon his vision of the "Kingdom of God as a just social order to be established among men." He rebelled against the orthodoxy of the church; the climax of this rebellion came during the Winnipeg General Strike when he realigned himself with "the great working class where I proudly belong."

Smith's third and most profound conversion came when he abandoned all religious forms and joined the C.P.C. His basic and rather naive desire to seek the "truth" led him to this course. In communism, Smith believed he found "the broad movement which would eventually bring forth the true nature and spirit of man in a classless society of brotherhood throughout the world."

As a communist, Smith carved a controversial albeit minor niche in Canadian history. He gave dramatic and forceful expression to a small but vocal segment of individuals who endeavoured to transform the nation's social, economic, and political system. He envisioned himself and the organizations which he moulded--the C.L.D.L. and the N.C.D.R.--as a "buoy in a stormy sea of rampant injustices perpetrated against the working class and their leaders"²

1. Along with a healthy dose of coaxing from his son Stewart.

2. Smith Papers p.c.

in the nation. And indeed, it could be argued that through his efforts the communist movement in Canada was saved from prolonged disarray.

Ultimately, however, what Smith stood for was anathema to the vast majority of Canadians. His idealistic vision of the brotherhood of man was clouded by his rigid subservience to the communist doctrine and a foreign power. Nevertheless, although repeatedly scorned, abused and prosecuted, he did not retreat from his goal. In his search for a new millenium Smith embodied the complexities and failings of all public men "whose knowledge is seldom sufficient, whose ideas are but distantly related to reality and who are never moved by reason alone."

APPENDIX ONE

The Canadian Labour Defense League

CONSTITUTION

1927

National Office
Room 808 - 331 Bay Street
Toronto 2, Ontario

THE CANADIAN LABOUR DEFENSE LEAGUE

Article 1, Name

The name of this organization shall be THE CANADIAN LABOUR DEFENSE LEAGUE.

Article 2, Aims

The aim of the Canadian Labour Defense League shall be to unite all forces willing to co-operate into a broad National organization that will undertake to provide means for the defense and support of workers, regardless of their political or industrial affiliations, race, colour or nationality, who are indicted and prosecuted on account of their activity in the Labour Movement.

The aim of the Canadian Labour Defense League shall be understood to involve, among others, the following detailed proposals: -

1. To provide legal defense for all workers prosecuted for expressions of opinion or for working class activity.
2. To provide material and moral support for all working class prisoners.
3. To provide material support for the families and dependents of such prisoners.
4. To initiate and centralize special campaigns for the defense and release of working class victims of the courts in their struggle for betterment of their conditions.
5. To work for the repeal of all anti-working class laws.
6. To defend foreign born workers in Canada against persecution,

unwarranted deportation and exclusion.

7. To collect material and give publicity to facts regarding persecution of workers and to expose anti-labour activities, labour spy systems, etc., etc.
8. To organize campaigns of protest against the white terror in other capitalist countries and to give moral and financial aid wherever possible to the victims of such terror.

Article 3, Membership

(a) - Individual Membership

Any person, who signs an application card and is in agreement with the aim of the League and the provisions of the Constitution, and who pays the regular Fee shall be accepted as a member of the Canadian Labour Defense League.

(b) - Membership of Organizations

Any local working class organization, such as local Trade Unions, local Labour Party, etc., in agreement with and prepared to subscribe to the aims of the Canadian Labour Defense League shall be eligible for membership in the League.

(c) - Membership of Composite and Federated Bodies

Any composite or federated Body, composed of delegates, representatives of one or more organizations, in agreement with and prepared to subscribe to the aims of the Canadian Labour Defense League, may become an affiliated member of the League. All affiliated membership shall be subject to the approval of the National Executive Committee.

(d) - Membership at Large

Any person, desiring to become a member of the League, but because of insurmountable difficulties, cannot conveniently unite with a local branch, may upon application to the National Office, be accepted and enrolled as a Member-at-Large. The cards for all such members shall be issued from the National Office, and the dues of such members shall be paid directly to the National Office, at the same rate as Branch members.

Article 4, Organization

1. Branches of the Canadian Labour Defense League may be organized wherever five or more members can be secured in a municipality,

industry, institution or neighbourhood. Branches may be established also of wholly non-English languages.

2. A LOCAL CENTRAL COMMITTEE shall be established wherever two or more Branches of the League have been organized, the above Committee to be composed of delegates from each Branch in proportion to its membership. Organizations holding membership in the League by or under the provisions of Article 3, Sections (b) or (c) of the Constitution, shall have the right to representation on the Local Central Committee by one delegate.
3. A LANGUAGE SECTION OF THE LEAGUE may be established for purely propaganda purposes, wherever there are in existence, at least five (5) Branches of the League whose membership is composed of a single language.
4. The Local Central Committee, wherever established, shall maintain direct connection with the National Office and shall receive instructions therefrom, which instructions shall be communicated to the local Branches under its administration. Branches which are not in connection with any local Central Committee shall maintain direct connection with and receive instructions from the National Office, and the N.E.C.

Article 5, Legislation and Administration

1. All Legislative authority of the Canadian Labour Defense League shall be vested in the National Convention, which shall be composed of delegates elected as provided in the Constitution.
2. All administrative and executive authority of the C.L.D.L. shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, subject to the control and direction of the National Convention of the League.

Article 6, Executive Committee and Officers

1. The Officers of the League shall be President, two Vice-Presidents, General Secretary-Treasurer. The officers of the League, together with nine other members of the League, shall constitute the National Executive Committee of the League.
2. The above named officers and the nine members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the National Convention of the League and shall hold office until their successors are elected. Vacancies occurring in the interim on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the N.E.C., which shall have power to co-opt members for this purpose.

Article 7, Duties of the National Executive Committee

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE shall be the sole administrative and executive authority of the League.

It shall be responsible for the conducting of the general work of the League.

It shall sanction and supervise all activity to give the effect to the provisions of Article 2 of the Constitution.

It shall have authority and control over all money collected by all Branches of the League or under the auspices of the League, for defense purposes.

It shall make a report of its activities to the National Convention.

Article 8, Conventions

1. - Time and Place of Meeting

The regular conventions of the Canadian Labour Defense League shall be held every two years at the time and place named by the Executive Committee.

SPECIAL CONVENTION.- The N.E.C. shall have authority to call special convention at any time wherever it shall receive a request so to do, by at least 60 per cent of the Branches of the League. Only business specified in the call shall be dealt with at a special convention.

2. - Representation and Finance

The National Executive Committee shall have authority to devise plans by which the delegate representation at the Conventions of the League shall be fairly and proportionately distributed to all Branches and membership organizations. It shall also devise plans for the financing to and fro of the railroad expenses of the accredited delegates in attendance at the Convention, so as to equalize the cost of sending delegates to all the organizations represented.

The detailed provisions for the above plans shall be embodied in the call for the convention, which shall be transmitted to the Branches and Organizations, at least two months prior to the date fixed for the same.

3. - Ex-Officio Members of the Convention

The N.E.C. shall have authority to extend invitations on behalf of the League to Organizations selected by the Executive to send fraternal delegates to the regular conventions; also the same courtesy may be extended to selected individuals by the Executive. All such

delegates shall be accorded voice, but no vote, in the convention.

All members of the N.E.C. shall be Ex-Officio Members of the Conventions of the League with voice, but no vote, unless they are accredited delegates. The members of the N.E.C. shall be eligible for re-election to office at the Convention.

Article 9, Dues and Fees for Membership in League

1. All individual membership dues shall be paid to the Branch Treasurer in which the member is enrolled, and all payments shall be acknowledged by monthly stamps, the same to be affixed to the member's card by the Treasurer of the Branch. (For members at large see Art. 3d.)
2. Monthly Dues Stamps shall be provided by the National Office at the rate of 12 stamps for One Dollar (\$1.00). Local Branches shall sell the Dues Stamps to their members at the rate of 10 cents for each stamp. All orders for stamps must be accompanied by the cash for the same.
3. All Organization Members (Art. 3b), shall pay to the National Office a per capita membership fee of five cents per member per annum.
4. All Affiliated Members (Art. 3c) shall pay to the National Office an annual affiliation fee of One Dollar for the first five bodies, or fraction thereof, represented in their membership, and One Dollar per annum, for each additional five bodies represented, or fraction thereof.
5. The National Executive Committee shall pay to the local Central Committee concerned fifty per cent of the money received in Fees paid by the Organization and Affiliated members, the same to be paid upon receipt thereof.

The above Constitution was adopted by the First National Convention of the Canadian Labour Defense League assembled in the Labour Temple, Toronto, October 29th and 30th, 1927.

It is issued upon the instruction of the Convention by the National Executive Committee.

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Toronto, Ontario, November 10th, 1927.

APPENDIX TWO

The Emergency Defense Conference, Hamilton 26-27 April 1930

Composition of the Delegation

Data was compiled on 124 out of the 166 delegates who filled registration forms.

1. NATIONALITY

French	1
Swedish	1
Swiss	1
Lithuanian	2
Dutch	2
Slovak	2
Bulgarian	4
Polish	5
Finnish	5
Hungarian	6
Scotch	8
Canadian	11
English	23
Ukrainian	24
Jewish	29
Total	<u>124</u>

2. OCCUPATION

Scholar	1
Domestic Worker	1
Printer	1
Bricklayer	1
International Harvester Worker	1
Tailor	1
Abattoir Worker	1
Miner	1
Stenographer	1
Chainmaker	1
Electrical Workers	2
Window Cleaners	2

Boot and Shoe Workers	2
Hoisting Engineers	2
Moulders	2
Carpet Weavers	2
Metal Works Employees	2
Salesmen	2
Restaurant Owners	2
Steel Workers	3
Railway Carmen	3
Millinery Workers	3
Blacksmiths	3
Furriers	4
Carpenters	4
Auto Workers	5
Machinists	6
Railway Employees	6
Painters	6
Unemployed	8
Functionaries	9
Dress and Cloak Makers	10
Labourers	11
Housewives	13

3. POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

Communist Party	48
Young Communist League	15
Other	61
Total	<hr/> 124

4. INDUSTRIAL CENTERS REPRESENTED BY THE DELEGATION

Oshawa	1	delegate
Sudbury	1	
Coniston	1	
Thorold	1	
Welland	1	
Port Arthur	1	
London	1	
Guelph	2	
Brantford	2	
New Toronto	2	
Montreal	2	
Windsor	5	
Niagara Falls	5	
Hamilton	33	
Toronto	108	

5. ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCE

Communist Party of Canada CEC
 C.L.D.L. CCC Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Jewish Branch Toronto
 C.L.D.L. English Branch Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Hungarian Branch Toronto
 Communist Party of Canada LEC Hamilton
 C.L.D.L. Ukrainian Branch Oshawa
 C.L.D.L. Finnish Branch Hamilton
 C.L.D.L. Slovak Workers Society Niagara Falls
 C.L.D.L. DEC Thorold
 C.L.D.L. CCC Windsor
 Communist Party of Canada LEC Windsor
 C.L.D.L. Ukrainian Branch Windsor
 C.L.D.L. Hungarian Branch Windsor
 C.L.D.L. CCC Port Arthur
 C.L.D.L. London
 Communist Party of Canada DEC Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Guelph
 C.L.D.L. NEC
 C.L.D.L. CCC Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Lithuanian Branch Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Welland
 C.L.D.L. Hungarian Branch Hamilton
 C.L.D.L. English Branch Hamilton
 Dressmakers Local INTU of C Toronto
 Dominion Steel Workers Hamilton
 EarlsCourt Labour Party Toronto
 Finnish Organization Sudbury
 Finnish Organization Toronto
 Greihiet Gasangs Ferein Toronto
 German Workers Club Toronto
 Garment Workers Local #46 Toronto
 Hungarian Society Toronto
 Hamilton Labour Council
 International Association of Machinists Local 414 Hamilton
 International Harvester Co. Hamilton
 Industrial NTU Joint Board Toronto
 Jewish Cultural Centre Montreal
 Jewish Labour League NEC
 Jewish Womens' Labour League
 Young Communist League Windsor
 National Executive Committee-L.L.-Toronto
 C.L.D.L. Ukrainian Branch Niagara Falls
 Cloak Makers Union Toronto
 Lithuanian Literary Society
 Labourers Union Local #5 A.B.W. of C.

- Labour League Branch #2
- Labour League Youth Branch Toronto
- Labour League Ladies Auxiliary
- Left Wing Group Shoe Workers Union Local 233 Toronto
- Labour League Toronto Branch #5
- Left Wing Group Machinists Union Local 235 Toronto
- Labour League Branch #6 Toronto
- Macedonian Club Toronto
- Millinery Workers Toronto
- Metal Trades Workers Group Union Hamilton
- Painters Local 151
- Painters International Local 1014
- South Slav Workers Club Toronto
- Unemployed Association Hamilton
- Unemployed Association Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. West Branch Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. Womens' Section West Branch Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. Bathurst St. Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. Womens' Section Bathurst St. Toronto
- Ukrainian Workers Sports Association Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. Womens' Section Hamilton
- U.L.F.T.A. #15 Hamilton
- U.L.F.T.A. Youth Section Brantford
- Womens' Labour League Domestic Servants Union Coniston
- Workers Benevolent Association West Toronto
- Workers Benevolent Association Brantford
- Workers Benevolent Association #80 West Toronto
- Workers Benevolent Association Hamilton
- Workers Benevolent Association #112 New Toronto
- Workers Benevolent Association Toronto
- Workers Benevolent Association #19 Toronto
- Workers Benevolent Association Windsor
- Young Communist League DEC
- Young Communist League NEC
- Young Communist League Hamilton
- Finnish Organization Hamilton
- Finnish Organization of Canada
- C.L.D.L. London
- C.L.D.L. Macedonian Branch Toronto
- U.L.F.T.A. Womens' Section #31 Toronto
- Workers Unity League Toronto
- District Executive Committee L.L. Toronto

APPENDIX THREE

PMA/CV

OTTAWA, 12th June 1936.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

Re: Bill to amend the Criminal Code

The following is a comparative statement with respect to section 98 and the proposed new subsection (4) to section 133:

Section 98

(1)

Makes any organization whose purpose is to bring about governmental, industrial, or economic change by use of force, or which teaches or defends such use of force or threats of injury for such change, an unlawful association.

(2)

Provides that any property, real or personal, belonging or suspected to belong to an unlawful association or held or suspected to be held by any person on behalf thereof may be seized, without warrant, if authorized by the commissioner of the R.C.M.P. and forfeited to His Majesty.

(3)

Provides that any person who acts or professes to act as an officer of an unlawful association and who sells, speaks or publishes

Section 133 (4)

(1)

No similar provision, but such an organization might be evidence of a seditious conspiracy with respect to any governmental change advocated by use of unlawful force under Section 134 and is not affected by the proposed amendment.

(2)

No similar provision and any writing, prints or documents which it is desired to seize for the purpose of evidence would in the ordinary case be done under the authority of a search warrant except, of course, of such document were in the possession of the person arrested while committing an offence.

(3)

No similar provision.

anything as representative of such association, or who becomes a member thereof, or wears or carries or displays any badge, etc., indicating that he is such a member or associated therewith, or who contributes anything as dues or otherwise to it or solicits subscriptions shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.

(4)

Provides that it shall be prima facie evidence that a person charged as a member of an unlawful association if it is proved that he attends meetings of such an association, speaks publicly in advocacy thereof or distributes literature thereof by circulation through the mail or otherwise.

(5)

Provides that any owner, lessee, agent, or superintendent of any building, room, etc., who knowingly permits therein any meeting of such association or subsidiary or branch thereof, or any assemblage of persons who teach, defend, etc., the use without the authority of law, of force, violence, etc., to person or property shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not more than \$5,000.00 or to imprisonment for not more than five years or to both.

(6)

Provides for the issue by any judge, magistrate or justice of the peace of a search warrant authorizing any peace officer,

(4)

No similar provision--evidence required would be in accordance with the ordinary rules of evidence.

(5)

No similar provision.

(6)

The remarks with respect to subsection (2) are applicable here and in addition the ordinary search warrant can only be executed in the

etc., with assistance, to enter at any time any premises mentioned in the warrant and to search the same and every person found therein and to seize and carry away documents, etc., and when so taken may be forfeited to His Majesty.

(7)

Provides for the procedure in the case of forfeiture.

(8)

Provides that any person who prints, publishes, edits, circulates, sells, etc., any book, pamphlet, picture, writing, print, or document of any kind, etc., in which is taught, advocated, advised, or defended, or which in any manner teach, advocate, advise, or defend the use without lawful authority of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property or threats of such injury as means of accomplishing any governmental, industrial or economic change or otherwise shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.

(9)

Provides that any person who circulates or distributes any document, etc., as described in this section, by mailing the same in the post office shall

day time, unless special authority to the contrary is granted, and the authority to search does not include that of searching persons.

(7)

There is no specific provision for forfeiture in the ordinary procedure with respect to seizure of this class of goods but same may be detained for certain purposes, such as appeal, and would probably remain indefinitely in the records of the court.

(8)

The proposed amendment would make a person liable to imprisonment for two years under section 134 who publishes or circulates any writing, print, or document in which is advocated, or who teaches or advocates the use, without the authority of law, of force as a means of accomplishing any governmental change. This amendment does not apply to the defence of the use of force or the threats of injury as a means of accomplishing any governmental, industrial, or economic change, nor does the proposed amendment apply in any way to industrial or economic change.

(9)

No similar specific provision but, of course, the circulation of a document advocating the use of force, without the authority of law, to accomplish a governmental

be liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.

change is prohibited and the penalty for breach thereof is not more than two years imprisonment.

(10)

(10)

Provides that any person who imports from any other country, or attempts to so import, any document, etc., as described in this section shall be liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.

No similar provision.

(11)

(11)

Provides that it shall be the duty of every person in the employment of the Government of Canada to seize and take possession of any such document upon discovery of same in the mails of Canada or upon any station, wharf, yard, etc., and when so seized to be transmitted to the Commissioner of the R.C.M.P.

No similar provision.

Signed

W. Stuart Edwards

D. M. J.

APPENDIX FOUR

LIST OF INTERNED AND IMPRISONED COMMUNISTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fergus McKean, Bob Kerr, Wm. Rigby, Harry Assan

ALBERTA

Ben Swankey, Bill Repka, Ald. Pat Lenihan, Capt. Alex Miller, G. Balint, D. Iwanyszyn (jail).

SASKATCHEWAN

A.C. Campbell, W. Taylor, W. Beeching, Gladys McDonald, (penitentiary)

MANITOBA

Ald. J. Penner, John Navis, Trustee A. Bilecki, M. Kostiniuk, P. Prokop, T. Bilecki, M. Shatulsky, P. Lysets, Orten Wads, N. Bidulka, N. Krechmarowsky, John Weir, Bill Tuomi, John Dubno, J. Procak, M. Biniowsky, J. McNiell, John Perozek, A. Petrash, A.C. Gunn, D. Moysiuk, John Boychuk, T. McEwen, M. Sago, J. Stefanitsky.

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE JAIL

Annie Buller, Margaret Mills

AWAITING APPEAL

H. Guralnick

ONTARIO

Louis Binder, Roy Saunders, M. Cohen, T. Chopowick, F. Collins, N. Freed, M. Erlich, C. Weir, J.S. Wallace, J. Murphy, Dr. H. Lowrie, W. Walsh, J. Billings, Bruce Magnusson, Nick Hucaluk, J. Nyerki, M. Gray, P. Keweraga, P. Spivack, Harvey Murphy.

GUELPH REFORMATORY

A. Parsons, M. Kamiel, J. Shower

KINGSTON PENITENTIARY

Harry Binder

QUEBEC

Pat Sullivan, Jack Chapman, Dave Sinclair, J. Villeneuve, Jos. Duchene, Romeo Duval, Jean Bourquet, M. Taub, T. Boychuk, N. Pindus, E. Charest, R. Majeau, Kent Rowley, A. Nadeau.

NOVA SCOTIA

Scott McLean, C. Smythe

DORCHESTER PENITENTIARY, N.S.

Tom Lawrence

APPENDIX FIVE

H.M. BURPEE
Chartered Accountant

28 Wellington St. East,
TORONTO

To the National Council for Democratic Rights,
Toronto.

AUDIT REPORT

I have audited the receipts and payments of the National Council for Democratic Rights since the inception of the organization in August 1941 to July 31st 1942, and have prepared the attached statement from the books.

In my opinion, the attached statement correctly shows the Receipts and Payments for the year ending July 31st 1942 and the balance of cash on hand and in bank at July 31st 1942.

August 7th 1942

(signed)

H.M. Burpee
Chartered Accountant

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
for year ending 31 July 1942

R e c e i p t s

Membership Fees and Dues	291.56
Internees' and Prisoner's Fund	932.13
Internees' Christmas Fund	1234.30
May Financial Drive	5722.26
National Conference Fund	1054.16
J.B. Salsberg Defense Fund	400.00
Fighting Defense Fund	4495.89
Collections at Public Meetings and Conferences	3275.51
Conference Fees and Railway Fares	462.29
Chinese War Relief	43.75
Sale of Literature	954.25
	<hr/>
Total Receipts	18866.10
	<hr/>

P a y m e n t s

Internees' and Prisoners' Parcels and Dependents' Allowances	2670.45
Victory Bond for Internees	100.00
Legal Defense	2836.85
Publicity - printing of pamphlets, leaflets, poster and newspaper campaigns, radio talk, press releases, etc.	5348.50
Organization Tours and Trips	918.00
Delegations to Ottawa and Parliamentary Committee - fares and expense	772.41
Public Meetings and National and other Conferences - delegates' fares, hall rents, decorations, advertising, etc.	2592.64
Administration expenses: -	
Salary of General Secretary	864.00
Salary of Executive Secretary	734.00
Office Rent, Telephone, Stationery, postage, and other sundry expenses	891.32
Purchase of Office Desks and Chairs and Payments on account of mimeograph machine and typewriter	222.45
Donations: -	
Canadian Red Cross	50.00

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Canadian Red Cross in name of Internees	50.00	
Kirkland Lake Strike Committee	125.00	
Kirkland Lake - donated at mass meeting	25.00	
Other donations	<u>62.00</u>	312.00
Chinese War Relief		<u>43.75</u>
Total payments		<u>18306.37</u>

S u m m a r y

Total Receipts for year ended July 31, 1942 as above	18866.10
Total Payments for year ended July 31, 1942 as above	<u>18306.37</u>
Balance of cash in bank and on hand July 31st 1942	<u>559.73</u>

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The research for this study was done by in large at the home of Mr. Robert S. Kenny, Toronto, where use was made of the Smith Papers and scattered files of the Canadian Labour Defense League. Where gaps in the material were evident; for example, the early years of the C.L.D.L.'s activities of which detailed data has been lost, the author has relied on government publications and newspapers. As well, the Department of Public Records and Archives, of Ontario contain the Attorney-General of Ontario Papers Relating to the Communist Party of Canada which provide data on the C.L.D.L. not found elsewhere.

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11

Memorandum Submitted to the Hon. Louis St. Laurent, K.C., M.P.,
Minister of Justice, Presented by the N.C.D.R., 25
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