DOCTRINE AND DISUNITY IN THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SECTION OF THE CCF, 1932-1956

by

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ABSTRACT

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The formation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1932 brought together political groups representing all shades of left-wing opinion. The CCF gradually established itself as a party of liberal reform but throughout its life, it had to contend with criticism from those members within its ranks who wished to pursue a programme of radical socialism. The radical faction was especially strong in British Columbia where the provincial party had been founded by the Socialist Party of Canada which had based its philosophy on the works of Karl Marx.

This study traces the socialist background of the CCF in British Columbia and examines the major doctrinal disputes which occurred in the B.C. section of the party between 1932 and 1956. It follows the development of ideological conflict from the struggle for control of the new party in its infancy to the adoption of a new statement of principles in 1956.

The main purpose of the thesis is to determine the nature of the radical element in British Columbia and the way in which the party attempted to resolve the difficulties it faced in maintaining a united public image when a significant

number of its members did not abide by official party decisions. Research is based primarily on unpublished CCF documents and correspondence. Published sources include CCF pamphlets and policy statements, the Vancouver CCF newspaper, and the Vancouver and Victoria daily newspapers.

The radical socialists were able to control the British Columbia section of the CCF throughout the 1930s. Thereafter they were a declining influence but remained a highly vocal minority, frequently causing embarrassment to the moderate leadership of the party by making public statements which conflicted with officially declared CCF policy. As the CCF failed to achieve the success it anticipated, the leadership became increasingly concerned that internal strife was a major cause of party weakness. Some moderates believed that many disputes were engineered by an alien group which had infiltrated the party in order to destroy it. The press exaggerated the importance of party quarrels so that the CCF appeared to be less united than it actually was.

In order to present a more harmonious party image to the electorate, the CCF began to enforce disciplinary measures against those who refused to abide by majority decisions within the party, expelling those who were considered to be disruptive. The Winnipeg Declaration of 1956 avoided any implications of revolutionary socialism and committed the party to a policy of liberal reform. Thus it

represented the suppression of radical influences as an effective force in determining party policy. The CCF was a democratic organisation in which the minority were allowed to participate in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, it was forced to curtail freedom of expression when it became apparent that abuse of this freedom diminished the party's chances of electoral success.

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INTRODUCTION

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation came into being in 1932 as a federation of socialist, labour and farm groups with similar objectives, uniting for the purpose of political action. The initiative for the party came from the East in the shape of a small group of M.P.s[1] led by J. S. Woodsworth,[2] with the backing of an association of university professors, known as the League for Social Reconstruction. The CCF failed to attract union support in its early years and relied to a large extent on the vote of the prairie farmer. It was by no means, however, merely an updated version of the Progressive Party. As the full title of the new party proclaimed, it was a "farmer-labour-socialist" alliance, and the existing Canadian socialist tradition had great importance in determining the character of the movement at its inception.

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[1]This was the Ginger Group, formed when eleven M.P.s broke away from the Progressive Party in 1924 and began to co-operate with the two Labour members, William Irvine and J. S. Woodsworth. For a full account of the formation of the CCF, see Walter D. Young, Anatomy of a Party: the National CCF, 1932-1961 (Toronto, 1969).

[2]J. S. Woodsworth left his career in the Methodist ministry to work in the labour movement. He was M.P. for Winnipeg Centre 1921-1942. He became the first national leader of the CCF but resigned this position in 1939.

The founders of the CCF were agreed on one thing; the need to reconstruct society following the social chaos brought about by the Depression. Due to the nature of the alliance, however, there was wide divergence of opinion as to how this could be done. The new party's statement of principles, the Regina Manifesto, was a compromise between those who wished merely to reform the capitalist system and those who wished to institute Marxian socialism in Canada.

The Regina Manifesto was not truly a Marxist document since it stressed the necessity for change through political action rather than violent revolution. It did not promise total socialization but stated merely that goods and services "necessary to the efficient functioning of the economy" should be placed under government control. Furthermore, it guaranteed security of tenure for the farmer. On the other hand, such phrases as "the parasitic interest-receiving class", and "the mortal sickness of the whole capitalist system" gave the document a distinctly Marxist flavour. In fact, the terms were vague enough to satisfy all shades of opinion and left the real intentions of the new party open to interpretation.

The Marxist overtones of the Regina Manifesto were largely the result of the influence of the delegates from British Columbia who represented the Socialist Party of Canada. As the CCF developed, the radical socialist element became a minority and party policy increasingly reflected the

growing dominance of the moderate reformers. In 1956, the party adopted a new statement of principles known as the Winnipeg Declaration which gave formal expression to the departure from militant socialism in favour of a more liberal philosophy. It may be argued that the Winnipeg Declaration was merely an attempt to clarify the Regina Manifesto by stripping away the Marxist jargon. The radicals, however, saw it as the culmination of a trend away from the original principles of the movement.

In British Columbia, the Socialist Party of Canada organised the formation of the provincial CCF and retained control of the party for the first years of its life. SPC members interpreted the Regina Manifesto in terms of their own belief in Marxian socialism. The socialists lost control of the party to the moderates but remained a highly vocal minority. They believed party policy as determined by the moderate leadership to be inconsistent with the principles of the Regina Manifesto. They continued to express Marxist views even when these conflicted with official party pronouncements and persisted in an attempt to rally support for a more radical policy. On several occasions, this group came into open conflict with the party executive.

It is the intention of this thesis to examine the major doctrinal disputes which occurred in the British Columbia section of the CCF between its inception in 1932 and

the adoption of the Winnipeg Declaration in 1956. It will explore the roots of division in the party, the nature of the left-wing influences, the way in which they expressed their views, and the way in which the party dealt with them.

Some CCF members believed that some of the disputes under consideration were engineered by the Communist Party. Fear of Communism is discussed where it is a factor in the attitude of the party towards the rebels but a detailed analysis of the relationship between the CCF and the Communist Party falls outside the scope of this thesis.[3] Similarly, no attempt has been made to analyze electoral behaviour, although specific elections are mentioned where individual perceptions of the results had a bearing on the continuing policy debate.

The words 'movement' and 'party' have been used interchangeably throughout the thesis since both terms appear regularly in the documents and correspondence researched. The writer is aware of the distinct connotations of each word but agrees with Dr. Walter Young that it is virtually impossible to distinguish the 'CCF movement' from the 'CCF party'.[4]

The word 'Marxist' is used here to describe those CCF members who believed the Regina Manifesto to have been founded

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[3]For information on this relationship see Young, Anatomy of a Party, chapter 9.

[4]Ibid., p. 9.

on the principles of Marxian socialism and who wished the CCF to maintain a radical socialist character. The term 'communist' is used in its broadest sense as one who believes that the means of production should be in the hands of the community, as distinct from 'Communist' which denotes a member of the Communist Party.

I

THE SOCIALIST TRADITION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia has a long-standing tradition of radical politics which may be said to be unique in North America. Ontario may have been "the cradle of early socialism in Canada",[1] but socialism in Ontario has tended to be less revolutionary than on the West Coast. Left-wing parties have received comparatively strong electoral support in British Columbia throughout this century. Although the CCF-NDP has never attained office in this province, it has constituted the official opposition since 1933, and it may be argued that only the alternative vote system prevented a CCF victory in the 1952 election.[2]

Ideology has played an important part in the development of left-wing parties in British Columbia and has been to

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[1]Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930 (Kingston, Ont., 1968), p. 34.

[2]After the first count, the CCF led in 21 seats, Social Credit in 14, Liberals in 9, Conservatives in 3, and an Independent Labour candidate in one. However, many CCF voters had cast their second ballot for Social Credit as a protest against the Liberal and Conservative parties. The final count gave 19 seats to Social Credit and 18 to the CCF. See Henry F. Angus, "The British Columbia Election, June, 1952," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 18, (1952), 518-525.

some extent a cause of weakness. Before 1932, socialism in B.C. was never a single unified movement based on one set of principles. The movement was characterised by many differing strands of thought which led to disputes between opposing groups and the splintering of organised parties. Even after the CCF was formed, the affiliated parties continued to exist separately and were not unified until 1935.

The unique character of British Columbia socialism has been largely determined by the preponderance of immigrants from the British Isles. The early strongholds of the Socialist Party were in the coal mining towns of Vancouver Island, where most of the population had been drawn from the industrial North and Midlands of England and from Scotland. Later, workers from other trades were concentrated in Vancouver which became the centre of radical activity. Typically, the British immigrant brought with him experience of participation in trade unions or left-wing political organisations. More important, he had been exposed to the ideas of the Fabian Society. The British Columbia socialist may have been dedicated to the concept of dialectic materialism and the coming of a Marxist Utopia, but he was equally committed to democratic procedure. The Co-operative Commonwealth would come about not by violent revolution but through parliamentary legislation.

The opening of the metal mines in the Kootenay region

attracted workers from the United States who were organised into the Western Federation of Miners, a Marxist-inspired union which had ties with the Socialist Party of America. Thus, left-wing philosophy in British Columbia developed as a blend of Marxian and Fabian socialism.

Martin Robin suggests that the structure of industry in B.C. largely accounts for the relative strength of radical opinion. Lumber workers, fishermen and miners lived in isolated communities which tended to reinforce class identity. The insecurity experienced by men working in seasonal industries tended to generate resentment against the existing social order.[3]

The existence of militant labour organisations has also been a factor in the growth of the socialist movement in B.C. At the turn of the century, union demands met with bitter opposition from employers, particularly in the coal mining industry. Legislation forcing employers to recognise the right to organise was hard-won, and even then not immediately enforced. Poor relations between unions and management tended to reinforce the radical sentiments of the working man.

The role of the city of Vancouver has been important

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[3]Martin Robin, "The Social Basis of Party Politics in British Columbia," Queen's Quarterly, LXXII (1966), 675-690.

in regard to the spread of socialist ideas. Although the early centres of socialism were on Vancouver Island and in the Kootenays, during this century Vancouver has been the hub of socialist activity. This is due not only to the large numbers of industrial workers in the area, but also to the fact that at times of economic depression, unemployed men from all over the province, and from the rest of Canada, have converged on Vancouver where the climate made poverty a little less arduous. The city became a meeting place for those dissatisfied with the existing system and played an important part in the dissemination of ideas.[4]

Finally, the weak development of the two-party system in British Columbia at the turn of the century made it possible for a minor party to be represented in the provincial legislature. Two socialists were elected in the 1903 provincial election; James Hawthornthwaite in Nanaimo and Parker Williams in Newcastle. Limited electoral success added impetus to the movement.

The original Socialist Party of Canada dated back to 1902 when it was created as a union of existing socialist groups.[5] The SPC was a revolutionary party which avoided

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[4]Ronald Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in British Columbia, 1898-1933," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1942).

[5]Its original name was the Socialist Party of British Columbia. It became the Socialist Party of Canada when it linked up with similar groups in Manitoba, New Brunswick and Ontario in 1904.

co-operation with reformists. After a temporary alliance with labour parties and trade unions in the Provincial Progressive Party, the socialists seized control from the moderate labour leaders at the 1903 convention and dissolved the alliance, resolving that:

> This convention places itself on record as opposed to the introduction of palliatives or immediate demands in propaganda work as being liable to retard the achievement of our final aim and that the Socialist Party of British Columbia henceforth stands firmly upon the one issue of the abolition of the present system of wage slavery as the basis for all political propaganda.[6]

The socialist movement in British Columbia was far from being a unified body at this time. The Socialist Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democrats continued for some time to exist separately from the SPC which was the most prominent of the groups. Division existed within the SPC. A major area of dispute was the attitude the party should have towards unions. One faction saw the unions as merely a part of the capitalist system which had to be overthrown. Unionists were, therefore, dangerous reactionaries, and the natural enemies of the socialist. The other faction wished to make the party the political arm of the trade union movement and felt that they should infiltrate the unions to this end. As Martin Robin shows, the latter group were a declining influence during the first ten years of the

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[6]William Bennett, Builders of British Columbia (Vancouver, 1937), p. 139.

party's life.[7] The SPC failed to give any support to the mine workers during the 1913 coal strike on Vancouver Island, and even refused Parker Williams permission to speak at Nanaimo during the crisis.[8] They declined to run candidates in municipal elections on the grounds that "they merely distracted workers from the real class struggle."[9] They were condemned by visiting British Socialists for preventing the development of a unified left-wing party on the lines of the British Labour Party. Keir Hardie found that "they knew nothing of socialism," and Ramsay MacDonald charged that they repelled potential supporters by "grinding away at their cold aggressive formulae about 'class war', 'economic determinism', [and] a 'class conscious proletariat'."[10] The party saw its main function as an educational body and therefore concentrated its energy on the production of pamphlets and the organisation of lectures to discuss Marxist doctrines. Apart from attacks on the unions in its early years, the party newspaper, the Clarion, consisted mainly of doctrinaire arguments and

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[7]Robin, Radical Politics, p. 93.

[8]Tom McEwen, He Wrote For Us: the Story of Bill Bennett, Pioneer, Socialist, Journalist (Vancouver, 1951), p. 20. Parker Williams had been elected as socialist MLA for Newcastle in 1903.

[9]Robin, Radical Politics, p. 95.

[10]The Voice, October 9, 1908, as cited in Robin, Radical Politics, p. 96.

abstract theorising. It is hardly surprising that the Clarion ran into financial difficulties and that in 1912, it went out of circulation for two years.

As the party grew more sectarian, it showed antagonism to other socialist parties. Originally, there had been a movement to join the Second International but even this was now opposed. The British Columbia socialists felt that only they interpreted Marx correctly and labelled those who disagreed reactionary. The B.C. section controlled locals of the SPC in other provinces but never held a National Convention. The party consisted of small, widely-scattered groups of men who met to discuss scientific socialism and disseminate Marxist literature. Thus the party had a very narrow appeal. The peak of its success came in 1909 when it polled twenty-two percent of the vote in the provincial election. Since the Conservatives led by Sir Richard McBride captured all but three seats, the two elected socialists constituted themselves the official opposition. After this, the party declined because of its failure to attract the working man. This was due to the doctrinal rigidity and constant internal disputes, which weakened its image, and its deliberate neglect of electoral organisation. The party expelled several leading members, claiming that the decline was due to infiltration by "hermaphrodite pseudo-socialists."[11] Those

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[11] B.C. Federationist, April 5, 1912, as cited in Robin, Radical Politics, p. 102.

expelled took their supporters with them and this weakened the party further. Moreover, the SPC had to contend with rivalry from the Social Democrat Party which had broken away in 1907[12] and which attracted the more moderate socialists to the detriment of the parent organisation.

It seems that between 1910 and 1918, radical activity decreased and several attempts to revive the socialist movement ended in failure. The British Columbia Federation of Labour consistently refused to endorse the socialist platform or to form a new party. No socialist was elected to the legislature in 1916, and membership of the SPC declined during the First World War. Many potential supporters were on active service and the Wartime Defense Regulations restricted the activity of socialist organisations.

The anti-conscription movement did give rise to some improvement of relations between the socialists and the unions. The SPC and the BCFL collaborated in an attempt to rally support for the movement in 1914 and for a while the SPC's war attitude attracted supporters. However, this was not sustained as the SPC renewed its attacks on the unions.

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[12]Grantham notes that it was usually the older members of the party who defected as they became convinced of the need for practical politics, while the younger members maintained strict adherence to the Marxian creed. "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in B.C.," p. 76.

Of the resolutions passed by the Trades and Labour Congress in 1915, W.A. Pritchard[13] wrote:

> The silly slaverings of sycophantic slaves attempting to imitate their political masters; the puerile piffle perpetrated by these protagonists of "Labour's rights" demonstrate that these hacks of capitalism, masquerading as labour leaders, must be fought to a finish . . . Comrades, let us hew to the line![14]

Nevertheless, co-operation between the SPC, the Social Democrats, the BCFL and the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council continued to encourage opposition to the proposal to initiate conscription. In 1916, the TLC recommended its members to support National Service Week, but this was opposed by unions in British Columbia where a more militant stand was taken against the Borden government. The VTLC voted to "resist by any means" the conscription announcement made by the federal government in May, 1917, and called for a general strike.[15]

While the sentiments of the BCFL tended towards syndicalism, they did not reject political action altogether, and ran six candidates in the 1917 federal election. They did not oppose the socialists although their own programme was limited to moderate reform and was largely geared to

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[13]William Pritchard was a Vancouver resident of Welsh origin who was to become a founder member of the CCF.

[14]The Clarion, June, 1915, as cited in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in B.C.," p. 96.

[15]Robin, Radical Politics, p. 132.

immediate problems brought about by the war. The BCFL failed to elect any of its candidates but was encouraged by its share of the vote to continue political activity. Accordingly, in January, 1918, the Federated Labour Party came into being "for the purpose of securing industrial legislation and the collective ownership and democratic operation of the means of wealth production."[16] The treasurer was Helena Gutteridge who was later to become active in the CCF. The new party absorbed the existing Social Democrat Party. While its programme was more moderate than that of the SPC, it was far more radical than the Ontario Independent Labour Party which was totally opposed to socialism.

The end of the war brought a revival of radical activity in British Columbia, largely due to the discontent of the returned soldiers who failed to find employment. Added to this were the resentment of the unions caused by Borden's failure to consider labour opinion and the continuing rise in prices while wages remained frozen. Furthermore, the socialists roused public support for those who had been imprisoned during the war for draft evasion or possession of illegal literature, and who were not released when the war ended. Anti-conscription fervour had run high in B.C. and

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[16]Griffin, British Columbia, p. 92.

passions had been inflamed by the Ginger Goodwin affair,[17] which sparked off a twenty-four hour strike in Vancouver in August, 1918. Strikers and returned soldiers clashed in the streets and the SFC headquarters were raided. This episode was not quickly forgotten and helped to build up resentment against the government.

Evidence of a trend towards left-wing thinking is given by J. S. Woodsworth in an article which was probably written around 1918-19, when he was working as a longshoreman in Vancouver:

> Wherever working men meet they are talking political and social and economic change . . . Something has already started--a mighty mass movement is clearly gathering momentum . . . It is a movement of the people, for the people, by the people.
>
> When will the revolution begin? It has already begun--where all revolutions begin--in the minds and consciences of the people.[18]

This growing awareness of the alternatives offered by socialism was reinforced by the Russian Revolution, and there was considerable support for the Bolsheviks in British Columbia. The 1919 BCFL annual convention sent greetings to the Soviet government and called for an end of Allied intervention.

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[17] Goodwin was a union official who was shot by police on Vancouver Island while resisting arrest on charges of draft evasion. Goodwin's friends claimed that he had been martyred for his union activities, while police testified that he was shot in self-defence.

[18] J. S. Woodsworth, "The Rising Tide of Democracy," On the Waterfront (Vancouver, 1928), p. 27.

Longshoremen in Vancouver refused to load munitions that were to be sent to Russia to be used against the Bolsheviks. Events in Russia caused a major split in the SPC as the question of affiliation with the Communist International was raised. No agreement was reached in this dispute. Those who favoured a link with the international movement formed themselves into the Worker's Party, which later became the Communist Party.

The remaining members of the SPC continued with their academic activities, claiming that once the workers were educated they would not need to be led. They rejected attempts by the Communists to draw them into an alliance and refused to join the Canadian Labour Party when it was formed in 1924. By 1925, the SPC was virtually dead. The last issue of the Clarion in July-August, 1925, carried an article which mourned the decline of socialism, explaining that North America was not yet ready for it while capitalism was still young and vigorous, but that the time would assuredly come. The writer argued that socialism in Canada had always been nurtured and maintained by new immigrants, and that the movement naturally declined when immigration ceased during the war.[19] In the opinion of another member, George Morgan of

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[19]C. Stephenson, "A Glance Back--and a Forecast," The Clarion, July-August, 1925, as cited in Grantham, "Some Aspects of the Socialist Movement in B.C.," p. 142.

Vancouver, the major cause of weakness was the party's "history of internecine war." Grantham quotes him as saying in an interview, "We always hated each other more than the enemy."[20] The party did not aim for electoral success, believing that once a man was elected, he could no longer be a true socialist. Keeping the party "pure" was more important than fostering an appealing image, an attitude which led eventually to the party's demise.

Undoubtedly, the downfall of the SPC can be partly accounted for by the popularity of syndicalism during this time. The radical upsurge of 1918 was channelled into a movement which advocated direct action. At the BCFL Convention in 1919, only a minority held out in favour of political action to secure reforms, while the majority endorsed the formation of the One Big Union, which would attempt to coerce the government by means of a general strike. The OBU was launched a few days later at the Western Labour Conference in Calgary. The convention condemned craft unionism, international organization and political action, but left no doubt as to the socialist colour of the OBU:

> The principle of Proletarian Dictatorship . . . [is] absolute and efficient for the transformation of capitalist private property to communal wealth.[21]

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[20] Ibid., p. 146.

[21] D. C. Masters, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto, 1950), p. 4.

At first the OBU enjoyed considerable support in British Columbia, specifically from the miners and loggers, but the movement was short-lived. The logging unions wanted to retain autonomy within the larger group and withheld dues in an attempt to strengthen their demands. The OBU responded by suspending the recalcitrant unions, after which its organization in B.C. broke down. Also, syndicalism became discredited after the Winnipeg General Strike.[22]

There was now a return to ideas of political action but as yet no unified left-wing party. The Federated Labour Party contested fourteen seats in the 1920 provincial election and three candidates were returned. Neither the SPC nor the ILP which also contested the election was successful. The Communist Party made periodic attempts to attract other left-wing groups into a united front and in 1924 set up the Worker's United League to infiltrate the unions and organize the unemployed. The Canadian Labour Party was formed on the initiative of the VTLC to contest the 1924 provincial election. It included the affiliated unions, the FLP, and the Communist Party. While all candidates ran under the CLP label, the individual groups did not lose their identity. Three of the sixteen candidates were elected to the

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[22]Although it is now thought to be unlikely that the Winnipeg Strike could have been organized by the OBU, some of the leaders had been present at the Western Labour Conference, and there was public fear at the time that this was the first step in an OBU plot to overthrow society.

legislature. The CLP contested the federal election of 1925 and 1926 but without success due to lack of union support. Thereafter the party declined.

A further attempt to consolidate left-wing opinion was made in 1925 when a new Independent Labour Party was set up, which proved to be the real forerunner of the CCF in British Columbia.[23] The ILP comprised elements of the FLP, some labour groups, and the remnants of the SPC. The Communists were excluded. At first it seemed that the ILP would suffer the same fate as the SPC. Like its predecessor, it laid heavy emphasis on education, organising study groups and lectures to disseminate socialist ideas. It failed to attract wide support and some of the original branches disbanded due to lack of interest. However, Angus MacInnis[24] won Vancouver South for the ILP in the 1930 federal election.

The turning point came in 1931. The Depression caused renewed interest in socialist activity and in British Columbia,

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[23]Dorothy Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel: Ernest E. Winch and His Times (Vancouver, 1960), p. 74. A prominent left-winger, Mrs. Steeves held many executive positions in the CCF party and served as MLA for Vancouver North 1934-1945.

[24]Angus MacInnis was born in P.E.I. of Scottish parents. He moved to Vancouver in 1908 and became active in the Union of Street Railway Employees. He held his seat in the House of Commons until his retirement in 1957, serving as Deputy National Leader under M. J. Coldwell from 1942 to 1957.

this was intensified by the radio broadcasts of Dr. Lyle Telford.[25] By December, 1931, Ernest Winch,[26] the organizer of the ILP, was able to report to the Fifth Annual Convention that the party had one thousand members and twenty-four branches. One hundred and twenty delegates attended the convention which decided to add the word 'Socialist' to the party name. The delegates also resolved that the provincial executive should be given the authority "to undertake and to assist in the formation of a Dominion-wide Independent Labour Party of Canada,"[27] which would unify all radical organizations on a Marxist basis.

The party had its own library of socialist works in Vancouver ranging from "the simplest to the highly scientific." Study classes were arranged in such subjects as the Principles of Socialist Philosophy, and the Materialistic Conception of History. A course in Economics used Das Kapital as a text.[28]

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[25]A physician and surgeon from Ontario, Lyle Telford became Provincial President of the B.C. CCF party in 1936 and represented Vancouver East in the legislature, 1937-1941. He became mayor of Vancouver in 1937.

[26]Ernest Winch was a Vancouver socialist of English origin who was one of the first CCF members to be elected to the legislature in 1933. He represented Burnaby until his death in 1957.

[27]Report of the Fifth Annual Convention of the ILP, December 6, 1931. All documents and correspondence referred to throughout the thesis are part of the Angus MacInnis Collection, Special Collections Division, University of British Columbia Library.

[28]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee of the ILP, February 13, 1932.

While rejecting association with the Communist Party, the ILP maintained adherence to strict Marxist principles. Members addressed each other as 'Comrade', a practice continued by the CCF for some years. The party did not have its own paper, but used a page of the Challenge, controlled by the Vancouver Citizen's Civil Rights Committee, for propaganda purposes. Its radical aims were expressed through this newspaper in July, 1931, as follows:

> whilst the Capitalist system remains operative, we will concentrate all our efforts toward its overthrow, which we feel can only be accomplished through the activities of a class-conscious working class and to the enlightenment and organisation of members of this class we commit ourselves.[29]

The writer further warned against the "synthetic socialism" as advocated by the churches, claiming that the only true socialism was that which abolished wage labour.

In 1932, the Victoria branch of the ILP moved that the name of the party be changed to distinguish it from the British Labour Party which they felt had been discredited by Ramsay Macdonald. The suggestion was at first shelved, but following a referendum in June of that year, the name 'Socialist Party of Canada' was revived. The party began publication of its own newspaper, the B.C. Clarion, in the same year. It was edited by Harold Winch[30] with the intention "to transmit high-

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[29] The Challenge, July, 1931.

[30] The son of Ernest Winch, Harold Winch became leader of the CCF caucus in the legislature before his election to the House of Commons.

tension Marxian socialism with a view to generating class-conscious workers."[31]

At the Western Labour Conference, held in Calgary in July, 1932, the SPC delegate, J. W. Hope, presented a "Draft of an Economic Plan for a Socialist State" which, he reported, was favourably received and submitted to the Economic Planning Council for further study.[32] The conference agreed to "actively assist in the building up of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation,"[33] the founding convention of which was held in August. In the debate over the name of the new party, the British Columbia delegates favoured that of the 'Socialist Party', but they had to be content with the addition of the words 'Farmer, Labour, Socialist'. They were somewhat mollified by the fact that the SPC would be the founding organization in British Columbia, and would thus control the B.C. section. A referendum held by the SPC showed a large majority in favour of joining the CCF, in spite of the misgivings of a few members who feared that they might have to sacrifice doctrinal purity in a broad-based alliance. A small number of these members split off from the party.

Thus the CCF was formed in British Columbia by the

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[31]Robin, Radical Politics, p. 199.

[32]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee of the SPC, August 8, 1932.

[33]Ibid.

Socialist Party of Canada, but almost immediately, it received applications for membership from other groups which had sprung up during the Depression. Foremost of these groups was the League for Social Reconstruction.[34] Branches of the League, a nation-wide organisation, had appeared in Vancouver and Victoria in 1932. Their function was to disseminate information on the nation's affairs through study groups and pamphlets, in order to create informed public opinion. The League disbanded as their members became more politically active within the CCF. Other small groups which sought direct affiliation with the CCF were the Army of Common Good, the Four Point Plan, the Co-operative Commonwealth of British Columbia, the People's Movement and the People's Party.

The SPC remained the only affiliate of the CCF in the province until March, 1933, although it had conferred with delegates from other interested groups before this date. At this time, the League for Social Reconstruction was formally admitted to the CCF and other groups were advised to merge directly with either of the affiliated parties. Presumably, this was a device to enable the SPC to retain control of the movement. The socialists were suspicious of the moderate nature of the LSR and made some attempts to force Marxian

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[34]There is no connection between the LSR and the Reconstruction Party of H. H. Stevens which broke away from the Conservative Party in 1935.

doctrines on to its members.[35] The SPC asserted its dominance over the party at the beginning by adding to the constitution the provision that:

> For the first year, the Provincial President and Secretary-Treasurer shall be members of the Socialist Party of Canada. This representation shall be in addition to the three regular representatives from that organization.[36]

Clearly, the SPC were jealous of their position in the CCF and anxious to protect the new party from anyone who might try to modify its principles. Their fears were partly realised when the spontaneous formation of the CCF Clubs throughout the province caused them to lose control. These clubs were set up largely as a result of the activity of Lyle Telford who, in addition to his radio speeches, toured the province arousing enthusiasm for the new party. At first, the SPC tried to prevent the clubs from using the name 'CCF', but it was obliged to recognise them when they joined with the LSR to become the Associated CCF Clubs in August, 1933. By the end of 1933, there were CCF organizations in most large centres, and in many small ones. Three separate newspapers expounded CCF views: the Clarion was published by the SPC, the Commonwealth by the Associated CCF Clubs, and the Challenge by Lyle Telford. There was even a CCF choir, led

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[35] Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 80.

[36] Constitution of the CCF, B.C. Section, 1933.

by the Welshman, William Pritchard.

The CCF was able to begin electoral activity almost immediately in British Columbia, because the SPC was already an established party. All ridings in the Vancouver municipal elections of 1933 were contested, half the candidates being members of the Associated CCF Clubs, and half members of the SPC. It was agreed that SPC candidates already chosen for provincial ridings should be allowed to stand.[37] Mrs. Steeves, who had been active in the LSR, notes that the socialists retained all the "juiciest prospects."[38]

The socialists who were still doubtful about the admission of moderates into the new party were somewhat reassured by the Regina Convention, held in July, 1933, where they discovered that the delegates from the CCF clubs were not the bourgeois reactionaries they had expected. To a large extent, the document endorsed by this convention, the Regina Manifesto, represented a compromise between the radical extremists of British Columbia, and the more conservative delegation from the United Farmers of the prairie provinces. It avoided the traditional Marxist jargon employed by the SPC, and declared the party's faith in constitutional methods. However, the Vancouver socialists were able to exert an influence which was

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[37]Minutes of the Provisional Provincial Council of the CCF, B.C. Section, February 11, 1933.

[38]Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 82.

"out of proportion to their numbers."[39] For example, they forced a change in the proposed manifesto on the question of compensation for socialized industry.[40] The final draft had an unquestionably socialist character with its strong condemnation of the existing system and its "inherent injustice and inhumanity." The B.C. delegates could be well satisfied with the militant tone of the final paragraph:

> No CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth.[41]

The Regina Manifesto formed the basis of the CCF party platform for the 1933 provincial election. The CCF received thirty-three percent of the vote and elected seven members to the legislature, six of whom were SPC members.

During the 1920s, there had been a decline of radicalism which left the socialist movement in disarray, and yet a left-wing party was able to come into being and become the official opposition in the B.C. legislature within a year of its inception. Undoubtedly, the CCF was a product of the depression, which dealt a severe blow to the Canadian economy.

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[39] F. R. Scott, "The CCF Convention," Canadian Forum, XIII (September, 1933), p. 447.

[40] Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 44.

[41] Programme of the CCF. Proceedings of the First National Convention, held at Regina, Saskatchewan, July, 1933. Hereafter referred to as the Regina Manifesto.

Particularly vulnerable were those whose jobs depended on the production of primary products. In the Prairies where the farmers had already begun to press for reform, the depression gave impetus to the protest movement. In British Columbia, the ranks of the unemployed were swollen by the closing down of industries. Out of work loggers and unemployed men from all over Canada converged on Vancouver and the problem of relief was acute. The obvious inability of the government to cope with the situation led to a protest vote against the disadvantages of the capitalist system, and the old parties whose interests lay in maintaining it.

What is remarkable about the socialist movement in British Columbia is that it survived the numerous doctrinal disputes which marked its development and that it was able to emerge during the depression as a significant part of a national movement of reform. Periodic attempts to unite the left-wing were ineffective as individual factions refused to compromise, and, for the most part, radical thought was fragmented and incapable of attracting mass support. In spite of the fact that unions in B.C. were considerably more militant than elsewhere in Canada, relations with the socialists were generally poor and the left-wing vote was therefore split on many occasions. Nevertheless, a radical tradition was maintained which, in the stress of the Depression was able to contribute to the formation of a significant, national party of the left. The CCF quickly became a major party in

provincial politics, yet internal disputes did not disappear with its consolidation in the early 1930s. To some extent, the CCF in British Columbia remained an amalgamation of factions, distinguished by doctrinal differences, even after the separate groups merged their identities in 1935. The members of the old Socialist Party of Canada were never able to compromise their principles even when it was clear that they were no longer the majority. As official party decisions were dictated more and more by considerations of practical politics, the Marxist element made repeated attempts to re-assert itself and threatened to split the party on more than one occasion. These difficulties can be traced back to the way in which the party was formed in 1932 as a federation of groups representing all shades of left-wing opinion, and further to the way in which socialist ideas have developed in this province since the end of the nineteenth century.

II

THE FIRST RUPTURE

The CCF became consolidated in 1935 with the merger of the two affiliated parties, the SPC and the Associated CCF Clubs. The merger, however, did not eliminate tension between the groups and may even have increased it. Not only did the SPC distrust the moderates in the Associated CCF Clubs, but serious division existed within the ranks of the socialists themselves. The split which occurred in 1936 was the result not only of a difference in the interpretation of socialism but also of a conflict between personalities. As one observer wrote:

> . . . along with the socialist tradition the CCF inherited, it inherited the figures of socialism also, and a quite healthy crop of jealousies and feuds. It is the misfortune of the movement that all these figures, and of all that the movement has developed, none has proved capable of introducing the discipline essential to an aggressive proletarian party.[1]

In its early years, the party was characterised by a struggle for power within its ranks. One might expect the greatest conflict to have been experienced between the two

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[1]Alex Holmes, "In Search of a Socialist Heaven," New Frontier, 1937, p. 4.

affiliating bodies whereas evidence suggests that these two may well have achieved close co-operation. The centre of the conflict seems to have been within the SPC. It should be remembered that the SPC itself had been created as a merger of different groups. Thus, moderate socialists like Angus MacInnis could find more in common with members from the League for Social Reconstruction than with some extremists of his own party.

The SPC had first rejected the merger because some of its members, notably, Ernest Winch, believed that it was a device whereby the moderates would eliminate the socialists from control of the movement. The group which opposed the merger dominated the SPC in 1934 in spite of the fact that the SPC representatives on the CCF executive were moderates. In a letter to J. H. Smith of Lillooet, Frank McKenzie, a CCF executive member, indicated that Winch was using machine tactics to consolidate his position. As moderates like Robert Skinner and Jack Price began to lose influence in the SPC, some members declined to continue their association with it and some branches, Lillooet, for example, transformed themselves into CCF Clubs even before the merger.[2] As moderates gradually deserted the SPC, the polarization between the socialist party and the Associated CCF Clubs became more clearly defined.

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[2]F. J. McKenzie to J. H. Smith, June 27, 1934.

When the merger was accomplished in 1935, the Marxists did not immediately lose all influence as they had feared. Indeed, the 1936 Provincial Convention elected an executive dominated by the left-wing of the movement. This was in part due to Winch's machine control, but the personal popularity of Dr. Lyle Telford, who declared himself for Marxian socialism, was also a factor. It was this convention and the policy determined by it which precipitated the expulsion of the Reverend Robert Connell,[3] Leader of the CCF caucus in the legislature from the CCF, and the subsequent formation of a splinter party, the Social Constructives.

Essentially, the facts are these. The rupture which occurred in the summer of 1936 was the culmination of a long period of hostility between Connell and the Marxists, specifically, Ernest and Harold Winch and Lyle Telford. Largely, the conflict was one of doctrine. Connell believed in socialism, but he sincerely thought it unrealistic to promise revolution and the immediate abolition of capitalism when the necessary changes would take time to be implemented. He wanted the CCF programme to promise only what it could fulfil; reforms which could be accomplished within the existing constitution. On the other hand, Winch and his supporters wanted the programme to reflect their ultimate goal; that of Marxian socialism.

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[3]Robert Connell was an Anglican minister of English origin who joined the CCF in 1933. He represented Victoria in the provincial legislature 1933-1937 and served as Leader of the Opposition from 1933 until his resignation in 1936.

Also involved, according to Dorothy Steeves, was a clash of personality. As a member of the CCF caucus at the time, Mrs. Steeves had opportunity to observe the relationship between the two men at close hand, and in her biography of Ernest Winch, she indicates that their basic incompatibility was a large factor in the split.[4]

The first signs of conflict came to the attention of the public in March, 1936, when Mr. Connell brought the issue into the open in a speech to the legislature. Connell specifically attacked an earlier speech of Ernest Winch, indicating that it "did not represent the policy of the CCF, which had little to do with Marxian socialism."[5] He continued by emphasizing that a CCF government would only make such changes as were possible within the limited powers of provincial authority and quietly outlined a programme which fitted in with those limitations. The speech not only repudiated Marxism, but as Bruce Hutchison pointed out in the Victoria Daily Times:

> Rev. Robert Connell, CCF leader, was calmly kicking the communists and direct actionists downstairs, out of his party, and publicly spanking the Winchs, father and son in the most gentle, fatherly fashion.[6]

However "gentle" and "fatherly" Connell's admonition had been, it was also a challenge which Ernest and Harold Winch could

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[4]D. G. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, chapter 9.

[5]Cited by Bruce Hutchison, "Across the Bay," Victoria Daily Times, March 14, 1936, p. 4.

[6]Ibid.

not overlook. As a protest, the younger Winch resigned as party whip, while his father told the legislature that Connell had spoken only for himself, and not for the party.

Although Connell was later to leave the party with only a small number of supporters, it is evident that at this stage he had considerable support. There is evidence that some of the moderates were feeling a profound disillusionment in the party as the Marxists gained ascendancy. For at least one member, W. Ewart Turner, Connell's action offered a ray of hope in a formerly hopeless situation. Turner had previously lost all enthusiasm for the party as Telford and Winch increased their control, but he now believed that a change could be effected. Referring to Bruce Hutchison's report of Connell's speech in the Vancouver Province, he wrote:

> I read the most soul inspiring thing it has been my privilege to read for many a long day. I felt like singing - "England arise, the dark night is over" for Connell had done the needful thing . . . I was certainly inspired, my whole being surged with new hope. Previous to that, I have actually spent sleepless nights pondering over the debacle that faced us, or - - that I thought faced us; now instead of despair and confusion, I see some chance of ordered progress.[7]

It seems that Turner subsequently set about organising

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[7]W. E. Turner to Arnold Webster, March 15, 1936. Turner had come to Vancouver from Alberta where he had been a member of the Alberta Labour Party. He served on the B.C. CCF executive 1935-1936. Webster was a Vancouver teacher and school administrator who served as Provincial President of the CCF 1935-6. He represented Vancouver East in the legislature 1953-1956 as Leader of the Opposition. He was elected M.P. for Vancouver Kingsway 1962-1965.

a group of people to defend Connell's programme and, at the same time, undermine the influence of Telford and Winch. It is not clear how large was the group or who comprised it, although letters indicate that Arnold Webster and Grant MacNeil[8] were both involved. They had the support of Angus MacInnis, who wrote from Ottawa advising them that the 1936 Provincial Convention would be crucial in the struggle to control the CCF movement. He warned that convention delegates would be "hand-picked" by Telford and Winch; thus Connell supporters should act quickly to counteract these "machine tactics." He expressed the belief that the Marxists would favour a split in the party if it furthered their aims and might even try to force the influential moderates like Connell and Webster to leave. Connell's group should be forewarned of such manoeuvres and adhere closely to the constitution and the Regina Manifesto: "If there is going to be a split, try to manoeuvre the other fellow into the position of taking the first step to break the cohesion of the movement."[9]

MacInnis wrote to Victor Midgley, Connell's secretary, in a similar vein, indicating quite clearly his support for

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[8]Grant MacNeil spent his early years in Ottawa where he was influenced greatly by the philosophy of J. S. Woodsworth. He represented Vancouver North in the House of Commons 1935-1940 and became MLA for Vancouver Burrard 1941-1945.

[9]Angus MacInnis to W. E. Turner, April 3, 1936.

Connell's position. Again, he urged Connell, through Midgley, to assert his views as those truly representing socialism and to try to woo the membership away from the Marxists.

> What we should strive to do is to bring the rank and file of our movement with us and leave the leaders [Telford and Winch], who have their heads in the midst of theory, where they rightly belong--in the clouds.[10]

At this point, both moderates and left-wingers recognized that some kind of showdown was inevitable. Each group, however, clung grimly to the claim that it expressed the true meaning of the Regina Manifesto and hoped for the other side to make a mistake.

In spite of MacInnis' exhortation that Connell supporters should visit every club in the province to weaken the "Winch machine", the Provincial Convention in early July was a victory for the Marxists. Lyle Telford was elected as President and the delegates ratified the provincial programme favoured by the Winch group, which included a plank on socialized finance. Telford himself, influenced by Premier Aberhart's financial theories, was especially anxious to see this aspect of Social Credit doctrine as part of the CCF programme.[11] His enthusiasm swayed the convention, in spite of opposition

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[10]Angus MacInnis to Victor Midgley, May 4, 1936.

[11]Telford had been influenced by the Douglas-Aberhart monetary theory which aimed to stimulate the economy by increasing the purchasing power of the consumer. J. S. Woodsworth had also been attracted to this theory in the 1920s. See Irving Brecher, Monetary and Fiscal Thought and Policy in Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto, 1957), p. 28.

from some of the party's economic experts such as Wallis Lefeaux.[12] The victory was not unqualified. The convention declined to commit the party to an endorsement of Marxian socialism, preferring to record that the party was "not opposed" to it. At the same time, delegates who gave their support to Telford in the presidential ballot, indicated their complete confidence in Connell as Leader of the Opposition by reversing a motion of non-confidence in him and giving him instead a "tremendous ovation".[13] It should be added that Connell had spoken little during the conference, even during the debate on socialised finance which he hotly opposed. In fact, at no time had he offered any specific criticism of the provincial programme approved by the convention. The delegates may well have taken his silence as tacit acceptance of the programme worked out by the Marxist-dominated executive.

Thus, it was with some surprise that the party, and the public at large, learnt in late July of Connell's 'defection' from the CCF. The leader's actions were somewhat dramatic. Having confided his plans to only a few friends, Connell sent a letter to the President and the executive of the provincial party in which he elaborated his criticisms

July 1936

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[12]Wallis Lefeaux was a Vancouver lawyer of English origin. A former President of the SPC, Lefeaux was President of the B.C. Section of the CCF 1939-1942. He represented Vancouver Centre in the legislature 1941-1945.

[13]Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 109.

of the party and set out his reasons for rejecting the provincial platform. Simultaneously, he gave a copy of the letter to the press. Mr. Connell used as a pretext for sending the letter an invitation to give a radio address on behalf of the CCF. In the letter he refused the invitation, stating that he could no longer speak for the CCF since he was unable to accept its platform. Connell also referred to an invasion of CCF clubs by Communists and objected to the fact that the Chairman of the Organization Committee, Ernest Winch, was a "self-declared pro-Communist."[14] Finally, Mr. Connell reasserted his faith in the Regina Manifesto, indicating that "sinister influences" were trying to subvert the party from its original course.

The party executive reacted by calling a special meeting. Telford reported that a group who were hostile to the executive had gathered around Connell. Grant MacNeil had attended a meeting of this "Commonwealth Group", as it was known, and described how Connell had read the letter to his friends and had been advised to publish it.[15] MacNeil asserted that Connell hoped by this move to split the party, calculating that the majority of members would support him

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[14]Robert Connell to the President and Provincial Executive of the CCF, B.C. Section, July 28, 1936.

[15]MacNeil named those who attended the meeting as W. E. Turner, J. Price, J. S. Taylor, E. F. Robinson and V. Midgley.

rather than the Marxist leadership. It is not clear what MacNeil's position was vis-à-vis the Commonwealth Group. Probably he was closer in ideology to Connell than to the Marxists and yet to report to the executive on the actions of the group was not an act of support. It seems likely that while he had sympathized with Connell's position in the spring of 1936, he found himself unable to condone the attempt to split the party. It should be added that Angus MacInnis, who had unquestionably encouraged Connell to resist the left-wing element, did not come to his aid during the crisis which followed publication of the letter. Clearly, both MacNeil and MacInnis were more interested in maintaining the unity of the party. Connell's provocative act in publishing the letter was calculated to precipitate a showdown. While both MacNeil and MacInnis may privately have sympathized with his viewpoint, they could not support his action.

As a result of the meeting, the executive issued a statement to the press indicating its belief that the Reverend Connell had been 'victimized' by insidious influences within the CCF. The executive believed it unfortunate that Connell had been led to take advice which had brought about this unhealthy situation. The statement expressed confidence in Ernest Winch as an elected officer of the CCF, but added that he should retire temporarily from the executive pending a resolution of the crisis. The statement

concluded that:

> The executive stands firmly behind the principles on which the movement was founded and will proceed forthwith to carry out the instructions of the convention.[16]

Possibly at this stage, the executive still hoped to effect a reconciliation. Dr. Telford wrote to Connell offering his own resignation if it could prevent a split but Connell replied that this would not alter the situation. The root of the problem, Connell emphasized, was the Communist influences which pervaded the party. The executive subsequently published a further statement to the effect that Connell had placed himself outside the CCF by virtue of his refusal to subscribe to the platform and manifesto of the movement.

Within a week, it had become clear that there would be no mass exodus from the party, following Mr. Connell. A mass meeting of Victoria and lower Vancouver Island CCF Clubs gave unanimous support to the executive. Of the six CCF members of the legislature, only three chose to stand by their leader; Jack Price, R. B. Swailes, and Ernest Bakewell. Only one CCF club, Grand Forks, came out in favour of Connell.[17] An important loss to the party was the Commonwealth which

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[16]Public statement to the press from the provincial executive of the CCF.

[17]This club disbanded later in the year to support Connell's new party.

became a vehicle for Connell's views. The editor, William Pritchard, already had his own difficulties with the executive and in particular opposed Ernest Winch and his "Machiavellian movements".[18] Pritchard claimed that the Communist Party was using Winch as a cat's paw. Pritchard may have thought that Connell would successfully carry the major portion of the party with him but he miscalculated. The Commonwealth was replaced as the official CCF organ by the Federationist and had ceased publication by the end of September, 1936. Pritchard claimed that his opponents had engineered the demise of the Commonwealth, supposedly by persuading its advertisers to end their patronage and its carriers to give up their rounds. In actuality, the paper had been in financial difficulties before the Connell crisis and it is difficult to see how it could have survived as the organ of a minority group.[19]

Connell was officially expelled from the party on August 12, 1936. Two days later he announced his intention to start a new party, based on the principles of the Regina Manifesto. The Social Constructives entered the provincial election of 1937 with a platform of moderate social reform. Based on the programme put forward by Connell in the spring of 1936, it emphasized the need for good, honest government.

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[18]William Pritchard to Dorothy Steeves, June 15, 1959.

[19]Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 111.

Newspaper editorials compared Connell's programme favourably with that of the CCF but the electorate appeared unimpressed. No Social Constructive candidate came close to winning a seat, and even in Grand Forks their share of the vote did not exceed that of the CCF. In spite of his alleged involvement with the Communist Party, Ernest Winch increased his share of the vote in Burnaby, and seven CCF candidates were elected to the legislature. The Reverend Connell retired from politics; none of those CCFers expelled with him returned to the fold.

In analyzing the conflict between Robert Connell and the B.C. executive, three separate but related aspects suggest themselves. The bitterness which accompanied the crisis indicates that a clash of personalities contributed to the break and perhaps intensified the dispute over policy. The divergent views concerning the provincial platform were themselves an important factor and in turn inflamed personal antagonisms. Thirdly, Connell and the executive failed to agree on the role to be played by the leader of the legislative caucus in the party, which led to a serious breakdown in communications between the two wings. Each aspect deserves separate consideration.

In her account of the Connell split, Dorothy Steeves emphasizes the personality conflict between Robert Connell and Ernest Winch.[20] Indeed, the two men had little in common.

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[20]Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, Chapter 9.

Connell was a quiet, scholarly Anglican minister whose main interest in life, apart from the Church and a desire to help people, was his love of nature. In the Victoria newspapers, his name appears far more often as the author of some article on local natural history than as a politician. It would seem that he never really learned to cope with the harsh realities of political life. Winch, on the other hand, sincerely believed in revolutionary socialism, and while he was not advocating the violent overthrow of society, he was impatient with the cautious reformism of Mr. Connell. He displayed a zest for politics and campaigning, and it was natural that he would feel constrained by a leader whose enthusiasm was less intense. In his eagerness to make the CCF a truly Marxian party, Winch offended many of the more moderate CCFers who resented his growing influence in the movement. Telford was also disliked in some quarters. Perhaps this was due to a certain amount of jealousy for the popularity he had achieved through his radio broadcasts, but there was also some suspicion that he was motivated by self gratification rather than by desire for the good of the party.[21] Certainly, the moderates were ready to believe that Telford and Winch were

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[21]Letter from W. E. Turner, March 22, 1936. It is not certain to whom this letter was addressed since the existing copy in the Angus MacInnis Collection begins simply 'Dear Friends'. However, other correspondence around this date indicates that Turner was keeping Angus MacInnis and Grant MacNeil in Ottawa informed of developments in the B.C. Section.

establishing control over the movement by unscrupulous means and for doubtful reasons.

It was well known that Winch and Connell were not on good terms. Connell himself indicated that he had been driven to his actions by "incessant badgering and harrassing" over a two year period.[22] He implied that he would have resigned earlier had he not believed that in doing so, he would be playing into Winch's hands. As Mrs. Steeves points out, had there not been a conflict of personalities, each man may have found it easier to forgive the other's shortcomings, but this being so, the feud intensified.

It would be wrong to conclude, however, that the two men's personal dislike for each other was the dominant factor in this affair. Perhaps personal rivalry would have played a lesser role had they shared a common cause. It was unfortunate for the party that while both claimed to have the best interests of the CCF at heart, there was basic disagreement as to what the CCF was, and what it should be doing.

Essentially, the difference was that Winch and his supporters wished to found party policy on a Marxian basis while Connell was offended by Marxian jargon and tended to confuse Marxism with Communism. In drawing up the provincial programme, the left-wingers ignored constitutional limits on the power of a provincial government, so eager were they to

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[22] Victoria Daily Times, August 31, 1936, p. 13.

present a revolutionary plan to the electorate. The moderates recognised that a socialist state could not be brought about overnight and that a CCF government in British Columbia would be obliged to administer capitalism for some time before full socialisation could be implemented. Nor did this prospect fill them with alarm. For them, the destruction of capitalism was not a crucial issue; of far greater importance was that the nation achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth. A CCF government could work towards this even in a capitalist state.

Above all, Connell strongly denounced the financial plank of the 1936 provincial platform which involved socialised credit and the issuance of scrip. He was not alone in his disparagement, and the failure of Premier Aberhart's experiment in Alberta later justified his criticisms. Not only was the economic theory behind the plan unsound, but it could not have been implemented within the existing constitution.

Connell rejected the 1936 provincial platform because, as a plan for a first term of office, it was totally unworkable. This was tantamount to cheating the electorate, who, having voted for it, would suffer disillusionment and disappointment when it became clear that it could not be carried out.

The importance of the third aspect, that of the role of leader of the legislative caucus, was a significant point

of controversy. The executive maintained that elected members were responsible to them on matters of policy. The executive was elected annually and claimed therefore to be more truly representative of the movement as a whole than were the MLAs. Policy was a matter to be determined by the movement through the provincial convention and the executive. Members of the legislature should therefore publicly subscribe only to the views of the party as expressed by the executive. Since Connell disagreed with party policy as expressed by the executive, he felt muzzled by them and tried to assert the right to put forward his own opinions. He believed that in his capacity as leader of the legislative caucus, he could more accurately reflect the wishes of the membership than the CCF officers, of whom a high proportion were left-wingers. The CCF programme which Connell outlined in the legislature in March, 1936, had not been ratified by a convention and the other CCF MLAs were hearing it for the first time as an official declaration of policy. Not unnaturally, the executive viewed this act with disfavour. It appeared to them to be an attempt on the part of Connell to dictate policy to the entire movement. As Connell saw it, he was merely doing what the leader of any other party might do in outlining the plans he would implement should he become premier. His programme was based on the Regina Manifesto which was accepted as a statement of the party's principles.

Thus, he could claim that his programme represented the wishes of the party membership.

Connell felt justified in by-passing the executive since he believed that the Marxist faction were overly represented on the committee. His appeal was directly to the membership and the electorate. He can be criticized for his handling of the situation. Connell seemed to want to ignore the very existence of the executive and communication between the two was negligible. Such correspondence as Connell found necessary to conduct with the executive officers was transacted almost entirely through his secretary, Victor Midgley. Connell rarely attended executive meetings, even when specifically invited. A special meeting was held following his provocative speech in the legislature in March so that he and Winch could explain their differences. They were both prevented from attending by a late sitting of the legislature, but Connell never did explain his views to the executive. The Assistant Provincial Secretary, E. F. Robinson, was forced to admit in reply to a query from the Jubilee CCF Club, Burnaby, that Connell's twenty-five points were thought to be his personal views, but that not enough information was available. Clearly, if the executive were to control the party, they had to be aware of what the elected members were doing. In this case, Connell maintained a stubborn silence, an attitude which at best can only be described as uncooperative.

To review the facts, in the spring of 1936, Robert Connell enjoyed the confidence of his party as Leader of the Opposition, although a few left-wingers would have liked to see him replaced. His unilateral declaration of CCF policy, accompanied by an attack on Ernest Winch, was not endorsed by the B.C. Executive, yet it rekindled the enthusiasm of some disillusioned moderates and had the support of some prominent national figures in the CCF. He was popular in the provincial riding of Victoria which elected him. With the exception of the Winches, he was well-liked and respected in the legislative caucus; in fact, he appeared to be in a strong position. The question remains, why, in a relatively short time, did he face political obscurity? The three aspects of the conflict discussed above do not in themselves provide an answer. The dispute over the party platform, which seems to be the pivotal factor could have been overcome, had Connell acted wisely. There were many in the party who shared Connell's opinions and who were working for a modification of the radical policies endorsed by the 1936 executive. The plank on socialized finance was dropped immediately after the 1937 election. The crucial factor in the sequence of events was Connell's misjudgement of the situation. As the disappointed moderates lamented, "he did the right thing at the wrong time."[23]

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[23]Arnold Webster to Angus MacInnis, February 26, 1937.

Even those who had warned that the Winch faction might try to provoke a split had to admit that the responsibility for precipitating the rupture lay with Reverend Connell. Winch could only be blamed indirectly, and the executive not at all. Connell had calculated that in sending the letter to the press in July, he was presenting the CCF membership with a clear cut issue on the question of party policy. It would be up to them to choose which platform they preferred, his own or that of the executive. Connell evidently counted on the support of a majority of members and hoped that in the face of mass support for his policies the executive would resign, allowing the moderates to take control. Connell, however, had done little to propagandize his point of view apart from one well-publicized speech in the legislature, and had not co-operated at all in determining the provincial programme. In actuality, Connell had had more than one opportunity to participate in planning the programme, but refused to do so. Prior to the 1936 Provincial Convention, Connell had been asked to serve on a planning committee which was drafting financial policy. Connell's only reply, through his secretary, was that his views were already well known, and he declined to elaborate further.[24] Again, when the financial plank was debated at the convention, Connell had ample

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[24] Victoria Daily Times, August 26, p. 5.

opportunity to speak against it, but he said nothing. He could have used either of these situations to his advantage by making clear his own views and soliciting support for a more moderate programme.

It was rather late, in July, to criticize a programme already ratified by the convention, and especially in view of the impending provincial election. What did Connell hope to gain by keeping silent until this time? Why did he choose to voice his criticism in the public press? Such action could only bring adverse publicity to the party and place it in an unfavourable light. How then could Connell expect to receive the support of members of a party he seemed bent on destroying? The only explanation is that this was a gamble that Connell was prepared to take in order to put the moderates in control of the party. Probably, Connell believed that the party had already been fatally injured by Communist subversion. He hoped that his action would stimulate the executive to order his immediate explusion from the CCF. He could then appear as a martyr to the membership at large who would flock to his defence. In the event, circumstances turned against him. The executive, while they publicly "regretted" Connell's action, did not immediately forestall any chance of a reconciliation. There was no evidence of a plot to depose Connell, and Telford, for his part, appeared genuinely disturbed by the situation. Telford was first made aware of Connell's rejection of the platform some days before

publication of the letter when Connell refused to make a radio broadcast which would counteract rumours of a rift. Telford's last communication to Connell before the crisis broke asked that the two might meet in order to try to resolve their differences. Connell ignored the request. Telford made one more attempt to heal the breach on August 1, when he wired Connell, offering to resign as President. The offer was rejected. Connell had hoped that his actions would discredit the executive but they discredited only himself and the few friends who stood by him. The CCF chose to preserve the unity of the party and he forfeited the support of those people who sympathized with his ideology.

Connell was not an aggressive man and it is not suggested that he acted out of a desire to win the party for himself. Indeed, it was his very lack of political expertise and distaste for 'wheeling and dealing' which led him to make the break. It is highly unlikely that he really wanted to see the break up of the CCF. Rather he hoped by his plan to purge the party of Communist infiltrators. He believed that the extremists, while highly vocal, and disproportionately influential, were nevertheless a minority. When the majority of the CCF members flocked to his support, they would be left outside, and a new CCF party could be built, free from disruptive forces.

The advice of Angus MacInnis to the Commonwealth Group had been sound. As long as Connell maintained his adherence

to the Regina Manifesto, and the constitution of the party, he could continue to enjoy support for his leadership. Connell's fatal error lay in the fact that he allowed himself to be out-manoeuvred by his opponents. By refusing contact with the executive, and failing to take part in drawing up the provincial platform, he showed himself to be unco-operative. By sending a damaging letter to the public press, he laid himself open to the charge that he himself was a disruptive force rather than the Marxists he hoped to eliminate from the party.

III

THE WAR YEARS

In the years following the Connell split, division in the party centred mainly on foreign policy. The growth of fascist governments in Europe led Communist groups in Canada to renew their efforts to bring the CCF party into a united front. The CCF consistently rejected overtures from the Labour Progressive Party[1] in spite of the fact that, in response to the political situation in Europe, some members were advocating co-operation with other groups opposed to fascism.

In British Columbia, the problem of Communist infiltration of CCF clubs was acute, and some members openly supported the Communists or co-operated with them in the League against War and Fascism.[2] Pressure from within the CCF for a link with the LPP became so great that a large part of the 1943 Provincial Convention was spent in discussing the

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[1]The Canadian Communist Party took the name Labour Progressive Party during the years 1943-1960.

[2]This was a front organization for the LPP. See Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 255.

question, and the executive was forced to appoint a special committee to consider whether a basis for co-operation could be found. It is not the intention of this thesis to discuss the relationship between the Communist party and the CCF in detail. However, the subject is raised at this point to demonstrate that those who favoured a united front were not necessarily those members who were ardent Marxists. Indeed, Dorothy Steeves and Colin Cameron, both noted for their left-wing views, were vehemently opposed to co-operation with the Communists and actively fought against Communist infiltration of the CCF. The Marxists saw the LPP as being a reactionary movement since it was more concerned with capitalizing on the deterioration of social conditions than with the freedom and welfare of the working class.[3] This point of view can be compared to the line taken by the SPC in the 1920s. The SPC refused to co-operate with the Communists then because they considered their loyalty to the Soviet government a hindrance to working class aims in Canada.

During the late 1930s, a definable group whose opinions were somewhat to the left of the official party line, emerged in the British Columbia section of the party. Prominent in this group were two Members of the Legislative Assembly, Dorothy Steeves and Colin Cameron.[4] Their differences with

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[3]Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 279.

[4]Born in England, Cameron came to Vancouver as a boy in 1902 and later settled on Vancouver Island. He served

the party were thrown into sharp relief at the outbreak of war in 1939. Since both were outspoken about their convictions, they proved to be a cause of embarrassment to the party throughout the continuance of the war.

It might be helpful at this stage to review official party policy on the war. The Regina Manifesto had firmly stated that "Canada must refuse to be entangled in any more wars fought to make the world safe for capitalism."[5] At the outset of war in Europe, the CCF National Council delayed any public statement on Canada's role in the situation until Parliament met on September 8th, by which time Canada was virtually committed to war.[6] In this way, they were able to avoid seeming to encourage the government to support the Allies against the wishes of the National Convention which favoured the avoidance of war at all costs. Since war was already a fact in Europe, the CCF could support Canadian aid to the Allies without apparent reversal of principles. The National Council statement, however, stressed that aid should take the form of materials only and not manpower. The CCF

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overseas with the Canadian Army during World War One and his wartime experiences influenced him to become an ardent socialist. He became MLA for Nanaimo-Cowichan 1937-1945 and M.P. for Nanaimo, Cowichan, the Islands 1953-1958 and 1962-1968.

[5] Regina Manifesto.

[6] Britain had already declared war on Germany at this point and the King government had repeatedly stated that Canada had a commitment to Britain in time of war.

would oppose any government attempt to impose conscription, to dispatch an expeditionary force to Europe or any infringement of civil liberties in Canada.[7]

As the war progressed, CCF policy gradually moved towards support for a maximum war effort. While they emphasized the need for conscription of wealth before that of manpower, and the maintenance of civil liberties, they also supported government plans to finance the war through War Savings Certificates. By January, 1942, the National Council was ready to support conscription for overseas service. Coldwell justified his call for an "all-out supreme effort" on the grounds that Canada was no longer merely helping Great Britain against her aggressors, but that the defence of Canada itself was now at stake.[8] These developments in official policy were accepted as necessary by the majority of moderate CCF members although there was universal admiration for J. S. Woodsworth who had resigned as leader in September 1939 because of his personal convictions of pacifism.

In British Columbia, the National Council's decision to support the war effort was seen by some members as an

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[7] Canada and the War: The CCF Position (Ottawa, 1939), p. 4.

[8] Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates (Ottawa, January 26, 1942), p. 63. Coldwell's visit to Britain in 1941 convinced him of Britain's need for further aid from Canada.

outright betrayal of socialist principles. In particular, Dorothy Steeves and Colin Cameron publicly denounced the war effort. At a time when the government was trying to rally Canadians in defence of the Empire, their outbursts received considerable press attention and caused some confusion in the minds of the public as to what was the CCF stand on the war. Two major incidents will be discussed in this chapter.

Specifically, Steeves and Cameron attacked the underlying causes of the war. They contended that Hitler had been produced by the policies of the Allies following World War One. Thus, Great Britain was as much to blame as Germany in causing the second war which was imperialist in nature and therefore against the interests of the working classes. This point of view appears to have been well supported in the early days of the war. At a well-attended CCF meeting in the Vancouver Moose Hall on September 30, 1939, every speaker stressed that the war was simply a struggle for the supremacy of rival imperialisms. Resolutions denouncing the dispatch of an expeditionary force to Europe and the infringement of civil liberties under wartime defence regulations were carried unanimously. Even Grant MacNeil, a party moderate who had endorsed the National Council statement favouring limited Canadian participation, described conscription as a "stupid national strategy", and declared that "Canada has no interests that would justify the shedding of Canadian blood on foreign

soil."[9] Colin Cameron proceeded to launch a campaign against conscription and while this did not have the official sanction of the CCF executive, it was not repudiated.

In November, Steeves and Cameron carried their attack on the war into the provincial legislature during the debate on the Speech from the Throne. It was at this point that the views of the left-wing members began to prove embarrassing for the CCF party. War had now been a fact for two months. To those who had accepted it, assertions that Canada should not be fighting at all began to sound subversive. The Conservative party leader in British Columbia, R. L. Maitland, accused the CCF of deliberate intent to retard Canada's war effort.[10] The legislature was shocked when Dorothy Steeves impugned the integrity of the British Empire by accusing Britain of helping to cause the war by her imperialist policies, and Premier T. D. Pattullo warned her that further remarks made in similar vein would bring reprisals from Ottawa.[11] Mrs. Steeves asked for a full declaration of war aims and emphasised the need for a constructive domestic programme which would be worth fighting for. Colin Cameron added that Canadians should not be sent overseas until they were given "unimpeachable guarantees that the foul things

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[9] Vancouver Sun, September 30, 1939, p. 14.

[10] Ibid., November 3, 1939, p. 30.

[11] Ibid., November 4, 1939, p. 1.

done after the last war will not be repeated."[12] Samuel Guthrie, CCF Cowichan-Newcastle, also referred to the First World War and the poverty which returned soldiers faced in 1918.

The speeches of these three MLAs constituted an impassioned attack on conscription on the grounds that Canadians could not be expected to sacrifice their lives for democracy in Europe until they achieved democracy at home. They provided a direct contrast to the patriotic fervour displayed by Liberal and Conservative speakers and the opponents of the CCF were quick to accuse the party of disloyalty to Canada. During the course of this heated debate, Premier Pattullo accused Cameron of deliberately trying to discourage recruiting and Cameron was forced to withdraw his statement that Britain had betrayed democracy. The Speaker declined to give a ruling on the rights of immunity of MLAs but, as the debate reached a climax, he read the defence of Canada censorship regulations to the members.[13]

As a result of this debate, the press began to call for a clarification of the CCF stand on the war. An editorial in the Vancouver Province on November 4, 1939, asked "Where is the CCF?" If Dorothy Steeves was expressing the views of the party as a whole in her attack on the British Empire,

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[12] Victoria Daily Times, November 7, 1939, p. 16.

[13] Ibid., November 7, 1939, p. 16.

then on whose side of the war did the party stand?

> Is it with Canada and the Empire or is it on the other side? If against it, it will find few supporters. If it is for Canada, it should realise the importance of bending every effort towards victory--and the futility and danger of recrimination.[14]

The editor of the Vancouver Sun pointed out that the CCF seemed to be expounding two opposite points of view. If the official party stand was that given by Harold Winch as leader of the B.C. Party that liberty and democracy were the issues at stake in the war, then Dorothy Steeves was against these principles. She should either resign or be disciplined by the party.[15]

Clearly the press was trying to show that it was impossible to be anti-war and pro-Canadian at the same time. If the CCF persisted in making socialism the main issue of the war, they would forfeit the support of the majority of patriotic citizens. Harold Winch attempted to clear up the confusion by outlining the official CCF war attitude in the legislature. He reassured the House that the CCF had no desire to discourage recruiting, nor to hamper the Allied cause in any way. The party intended rather to concentrate its efforts on the preservation of civil liberties and to

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[14] Vancouver Province, November 4, 1939, p. 4.

[15] Vancouver Sun, November 4, 1939, p. 4.

press for a policy of conscription of wealth before that of manpower.[16]

Press treatment of the Throne Speech debate had cast doubts as to the loyalty of the CCF to Canada and the British Empire. This tended to undermine CCF morale and popularity. The CCF executive, however, did not discipline the three MLAs for their part in creating the furor, as the newspapers had suggested. It preferred instead to minimize the incident in the legislature and to reassure CCF members that no schism was developing in the party on the war issue. Wallis Lefeaux, as President of the B.C. Section wrote to the Vancouver Sun complaining that Mrs. Steeves had been quoted out of context, and that the CCF MLAs had merely been trying to show that the rise of fascism in Germany had economic origins.[17] The party newspaper, The Federationist, offered no criticism of those who had spoken so passionately against the war, and it seemed that senior CCF officials could find nothing in their words which contradicted CCF policy. Angus MacInnis wrote in the Federationist that the CCF had long foreseen that British imperial policies would lead to war and that Dorothy Steeves and Colin Cameron had done no more than repeat what the CCF had been saying for some time.[18] The editorial in the

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[16] Federationist, November 16, 1939, p. 1.

[17] Vancouver Sun, November 13, 1939, p. 4.

[18] Federationist, November 16, 1939, p. 4.

December 21 issue of the Federationist sought to justify the CCF's official position on the war, implying that it recognised that the views of the rebel MLAs were actually more consistent with party principles than was the National Council declaration. It explained that while it was inconceivable for the CCF to have a 'war policy', which had connotations of aggression, it was necessary to formulate a policy 'in time of war'.[19]

It is not clear how much harm was done to the party image by the legislature incident, but it undoubtedly caused some confusion in the minds of the public as to the party stand on the war. Moreover, it tended to give the impression that the CCF did not support the war effort at a time when the majority of people, including the trade unions, were strongly in favour of it. Certainly it generated a great deal of bad publicity which the party could ill afford. It may well have contributed to the setback which was suffered in British Columbia in the 1940 Federal election when the CCF share of the vote dropped from 33.6% to 28.4%, and representation in the House of Commons was reduced from three to one seat.[20]

The question of CCF loyalty to Canada was again raised by the press in 1941 when Colin Cameron caused a storm by

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[19] Federationist, December 21, 1939, p. 1.

[20] H. A. Scarrow, Canada Votes (New Orleans, 1962). Angus MacInnis was the only B.C. CCF member to retain his seat.

publicly attacking the government's methods of financing the war. In January 1941, Cameron proposed that the Provincial Executive initiate a campaign against War Savings Certificates on the grounds that they constituted an additional burden on low income groups while the wealthy contributed less than they could afford. He argued that:

> The question is a fundamental one of loan versus taxation. To advocate loans without interest is a preservation of existing inequalities and all leading bankers show their determination to preserve the loan procedure as against a taxation only policy.[21]

The national leadership had already promised CCF support for the government's financial policy, and the B.C. executive favoured only a campaign against compulsory war savings and high pressure salesmanship.[22] Cameron left the meeting determined to carry on his campaign without executive sanction. Subsequently he made a speech at a meeting of his Courtenay constituents which was so inflammatory that it raised the question in the House of Commons as to whether action should be taken against him under the Defence of Canada Regulations. A. W. Neill, M.P. (Independent, Comox-Alberni) argued in the House that Cameron's speech had contained subversive statements. He contended that the Minister of Justice did not go far enough in enforcing wartime censorship regulations. The offending parts of the Courtenay speech accused those who

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[21]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, January 24, 1941.

[22]Ibid.

supported the war savings campaign of "helping to put shackles on the people of Canada" and asserted that the CCF had prepared a "bold, almost revolutionary program" which would dispossess the owning classes.[23]

CCF officials were quick to point out that Cameron's views did not coincide with the policy agreed on by the National Council. The CCF leader, M. J. Coldwell[24] had repeatedly expresssed support for the war loan in the House of Commons, and CCF members were actively working on war savings committees in British Columbia as in other provinces.[25] The damage, however, had already been done. In the eyes of A. W. Neill, Cameron's words smacked of Communism, and he warned the House that the CCF party was:

> . . . very strongly tinged with undiluted Communism; it is very hard to tell the difference between one and the other.
>
> We from British Columbia--things may be different on the Prairies--know how close the relationship is between those two phases of thought, shall we call them?[26]

The implication was that the B.C. Section, and thus the national CCF party was harbouring subversive elements

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[23]House of Commons, Debates (February 28, 1941), p. 1077.

[24]As head of the Saskatchewan Farmer-Labour Party, M. J. Coldwell played a key role in the formation of the CCF. He was M.P. for Rosetown-Biggar, Sask., 1935-1958. He succeeded J. S. Woodsworth as national leader in 1939 and retained this position until 1961.

[25]Vancouver Sun, February 28, 1941, p. 3.

[26]House of Commons, Debates (February 28, 1941), p. 1077.

preparing to overthrow Canadian society. The newspapers gave full coverage to Neill's speech. The Vancouver Sun went so far as to point out that the Communist Party was opposing the war loan in the hope that social chaos would result from failure to finance the war soundly, and left readers to draw their own conclusions.[27]

Again, Colin Cameron's blunt outspokenness caused adverse publicity for the CCF party and provided a weapon for the party's opponents who lost no opportunity to equate CCF socialism with Communism. The CCF executive, however, did no more than issue public statements which reaffirmed CCF support for the war savings campaign and denied that Cameron's views constituted official policy or that the party was subject to Communist influence. The only disciplinary measure taken was that Cameron was requested by the Provincial Executive "to adhere to the National Convention stand on war financing in public utterances and desist from making statements of absolute opposition to the war savings campaign pending the 1941 provincial convention."[28] The executive was able to take this position since Cameron had made some attempt to justify his stand in a statement published by the Vancouver Sun on March 1, 1941 which clarified his views to

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[27]Vancouver Sun, February 28, 1941, p. 3.

[28]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, March 5, 1941.

their apparent satisfaction. His statement was endorsed by a meeting of the provincial executive committee on March 5, 1941.[29] Moreover, to take more drastic action against him would have meant alienating the large number of CCF members who agreed with him, since Cameron was by no means alone on this issue. The Nanaimo CCF Club had passed a resolution urging opposition to the war savings campaign in January. The provincial convention held in Vancouver in March represented a victory for the left-wingers as Colin Cameron and Dorothy Steeves were elected First and Second Vice-President respectively, and Cameron's views on the war loan were endorsed by a large majority of the delegates.[30]

The Marxists, and Cameron in particular, continued to criticise the policies of both Canada and the national CCF throughout the war. In June, 1943, Cameron persuaded the provincial executive to protest M. J. Coldwell's support for the fourth Victory Loan Campaign.[31] In March 1943 his attacks on the government's prosecution of the war led the editor of the Vancouver Province to complain that he had never heard one honest word of encouragement for the war effort from Mr. Cameron, and that "Within the sphere of his

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[29]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, March 5, 1941.

[30]Vancouver Province, March 24, 1941, p. 26.

[31]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, June 4, 1943.

influence, there has been no more mischievous enemy of our war effort since September 1939."[32]

The outspokenness of Colin Cameron and his supporters caused a great deal of embarrassment for the CCF during these years due to the large measure of public attention their views received and the resulting confusion over CCF policy. Attacks on the war effort by the left-wingers may have cost the CCF votes in the 1940 general election. Certainly, doubts about the party's loyalty to its country, and rumours of a schism in its ranks did nothing to improve party image or morale. The daily press frequently hinted that the party in British Columbia was about to fall apart due to irreconcilable differences over policy between its members, yet the B.C. section remained intact. Several reasons for this suggest themselves.

Firstly, while the Marxists frequently found themselves at odds with the national leadership on issues of war policy, they actually had a large measure of support within the B.C. section of the party. The executive was dominated by left-wing members throughout the war years and the leader of the party in the legislature, Harold Winch, was known for his Marxist approach. Thus, while the executive may have considered Colin Cameron's more explosive remarks to be ill-advised, they sympathized with his basic philosophy. Those

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[32] Vancouver Province, March 8, 1943, p. 4.

moderates who did have some influence, such as Arnold Webster, realized the weakness of their minority position and therefore tried to minimize differences rather than risk an open split.

Similarly, the national executive could not afford to take action against those who refused to toe the party line. Faced with a large number of militant socialists on the west coast, plus some dissent in other provinces, they ran the risk of disrupting the entire party, and were therefore forced to tolerate a wide divergence of opinion on the war issue.

Moreover, the national executive recognised that the views of the left-wingers were not incompatible with the socialism expressed by the CCF as a whole before war had broken out. The CCF had, in the interests of practical politics, found it necessary to modify its policy towards the war in Europe in 1939, and to lend more and more support to a maximum war effort in Canada from then on. As late as 1938, the party reaffirmed its stand that it would oppose Canadian entry into an imperialist war "recognising that in the future, as in the past, an attempt will be made to dress up imperialist wars in a guise acceptable to the public."[33] When the National Council reviewed its policy during the summer of 1939 in the light of events in Europe, those who took the view that Canada should support the Allies in this particular

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[33]Report of the Fifth National Convention, July, 1938.

conflict met with strong opposition from Manitoba as well as British Columbia. The Saskatchewan party seems to have been divided on the issue. While the Saskatchewan party leader, George Williams, wished the CCF to go further in support for the Allies, a significant number of rank and file members wished Canada to remain neutral. The statement prepared by the National Council on September 7, 1939, which gave limited support to Canadian entry, did not have the unanimous approval of the Council members. Seven out of twenty-two members refused to endorse the statement which M. J. Coldwell read to the House of Commons on September 9.[34] The party leader himself, J. S. Woodsworth, was so strongly opposed to the war that he resigned over the issue.

Clearly the war presented a dilemma to the CCF party which could not be easily resolved. As a socialist movement, it was opposed to war in principle, but it was also opposed to the expansion of Hitler's empire. By September 1939, it was obvious that Hitler's advance could be checked only by military force. As a political party operating in the framework of the Canadian party system, principles had to be sacrificed for the sake of expedience on this particular issue. The national leadership, as provided by Angus MacInnis, M. J. Coldwell, Grant MacNeil and Davis Lewis, recognised that the CCF must support the war effort or face public

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[34]Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 93.

rejection and hostility. Yet, they must also have seen that to do so represented a crisis of conscience for many dedicated socialists within the ranks. This was not simply a division between Marxists and moderates. An attempt to force the rank and file to show enthusiasm for the war would have precipitated a party split. Rather, they attempted to minimize the conflict by stressing those points on which all members could agree; that conscription of wealth should precede conscription of manpower, and that guarantees of civil liberties should be upheld.

Finally, it should be remembered that more difficulties were created for the party by adverse publicity than by the division amongst members. The press tended to inflate every situation where a CCF member's personal views did not coincide with official policy, and was responsible for creating the impression of a divided party under the influence of subversive forces. In fact, the war involved a crisis of conscience for all CCF members who, it seemed, could not be loyal to their socialist convictions and to their country at the same time. The views of those who denounced the war as imperialist, and those who supported it as a war against fascism could not be reconciled. By allowing individuals to take their own stand on this issue without fear of disciplinary action, the CCF party found the only way to avoid serious rift.

IV

THE CAMERON-ALSBURY DISPUTE AND THE 1950 NATIONAL CONVENTION LITERATURE INCIDENT

Throughout the 1940s, the rift between the moderate CCF members and the extreme left-wingers was steadily widening. The Marxists were becoming a minority but for most of the time, they were able to hold key positions on the executive and were therefore able to exert some influence on policy decisions. Colin Cameron was elected President of the B.C.-Yukon Section in 1945 and again in 1946. He was succeeded by Dorothy Steeves.

The Marxists consistently opposed what they saw to be a trend away from socialism in the national party. Specifically, they were anxious to retain the plank of the Regina Manifesto which called for "a regime of public ownership and operation." For many members, this meant full nationalisation of all industries and business concerns in order to have complete centralized planning. While the Regina Manifesto did not state that all private concerns would be taken over, and rather implied that industries and services not essential to social planning would continue to exist

independently, the idea of allowing private industry in any form to prosper under a socialist government seemed like heresy to those who clung to Marxist theory. The National Executive, however, was moving further and further away from Marxist principles. At the 1948 National Convention, the National Council made several recommendations which indicated that they wished the party to disassociate itself from a programme of total socialization. David Lewis spelled out the executive's intentions when he explained:

> the National Council resolution makes it abundantly clear that the CCF envisages a large area of private enterprise and undertakes to help and encourage private business to fulfil its legitimate function.[1]

One of the recommendations made by the National Council suggested that it was not necessary to socialize the chartered banks when government control would be sufficient. On this point the Regina Manifesto had been quite clear; "the chartered banks must be socialized and removed from the control of private profit-seeking interests." Two British Columbia delegates, Colin Cameron and Dorothy Steeves, argued strongly against the recommendation. Mrs. Steeves reminded the convention that socialization of the banks had always been a basic tenet of CCF policy and Cameron swiftly moved the following motion:

> Public ownership of chartered banks is vital to proper control over national investment policies, price levels, and over the expansion, contraction and direction of

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[1] CCF News, July 29, 1948, p. 2.

> credit. Public ownership of the central bank alone is not enough.[2]

T. C. Douglas[3] and F. R. Scott[4] argued in favour of controls but Cameron's motion was passed by a clear majority and the National Council's recommendation was reversed.

Mrs. Steeves believed that such attempts on the part of the National Council to modify the Regina Manifesto had a debilitating effect on the party. The Provincial Council of the B.C. Section met on October 9, 1948, to discuss policy and the state of the party. It had been expected that there would be a significant growth in membership when the war ended but instead, three years after the Allied victory, membership figures were down and the party was facing financial difficulties. As president of the B.C. Section, Mrs. Steeves presented a report to the council, expressing her own views on the situation. She claimed that the party could not blame external causes for its decline since, theoretically, conditions were ripe for expansion. Clearly then,

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[2] CCF News, August 26, 1948, p. 2.

[3] T. C. Douglas participated in the formation of the Saskatchewan CCF Party and was M.P. for Weyburn, Sask., 1935-1944. From 1944 to 1961 he was Premier of Saskatchewan. He returned to the House of Commons to represent Burnaby-Coquitlam 1962-1968. Since 1968 he has held the seat of Nanaimo, Cowichan, the Islands. He succeeded M. J. Coldwell as National Leader in 1962, resigning this position in 1971.

[4] A professor at McGill University, Frank Scott had initiated the formation of the LSR together with F. H. Underhill.

the fault lay with the party and the image which it presented to the public.

> If our members and supporters have not sufficient enthusiasm for the CCF cause to ensure the progress we expect, then we should ask ourselves whether we are interpreting democratic socialism to them . . . in such a way as to make them feel that the future of the whole world may be greatly affected by the policy and action of Canadian socialists.[5]

Mrs. Steeves recommended that the only way to revitalize the movement was to give the public a greater understanding and awareness of the socialist policy to which the CCF was originally committed.

It is difficult to tell how far the B.C. membership approved of the trend which the party was taking towards liberal reformism, or even if the rank and file were aware of it. However, the CCF News did carry a significant amount of theoretical discussion and the number of letters to the editor on the subject suggest that Mrs. Steeves' opinions had a great deal of support. Many believed that the original socialist aims of the CCF party were being watered down for the sake of political expediency. A typical letter is one from A. Burns, the district organizer for Rossland-Trail, who warned that the party had absorbed "discontented Liberals and political opportunists". The only way to guard against subversion by this type of person was by a thorough educational programme and the requirement that all new members

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[5]Minutes of the Provincial Council, October 9, 1948.

should agree to accept the Regina Manifesto without reservation.[6]

The policy debate became more heated in 1949 when it became clear that the B.C. Section was at variance with the national party. At the 1949 provincial convention, the Marxists introduced a resolution which opposed the North Atlantic Pact in spite of the fact that the CCF caucus in the House of Commons had agreed to support the government's policy in this regard.[7] The resolution was not passed without opposition and was to be a source of controversy for some time. The moderates in B.C. felt that the national party should be supported in such a decision and that this gesture on the part of the left-wingers would have the effect of splitting the party. Many members believed that this dispute was a large factor in the poor showing of the CCF in the federal and provincial elections later in the year. Indeed at a time when the majority of the population supported the Atlantic Pact, the B.C. Section's rejection of it could only bring adverse publicity. During the federal election campaign, M. J. Coldwell tried to clarify the issue by stating that his

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[6] CCF News, April 6, 1949, p. 4.

[7] The St. Laurent government joined with Britain, the United States and France in the formation in 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which was primarily a defensive alliance to prevent further expansion of the USSR.

party supported NATO and that he would not lead the party if it opposed the Pact. When, at a campaign meeting in Victoria, he was reminded of the action of the B.C. provincial convention, he denied that this would affect national policy and implied that it had not been a valid decision since it was passed by a minority of delegates. The editor of the Vancouver Province suggested that the CCF leader could not truly speak for his party on this issue and probably not on other issues as far as British Columbia was concerned.[8]

At the provincial and federal elections, held on June 15 and June 27, respectively, the CCF results fell far short of their expectations. The ensuing soul-searching which took place within the B.C. Section heightened the tension between the moderate and left-wing factions. Before the elections, some members were concerned that the provincial platform did not contain enough socialism; it promised reforms but avoided mention of socialisation except in plans to take over the B.C. Electric Railway and the West Kootenay Light and Power Company. Now they blamed the moderates for destroying their socialist image and thereby causing the loss of votes.

Their point of view was published by the CCF News in a full page article by Colin Cameron. Cameron denied that

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[8] Vancouver Province, June 29, 1949, p. 4.

potential CCF voters had been alienated by the Atlantic Pact dispute. He pointed to the fact that the CCF had not suffered so severe a setback during a similar situation in 1940 and 1941, when prominent CCF-ers had opposed Canada's entry into the war. He also rejected the theory that the controversial singing of the "Red Flag" at a CCF meeting had damaged the CCF image, but rather felt that the action of those who tried to apologize for it should be deplored. Cameron argued that the fundamental reason for the decline of CCF support was demoralization within the party which he likened to a sick man in whom illness has gradually become apparent. Changes had taken place almost imperceptibly but there was no doubt that the CCF had sacrificed socialist principles for "practicality". Too much stress had been placed on the attempt to win office so that more energy had been expended in trying to discredit the coalition provincially and keep out the Tories federally, instead of putting forward a viable alternative. There had been too many compromises and attempts to placate various segments of society which "finally resulted in the CCF being held up to contempt as the Lackey of the Liberal Party." Cameron called for a re-appraisal of the party's principles and implied that the leadership had betrayed the rank and file and should therefore be replaced. The final paragraph was aimed directly at the moderates:

> The set-back of 1949 may yet prove a blessing in disguise if it results in discrediting those influences in the CCF which for some years have been gently pushing us down the primrose path of respectability and caution. The most disastrous result of these elections would be for the CCF to be stamped in its turn into still more caution, still further attempts to placate elements in our society who will never accept the socialist idea no matter how the pill be sweetened. That way lies complete oblivion.[9]

Cameron's article, a highly provocative attack on the party leaders, encouraged a long and bitter dispute between opposing groups. Much of the argument was carried on through the "Letters" column of the CCF News. The issue of July 13, 1949, carried several letters which showed support for the opinions expressed in the article, and the editor included a report of an article from the Toronto Star in which the writer argued that the CCF could only be distinguished from other parties if it stood squarely on socialist doctrine.[10] On July 20, Angus MacInnis replied to Colin Cameron in a four-column article which represented the moderate point of view. MacInnis deplored the fact that Cameron had chosen to attack the leadership publicly, before there had been any chance for discussion. He pointed out that Cameron had had ample opportunity to influence party policy himself since 1945. He

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[9]Colin Cameron, "An Analysis of the Election Results," CCF News, July 6, 1949, p. 5.

[10]Beland Hendrick, Toronto Star, July 4, 1949, as cited in CCF News, July 13, 1949, p. 1.

claimed that the election debacle was merely a temporary setback and cited recent party achievements to show that the party was not in a state of demoralization. Furthermore, he criticized the logic of Cameron's argument that CCF-ers should become "searchers after truth" rather than office-seekers, arguing that the two things were not incompatible.

The article by MacInnis was supported by a letter from A. T. Alsbury of Vancouver, who charged that Colin Cameron had harmed the party by his open criticism and "questionable charges".[11] Alsbury's letter gives the first written indication of a conflict between these two men which resulted in a party "trial" in 1950.

Cameron's article and the subsequent reply from MacInnis had sparked a major controversy. It appears from the number of letters on the subject which appeared in the CCF News during the following months, that most active CCF members took sides in the dispute. Each week, letters were published which commented on the two provocative articles and these in turn gave rise to further comments from other members. Often the letters became personal in their criticism such as the one from a Vancouver lady who described Cameron as a small boy rocking the boat, "irresponsible, mischievous and malicious."[12]

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[11] CCF News, July 20, 1949, p. 2.

[12] CCF News, August 3, 1949, p. 2.

As the debate grew more heated, vituperative attacks from both sides were common and a letter from A. Burton[13] called for tolerance, and an end to the smear campaign being waged against Cameron.

It is evident that a significant number of members agreed that the CCF had deviated from socialism and that they regretted the fact. Zella Ross of Prince George listed a number of steps which the party had taken in this direction.[14] She included the support given to the North Atlantic Pact in violation of the United Nations Charter and the failure of the B.C. party to encourage harmony among rival labour groups as they had resolved to do. She noted a discernible shift in emphasis in the choice of election slogans. In 1945, the CCF had advertized "A Revolution in Thinking"; the 1949 slogan promised only that "The CCF Can Do the Job". Tom Alsbury criticised this letter point by point, challenging its author to name the individual leaders who had supposedly misled the membership.[15] Accompanying Alsbury's letter was one from Laura Jamieson, a Vancouver city alderman and member of the provincial executive of the CCF. Mrs. Jamieson "regretted" the defeatism of the left-wing members, stating that the CCF must present a first term programme to the electorate and that

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[13] CCF News, August 24, 1949, p. 5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] CCF News, August 31, 1949, p. 4.

they would be able to do no more than administer capitalism for several years after first taking office.[16]

The continuing debate caused some concern outside the B.C. section of the party. E. G. Thomlinson of Alberta urged that the quarrel should now be forgotten and that in matters of federal policy, members should abide by the will of the majority.[17] Rumours began to circulate in the daily press that the national executive would oust the "allegedly leftist leadership in B.C." because of their role in the Atlantic Pact dispute, and the subsequent poor election showings. The Victoria Daily Times specifically mentioned Harold Winch, Colin Cameron, and Dorothy Steeves as three of those who would be replaced in the shake-up which was supposedly organized by Angus MacInnis.[18] Although the executive emphatically denied the rumour, it is clear that the rift had become public knowledge and was not helping to foster the image which the CCF desired.

By November 1949, the CCF News no longer referred to the dispute over the election results, but the controversy over the extent of socialism desirable continued to rage as specific issues came under consideration. An article on the

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[16] CCF News, August 31, 1949, p. 4.

[17] CCF News, September 7, 1949, p. 4.

[18] Victoria Daily Times, November 12, 1949, p. 1 (early edition). The later edition carried a denial of the story after an interview with Harold Winch.

nationalisation of the steel industry in Britain[19] gave rise to a furious exchange of letters regarding the transition to social ownership. The moderates upheld the policy of just compensation for shareholders while the leftists argued that giving capitalists the right to sell their holdings implied the right to refuse to sell. Colin Cameron again provoked argument with an article in which he explained that the defeat of socialist governments in Australia and New Zealand was due to their gradualist policies.[20] Laura Jamieson retorted that some members hated capitalism so much that they seemed to favour totalitarianism, while failing to realise the value of freedom.[21] An article by David Lewis in the January 11 issue also put forward the view of the moderates. Lewis disputed Cameron's implication that once elected, a socialist government should be re-elected at every subsequent election. This, he argued, was inconsistent with natural shifts in public opinion which were inevitable in a democratic society.

In late January, the dispute was again aired in the public press when CCF policy and achievements were debated at an open forum, held at the Stanley Park Club in Vancouver.

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[19] CCF News, November 16, 1949, p. 3.

[20] CCF News, December 14, 1949, p. 4.

[21] CCF News, January 4, 1950, p. 2

Harold Winch defended the party leadership and declared himself to be in favour of a social reform policy which would include compensation for nationalised industries. He was opposed by Colin Cameron who argued that since the CCF would never win an election under normal conditions, they should not waste time with moderate programmes of reform but should rather prepare a revolutionary plan which could only be implemented when economic chaos demanded drastic action.

The executive hoped that the provincial convention, held in April, 1950, would clarify CCF policy and that members would afterwards abide by the decisions taken. Grant MacNeil tried to minimise the conflict within the party, and the debate on the decline in membership was closed to the press. It was impossible, however, to avoid a confrontation between the opposing factions and the conference became something of a showdown. In her report, the retiring Provincial Secretary, Dorothy Steeves, recommended that the CCF must move left in order to win elections or risk becoming "a meaningless reform party."[22] In the heated debate which followed, on how far the principles of Marx should be accepted, Cameron and MacNeil failed to agree on what were the fundamental principles of socialism. There were sufficient numbers of leftist delegates present to maintain the debate but the

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[22] Vancouver Sun, April 8, 1950, p. 2.

election of officers for the coming year indicates that they were a minority. The election of Grant MacNeil and Laura Jamieson as President and Vice-President respectively signified a victory for the moderates. The left-wing faction managed only to elect Rodney Young as Second Vice-President and Dorothy Steeves and Arthur Turner as National Council members. Colin Cameron had been a candidate for the executive council, and for the positions of President and Vice-President, but failed to find support. He had lost his place on the executive for the first time since 1937.

The outcome of the Provincial Convention did not subdue the left-wing faction and there are indications that disagreements over policy were accompanied by a conflict of personalities. Colin Cameron had complained at the April meeting that those who had voiced criticism of official party policy had been subject to an "irrationally vicious" reaction.[23] He was doubtlessly aware of his own unpopularity in some quarters. At the 1950 National Convention, held in July in Vancouver, some delegates had reportedly opposed an amendment to a resolution concerning a public works programme for the sole reason that it was moved by Cameron.[24]

The national convention in July gave rise to an incident which caused some bitterness and helped to widen the

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[23] Vancouver Province, April 8, 1950, p. 2.

[24] Vancouver Sun, July 27, 1950, p. 3.

rift between left and right-wing groups. The literature stand in the convention hall displayed a pamphlet published by the Socialist Party of Great Britain, entitled "Is the Labour Government the Way to Socialism?" Since some delegates were offended by the pamphlet's criticism of the British Labour Party, David Lewis, in his capacity as National Secretary, decided that the pamphlet should be removed. Evelyn Smith,[25] who had been responsible for the provision of literature, immediately challenged the decision, but she was shouted down by the assembled delegates. During the furor, a Calgary delegate ellegedly shouted "I am getting sick and tired of people from B.C. who get up and introduce Trotskyite notions with Stalinist tactics,"[26] an outburst which provoked a howl of protest from the B.C. members. The convention, however, upheld Lewis's action and continued with other business, declaring the matter closed.

For Eve Smith, who was chairman of the B.C. Literature Committee, the matter was by no means closed. Having failed to make herself heard at the CCF conference, she then wrote a letter to the Vancouver Sun. She linked the removal of the pamphlet in question with a statement made by M. J. Coldwell

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[25]Evelyn Smith and her husband Don Smith were former members of the SPC. Don Smith had been dismissed from the staff of the Federationist in 1937, allegedly because of his extreme left-wing views (Evelyn Smith to Angus MacInnis, November 2, 1937).

[26]Victoria Daily Colonist, July 29, 1950, p. 23.

at the convention to the effect that the Regina Manifesto was out of date and should be revised. Her implication was that Coldwell was using censorship as part of a plot to force a "new approach" to policy on the rank and file. Further, she implied that many of the out-of-town delegates to the conference did not truly represent the membership since they were appointed by the national leadership. Thus, Coldwell was using undemocratic means to get his policies adopted by the party.[27]

She received some support in the form of a letter from George Weaver, another Marxist CCF member, published in the same newspaper five days later. Weaver argued that the action of the National Secretary was a denial of the right of one of the founding bodies of the CCF to uphold the theories it held at affiliation. The offending pamphlet had been published by the Socialist Party of Great Britain which had close ties with the Socialist Party of British Columbia. The socialists did not undertake to abandon Marxism on their entry into the CCF; therefore they should not be asked to do so now.[28]

Eve Smith's letter had made some serious accusations against the national executive, and it should be remembered that the B.C. executive were not in sympathy with the left-

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[27] Vancouver Sun, August 4, 1950, p. 4

[28] Vancouver Sun, August 9, 1950, p. 4.

wing group with which Eve Smith was identified. Moreover, she had chosen to voice her complaints in the public press which could have a damaging effect on the party image. Presumably, she had hoped that the threat of adverse publicity would persuade the executive to grant concessions to the Marxists. The executive, however, refused to be intimidated. It took immediate action, arranging for the Administration Committee to interview Mrs. Smith and her assistant and to prepare a report.

The committee concluded that the National Office had final responsibility for literature displayed at the convention and that Mrs. Smith had been fully aware of that fact but had failed to submit the pamphlet in question for their approval. While objections to the pamphlet had been made in an offensive manner, it was thought that Mrs. Smith should have accepted the National Secretary's request to remove it. The report censured Mrs. Smith for having written to the "capitalist press", and advised that:

> unless members of various committees use the proper channels of the organization to air and settle differences of opinion, it will have no alternative but to advise their removal from office.[29]

A full meeting of the executive committee on August 25, 1950, accepted the memorandum and accordingly, Eve Smith was dismissed as literature chairman.

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[29]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, August 25, 1950.

The literature incident caused a great deal if ill-feeling within the party and also created bad publicity. It had a deeper significance in the development of a factional split in the British Columbia section. Some members believed that a Trotskyite[30] group was deliberately trying to disrupt the CCF by provoking such incidents and then advertising them in the public press. The party leaders, who seemed anxious at this time to project an image of a moderate reform party, feared public reaction against the CCF because of the radical sentiments expressed by those who propounded Marxism. On the other hand, those who supported Eve Smith believed that they were being deliberately silenced by the executive so that they would be unable to prevent the move to the right which was taking place. Passions became aroused and the incident helped to fan the flames of a conflict between two men, Colin Cameron and Tom Alsbury, which had been developing for some time.

On August 26, 1950, the provincial council received a letter from Colin Cameron which laid a charge of "conduct detrimental to the interests of the CCF" against A. T. Alsbury, and asked for disciplinary action. The letter complained that Mr. Alsbury had threatened Cameron with expulsion from the party at a public meeting, that this was another step in "a

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[30] 'Trotskyite' was the name given to disciples of the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky who accepted the theory of the necessity for permanent revolution.

well organised campaign of character assassination" and that the situation indicated "an extremely dangerous anti-democratic tendency" within the movement.[31] Cameron and Alsbury had both taken a leading part in the debates over matters of policy and it is clear from the tone of the letter that a clash of personalities was also involved. The dispute also signified an open conflict between rival factions. Alsbury was a prominent Vancouver CCF member who supported the moderate leadership,[32] while Cameron had been described as "the leader of the Party's extremists."[33]

The provincial executive appointed five of its members to a trial board in order to investigate the charges against Mr. Alsbury.[34] The hearing was scheduled for September 2, 1950, with fifteen witnesses giving evidence. The board first considered the accusation that Alsbury had threatened to have Cameron expelled for writing to the public press to express opinions which did not coincide with official CCF policy. Allegedly, the threat had been made at a public forum, held in the Stanley Park Club Rooms, Vancouver, on August 6, 1950. At this meeting, Alsbury had stated that CCF

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[31]Report of the Trial Board appointed to hear the complaint of Colin Cameron against A. T. Alsbury.

[32]Alsbury later became mayor of Vancouver.

[33]Vancouver Sun, April 8, 1950, p. 1.

[34]Arnold Webster, T. H. Clark, J. H. Thomas, F. J. McKenzie, and Ernest Winch.

officers should be obliged to uphold party policy in public and should refrain from expressing their personal opinions where these conflicted. Specifically, he criticized Colin Cameron for the article which had appeared in the CCF News on July 6, 1949,[35] and Eve Smith for her letter to the Sun. He then referred to "disciplinary measures" for those who publicly slandered the movement instead of accepting a policy which had been democratically determined. On this point, the witnesses gave conflicting evidence as to Alsbury's exact words. None could give a verbatim account. Some of those who had been called by Cameron[36] thought that Alsbury had definitely linked the names of Cameron and Eve Smith with the threat of expulsion and had further implied that he himself had the authority to see that disciplinary measures were carried out. Witnesses for the defence[37] testified that Alsbury had spoken in general terms and had not threatened any member specifically. After consideration, the board found that evidence was confused and the atmosphere of extreme tension at the Stanley Park meeting had prevented accurate observation. They therefore dismissed the charge and turned their attention to the accusation that a conspiracy

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[35]This was the article on the election results referred to on pages 76-79.

[36]Jack O'Brien, Edsel Olson, Robert Loosmore, Rodney Young.

[37]Jack Edge, Grace MacInnis, Grant MacNeil.

existed to defame Mr. Cameron.

Again, witnesses were heard on both sides but no concrete evidence to substantiate the charge was put forward. It was alleged that Grace MacInnis had told the CCF National Council in January, 1950, that "there was a situation in B.C. which had to be cleared up, and that she and others were going to see to it," and also that Tom Alsbury, speaking of a group of people which included Colin Cameron and Dorothy Steeves, had said "these people would have to be cleaned up." The board ruled that in neither case was there any suggestion of character assassination and dismissed the complaint. The above evidence does indicate, however, that the executive was aware that a definable group of members held views which did not coincide with official policy. Furthermore, the moderates feared that the existence of the group might injure the party, or undermine their control of it.

A report of the trial and the board's findings was mimeographed and a copy sent to all CCF units ostensibly "in order to avoid misunderstandings and to make the true facts accessible to the membership."[38] Perhaps this was also done as a warning to members that the executive would move swiftly to squash disputes of this kind in the future. It is not surprising that the board's findings favoured Mr. Alsbury since

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[38]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, September, 1950.

only one representative of the left-wing group offended by his remarks was a member of the executive which supervised the trial. This was Rodney Young, who was soon himself to find disfavour with the provincial council. In fact, the report found no fault with Mr. Alsbury and, rather, criticized Mr. Cameron for the nature of his complaint. What is surprising is that the board did not deprecate the situation which had given rise to the complaint. It is clear that the Stanley Park meeting was a stormy one and that, in the heat of the moment, remarks were made on both sides which might afterwards have been regretted. In failing to comment on this, the report had an appearance of trying to whitewash Mr. Alsbury and discredit Mr. Cameron.

The Cameron-Alsbury incident was not one of which the CCF could be proud. It reflects, however, the atmosphere which pervaded the B.C. section at this time. Cameron and the left-wingers were expressing the frustration of a minority group, desperately trying to influence the whole. Being excluded from the executive, they felt they had no part in the decision-making process. They wished to make themselves heard and the trial was one way of drawing attention to themselves. Alsbury's outburst at Stanley Park demonstrated the fear that the moderates had of the left-wingers. They were concerned with the respectability of the party and had no wish to be associated with Marxism, which in the minds

of the electorate, would be too easily equated with Communism.

With the dismissal of the charges against Alsbury, the left-wing faction lost a battle, but they were not yet defeated. Indeed, they were at the same time mobilising for action and hoping to put pressure on the party through an organisation which came to be known as the Socialist Fellowship.

V

THE SOCIALIST FELLOWSHIP

On August 25, 1950, seventy members of the CCF attended a "left-wing conference", held in Vancouver. An agenda had been drawn up by a committee of three, namely Douglas Cameron, Edsel Olsen, and Evelyn Smith, as a result of a spontaneous meeting of CCF members following the National Convention. Other prominent CCF members present were Rodney Young, Wallis Lefeaux, George Weaver, Colin Cameron, May Campbell, Shirley Davis, Robert Loosmore and Jack O'Brien. The purpose of the conference was to organize the left wing of the party. The decision to organize was a direct reaction to the Convention.

The left-wing members had for some time been urging the leadership to adhere to the principles of the Regina Manifesto. They strongly resented the Convention's decision to authorize the drafting of a re-statement of principles, and they could not accept the policy to which the CCF had been committed by the leadership. In particular, they objected to Coldwell's support of Canadian participation in the Korean War which the convention had endorsed. The

left-wingers took the line that this decision was a direct contradiction of the Regina Manifesto which opposed participation in imperialist wars. They made it quite clear that they still believed that "Canada must refuse to be entangled in any more wars fought to make the world safe for capitalism." They agreed that Canada should support the United Nations in the interests of international co-operation, but argued that at that time, the U.N. was improperly constituted, thus serving only the ambitions of the capitalist nations.[1] The left-wingers also opposed the decision to support the rearmament of West Germany. Further, they disputed Coldwell's right to anticipate the National Convention in making public declarations of policy.

As a result of the left-wing conference a formal organisation of CCF members who were "definitely interested in the propagation of scientific socialism" was established.[2] They described themselves as "an informed group of socialists who understand the scientific socialist principles and ally ourselves with such people in other countries."[3] Originally,

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[1]An exposition of the left-wing argument is given by Mildred MacLeod in an article, "War, Peace, and the CCF," Socialist Thought, Vol. II, no. 2, March, 1951.

[2]Minutes of the left-wing conference.

[3]Materials for Thought, August, 1950, p. 1.

they adopted the name "Socialist Caucus",[4] but later they became the "Socialist Fellowship" which was the name of a similar organization formed within the British Labour Party. There seems to have been a definite link with the British group. They adopted the principles of the British Socialist Fellowship and printed articles by left-wing members of the British Labour Party, for example, Fenner Brockway, in their broadsheet. They were also in touch with a group of Marxists in the Ontario CCF.

The general aim of the organization was to work within the CCF to convert the membership to Marxism. Its members believed that the Regina Manifesto should remain as the definitive statement of CCF principles and they undertook a campaign to prevent the abrogation of those principles. A minority of members believed that it was impossible to put forward Marxian ideas within the CCF and that the Socialist Fellowship should therefore disaffiliate from the party, but their proposal was defeated at the left-wing conference.

The dissidents realized that the organization was unconstitutional as far as the CCF was concerned but agreed to stand together in the event of disciplinary action by the Provincial Council. If they were successful, they would challenge the executive who could not risk mass expulsion.

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[4] Other names suggested for the group were "Organization to Save the Regina Manifesto", and "Karlist". Minutes of left-wing conference.

The Socialist Fellowship was not an underground organization. Its secretary was instructed to inform the Provincial Council of its existence, and minutes taken at meetings were handed over to the executive on demand. The group even advertised its meetings in the CCF News until prevented from doing so by order of the executive. A group bulletin was mimeographed and distributed monthly to interested party members. The first issue of the bulletin, Materials for Thought, was actually brought out before the formation of the Fellowship, on the initiative of four radical CCF-ers.[5] The Fellowship decided to adopt the bulletin as its theoretical organ and later renamed it Socialist Thought.

At first, leaders of the Socialist Fellowship had no hesitation in openly declaring their beliefs. Speaking at the Stanley Park Club Forum, Eve Smith attempted to justify the formation of the group:

> I am a revolutionary socialist. . . . The CCF started out with a revolutionary program and we are seeing it gradually being turned into its opposite, into a reactionary movement.[6]

She charged that M. J. Coldwell and Frank Scott had both misunderstood and misrepresented Marx. At the same time, Edsel Olsen defended the Fellowship for remaining in the CCF while holding views which conflicted with the leadership. He

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[5]Edsel Olsen, Robert Loosmore, Roger Bray and John Smith.

[6]Notes taken at Stanley Park Forum, n.d.

argued that there should be room in the movement for educational activities "of every nature and description."[7] After the Rod Young trial,[8] however, there was some fear of reprisals against individual members. For this reason, individuals were not named in minutes and regular contributors to the bulletin wrote under a pseudonym.

There are no figures to indicate the size of membership of the Socialist Fellowship except that seventy people attended the first meeting. It seems to have been primarily a Vancouver organization. Most of the leading members lived in Vancouver, the bulletin was printed there, and debates at the Stanley Park CCF Club were used to put forward Fellowship ideas. The Vancouver group represented the Fellowship in dealings with the executive, and they alone took the decision to dissolve the association in March, 1951. However, Socialist Thought was distributed throughout the province and minutes of Socialist Fellowship meetings indicate that small groups existed in Trail, Kamloops, Hedley, Nanaimo, New Westminster, and Victoria. Members were instructed to spread out as thinly as possible amongst CCF-ers in order to exert the maximum amount of influence.

Closer examination of the nature of the Socialist Fellowship indicates a marked similarity between this

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[7]Notes taken at Stanley Park Forum, n.d.

[8]Details of this are given on pages 105-107.

organization and the Socialist Party of Canada. Its members stood squarely on the principles of Marxian socialism. It is true that they urged socialist principles as advocated by the Regina Manifesto, which, it may be argued, was not truly a Marxist document.[9] However, their interpretation of the manifesto was likely to be more radical than that of the moderates. Also, their best chance of being able to influence loyal CCF members lay in their claim that their sole object was the preservation of the original doctrines of the movement.

Like the SPC, the Socialist Fellowship laid heavy emphasis on the role of education, although they hoped to avoid the "ivory tower" attitude which the SPC had displayed in the 1920s. Materials for Thought was not a news bulletin and its editors avoided derogatory references to events in the CCF, its primary function being to promote understanding of socialist ideas. Thus, it was used mainly as a vehicle for theoretical discussion, although it also included reports of Socialist Fellowship activity in Britain, and articles concerning specific aspects of CCF policy. The educational programme of the Socialist Fellowship was similar in structure to that drawn up by the SPC. An education committee was formed which planned to sponsor study courses in evolutionary

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[9]Coldwell had stated that the CCF movement owed nothing to Marx.

logic, outlines of history, outlines of Marxian economics, analysis of alternative systems and current affairs.[10] The works of Marx and Engels were required reading for all courses. As small groups of left-wing CCF-ers organized outside Vancouver, they held study groups on the basis of the programme worked out by the committee.

A re-statement of the principles of the Socialist Fellowship in February, 1951, emphasized the preoccupation with educational activities. The original declaration of principles had indicated that the prime objective of the Fellowship was to change CCF policy, or rather to force the leadership to return to the doctrine of the Regina Manifesto. The new statement avoided any reference to propaganda work, claiming that the purpose of debate was to bring together divergent points of view. The first paragraph declared that:

> The Socialist Fellowship is a voluntary association of CCF members for the sole and exclusive purpose of debating and studying current and historical questions appertaining to Socialism.[11]

The Fellowship bulletin would continue for the purpose of "clarification and research"[12] but its editors would disclaim responsibility for opinions expressed by the contributors. The new declaration of principles indicated that the militancy shown by the Fellowship at its inception was beginning to

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[10] Minutes of the Socialist Caucus, October 1, 1950.

[11] Minutes of Socialist Fellowship, February 4, 1951.

[12] Ibid.

wane. This may have been in response to the fact that they were facing opposition from the B.C. executive and CCF members who remained loyal to the leadership. The Socialist Fellowship hoped to continue their activities within the CCF and, having built up their organisation did not want to risk expulsion. If they left the party, they would be unable to exert influence upon it. If they appeared as a group of loyal CCF members, diligently pursuing a thorough study of socialism, the Provincial Council would find it hard to justify disciplinary action. Furthermore, in the summer of 1950, the radicals who founded the splinter group had the most influence in determining its character. As the Fellowship grew, it absorbed members who were discontented with CCF leadership and policies, but who were basically loyal to the CCF and less extreme in their views. These members would be less likely to want to risk a split in the party and may therefore have been an influence in modifying the principles of the Socialist Fellowship.

The Socialist Fellowship emphasised education activity because its members thought that this was the best way to prevent the party from accepting social reformism. Left-wingers believed that the leadership was forcing a moderate policy on to a gullible and unsuspecting membership. If the rank and file could be made to understand scientific socialism, then there would be more support for Marxism. CCF policy could then be made to reflect radical ideas. The leadership could

be replaced by men who would not allow the movement to deviate from its original revolutionary cause. This, however, would be a slow process, and the Fellowship employed other tactics for immediate action. Fellowship members who were also representatives on the Provincial Council undertook to present resolutions at Council meetings on behalf of the left-wing group. This was, of course, unconstitutional as they could not claim to be representing their riding or unit while advocating the Fellowship point of view. Since the Socialist Fellowship was not a legally constituted body within the CCF, they were not entitled to representation on the Council.

The resolutions prepared by the left-wing give some indication of the major points on which they conflicted with official CCF policy. In October 1950, the Socialist Caucus drew up a list of resolutions dealing with the issues it thought were most urgent for presentation to the next Provincial Council meeting.[13] The first resolution called for CCF opposition to Canadian participation in imperialist wars and referred to the decision to support Canada's entry into the Korean War. Secondly, the Socialist Fellowship criticized recent statements made by CCF leaders which inferred that a mixed economy would operate under a CCF government. The resolution called for a re-avowal of the Regina Manifesto

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[13]Minutes of the Socialist Caucus, October 1, 1950.

with respect to the social and economic revolution. The Fellowship demanded that the CCF adopt a programme which would include complete socialization of industry, commerce and land. Finally, they proposed that disciplinary action be taken against M. J. Coldwell for making major policy statements without the authorization of the membership. Coldwell had announced his decisions to support the Atlantic Pact, and the deployment of Canadian troops in Korea before these decisions had been ratified by the National Council.

In November, the Socialist Fellowship protested Coldwell's action in supporting legislation, which the federal government had introduced in order to end the 1950 rail strike, on the grounds that such legislation was "reactionary . . . pointing to fascism."[14] The fear that nuclear weapons would be used in Korea prompted the Socialist Fellowship to demand action from the CCF. The Fellowship passed a resolution which called for mass protest rallies throughout Canada and urged that the CCF should contact similar bodies in other parts of the world to ask for their co-operation. It recommended the organization of a general strike should the atomic bomb be used.[15] A special meeting on December 7 discussed the possibility that if the CCF turned

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[14]Minutes of the Socialist Fellowship, November 10, 1950.

[15]Minutes of the Socialist Fellowship, December 1, 1950.

down the resolution, the Fellowship could take unilateral action in contacting other organisations and putting the resolution into effect but failed to reach a decision.

Underlying the concern with specific issues was a desire to see CCF policy founded on Marxian principles. Edsel Olsen, one of those who initiated the formation of the Fellowship, gave a clear exposition of his views on the CCF at the Stanley Park Club Forum on August 13, 1950. He argued that the CCF owed a great deal to the Socialist Party of Canada and that it had been founded on a Marxian basis. He cited specific examples of the way in which the original principles of the movement had been sacrificed in times of crisis, mentioning in particular CCF policy during the Second World War. The CCF had supported Canadian entry into the war, and Coldwell had favoured the continuation of military service in 1945. Furthermore, CCF leaders had progressively abandoned the commitment to the socialisation of industry. Olsen concluded that the CCF was no longer a "vehicle for socialism", but was now in conflict with the Regina Manifesto. This situation produced a dilemma for the socialist: should he continue to support CCF leaders or should he follow his own conscience? The solution, Olsen advised, was that the rank and file members must reassert their faith in Marxian socialism and pressure the leadership to return to the Regina Manifesto before it was too late. He warned that:

> If the CCF becomes a vehicle for capitalism, then it will follow capitalist dictates. . . . There will be no opportunity to take a road which will lead us to give an expression of socialist principles.[16]

The speech contained an implicit invitation to the audience to organize in order to reverse the trend to the right and replace the leaders who had sanctioned the betrayal of the Regina Manifesto. If they failed, socialists would have no alternative but to leave the party.

As a formal organization, the Socialist Fellowship lasted only seven months. The CCF executive could not be expected to tolerate a faction which constituted a direct threat to the leadership. The first disciplinary action was taken shortly after the first left-wing conference in August, 1950, in the form of a complaint on behalf of the executive against Rodney Young:[17]

> That Rodney Young, second Vice-President of the CCF in British Columbia, moved a resolution at a meeting of CCF members that they disaffiliate with the CCF.

A trial board, appointed by the executive, heard the case on October 15, 1950. Mr. Young did not deny the charge; two witnesses who had been present at the left-wing conference on August 25, testified that he had moved the resolution and the minutes taken at that meeting confirmed the fact. His

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[16]Transcript of debate at Stanley Park CCF Club, August 13, 1950.

[17]Rodney Young was a Vancouver lawyer who had been the first Vice-President of the CCF Youth Movement in 1934. He won the federal by-election Vancouver Centre in 1948 but lost his seat in the general election of 1949.

defence rested on the submission that it had not been his intention to incite a mass exodus from the party. He explained that prior to the meeting he had discussed CCF policy and the National Convention with several other members who were dissatisfied with Coldwell's leadership and they agreed that close co-operation was needed between "those who considered basic premises essential to our movement." Some felt so strongly that they had voiced their intention to leave the CCF. Young claimed that in bringing in the resolution, he was merely trying to represent their point of view. He himself had not voted in favour of it and would not have brought it up had he expected it to pass. His reasons for doing so was his hope to "shock" the meeting and to make those present feel satisfied that they could work towards educational goals within the movement. The witnesses, Wallis Lefeaux and Stanley Brook, agreed that Young had not personally advocated disaffiliation but had presented arguments both for and against it, and that only two or three people had voted in favour. Young's argument was, then, that he had tried to avoid a split in the party by showing the discontented members that, when faced with a decision, they would choose to remain in the party while there was still a chance of achieving their aims.

The chairman of the trial board, Frank McKenzie, could not accept that the resolution had been moved out of concern

for the CCF. He concluded instead that Young had acted out of vanity, that his action was "foolish" and "infantile" and that he had violated his duty as a CCF officer. Of the other six members of the trial board, only one disagreed with the chairman's findings. They recommended that Young be suspended from the party for four months.[18]

In October, the executive proposed a meeting with Socialist Fellowship leaders in an effort to discuss and resolve differences of opinion. The meeting was not a success. The Fellowship representatives were suspicious of the executives motives and demanded an assurance that no further charges would be laid. The atmosphere of the meeting was hostile and no conclusions were reached.

The next move was made by the Provincial Secretary, Jessie Mendels, who presented a report on the Fellowship to the Council on January 27, 1951. The report indicated that while the Fellowship had not technically contravened the constitution of the CCF, it reflected a trend which could only damage the movement. In effect, it constituted a separate organization which posed the threat of disruption. If the left-wing faction were successful in gaining control of the the B.C. Section, then the Provincial movement would have to secede from the national movement or face expulsion since it

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[18]Report of the Trial Board in the matter of the complaint of the Provincial Executive against Rodney Young.

would refuse to accept majority decisions on national policy. If it were unsuccessful, the ensuing disturbance within the B.C. Section would cause loss of confidence and the possible formation of a splinter group as a separate political entity. Mrs. Mendels did not suggest what action should be taken but implied that the Fellowship should be challenged without delay.

In view of the report, the executive decided that a letter should be sent to Shirley Davis, Secretary of the Socialist Fellowship, expressing disapproval of the organization. The letter informed the Fellowship that:

> The executive views with some misgivings any attempt to establish a separate organisation within the CCF whose deliberations go so far beyond straight socialist education as to consider ways and means of nullifying and challenging established convention decisions and discuss ways and means of using legitimate CCF channels to introduce motions to Provincial Council and convention meetings.[19]

No further action was taken until the spring, by which time some reaction against the Socialist Fellowship had been expressed by moderate rank and file CCF members in response to a brief distributed by the executive. Several CCF Clubs passed resolutions condemning the left-wingers and urging the executive to take disciplinary action. The Secretary of the Kamloops CCF Club, L. D. Beck, denied that a Fellowship group existed in his area and condemned the tactics of the Vancouver

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[19]Jessie Mendels to Shirley Davis, February 5, 1951.

factions.[20] Similar views were expressed by the secretaries of clubs in Victoria, Prince Rupert, and North Vancouver. Dorothy Fraser of the Osoyoos Club condemned the Socialist Fellowship but asked the executive not to take action which would stiffen opposition and injure the party further.[21] Some members believed that the formation of the Fellowship had been a Communist plot, designed to split the party and that normally loyal CCF-ers were being duped by Trotskyite agents. Jessie Mendels wrote to Lorne Ingle, the National Secretary, on this point, asking for information about the British group. Ingle consulted the British Labour Party and advised the B.C. executive that while there was no evidence of a Trotskyite conspiracy behind the British Socialist Fellowship, the Labour Party had made it a proscribed organization.

It is clear that by March the provincial executive, and the National leadership were becoming increasingly concerned about the situation. However, since the Fellowship had not violated the CCF constitution, it was difficult to find charges on which to discipline its members. The executive feared that any attempt to stifle the group might be viewed as undemocratic. The provincial officers appealed to

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[20] L. D. Beck to Jessie Mendels, February, 1951.

[21] Dorothy Fraser, Secretary, Osoyoos CCF Club, to Jessie Mendels, February, 1951.

the National Executive for advice.

In March, matters were brought to a head for two reasons. Firstly, the National Council was scheduled to begin work on a re-statement of principles, as authorized by the 1950 National Convention. Secondly, the Labour Challenge published a report of a B.C. Provincial Council meeting, indicating a leak of information through one of the B.C. officers. On the second point, Grace MacInnis[22] wrote to the National Secretary, expressing her belief that the Socialist Fellowship was to blame. "We are," she wrote, "faced with a critical situation regarding the Fellowship, inasmuch as it is now organised sabotage of CCF policies and leadership on a widespread scale. M. J. [Coldwell] has written to me in terms that worry me."[23] She advised co-ordinated action from the CCF executive at provincial and national levels.

Regarding the proposed re-statement of principles, the moderates were anxious that the radicals should not be able to block the attempt to modify the Regina Manifesto. Two of the British Columbia delegates to the National Council were Dorothy Steeves and Colin Cameron, both known for their advocacy of Marxian socialism. Mrs. MacInnis, who had been

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[22]Grace MacInnis was the wife of Angus MacInnis and the daughter of J. S. Woodsworth. She represented Vancouver-Burrard in the legislature 1941-1945. Since 1965 she has been M.P. for Vancouver Kingsway.

[23]Grace MacInnis to Lorne Ingle, March 5, 1951.

working on a draft for the new policy statement for presentation to the National Council, anticipated that Cameron and Steeves would probably stir up opposition to it on their return to the west coast. Writing to Frank McKenzie, she therefore advised that one of "our little circle", Grant MacNeil, attend the National Council meeting and be on hand in B.C. afterwards to counter any moves that the left-wingers might make. The Socialist Fellowship could then be made an issue at the provincial convention.[24]

In fact, the executive did not wait until the convention to take action. The Socialist Fellowship had been discussed at the National Council meeting and the National Executive subsequently issued a statement which declared that the CCF could no longer tolerate the group. Whatever the original intentions of its members, it had developed into a separate entity which collected dues and demanded a pledge of loyalty. The statement expressed the hope that the B.C. Executive would deal with the matter "promptly and efficiently."[25] With the official backing of the National Executive, the provincial leaders could now make their move. A special meeting of the executive, held on March 24, issued an ultimatum to Socialist Fellowship members; those who continued to support the Fellowship would be expelled from the party.

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[24]Grace MacInnis to Frank McKenzie, March 4, 1951.

[25]Vancouver Sun, March 21, 1951, p. 1.

On receiving the ultimatum, the Vancouver members of the Fellowship met on two consecutive days to consider their position. It now became clear that there was a serious division within the Fellowship itself. The majority of members dared not risk expulsion. They saw their immediate task to be that of electing left-wing representatives to the executive of the CCF and had great hopes for the forthcoming provincial convention. Maintenance of the Fellowship in defiance of the executive would prevent them from gaining control of the movement. They therefore voted in favour of compliance with the ultimatum and officially dissolved the Fellowship. However, a significant number of members voted against dissolution since they were not so concerned with the election of left-wing representatives. This minority distributed an account of the debate at the meeting to the membership outside Vancouver. They offered two solutions for those who did not wish to see the Fellowship disbanded: they could either remain in the CCF and try to carry on educational activity through the clubs, or they could leave the CCF and revive the Socialist Party of Canada.

Officially, the Socialist Fellowship had ceased to exist by the time the annual provincial convention was held in May. Nevertheless, it proved to be a major issue at this convention as the left-wingers made a determined bid for control of the B.C. Section of the party. The first signs of

tension were evident as the delegates chose a convention chairman. The radicals failed to command a majority and thus managed only to secure the deputy chairmanship for Colin Cameron, while Tom Alsbury took the chair. In their reports, both Provincial President, Grant MacNeil and Vice-President, Laura Jamieson, attacked the Socialist Fellowship for causing disruption within the CCF. MacNeil defended executive action against the Fellowship and warned that "the danger point is reached when critics think more of defending their own theoretical position than promoting the fundamental purpose for which the CCF was formed."[26] Both stressed the fact that individuals must discipline themselves to accept majority decisions even when these decisions conflicted with their personal opinions. Obstruction of official CCF policy could only lead to the disintegration of the party. They were challenged from the floor by radicals who disputed their interpretation of the situation, and newspaper accounts indicate that Alsbury had some difficulty in keeping order.[27] In spite of the open conflict between the left wing and the moderates, some measure of agreement was reached as the convention discussed the problem of disunity. The delegates unanimously agreed that an effort should be made to maintain unity in the national movement. The radicals conceded that

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[26] Vancouver Province, May 19, 1951, p. 9.

[27] Victoria Daily Colonist, May 19, 1951, p. 23.

members and officers should be required to abide by the decisions of the party with respect to policy. Other proposals referred to the need for complete freedom of discussion in the formulation of policy, the need to conduct party affairs so as to inspire public confidence in the CCF, and the resolve to provide for full co-operation between all who shared a belief in the major principles of the movement. These proposals were probably intended as a concession to the disaffected Marxists but were stated in such general terms as to preclude any threat to the moderate leadership.

Perhaps the only achievement of the Socialist Fellowship was that it indicated to the executive the strength of opposition within the B.C. party to their policies. This was of dubious value to them, however, as it seemed to stiffen the moderates' resistance to left-wing pressure. The leadership both in Ottawa and Vancouver seemed even more determined to go ahead with the re-drafting of the statement of CCF principles. On the negative side, as rumours of disruption leaked to the press, the Socialist Fellowship brought a great deal of adverse publicity to the CCF. Both Vancouver and Victoria newspapers gave coverage to news of a threatened split and the Rod Young trial was widely publicized. Reports of the provincial convention in May, 1951, largely dealt with the heated debates on the Fellowship and only briefly covered other aspects of the meeting. The projected image of a party

divided by bitter quarrels amongst its own members was hardly likely to inspire public confidence or sympathy.

The executive was faced with a dilemma in regard to the Fellowship. As a democratic movement, they were obliged to allow freedom of expression within the CCF, but as a political party, they could not be expected to tolerate a faction whose members pledged to place their loyalty to a splinter group above their allegiance to the parent body. By destroying the Fellowship, the executive brought apparent unity to the party. Their action, however, did not prevent further opposition to their policies and, indeed, forced some of their most extreme critics to continue their fight against the leadership underground.

VI

TOWARDS THE WINNIPEG DECLARATION

During the 1950s, the left-wing faction of the British Columbia CCF party had a decreasing influence in determining party policy as the moderates strengthened their control of executive positions. The 1954 provincial convention elected Frank J. McKenzie as president with an overwhelming majority, rejecting the Marxist candidate, Rodney Young. McKenzie was a moderate who had been an executive member of the Associated CCF Clubs when that organization united with the Socialist Party of Canada in 1933.

Under McKenzie's direction, the executive prepared a "Program for Action" which was adopted by the Provincial Council in September, 1954. The programme stressed that the CCF was a political party "organized for the purpose of assuming the responsibility of government"[1] and outlined a three-year plan geared to achieving success in the next provincial election. The plan involved an attempt to reach voters who were not socialists but who were looking for

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[1] CCF News, April 27, 1955, p. 3.

solutions to their problems. Thus the programme said little about traditional socialist targets but included a pledge that a CCF government would honour existing agreements and would administer a mixed economy so that business need not fear confiscation or immediate socialisation. The programme emphasised that such a plan must receive the unanimous support of the membership and warned that:

> unless we are prepared for such hard work, such over-all planning, such loyalty and such self-discipline, we may as well resign ourselves to becoming merely a debating group, completely ineffective in the struggle for world socialism.[2]

The programme was significant in that it represented a definite shift in policy. The CCF was now to concentrate its efforts on success at the polls rather than on the interpretation and dissemination of socialist theory. Furthermore, the executive intended to silence opposition to the programme by demanding complete loyalty to its policy decisions. Inevitably, opposition did come from the left-wing of the party whom the executive aimed to silence. The Marxists were unwilling to sacrifice their socialist goals and their freedom of discussion in favour of a semblance of unity for the purpose of electoral success. Some of this opposition was voiced by an anonymous group of members known only as 'Box 16'.

In the autumn of 1954, CCF members began to receive unsolicited broadsheets from an unknown source. The

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[2] CCF News, April 27, 1955, p. 3.

broadsheets contained articles which attacked the executive and deplored the trend to the right which, the authors claimed, CCF policy had taken since the Regina Manifesto. An accompanying letter claimed that the broadsheets were being distributed by a committee of CCF members "imbued with a desire to preserve and to develop the Socialist essence of the policies and program of our CCF movement." It explained that anonymity was essential due to fear of reprisals from the executive, and requested financial support. The address to which subscriptions could be sent was given as "Box 16, Vancouver, B.C." which gave rise to the use of 'Box 16' as a name for the group.

Although the identity of those behind 'Box 16' is not known for certain, Frank McKenzie believed them all to have been previously connected with the Socialist Fellowship.[3] He was convinced that they were working for the Trotskyites to disrupt the party and urged the executive to attempt to expose them. The executive, however, were unwilling to initiate fresh upheavals in a year which had seen other bitter disputes in the party. The group's right to free speech was upheld by such influential people as past president Wallis Lefeaux[4] and by two executive members, Dave Stupich and

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[3]F. J. McKenzie to David Lewis, May 20, 1955.

[4]Although Lefeaux had been implicated in the Socialist Fellowship and was known to be a Marxist, he was nevertheless highly respected in the CCF and was certainly not suspected

Joseph Corsbie who refused to sign an executive report to the 1955 provincial convention. The report claimed that Trotskyites were behind the Socialist Fellowship and Box 16, and were thus responsible for the CCF's failure to win the 1952 provincial election.[5]

As indicated by the words of the 'Program for Action' quoted above, President McKenzie intended to enforce discipline in the CCF ranks. His first opportunity arose out of the 1954 provincial convention at which he assumed office, when remarks made by the outspoken Marxist, Rodney Young, caused the party some embarrassment in the press.

Rodney Young's career in the CCF had been chequered. In 1937, he had been suspended from the Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement for alleged Communist activities. He was again disciplined by the CCF in 1950 for his role in organizing the Socialist Fellowship. On June 11, 1953, he outraged delegates to the provincial convention by his open declaration that he was proud to be called a communist and his allegation that at least fifty other CCF members were also communists. The delegates were even more angry when

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of being a Trotskyite. Notes on F. J. McKenzie's speech to the 1955 provincial convention.

[5]The CCF candidate for Vancouver-Burrard, where controversy over the Socialist Fellowship had been intense, failed to hold his seat in the provincial election. Had the CCF held this seat, it is likely they would have been asked to form a government.

Young's remarks made headlines in the Vancouver newspapers that evening. Grant MacNeil claimed that this one statement had set back the CCF in British Columbia by ten years.[6] George Home, a newly re-elected member of the executive and Secretary-Treasurer of the B.C.F.L., called for Young to resign.[7]

Young made the remarks in support of a resolution from the Sooke CCF Club which referred to the incidence of McCarthyism in the United States, which they feared was spreading to Canada. Condemning the 'witch-hunt' against suspected Communist sympathisers as being an attack by capitalists on all working class organisations, the resolution proposed that the CCF refrain from "assisting our class enemies by repeating their slander on many fine class-conscious workers."[8] While the resolution received a significant amount of support from some delegates, it was rejected by the convention.

The majority of delegates, even left-wingers such as Dorothy Steeves, deplored Young's remarks because they brought the whole party into disrepute at a time when public fear of Communism was high. The convention, however, upheld his right of free speech by defeating the motion that he be asked to

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[6] Vancouver Province, June 14, 1954, p. 25.

[7] CCF News, June 23, 1954, p. 1.

[8] Ibid.

resign although most delegates believed that the implication of CCF complicity with the Communists had done irreparable damage to the party's public image. They were almost unanimous in their agreement that the convention disassociate itself from Young's statement on communists and communism.

It seemed that after the initial shock, the party was prepared to smooth things over and content itself with a repudiation of Young's offending remarks. A statement from President McKenzie indicated that he was satisfied that the word 'communist' had been used in a special sense and that he did not believe there to be any practising members of the Communist Party within the CCF ranks. Young's statement had been irresponsible but freedom of opinion within the party would be preserved.[9] However, the matter was not allowed to rest there. Not only had Young brought the CCF into disrepute in the eyes of the public, but he had also brought the left-wing of the CCF into disrepute within the party. The mood of the moderate rank and file members had changed and they were no longer willing to tolerate contentious remarks from Marxist individuals as they had in the past.

The first meeting of the newly-elected executive, held on July 10, 1954, received complaints from six CCF clubs in Vancouver Centre, Vancouver East, New Westminster, Delta, Cordova Bay, and Smithers. These were consolidated into a

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[9]CCF News, June 23, 1954, p. 8.

single resolution that a charge be laid against Rodney Young that his remarks at the convention had been made in the full knowledge that "in doing so, he would misrepresent the CCF and bring it into undeserved disrepute, contrary to his duty as a member, and contrary to the constitution of the CCF."[10] The executive agreed to hear these charges on July 24, 1954, and to suspend Young until that time. Rather than attend the trial, Young resigned immediately upon publication of the charges. The hearing was held in his absence and he was officially expelled from the party.

The executive's decision to reopen the case caused a great deal of controversy in the CCF. Initially, most CCF members were upset by the publicity given to Young's statement at the convention. Even the Marxists agreed that Young had acted irresponsibly, knowing that the general public would not distinguish between the word 'communist' in its broadest sense and the Communist Party. While socialists familiar with the terminology could differentiate between the two meanings, the average newspaper reader would not, and the idea that a link existed between the CCF and the Communist Party would be firmly established in his mind. In the light of the continuing Cold War, this could only contribute to public hostility towards the CCF. However, the executive's reversal of the convention's decision to take no disciplinary

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[10] CCF News, July 21, 1954, p. 4.

action against Young put the matter in a new perspective. The Marxists began to suspect the executive of an attempt to silence one of its most outspoken critics, thus curtailing the right of freedom of opinion within the party. Seen in these terms, the executive's decision appeared as an attack on the entire left wing.

Reaction against the executive stand came mostly from Vancouver Island and the lower mainland. Vancouver Island CCF members held a special conference in Nanaimo to discuss their dissatisfaction with the executive's handling of the situation. Comox MLA Bill Moore demanded an explanation from F. J. McKenzie warning that his constituents would call for the entire executive to resign.[11] Several letters to the CCF News protested that the executive had not followed democratic procedure in overruling the decision of a higher body, the provincial convention, and that Young was being victimized. Many felt that Young had been misrepresented. S. Ashworth of White Rock pointed out that his actual words had been; "the difference between socialism and communism according to the dictionary is so slight that I am proud to be called a communist," which may have been tactless but not serious. The press had omitted the first part of the sentence which had the effect of distorting the sense of it but

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[11]Bill Moore to F. J. McKenzie, July 12, 1954.

Young was not to blame for that.[12] Edith MacDonald called on CCF members to resist any form of dictatorial purge and questioned the motivation behind the executive's repeated attacks on Young who, she claimed, was actually closer to the original philosophy of the CCF than most others:

> In twenty years economic and political circumstances have had a softening effect on us but many of the first members deplore the present trend in the party to bypass the fundamental principles for the quick returns.[13]

A member of the Sooke Club, Phyllis Johnson of Milnes Landing, showed that the situation need not have arisen had the convention correctly interpreted the Sooke resolution to begin with. The resolution had not sought to defend known Communists but to point out that many "fine class-conscious workers" were branded as Communists in error.[14]

While the Marxists in the CCF were highly vocal in Young's defence, moderate members were equally vocal in condemning him. The CCF News published an equal number of letters from both points of view. Many CCF members believed that he had deliberately tried to embarrass the party at the convention and by his subsequent statements to the press in which he accused the executive of trying to split the party.

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[12] S. Ashworth to Arnold Webster, June 30, 1954.

[13] CCF News, August 4, 1954, p. 4.

[14] CCF News, July 21, 1954, p. 7.

In a letter to the CCF News, R. C. Hill argued that Young was a lawyer, trained to handle words expertly. It was inconceivable that a man with his training could have made such a blunder accidentally; he must therefore have acted deliberately to bring the CCF into disrepute.[15] Whatever the true motivation behind Young's remarks, the majority of CCF members seemed to support the executive's view that this time he had gone too far and should not be forgiven. Technically, the executive had no right to expel Young when the provincial convention to whom it was responsible had decided to allow him to remain in the party. Nevertheless, they refused to be swayed by the Marxist minority and Young remained outside the CCF.

Even then, Rodney Young was still to cause problems for Frank McKenzie and the executive. In November 1954, the North Vancouver Constituency Association arranged for Young to address a public meeting scheduled for December 16. He was to speak on "The Human Race is not White" as part of a series of talks. The executive, fearing that this would give the impression that the black sheep had returned to the fold, advised the officers of the North Vancouver Association to cancel the meeting on the grounds that Young was no longer an exponent of CCF policy and that for him to address a CCF meeting would needlessly revive a harmful controversy. The

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[15] CCF News, July 21, 1954, p. 7.

Association replied that the substance of Young's lecture would have nothing to do with CCF policy. When they decided to go ahead with their plans, a special meeting of the executive passed a resolution declaring that no CCF organization should permit Rodney Young to speak under its auspices and that any member "wilfully authorizing, promoting or assisting in such a meeting" ran the risk of expulsion or other disciplinary action.[16]

North Vancouver members refused to be subdued. At a meeting on December 12, they agreed that "we do not believe the constitution intends the provincial executive to exercise their powers in the manner in which they are doing,"[17] and proceeded with the Rod Young lecture as scheduled. Within a few days, the executive had acted, freezing three bank accounts of the defiant association and suspending twenty-three of its members pending a hearing on January 10, 1955. At the trial, the defendants were represented by Dorothy Steeves and Wallis Lefeaux. Only one of the defendants was acquitted and the remainder were suspended from the CCF until January 31.[18]

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[16]Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, December 1, 1954.

[17]CCF News, February 2, 1955, p. 4.

[18]Those suspended were: Beryl Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Lefeaux, Mr. and Mrs. James T. Cummings, Gordon Greenaway, Donald MacLean, Harry Jerome, Mr. and Mrs. Reg Bullock, F. H. Caudwell, Mrs. W. Henderson, H. Clifford,

Left-wing members again raised the question of democracy within the party as the radicals fought yet another attempt to weaken their influence. At the hearing, Steeves and Lefeaux argued that the executive had exceeded its authority in prohibiting the meeting addressed by Rod Young and that the association had the inalienable right to choose their own speakers.[19] One member of the trial committee, Dave Stupich,[20] filed a minority report which questioned whether democratic procedure had been followed by the executive. In his opinion, the North Vancouver members were not guilty of wilful disobedience but had chosen to uphold their rights under the CCF constitution.[21]

This time there was little debate in the letters column of the CCF News. The executive took a full page in the February 2 edition to justify its actions. It included a summary of events and both the majority and minority reports of the trial committee. There is some evidence that the editor of the CCF News was actually instructed to delay publication of any letters supporting the North Vancouver

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Fred Peterson, Gladys Hall, Charles Lightfoot, Allen MacSween, Mrs. E. Lefeaux, M. Bruheim, J. W. Cox, T. Griffin, F. Mallinson. Mrs. E. Summers was acquitted.

[19] CCF News, February 2, 1955, p. 4.

[20] Stupich had earlier been instrumental in organizing the Nanaimo Conference to protest the expulsion of Rod Young. He was MLA for Nanaimo and the Islands, 1963-1969.

[21] CCF News, February 2, 1955, p. 4.

Association until at least the end of March.[22] Certainly no statement from the North Vancouver group appeared with the publication of the trial report although this was supposedly designed to answer charges that the executive had been undemocratic. This suggests that the executive had in fact acted arbitrarily and wished certain facts to remain unpublished at least until the storm had blown over.

Whether or not the executive had the authority to prohibit the North Vancouver Association meeting is debatable. Certainly the Association had the right to appeal the decision before the Provincial Council, as they attempted to do on December 11. On this point, the evidence is confused. President McKenzie's account of what happened at the Council meeting, as published by the CCF News, asserted that the North Vancouver delegate had asked the Council to suspend the executive's decision until the issue could be debated by the next provincial convention, but that the Council had rejected the request. He maintained that:

> At this point then the Provincial Executive and the Provincial Council were agreed that what the North Vancouver Association had expressed its intention of doing was contrary to the best interests of the CCF and a punishable breach of discipline.[23]

According to Hugh Clifford, Chairman of the North

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[22]Hugh Clifford to the Editor of the CCF News, March 10, 1955. This letter was not published.

[23]CCF News, February 2, 1955, p. 4.

Vancouver Constituency Association, the matter was never actually discussed by the Council members. He claimed that the North Vancouver delegate had hoped to raise the issue when the minutes of the Special Executive Committee meeting were discussed on a motion to accept, but that the minutes were "laid on the table" and could therefore not be discussed without a majority vote to raise them. The Council rejected North Vancouver's proposal to hold over the minutes until the next provincial convention which was the closest it came to upholding the executive's decision. Clifford argued that tabling the executive minutes was an unprecedented device on the part of the president to prevent discussion. More than that, the president had deliberately twisted the facts in his statement in the CCF News in order to deceive the membership. Clifford made these accusations in a letter to the editor of the CCF News, who declined to publish the letter.[24]

The fact that the executive discouraged the publication of letters such as Clifford's suggests that they did in fact fear open discussion of the case. McKenzie's executive had used the Rodney Young issue and the North Vancouver Assooci-ation issue in order to bring the left wing faction into line. By making an example of these 'rebels', the executive was warning that opposition from the Marxists to new CCF

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[24]Hugh Clifford to the Editor of the CCF News, February 14, 1955.

policies would be firmly crushed. The Marxists continued to protest the desertion of socialist principles and the undemocratic methods of the executive but they were fast becoming mere voices crying in the wilderness. The 1955 Provincial Convention was a personal triumph for Frank McKenzie as the delegates endorsed both the 'Program for Action' and his disciplinary measures, and elected him for a second term of office.

Frank McKenzie had taken office as president in 1954 with the intention of reshaping the B.C. section to bring it into line with the national party. Keenly disappointed with the CCF's narrow defeat in the 1952 provincial election, McKenzie believed that the party would never achieve success while the left wing continued to make public avowals of Marxism. He regarded the Marxists as a liability in weakening the party image. He resolved therefore to carry through new policy which would be more palatable to the electorate, and to prevent further embarrassment from the left wing. He considered the new 'Program for Action' and his disciplinary measures to be "inseparably bound together."[25] Of the 1955 Provincial Convention which vindicated him he wrote: "I hope it will prove to have marked the successful conclusion of

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[25]F. J. McKenzie, "From the President's Point of View," CCF News, April 27, 1955, p. 3.

the first and painful phase in the process of correcting our course."[26]

There is no evidence that McKenzie's actions were actually dictated by the national leadership. The national office seemed prepared to allow the British Columbia party to deal with rebel members in its own way yet it made quite clear to members of the B.C. executive that Rodney Young's presence at the 1956 National Convention might prove embarrassing. The only way to prevent him attending as a delegate would be to expel him from the party.[27] Doubtless the national leadership was anxious to remove troublemakers from the party to facilitate acceptance of a revised statement of principles. In Ontario, fourteen members suspected of being Trotskyites were expelled from the party in April, 1955.

McKenzie's methods may have been undemocratic but they were effective. He had taken advantage of the prevailing mood of the times to subjugate the left wing of the party and enforce a semblance of unity in the B.C. section. The membership shared McKenzie's disappointment over the 1952 electoral defeat and, as party fortunes worsened, they were anxious to remedy the situation. With the tensions of the Cold War, and fears of Communism generated by McCarthyism, the Marxists were a natural scapegoat. Thus, the membership

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 283.

were willing to sacrifice freedom of opinion for a positive plan to bring success to the party.

In the year following the 1955 convention, the moderates consolidated their position and the 1956 Provincial Convention saw a party united as it had never been before. 1956 was a crucial year for the CCF party. In August, the National Convention met in Winnipeg and approved a revised statement of principles which was to supersede the Regina Manifesto. The Winnipeg Declaration abandoned the militant language of the Regina Manifesto and its socialism was considerably toned down. In accepting this document the party officially discarded its commitment to total socialisation in favour of a mixed economy. In effect, it represented the triumph of the liberal CCF members over the Marxists. The Winnipeg Declaration was not so much a change in policy as a formal expression of the trend which CCF policy had been taking since the first CCF members took their seats in Parliament.

Not unnaturally, the new document was strongly criticised by left-wing CCF members throughout the country. In British Columbia, Marxists were particularly upset that the final paragraph of the Regina Manifesto had not been preserved:

> No CCF government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth.

For the Marxists, this represented the essence of CCF policy.[28] Significantly however, while Ernest Winch, Colin Cameron, Dorothy Steeves and others opposed the Winnipeg Declaration, there was no organized protest against it. McKenzie's disciplinary measures had convinced the membership that unity would be preserved at all costs. No longer would a minority be allowed to frustrate the expressed will of the majority. The left-wing members were to be a declining influence from now on.

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[28]Ernest Winch to Ken Grieve, September 29, 1956.

CONCLUSION

The CCF was formed in 1932 as an alliance of left-wing groups who were impelled by the prevailing economic conditions of the Depression to want to change the organization of Canadian society. Each affiliating group had its own distinct philosophy so that it was virtually impossible for the delegates to the Calgary Conference to find unanimity on a programme for the new party. There was a fundamental difference between the Marxists of the Socialist Party of Canada, and the moderates who formed the majority of CCF members. The Marxists aimed at nothing less than the institution of a socialist state in Canada. The main function of the CCF, as they saw it, was to educate the public to a state of preparedness for this event. The moderates, however, had more immediate goals. Their target was to attract enough votes to enable them to form a government with a mandate to reform the capitalist system rather than to destroy it.

In the 1930s, the moderates needed the support of the Marxists if they were to consolidate left-wing opinion into an effective political force. The Depression had revitalized the revolutionary socialist movement and caused many people to view Marxian socialism as a viable alternative to

capitalism. Hence the militancy of the Regina Manifesto and the disproportionately large amount of influence the Marxists had in determining the character of the movement.

As economic conditions changed, Marxism lost some of its appeal. As the CCF became an established party, it gained support of more people who wanted social reform but without the consequences of Marxian socialism. Concessions to the Marxists ceased to be vital to the CCF's interest and instead, they became somewhat of an embarrassment to a political party largely concerned with attracting votes. As the Cold War developed during the 1950s, socialism was too easily equated with the bogey of Communism in the mind of the public. The party could not afford to risk being identified as an agent of the Iron Curtain governments. It therefore attempted to foster an image of itself which would be appealing to a basically pro-capitalist population by silencing criticism from the left wing within its ranks and by purging itself of the more radical elements. The Winnipeg Declaration of 1956 gave formal expression to the CCF's philosophy of liberal reform and signified the demise of the Marxists as a major influence in determining CCF policy.

In British Columbia, the Marxists had been the founding members of the provincial CCF party and retained control for the first years of its existence. It was not until the mid 1940s that the moderates began to oust them from their dominating positions on the provincial executive. Because of

their numerical strength, the struggle to subdue the Marxists was more intense in the British Columbia section of the party than in any other. It was not until the mid 1950s that a concerted effort to diminish their importance was successful. That the Winnipeg Declaration was accepted in British Columbia without organised protest or threat of disruption was due in large part to the firmness exhibited by Frank McKenzie's executive in enforcing disciplinary measures against those who did not toe the party line.

Since membership rolls of the old Socialist Party of Canada were not available for study, it has not been possible to establish a definite correlation between the SPC and the radical element of the CCF. Neither has it been possible to prove conclusively that the radicals formed a cohesive and definable group throughout the period. Although the leaders are easily identifiable by their well-publicised provocative statements, their supporters in the CCF ranks tended to remain anonymous. For example, the Socialist Fellowship published only the names of the organising committee, and contributors to the Socialist Fellowship broadsheet used pseudonyms to forestall disciplinary action from the executive. Furthermore, some individuals do not fall easily into either category of Marxists or moderates. Harold Winch, for example, was one of the most militant members of the Socialist Party of Canada and was deeply involved in the policy dispute which

led to the resignation of Robert Connell in 1936. Yet he did not identify with the radicals on the war issue and did not display any sympathies towards the Socialist Fellowship.

In spite of these difficulties, it is safe to speculate that the radical element of the B.C. CCF party did form a fairly cohesive group throughout the period 1932-1956 and that this group represented the old Socialist Party of Canada. It is possible to name individuals who were consistent in their advocacy of Marxian socialism and their criticism of the moderate leadership throughout these years. The most prominent of these were Colin Cameron, Dorothy Steeves, Evelyn Smith, Wallis Lefeaux and Rodney Young. Furthermore, support for the Marxists was strongest in Vancouver and the Nanaimo area which have been the traditional strongholds of revolutionary socialism since the end of the last century. The Stanley Park and North Vancouver CCF Clubs both had a preonderance of radical members. Colin Cameron's constituency of Nanaimo-Cowichan retained him as a candidate for the 1945 provincial election after his views on the War Savings Loan had caused acute embarrassment for the CCF party, although he was not re-elected. CCF clubs in the Nanaimo area were united in their protest against the expulsion of Rodney Young in 1954.

There was a marked similarity between the philosophy of the Socialist Party of Canada and that of the radical CCF

members identified with the Socialist Fellowship. Both organizations stressed education through a thorough study of Marxism and worked through discussion groups to disseminate Marxist theory. Both emphasized that propagation of socialist doctrine should take priority over electioneering.

It is possible that the turbulent history of the CCF party in British Columbia has been a factor in its failure to win an election. Socialist parties are especially vulnerable to doctrinal disputes since they depend for their existence on a given set of principles. Moreover, the open and democratic structure of the CCF has meant that internal strife has easily become public knowledge. Disputes in other political parties tend to be less divisive because their members are more pragmatic, and achieving electoral success is more important to them than doctrine.

During the period under consideration, disciplinary problems were used by the party's political opponents to discredit the CCF and minor conflicts over policy were sensationalized by the press. The positive aspects of the party's achievements were minimized by the daily newspapers while the slightest rumour of a rift made the headlines. For example, in covering the 1954 CCF provincial convention the Vancouver Province placed reports of the routine debates on the inside pages while Rodney Young's one provocative remark appeared on the front page. Both the Vancouver Sun and the

Vancouver Province anticipated the 1955 provincial convention in speculating in advance that Trotskyite infiltration would be discussed in depth. It has not been possible within the scope of this thesis to determine the extent to which wide publicity of internal strife has been a cause of weakness but further research might usefully examine the role of the press in distorting the image of the CCF and its effect on electoral behaviour.

Nevertheless, it is clear that as long as the CCF appeared unable to reconcile opposing philosophies within its ranks it would have difficulty in winning the confidence of the electorate, since voters might not be sure which policy the CCF would implement if elected. Certainly CCF leaders believed that internal dissension could seriously harm the party's public image and that the rumours of Communist infiltration which accompanied party quarrels could deter potential voters. The party found it necessary therefore to sacrifice democracy within its own organization to some extent, in order to increase its chances of electoral success.

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