"Within Sound of the Drum": Currents of Anti-militarism in the British Columbia Working Class in the 1930s

by

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ABSTRACT

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The decade of the 1930s was a period of considerable social upheaval. In the industrialized western world, the structural weaknesses of international monopoly capitalism were revealed by the collapse of interrelated markets and financial reserves. A consequence of this collapse was the renewed radicalism and militancy of the international working class. Similarly, in BC the Depression had a hot-house effect on working-class consciousness and fostered a minor renaissance in working-class organizations and cultural activities. Working-class activists voiced a disparate collection of principles of dissent. One of the most powerful was the principle of anti-militarism.

The anti-militarism working-class activists expressed was an essentially inchoate set of ideas. It grew from what might appear to be an amalgam of disparate experiences in 1930s, BC. The provincial and federal governments constructed an effective web of reaction in the face of working-class dissent. Relief camps, parsimonious relief and purposeless, make-work projects formed a structure of social control. Sedition and immigration law combined with militia to forcefully silence dissent. Finally the state supplied political and economic stirrups for the reactionary right to mount a private vigilante campaign against left-wing dissent. Many working-class activists identified this as incipient fascism. These statist reactionary elements were rooted in the capitalist economic system. When working-class

organizations voiced critiques of the economic system they experienced this reactionary complex. They described this experience with the language of anti-militarism.

Though working-class anti-militarism was a product of the domestic material experiences of the working class, a parallel current of dissent was voiced by a collection of radicalized liberal pacifists. Thomas Socknat has identified the social origins of this pacifism. Like working-class anti-militarism, Socknat traces the taproots of this growing socialist/pacifist alignment of the 1920s and 1930s to the experience of the First World War. There were similarities in that radical pacifism called for social justice and a redistribution of wealth to perpetuate peace, but working-class anti-militarism had a materialist foundation unlike radical pacifism. This pacifism, though founded on a critique of the political economy, lacked a well defined activist agenda. This was obvious by the mid-1930s when state confrontation was a necessary part of radical dissent.

The differences between the two groups have not been examined. This thesis traces the social origins of anti-militarism in the material experiences of the 1930s working-class. With the origins identified, one can look at certain events and working-class organizations with a fresh perspective. Until now historians have described the League Against War and Fascism and to a lesser extent the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion as merely groups of enlightened workers joining under the auspices of the Communist International. I maintain this is a

caricature of the workers involved in these groups. Only when one examines the discrete experience of the BC working class in the Depression can one understand why, for example, Vancouver supplied more volunteers per capita to the Spanish Civil War than any occidental city. And only then can one appreciate the radical potential expressed in these currents of anti-militarism.

Instead of unity on the principles of peace and anti-militarism, the BC left remained divided in the 1930s. The byzantine politics of leftist dissent in BC subsumed the energies of many activists. Since the CCF, the political organ of radical pacifism, lacked an activist agenda, Communist Party of Canada groups were left to exploit a source of radical solidarity not of their own creation. Though the domestic social scene of 1930s BC inspired anti-militarist dissent, working-class militants were left to express their activism in international-oriented organizations.

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In memory of my mother and father.

Introduction

Though some critics lament the sectionalized character of social history, new fields such as the history of women, education, the family, and labour have shed light on hitherto obscure realms of social experience. The social impact of military conflict and the use of armed forces has also claimed a place in social history. From a political and economic perspective, the effect of war on society has been well documented. In the Canadian context, the issue of conscription has drawn much attention. And in a particular way, labour and women's roles in armed conflict have merited some attention. Most often these latter groups have been studied in terms of how they have participated in wars. Even studies of strikes during wartime have noted how workers used the premium the nation placed on war-production to win better conditions and lucrative settlements. Such studies examine the impact of war on society. I wish to acknowledge the reciprocal nature of the relationship; that is, war has indeed changed the role many people play in society, but there are many who have borne witness against war and devoted long hours and great effort to effect its elimination. Of course, war should be studied as social history, but so should opposition to war. Opposition to war is not simply an idea or ideal but a social statement. It is necessarily social history.

Aware of this fact, and the tremendous silence in Canadian social history regarding social movements rejecting war and

militarism, Thomas Socknat has made a valuable contribution in his study of pacifism in Canada in the early twentieth century. Socknat has highlighted a single current in a convoluted stream of anti-war and anti-militarist thoughts and movements. In doing so he recognized the various colours of pacifist sympathy from strict non-violence to degrees of anti-militarism. Though he is aware of anti-militarist groups, his focus on Christian and middle-class pacifists who express a credo of non-violence was necessary for reasons of clarity and organization.[1] It is now for other historians to study other anti-war and anti-militarist groups and ideas in the period of the early twentieth century.

Specifically, I shall expand on what Socknat has termed the "crisis of conscience" for Canadian pacifists: the 1930s Depression experience when pacifists were struggling to develop a practical response to the rising threat of militaristic fascism.[2] I will, however, look at the issue from another perspective. What seemed a question of conscience for pacifists was for BC working class activists one of survival. For the working class in economic depression militarism represented, not a distant

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[1] Martin Ceadel in Pacifism in Britain, has acknowledged, like Socknat, that anti-war and anti-militarist groups and ideas range beyond strict pacifism. Such a focus is necessary if one is to identify the social origins of particular groups and the ideas they espouse. He is now in the process of studying other anti-war and anti-militarist groups in the same time frame. Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p.12.

[2] Thomas Socknat, Witness Against War Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). See, in particular, chapters five and six.

European evil, but an immediate threat to one's existence. Working-class anti-militarists struggled to articulate a practical response to domestic militarism and European fascism (the two were often one in the eyes of many members of the working class). Mounting a coherent and discrete working-class response to militarism was difficult, however. For one thing, another anti-war movement already existed - the peace movement described by Socknat, having its roots in Protestant ideals, the social gospel, and even Christian socialism. It was often difficult for working-class anti-militarists to distinguish themselves from this Protestant pacifism which rested upon a conscientious objection to all forms of organized violence.[3] Pacifist groups had turned increasingly to social democratic ideals as means of perpetuating the post-World War One peace.[4] In the circumstances of the 1930s, however, the distinction between Protestant pacifism and working-class anti-militarism became more apparent, and the possibility of a pan-class anti-war consensus disappeared. The historian cannot ignore the differences between the traditional peace movement response to war, as discussed by

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[3] For the history of these peace groups see, Peter Brock, Pacifism in Europe to 1914 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972); Alexander Tyrrel, "Making the Millenium: The Mid-Nineteenth Century Peace Movement," Historical Journal, 21 (1978), 75-95; F.H.Hinsley, Power and the Pursuit of Peace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953); Christina Phelps, The Anglo-American Peace Movement in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930); David Martin, Pacifism: An Historical and Sociological Study (London: Routledge, 1965).

[4] Richard Allen, The Social Passion (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).

Socknat, and the anti-militarist response emerging from the working class. In the 1930s specific groups representing working-class interests struggled to forge a working-class response to the problem of war and militarism, using working-class experience and tactics at the core of this new anti-militarism.

To appreciate and expand on the implications of Socknat's work one must be clear about certain analytical categories: namely, pacifism, anti-militarism and social class. Unfortunately the problem of definition is a serious one. There has been no lack of studies of peace movements in history. What we lack, however, is a careful analytical dissection, or political genealogy, of the forms of anti-war expression.[5] We do have, in history and political science, working definitions of political ideologies, from liberalism to the various forms of revolutionary socialism. There is no equivalent for anti-war thought and expression. Furthermore, we have few attempts to define pacifism in anything other than the idealistic terms of pacifists themselves. Pacifism is all too often defined as the "Christian testimony" that all war is inconsistent with the spirit and teachings of Christ. Anti-militarism is often assumed to be a somewhat weaker version of this conscientious aversion to war, in which the emphasis is on secular and political solutions to a moral evil.

At its most basic, pacifism is a conscientious rejection of

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[5] Martin Ceadel has recently attempted to address this problem in Thinking About Peace and War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

violent methods in resolving disputes between nation-states. In an attempt to make distinctions across the broad spectrum of pacifist ideas some authors have pointed to the semantic evolution of the word. Pacificist, from the French "pacificisme," had by the 1930s evolved to the contraction. With the change was lost an important term. The original word denoted not the pure non-violence of pacifism but an "ethic of responsibility."[6] The term recognizes the goal of peace while acknowledging the occasional, controlled use of armed force could be needed. It is fundamentally a political idea for it depends on reforms at the political level--instead of relying on a holistic change in the conscience of humankind--as the only realistic option to restricting war in the dialogue of human relations.[7] To understand the nature of such reforms one turns necessarily to the socio-political philosophy of the pacificist. That philosophy is usually some variant of European liberalism, because it holds that conflict resolution is possible by the application of rational persuasion, moral suasion, or some form of democratic or, at least, representative institutions within and between nations.

To examine the social dynamics that motivated and influenced social groups who organized against social conflicts, I have chosen the term anti-militarism as my definition of the movement which is the subject of this thesis. Though pacificism isolates a

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[6] Martin Ceadel, Thinking About Peace and War, p.14.

[7] Martin Ceadel, p.8.

set of ideas I wish to study, anti-militarism better suits my purposes: it permits me to focus more closely on the domestic scene of social conflict and reform; and the term more accurately connects with the issue of domestic class struggle. Pacificism addresses these issues too obliquely.

There is, both ideologically and historically, a difference between pacifism and anti-militarism. Anti-militarism, as the word itself makes clear, is explicitly oppositional: it exists in opposition to militarism. Leibknecht supplies a clear description of the function of "modern militarism" and his definition has the advantage that it rests upon a clear materialist foundation. In a capitalist society, militarism, "in form and nature," is that set of institutions which serves to protect "the existing state of society." Militarism serves

> as a weapon in the class struggle, a weapon in the hands of the ruling classes, serving, in conjunction with the police and law-courts, school and church, the purpose of obstructing the development of class-consciousness and of securing...at all costs to a minority the dominating position in the state and the liberty of exploiting their fellow-men, even against the enlightened will of the people.[8]

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[8] Karl Liebknecht, Militarism (New York: B.W.Huebsch, 1917), p.38. Of course Liebknect recognized "militarism is a highly polymorphous phenomenon..." This description refers to militarism in a capitalist society as used by the dominant class. Like pacifism Liebknecht sees militarism "is in its nature a means to an end...which differ with the kind of the society" (p.21). For militarism and modern political economy see David McNally, "Political Economy without the Working Class?" Labour/Le Travail, 25(Spring 1990), pp.223-224. Although Liebknecht does not mention the manufacture of popular consent, when he speaks of militarism as a means of social domination that goes beyond pure force, his work is a precursor to Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony.

Leibknecht's comment implies ideas can only be found to influence a society's value systems if one examines how they are mediated and expressed by people as they live out their lives. It allows us to make sense of the dialectic of power and social change through the principle of social class. For as Bryan Palmer has reminded us, the history of class and class formation is the history of the process of confrontation between classes.[9] Militarism is a fundamental cog in this wheel of confrontation and in 1930s BC this confrontation reached an historically significant plateau. Anti-militarism, therefore, is organized resistance to militarism, or resistance to the institutionalized military systems by which capitalist society defends itself.

For an historian operating within the Marxist tradition, to study the operation of militarism in society is to broach several key issues in contemporary marxist historiography. Most notably, one must identify the operative characteristics of the capitalist

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[9] B. Palmer A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), p.xvi. There is a large volume of marxist literature on the relationship between class structure and class consciousness. Collective action aimed at serving interests of workers in opposition to employers is generally thought of as indicating a degree of consciousness. Przeworski explains the inclusion of the lumpenproletariat: "It is a necessary consequence of capitalist development that some quantity of the socially available labor power does not find productive employment. This surplus labor power may become socially organized in a number of different forms. These forms are not determined by the process of accumulation but directly by class struggle." The collective actions of the 1930s BC unemployed is a graphic example of this point. A. Przeworski, "Proletariat into a Class: The Process of Class Formation from Karl Kautsky's The Class Struggle to Recent Controversies," Politics and Society Vol.7, No.4 (1977), pp.343-401.

state. Leo Panitch has offered us three pre-requisites to a useful concept of this state. One must "delimit the complex of institutions that go to make up the state,"[10] empirically demonstrate "the linkages between the state and the system of class inequality in the society"[11] (this must be done relative to the dominant social class), and place these functions and linkages in the context of continually varying social formations that occur as a society reconstitutes itself within a capitalist system.[12]

The Canadian state in the 1930s was operating in the context of a monopoly capitalist system.[13] During this period, this system experienced its greatest economic crisis of the twentieth century. In such a context, the study of militarism becomes a question of how the state uses coercive state apparatus; the goal of the state is not simply to legitimize the capitalist social system but to preserve it. One must distinguish between the function of the state as a legimitizing instrument, gaining working class consent in the maintenance of a capitalist social

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[10] Leo Panitch, "The Role and Nature of the Canadian State," in L. Panitch (ed) The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.5.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] For an overview of the socio-economic context of the Canadian state in the 1930s see Michiel Horn (ed.) The Depression in Canada: Responses to Economic Crisis (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988).

system, and as a coercive instrument.[14]

In the latter case the state uses different, though not exclusive or unique, apparatuses to respond to situations when a significant proportion of the working class no longer concedes the legitimacy of bourgeois hegemony in the capitalist social system. In the 1930s context a list of coercive state apparatuses includes the militia and police (Department of National Defence forces, RCMP, provincial and city police), bureaucratic and political support of independent reactionary groups, the work camps of the Department of National Defence and the government's administrative relief committees. Monopoly capitalism turned to the coercive instruments at its disposal during the economic crisis of the 1930s. In Gramscian terms, "consent and force nearly always coexist, though one or the other predominates."[15] In examining militarism in 1930s BC, I will describe how force predominated in the state's dialogue with a growing number of working class activists in the province.

From a working class perspective, state coercive means seemed various and disparate. Though Liebknicht does not mention coercion per se, state coercive power is how I understand his concept when he states, "militarism manifests itself in the tasks

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[14] For the state's means to working-class consent and the theory of cultural hegemony, see T.J. Jackson Lears, "The concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," American Historical Review, Vol.90, No.3, (June 1985): 567-93.

[15] Ibid, p.569.

militarism has to accomplish."[16] With this in mind, what was the working class experience of such state programmes of coercion as work camps, parsimonious relief, use of the militia, and open support of right wing vigilantes? It is my argument that the working-class experience of these state programmes lies at the heart of anti-militarism. Anti-militarism was not a response to the threat of international war itself; nor was it even a response directed specifically at Canada's preparations for international war; it was rather a response to the domestic state programmes.

There were three distinctive features involved in the BC working class's experience of militarism. Overt state force: militia, mounted police, and even battleships were employed to silence working class protest in the 1930s. Regimentation: work camps were conducted with military discipline, and the state often offered relief on the condition that citizens maintain acceptable behaviour in the eyes of police and relief administrators; finally, when relief was granted it frequently came in the form of food and in this way the life-style of the unemployed was controlled[17]. Fascism[18]: members of the BC working

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[16] Liebknecht, Militarism, pp.21-22.

[17] See J.D. Belshaw, "The Administration of Relief to the Unemployed in Vancouver During the Great Depression," unpublished M.A. Thesis, SFU, 1984.

[18] The activities of fascist proponents in Western Canada in the 1930s merits, in itself, a thesis. When I speak of a working class experience of fascism in 1930s BC I am refering to the basic characteristics of a rather nebulous concept. There existed in BC a Fascist party, and one must view its fascist nature in a

class saw incipient fascism enjoy the tacit and often overt support of local, provincial and federal politicians and bureaucrats. Many working class writers and advocates were comparing the experiences of members of the BC working class with these "embryonic"[19] fascist groups and the struggles of the German and Italian working classes.

When one considers the extent to which all three forms of coercion encroached on the lives of members of the BC working class in the Depression, one is struck by the extent to which

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BC context. Fascism is one of "the vaguest of contemporary political terms." Stanley G. Payne, Fascism: Comparison and Definition (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), p.4. This is partly because the most significant advocates were principally orators relying on immediate political expediency, not writers concerned with conceptual clarity. Further, with its focus on national crusade, such movements were closely linked to national character. In BC one cannot highlight the cultural aspects of a "Fascist movement" simply because mass support did not exist for such ideas to form. What made it similar to the European model was its emphasis on visual symbol, marches, meetings and a crusade to defeat local socialist, communist, and other progressive groups and organizations. This leads us to the other distinct characteristic of the BC hybrid: the drive to militarize politics to unheard of levels. Like its European cousin, BC's fascists expressed a need for party militia and even the social need for violent struggle. Unlike in Europe, Tom McInnis, BC's most prominent fascist, did not speak of an integrated national economy. He was funded by the Vancouver economic elite, and if anything his drive to crush working class protest was intended to preserve free enterprise. Thus, through his use of force to preserve the social order and political economy, Tom McInnis's fascists are another component of the BC working-class experience of militarism. See "Communism in British Columbia." Vancouver: issued by Citizens League of BC, 1935, BCARS. For studies of the concept of fascism see, S.G. Payne, Fascism: Comparison and Defintion; John Weiss, The Fascist Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); and John Milfull(ed), The Attractions of Fascism (New York: Berg, 1990).

[19] This is how J.J.McGeer describes BC's fascist groups in J.J.McGeer, "Vancouver Underground," New Frontier, Vol.I, No.7, (November 1936), p.12.

militarism constituted a common characteristic of the working class's depression experience in BC.

What follows, then, is an examination of how members of the working class experienced statist reaction and how, by drawing on an historical taproot of anti-militarist dissent from the nineteenth century, they reconstituted and expressed anti-militarist dissent in the 1930s political milieu. In 1930s BC the left was a variegated skein of movements and parties alternatively uniting and splitting on many issues. In the case of anti-militarism, the events surrounding Communist Party of Canada united front groups prove that a grass roots, genuine discontent emerged from working-class experiences of militarism, but these energies of dissent were subsumed in byzantine political debates. To recognize this subsumption does not obscure the fact that it was the domestic social and political scene that most forcefully inspired anti-militarism in the working class.

In examining the lost possibilities the collective anti-militarist dissent augured, I am highlighting the agency of the BC working class. To speak of a domestic source of anti-militarism is to question certain studies of Communist front groups because such studies have focussed on the inspiration of foreign intellectuals and the international socialist framework.[20] This is an inaccurate description of such groups as

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[20] Victor Howard and Mac Reynolds. The MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986); Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada: A History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975); and to a lesser degree Norman Penner, Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond

the League Against War and Fascism and the Mackenzie-Papineau Batallion (to name the two most prominent anti-fascist groups) and amounts to a caricature of the workers who participated in them. Though foreign sources contributed to their formation, their relative success was primarily a reflection of the genuine anti-militarist discontent of the BC working class.

(Toronto: Methuen, 1988).

Chapter One
Taproots of Dissent

A study of anti-militarism in the 1930s must begin with the experience of working-class Canadians in the generation before the Depression. There is no simple connection between the experience of the early 1900s and the development of anti-militarism in the 1930s, and the historian should not impose a false unity upon the dynamics of change. But it is unlikely that anti-militarism would have become an important part of working-class thought in the 1930s, were it not for the experience of the first decades of the century.

One could cite the experience of many British Columbian workers in the Boer War, or the clashes with the militia in the 1912-14 coal miners' strike in Nanaimo. But much more important was the impact of the First World War. No section of the working class was unaffected by this war. For a number of reasons, which historians have discussed in some detail, the war years led to an increase in union membership, an increase in militancy, and a deepening of class conflict which culminated in the strikes of 1919.[1]

It was in this reactionary climate, aggravated by national chauvinism, that Ottawa formed the Royal Northwest Mounted Police from the regional RNWMP and the Dominion Police.[2] By the end of

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[1] Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt, Labour/Le Travail, 13 (Spring 1984), 11-44.

[2] As William M. Baker has noted, Canadian social historians have neglected the origins and social significance of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its predecessor, the Royal Northwest

the war this state force had infiltrated every important radical organization in the West. Through orders in council and acts of parliament the state orchestrated raids on the headquarters of labour and political organizations, and designed a system to deport or otherwise monitor 'dangerous' immigrants.[3] The government's restrictive and suspicious view of immigrant and various left-wing groups continued in the post-war reconstruction period. Restriction on publications and freedom of movement, deportations, independent vigilante groups, and registration of 'aliens' were all part of a web of reaction the state wove around suspected sources of radical organization and protest. The state's assault confirmed the radical beliefs of many working-class activists and immigrants and effectively herded the less resolute into passivity.[4] Thus on the battle fields in Europe, and at home in Canada, the 1910s brought direct personal experience of war and militarism to large numbers of working class Canadians.[5]

Mounted Police. For an example of this subject's potential for working-class historians and a brief overview of the Canadian literature on the topic, see William M. Baker, "The Miners and The Mounties: The Royal North-West Monted Police and the 1906 Lethbridge Strike," Labour/Le Travail, 27 (Spring 1991), 55-96.

[3] Donald Avery, "Dangerous Foreigners:" European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979).

[4] Bryan Palmer, Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto: Butterworths, 1983), pp. 170-184.

[5] "The West Remembers 1919," New Frontier, Vol.2 No.3, (July August, 1937), pp.13-15.

Many workers learned by experience that military organizations were their enemy, and experience confirmed what many of their leaders had told them. As Ross McCormack has noted, pacifism and anti-militarism were part of labour radicalism in western Canada from the beginning.[6] An important source for this line of thought was Christian social ethics.

> Unlike the stringent materialism of the SPC, Christianity always informed the beliefs of labourites. They employed the forms of the church--Sunday meetings, hymns, sermons, socials. And they continued to base their critique of capitalism, in part, on Christian ethics...[S]ome labourites employed Christianity, the scriptures, and the historic and divine person of Jesus Christ to justify their crusade against capitalism.[7]

Thus the working-class argument against militarism came from a rich social tradition of Christian ethics originating in the nineteenth century. As centres of capitalist society evolved in western Canada, the principal legacy of this tradition was the popularity and vibrancy of the social gospel movement.[8] It is significant that the ultimate leader of this movement, J.S. Woodsworth, was representative of the inherent anti-militarist ideal of Christian social ethics.[9] Furthermore, it was not only

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[6] Ross McCormack, Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.118.

[7] Ross McCormack, p.87.

[8] Richard Allen, The Social Passion (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

[9] Woodsworth personally encountered the militarist institutions linked to the ideological complex of Canadian government when he was arrested for this participation in the

the social gospel tradition that circulated anti-militarist ideas.[10] Even the social critique of more secular radicals and the professed followers of Karl Marx could find war and militarism to be principal enemies of the working class.[11]

But this does not suggest workers would suddenly unite to oppose participation in a war in Europe anymore readily than European workers themselves.[12] It was very easy to approve a declaration of war on Germany, and to do so using anti-militarist principles: the Kaiser was the archetype of war, the epitome of militarism, and so Germany's defeat would be a victory for permanent peace.[13] As I shall explain, such an anti-militarist position would be applied to the necessity to defeat fascism in the 1930s.

The majority of workers saw the war as a product of

Winnipeg General Strike. Kenneth McKnaught touches on the significance of Woodsworth's pacifism in A Prophet in Politics, but does not expand on these ideas and his thoughts on the militaristic institutions of the Canadian state. As a socially conscious pacifist Woodsworth represents the pacifist political heritage of the CCF: the pacifism of Woodsworth's Christian social ethics was the perfection of democratic socialism; not an agenda for radical social change.

[10] Thomas Paul Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); John Herd Thompson. The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).

[11] Ross McCormack, p.137.

[12] For the European workers reaction to the first World War and the failure of the Second International, see Douglas J. Newton, British Labour, European Socialism and the Struggle for Peace, 1889-1914 (Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1985).

[13] Thompson, The Harvests of War, Chapter, 2.

international affairs, and if they did not enlist, they patriotically recognized their labour as part of the greater war effort. To this end, the Trades and Labour Council of Canada passed the following resolution when it held its convention in Vancouver in September 1915:

> Under existing conditions it becomes the duty of the Labor world to lend every assistance possible to the Allies of Great Britain, and for us in Canada more especially to the Empire of which we form a part, in a mighty endeavor to secure early and final victory for the cause of freedom and democracy.[14]

Western socialists cast dissenting votes, but for the majority, war was consistent with the on-going struggle for freedom and democracy. Furthermore, in the security of their trade convention, they had no way to predict the government's arbitrary wartime suppression of dissent and conscription of manpower.

> It is in the best interests of labor that the Allies and Great Britain in particular should finally triumph in the war; this we reiterate in a most positive manner. It is also the duty of labor to lend every possible assistance in the strife. But that help must be free, not coerced...not the product of the lash...or the legalized enforcement of a people.[15]

This principled and cautious support for the war did not end debate on the issue in the Canadian labour movement. It could not do so, precisely because the principle that "help must be free"

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[14] Clarion, 15 October, 1915. cited in R.Johnson, No Compromise--No Political Trading: The Marxian Socialist Tradition in British Columbia (Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, UBC, 1975), p.329.

[15] B.C. Federationist, 25 September 1915. Cited in R. Johnson, p.329-330.

collided directly with conscription, introduced in 1917. Labour saw conscription as anathema to trade unionism. Thus when Borden passed an order-in-council in April 1916 for the appointment of a National Service Board to discern whether men could best aid the war effort in a military or industrial capacity he was met in the West with a campaign against registration. Not deterred, Borden announced conscription in May 1917. Finally, the union government's gerrymandered victory of December 1917 went far in coalescing the diverse B.C. left, for it appeared to the B.C. working class that the texture of their lives was rapidly changing without any significant input of their own. In reaction to the Wartime Elections Act and the arbitrary suspension of democratic principles, direct action in the form of syndicalism became increasingly popular amongst craft and industrial unions.

The formation of the union government witnessed a new reactionary conviction in Ottawa, partly in response to the 'red scare' of events in Russia and partly in response to the newly unified left wing anti-conscription movement in the Canadian west. The resulting polarized environment saw reactionary anti-labour subterfuge and state inspired red baiting countered by an increasingly militant, unified and radical working class.[16] The Dominion goverments's reaction to working-class dissent in 1918 and 1919 confirmed the connection between state repression and militarism. The word "militarism" did not imply merely an

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[16] B. Palmer, pp.177-184.

external or international threat. It also included domestic repression. Among many repressive acts, the state passed an anti-loafing law in May 1918 requiring all adult males to be engaged in 'useful' work. In September the state passed PC 2384 outlawing fourteen radical organizations and banned the act of advocating violent revolution or meetings held in Russian, Finn, Ukrainian, or the language of enemy nations. State law made imprisonment the penalty for possessing books from the Charles Kerr publishing company.[17] In October another order-in-council declared strikes illegal in several industries and those who dared strike were drafted.[18] Also in October, the government moved to make press censorship more efficacious creating a Public Safety Division of the Justice Department and placing C.H. Cahan as director. He was instructed to enforce:

> the laws, orders and regulations respecting aliens, unlawful publications, assemblies or meetings, and the laws, orders and regulations intended or designed to suppress or extirpate enemy, revolutionary or seditious propaganda.[19]

The post-1917 anti-Bolshevik hysteria in B.C. was illustrated well through the censorship and police harassment of the S.P.C. The event most symbolic of the experiences of B.C. in wartime was the murder of Ginger Goodwin, past vice-president of the

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[17]Charles Kerr was the largest North American distributor of socialist literature.

[18] Ross McCormack, pp.150-155.

[19] Order-in-Council (no. 2476), 7 October 1918. Cited in R. Johnson, p.338.

Federation of Labour. While Ottawa passed laws on sedition, censorship and loafing in 1917, a federal conscription board declared Goodwin class D, unfit for service. As an S.P.C. organizer in Trail, Goodwin led a smeltermen's strike to stalemate. During the strike he was recalled to the conscription board and the inspectors, deciding he had made a miraculous recovery from the advanced T.B. which initially earned him a class D, decided he was class A, fit for service.[20] Recognizing the ideological motivations behind his new fighting status, Goodwin, now a fugitive, went to the woods surrounding the Comox Valley.

In late July, when D. Campbell, a special constable searching for draft dodgers, shot and killed Goodwin with a soft-nosed bullet, labour's response was unequivocal: no matter that Campbell claimed he acted in self-defence, and despite the fact that a special committee cleared him of guilt, in the eyes of many in the working-class Goodwin had been murdered for supporting the socialist cause. The events surrounding the August 2 burial of Goodwin in Cumberland confirm both the polarization of B.C. society and the depth of support for worker's militancy. Cumberland miners declared a 24 hour walk-out and Vancouver Trades and Labour Council supported a similar move by the metal trades council--a situation closely approximating a general

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[20] Paul Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: BC Federation of Labour Boag Foundation, 1967). p.289. See also Derek Hanebury, Ginger Goodwin: Beyond the Forbidden Plateau (Vancouver: Pulp Press Book Publishers, 1986).

strike.[21] Reactionary statism also responded swiftly: with the active support of the Vancouver Board of Trade about 200 returned soldiers ambushed the Vancouver Labour Temple and badly beat the secretary of the VTLC Victor Midgely. They also forced him to kiss the Union Jack.[22]

In the afternoon of August 2, Mayor Gale declared himself willing to lead gangs to deport the leaders of the VTLC. Since members of municipal government, the business community and other reactionary forces identified the working-class leaders as responsible for the growing activism of the rank and file, they were determined to root out the B.C. Bolshevik leadership.[23] Returned soldiers went to the Longshoremen's hall to find E. Winch, VTLC President. These men believed the leadership was inspiring militancy and the rank and did not support them. Winch and the VTLC leadership narrowly escaped violence by holding an impromptu straw vote where the leadership was endorsed wholeheartedly. In less than two decades, the S.P.C.'s analysis of the occasion would sound significantly familiar.

> Labour forces, irrespective of race, are united and on the defensive against the historically reactionary forces. Note the line-up: Board of Trade, Manufacturer's Association, Credit Men's Association, Daughters of the Empire, press and pulpit.[24]

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[21] Phillips, p.298.

[22] B. Palmer, p.170 and R. Johnson, pp.344-345.

[23] R. Johnson, p.341.

[24] Clarion, August 1918 in R. Johnson, p.346.

The hyper-patriotism of the early war-years transcended the class interests of the B.C. workers. This patriotic sensitivity declined in importance as it became apparent that working-class wartime sacrifices outweighed those of other classes on both the 'home front' and in Europe; moreover, the issue of war-profiteering bitterly reminded the working class of their position in the Canadian industrial capitalist system. The solidarity and militancy of B.C. working class activists culminated in their support of the Winnipeg General Strike; however, the Goodwin affair symbolized working-class sentiments in ways more tangible and identifiable. The growth of this working-class consciousness, which was influenced to a great degree by the war experience, reinforced the anti-militarist tradition in labour and socialist thought. This war was not a victory for freedom and democracy over the forces of reactionary militarism; instead, the war seemed to many to be in itself a form of oppression: working men died in thousands on the battle fields; at home war meant declining living standards for many, and direct confrontation with the state and its military agencies.

Chapter 2
Dialectics of Power

In the early 1930s the working class confronted, perhaps more directly than ever before, the connection between military force and state power.[1] There is no doubt that the 1930s witnessed increasing international tensions and the threat or reality of international war. But international events alone did not give rise to working-class anti-militarism. Of greater importance was a series of dramatic events occurring within Canada, and the nature and intensity of domestic class conflict. Anti-militarism was one of the most compelling forms of working-class dissent in response to coercive state power.

This chapter examines the arrival of working-class anti-militarism, as it emerged in specific events and situations in the early 1930s. These events are linked in one critical way: they contain a dialectic of response and counter-response between workers and the state, in which we see both militarism and, on the part of workers, an emerging anti-militarist response. The events to be discussed include the Strathcona school affair of 1933, involving working-class ex-servicemen; the anti-war rally of August 1st, 1931; the hunger marches of 1932; the Department of National Defence's relief camp project; and the Vancouver waterfront strike of 1935.

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[1] This "linkage" is the second criterion in Panitch's three requisites to a marxist theory of a capitalist state. L. Panitch, "The Role and Nature of the Canadian State," in L. Panitch (ed) The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power (Toronto: U.ofT. Press, 1977), p.5.

To many in BC's working-class, the depression experience provided insight into the naked function of authority--defence of the status quo. State authority manifested itself on many levels: the armed repression of free speech, the regimentation and isolation of work-camps, the parsimony of relief programmes. Waiting for an uncertain prosperity, state authority managed an elaborate and increasingly violent holding action in the face of dissent.

Such a setting highlighted class inequities and had a hot-house effect on BC working-class consciousness. This process of radicalization led to a flowering of collective worker initiatives such as neighborhood councils, unemployed associations, and arts and sports functions.[2] A second result of the increase in class consciousness was a reassessment of the state's cultural symbols of authority. At a time when many workers in Germany were embracing (or succumbing to) the cultural symbols of inflexible state authority, an increasing number of BC workers were reassessing traditions supporting Canadian state hegemony.[3]

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[2] See Bonita Bray, "The Weapon of Culture: Unemployed Theatre in Vancouver in the 1930s." Unpublished MA Thesis, UVic 1990.

[3] This reassessment was led by a vanguard of workers associated with the WUL. But Independent Labour Party and subsequently CCF supporters were also questioning the function of state authority. For some important work on the concept of cultural hegemony see T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," American Historical Review. pp.567-593; Perry Anderson. "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci," The New Left Review, 100(1976-77):5-78 and Walter L. Adamson, Hegemony and Revolution: A study of Antonio

To broach the anti-militarist ideas working-class activists expressed, one must first appreciate the depression experience of the BC working class. One finds that events which at first glance appear disparate and unconnected, combine to create an underlying theme of statist, militaristic coercion. Anti-militaristic ideas were coloured from the palette of workers's daily experiences and hence their ideas are not of a single tone or hue. Nevertheless, from their experiences of the particularities of power and authority working-class activists painted a picture of pervasive militaristic coercion. Their experience of militarism involved overt state force to silence demands for social assistance and relief, regimentation and social control to preserve the social order, and state support for reactionary, hybrid, fascist groups who advocated violent solutions to working-class dissent.

An important source of dissent in the 1930s was that expressed by groups affiliated with the Worker's Unity League(WUL). Though only formally in existence in Canada from 1930 to 1936, the WUL played an important role in organizing Canadian working-class dissent. The most important WUL-associated confrontations with the state and employers, and the most important sources of anti-militarist rhetoric, were led through the four main WUL affiliates in BC: the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union(LWIU), the Fishermen and Cannery Workers' Industrial Union (FCWIU), the Mine Workers' Union of

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Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980).

Canada(MWUC), and the Relief Camp Workers' Union(RCWU).[4]

The National Unemployed Workers' Association(NUWA) was an affiliate of the WUL from 1930 to 1932. The NUWA established prominent locals in Vancouver, Victoria, Fernie, Nanaimo, Port Alberni, and had others in smaller towns.[5] During this period the NUWA organized a great number of unemployed demonstrations. The usual result of these was a violent confrontation with the police. Following its dissolution, the RCWU assumed most of the functions of the NUWA. According to Arthur Evans, the titular head of the organization, the RCWU did not effectively organize camp workers until the summer of 1933.[6]

Within this framework of unemployed organizations, the "Anti-War" rally of 1 August 1931, organized by the CPC through WUL organizations, is significant not only as an example of WUL work in organizing dissent, but also as a way to examine the complex system the state engineered to silence dissent in a militaristic way. Beyond overt force, governments used the Criminal Code (section 98) and Immigration Law (acts 41 and 42)

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[4] For a complete outline of the organizational structure of the WUL see, Ian Radforth, "The Workers' Unity League in Ontario," unpublished PhD. research paper, York University, 1979; John Manley, "Communism and the Canadian Working Class During the Great Depression: The Workers' Unity League, 1930-36," unpublished PhD. Dissertation, 1985; and David York, "The Workers' Unity League in BC," unpublished undergraduate paper, UBC, N.D.

[5] D.York, "The Workers' Unity League in BC," p.12.

[6] B. Swankey and Jean Evans Shields, "Work and Wages", p.77.

against the most militant.[7] The combination of Section 98 and Immigration law formed a net which could successfully catch radical activists and if not remove them from the country, place them in prison for years--a "double-barrelled" approach to get rid of "undesirables."[8]

Similarly, sections 41 and 42 of the Immigration Act were designed to silence dissent. Under section 42 immigrants who had been in Canada less than five years were candidates for deportation if they were "public charges."[9] Under section 41 non-native Canadians could face deportation for advocating a forceful

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[7] Section 98 of the Criminal Code was passed in July 1919 by order in council. Although it was "a legislative codification of a similar Order in Council passed during" the First World War, the impact of the Winnipeg General strike on government lawmakers seems obvious. Robbie Fleming, "Sedition, Democracy and the State: British Columbia in the 1930s." (University of Victoria: Unpublished law paper, 1989), p.9.While useful for his explanation of legal terms Fleming suggests there is no clear relation between the strike and codification! The state's attempt to suffocate dissent is obvious in the fact that Section 98 makes even advocacy of the use of force to change the nature of the state an offense. Thus the clause effectively declares guilt by association. For further study of the history of the state's use of deportation see Barbara Roberts, From Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-35 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988); Donald Avery, Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979) and Lyle Dick, "Deportation under the Immigration Act and the Canadian Criminal Code, 1919-1936," unpublished MA thesis, University of Manitoba, 1978.

[8] J.Petryshyn, "Class Conflict and Civil Liberties: the Origins and Activities of the Canadian Labour Defense League, 1925-1940," Labour/Le Travailleur,10 (Autumn 1982), pp.45-50.

[9] Petryshyn, "Class Conflict," and Lorne and Caroline Browne, An Unauthorized History of the RCMP (Toronto: Lorimer, 1978), pp.60-65.

change in the system of government.

In the 1930s the state declared civil liberties, like relief funds and soldier's pensions, a luxury it could not afford. Although one is an abstract and the other a material compensation of the liberal democratic system, they are closely linked. The militant protests of the unemployed and destitute reveal this connection. The state's forceful removal of these 'benefits' engendered a resentment of its armed forces and this resentment translated into anti-militarism for a working class familiar with state force. The anti-war rally of August 1931 went far in familiarizing the working class with state force.

The protest against 'imperialist war' on 1 August 1931 was an international affair--a fact made explicit by the Vancouver dailies' news-clip coverage of Communist confrontations in major European centres.[10] A crowd large enough to make full use of the expansive Cambie St. Grounds was testimony not to the upsurge in grass roots CPC support, but to the sense of powerlessness many felt in the early years of the depression.[11] To attract 12,000 workers to demonstrate against war[12] cannot be written off as

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[10] "World Wide Troubles", Vancouver Sun, 3 August 1931, p.7.

[11] Shields and Swankey, Work and Wages, and "Police Injured in Downtown Street Battle," Vancouver Sun, 2 August 1931, p.1.

[12] Workers' Unity, 6 August 1931, cited in Ben Swankey and Jean Evans Shields, "Work and Wages ":A Semi-documentary of the Life and Times of Arthur H.(Slim) Evans, 1890-1944, Carpenter, Miner, Labor Leader (Vancouver: Trade Union Research Bureau/Granville Press, 1977), p.33. While Shields and Swankey cite the statistics of Workers Unity for crowd size, The Province

"symptomatic of the times."[13] Specifically, it is an important example of how the WUL linked issues of peace and anti-militarism to the need for a restructured social system. What is significant is that the threat of war was so effectively linked to the socio-economic situation of the working class it could draw out a substantial number for an anti-war rally. The protest may have been international in nature, but the event indicates that in the collective conscience of activists in the Vancouver working class, the possibility of war was explicitly linked with the domestic social system.

The rally's violence occurred over Saturday and Sunday, 1 and 2 August.[14] Once the rally broke into a brawl on Dunsmuir St. the issue was no longer simply imperialist war: protesters were marching to City Hall to demand relief at the same time as refusing to carry a British flag as civil law required. That the protesters were prepared for violence made it an unusual anti-war rally. Police had granted permission for use of the Cambie St. Grounds with the proviso of no parade. But when the crowd heard

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and Sun estimated 1,000-2,000 protesters gathered. Since The Sun reported Winnipeg citizens saw "10,000 Communist adherents [march] through city streets in a steady downpour of rain" on 1 August it is reasonable to assume that in a city with at least as much militant potential as Winnipeg the numbers were closer to the Workers Unity's.

[13] Shields and Swankey, p.33.

[14] "Police Injured in Downtown Street Battle", Vancouver Province, 2 August 1931, p.1; "Communists and Police Clash Again", Vancouver Province, 3 August 1931, p.1.

rumours of approaching police, M. Herndel, the rally leader, "jumped from his place, put a paper-padded cap on his head, seized a red flag," and led the rally down Cambie street.[15] Skirmishes continued until Sunday evening. The popular press highlighted the morality, strength and even the machismo of the police, unconcerned that they might turn Herndel into "a Grade A-1 Modern Martyr:"[16] "Clad in plus fours, his head adorned with a natty panama hat, [Chief Bingham] lustily wielded a baton which he borrowed from one of his men."[17] This street theatre was played out before thousands of spectators[18] all of whom viewed for themselves the dynamics of Vancouver's polarized political atmosphere.[19] The event, especially when juxtaposed with its

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[15] "Police Injured," p.1.

[16] "Lend Me Your Ears," Vancouver Sun, 3 August 1931, P.3.

[17] "Police Injured," p.1

[18] "Lend Me Your Ears."

[19] For an in depth study of the interaction of Vancouver political affairs and the colourful spectrum of various local media, see B.Bray, "The Weapon of Culture: Unemployed Theatre in Vancouver in the 1930s." UVic 1990 and Bray, "Against All Odds: The Progressive Arts Club's Production of Waiting for Lefty," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol.25, No.3 (Fall 1990), 106-22. The local Vancouver dailies were making no secret of their advocacy journalism. Indeed, so close was the relationship of the local legal establishment and the media that the city prosecutor W.M.McKay referred the jurors to the press coverage of the anti-war rally to decide on an adequate sum for Herndel's bail. When J.E.Bird, appearing on behalf of W.W. Lefeaux, questioned if this was a fair source for the jurors, McKay responded "he was considering what he thought to be the truth." "Communists and Police Clash Again."

coverage in the popular press, brought attention to the action of the police, and in addition to highlighting the fear of Communism, also turned attention to police brutality. Not only were citizens spectators but they were frequently victims. So often were innocent bystanders injured in these confrontations that authorities such as Mayor Taylor cautioned citizens to avoid protest sites. "I wish to warn the citizens of Vancouver against being in the vicinity of demonstrations, and should they do so, it will be at their own risk."[20] While many citizens were relieved with the speed with which Herndel and other activists were imprisoned and subsequently deported,[21] the labour press gave full comment to the biased 'British justice' that removed 'undesirable citizens' with frightening efficiency. The Unemployed Worker made full use of this fact by publishing correspondence with Herndel following his deportation to Switzerland.[22]

Another result of the riot was an increase in the police force. Fifty specials were sworn in with the intention of

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[20] Proclamation signed Louis D. Taylor 13 January 1933, Attorney General's Papers, 1925-1937, L 125.1.

[21] "Deportation of City Rioters Expected," Vancouver Province, 4 August 1931, p.1; "Swears He Was Kicked in the Face," Vancouver Province, 10 August 1931, p.1.

[22] "Message from Comrade Herndel," Unemployed Worker, 14 February 1932, p.5.

bringing the special forces to 200.[23] Again the ideals of patriotism and war became factors in the equation as The Province threatened "a number of those engaged...are ex-service men, whose military training will be of great value to police...."[24] Many working-class activists saw the ultimate lesson of the riot was that special police were to be state arbiters in future protests.[25]

There was a central contradiction to the way events occurred on August 1 and 2: despite the fact international war was the issue of contention, the true debate occurred between the local armed forces and the working-class protesters. In the mainstream and left-wing press the issue of international conflict was never mentioned in any of the reportage. Domestic conflict was the only issue of concern. The resources of the state were brought to bear on the protesters at such events; not, argued some writers, to maintain public order, but to coerce and silence working-class protest.[26]

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[23] "Riot Police Are Sworn In," Vancouver Province, 4 August 1931, p.1.

[24] Ibid.

[25] John L. Martin, The Canadian Cossacks: A Review of Facts Concerning the R.C.M.P. Pamphlet, Vancouver 1935, Kenney Collection, University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. Martin's work is useful for he effectively links increasing government funds for the police and militia with protests by working-class organizations and unemployed groups.

[26] Ibid.

The unemployed and those on relief formed an important source of dissent. As early as the first months of 1930, unemployed protests in Vancouver were met with mounted police: by the end of the year, all meetings on Cambie and Powell Street Grounds not approved beforehand by the Police Commission were systematically dispersed.[27] By 4 September 1931 there were more than 15,000 registered unemployed in the city with 2,000 single homeless in 'hobo jungles' and 2,500 families on relief.[28] When the provincial government began registering unemployed in August 1931 they were alarmed to see 9,000 register in the first ten days.[29] By the Spring of 1932, one-tenth of the population of Vancouver was on relief.[30] These conditions made workers and unemployed prepared to manifest dissent in the face of state force. As the solidarity of their protests increased they were forced to contemplate the legitimacy of law and military force.

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[27] Bingham to Mayor Taylor, 21 Jan.31,Vancouver police Board, Vancouver City Archives (CAV), 75(C)5, file2."The decision to prevent unlawful meetings of the unemployed is a good one and was acted upon on the 21st(sic) instant...the presence of mounted men at congested corners was indispensible."

[28] John D.Belshaw, " The Administration of Relief to the Unemployed in Vancouver During the Great Depression, unpublished MA Thesis, SFU, 1984, p.92

[29] "9,000 Register for Relief," Province, 10 August 1931, p.7.

[30] E. Groves, "Business, Government, Party Politics and the British Columbia Business Community, 1928-33," unpublished M.A.Thesis, UBC, 1976, p.61.

The February and March hunger marches of 1932 were the largest collective protests of those Vancouverites either unemployed or on relief. Once again they were organized with the help of the WUL affiliated NUWA. When viewed individually these hunger marches begin without any regard to issues of war and militarism. However, these incidents cannot be understood as spontaneous, isolated protests. The culmination of these events was May Day 1932, a day when Vancouver saw machine gun battalions and warships in her harbour. When seen as a protracted, four-month dialogue with the state, one can see how a hunger march was related to the state's armed forces and the experience of militarism.

The 22 February hunger march was held in support of a delegation of unemployed travelling to Victoria to present their demands to Tolmie's unemployment committee. Despite heavy rain, an estimated five to seven thousand people gathered on Powell St. Grounds. As the numbers swelled, a delegation went to City Hall to request permission to use Cambie St. Grounds (the police commission had already refused permission). Because of "the imposing demonstration... marshalled on Powell St. Grounds,"[31] the delegation won permission and "a meal and one night's lodging to each of a maximum of 1500 persons from 'distant points'."[32]

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[31] "Now For March 3rd", Unemployed Worker, 27 February 1932, p.1.

[32] "Jobless Seek $25 Weekly 'Insurance'" Vancouver Sun, 23 February 1932, p.1.

Arriving at Cambie St. Grounds, the parade numbered 30,000. This was a remarkable turn-out given that Vancouver's population was only 245,000.[33] The sheer size of this rally, and particularly the state's humiliating inability to enforce the prohibition, precipitated the state's subsequent use of armed force.

Following the 22 February rally, the unemployed leaders organized another rally for March 3, "to elect delegates to go to Ottawa for the purpose of laying the workers' grievances before the Dominion Parliament."[34] Permission was granted to hold a march and a rally "on the understanding that there will be no demonstration following the assembly."[35] Overconfident,[36] the "Hunger March Committee" notified the City Council to "be on hand to meet a delegation from the mass meeting on Cambie St. Grounds at 3 p.m. Thursday, 48 hours notice."[37] The "Hunger Committee"

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[33] Shields and Swankey, p.36.

[34]"Jobless Plan to March Tomorrow," Vancouver Sun, 2 March 1932, p.1; "Now For March 3rd", Unemployed Worker, 27 February 1932, p.1.

[35]Ibid.

[36] The egotistical Mayor Taylor would later cite a boastful article in a "communist paper" (no doubt the Unemployed Worker, and possibly the article "Now For March 3rd".) commenting that the 'reds' in Vancouver were pushing the police commission around, thus he argued for a new hard-line police chief. "Mayor Charges City is Unsafe." The Daily Province, 11 March 1932, p.8.

[37] "Open Letter to City Council (from Arthur H. Evans representing "Hunger March Committee")," Vancouver Sun, 9 March 1932, p.6.

claimed it finally received a reply the afternoon of the rally informing them no meeting of City Council would be held that day.[38] The Vancouver Sun claimed the "Hunger Committee" was informed the day before the rally[39]. The difference is important for the notice helped precipitate what the Unemployed Worker described as "the most savage and unprovoked attack upon the workers in the experience of unemployed demonstrations in Vancouver."[40] Approximately 4,000 protesters met about 150 police(including over 40 RCMP, and a large number of provincials brought in specifically to deal with the rally); two policemen were confined to hospital and three protesters were treated and released.[41]

The most significant development was the City Council's decision to rescind open air meetings. The council claimed the unemployed "willfully disregarded the regulations and the whole

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[38] Ibid.

[39]"Five Hurt in Street Fight With Police," Vancouver Sun, 4 March 1932, p.1.

[40]"Police Brutality City Council's Answer to Hunger March," Unemployed Worker, 5 March 1932, p.1.

[41]"Nine Arrested"; "Police Brutality";"Five Hurt"; "Open Letter".

basis of the permit".[42] Open air parades were particularly important for the unemployed for they needed to reach the attention of the general population of the city if they were ever to win any relief concessions from the government--public demonstrations were the principal means by which they could win this attention.

Given the importance the unemployed placed on public demonstrations, it is not surprising that a conference protesting their loss of free speech was held on April 10, shortly after the hunger march. Resolutions of protest poured into the City Council offices as well as the parliament buildings. Most shared the common theme of "British Justice." This idea was contested terrain. Working-class activists claimed the state forcefully violated this principle and was hence a militaristic entity. The politicians argued the Depression required a return to Canadian patriotism with British values and justice; hence the symbolic importance of a British flag leading the unemployed parade. Like most letters, the North Burnaby NUWA's protested "denial of one of the fundamental rights of British subjects the world over, a right that had been paid for in blood....Assembly is the only means by which workers...who have sufficient intelligence and

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[42]"Chief Bans Parades Because Privilege has Been Abused," Daily Province, 5 March 1932, p.1. The comment Chief Edgett makes to the flag is in reference to city bylaw No. 1475: "parades shall be unlawful unless headed by the British flag... if the flag of any other nation is unfurled, it shall be carried under or behind the British flag; and that there shall be two British flags for every foreign flag." Five Hurt in Street Fight," p.15.

courage can express the misery in which they exist."[43]

Throughout these confrontations the issue of patriotism was always posed by government representatives. Parades were always permitted on the condition that a Union Jack led the parade.[44] The governments argued that such parades would not be permitted if not for the British political system. But the working-class marchers were behaving in a willfully unpatriotic manner. The Red Flag was a standard parade reprise and red flags were the normal fare. These actions were not simply endorsing a foreign system as their detractors would claim. Rather, the unemployed were appearing to be unpatriotic because the present system had nothing more to offer than state force when questioned. The working class faced a strategic dilemma: they needed free speech to argue against the inequities of the system, but freedom of speech was a privilege for supporters of the status quo.

The repeal of free speech drew a clear objective around which the heterogenous left could rally. A United Front for Free Speech, with Arthur Evans as secretary, was formed almost immediately after the March 3 riot. In committee on 12 April this group sent a protest to A.M. Armor, Secretary of the Board of Police Commissioners, describing the front: "75 working class organizations...including 15 locals of the American Federation of Labor, 6 locals of the All Canadian Congress of Labor, 7 Branches

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[43] North Burnaby NUWA resolution to City Council, 2 April 1932. CAV 75(C)6, file13.

[44] See City bylaw No. 1475 noted on page 26.

of the Independent Labor Party, and numerous branches of NUWA and CLDL."[45] On Sunday, April 17 at the Arena, over 5,000 "rank and file workers" gathered to pass unanimously three resolutions: one resolution demanded permission to use Cambie St. Grounds for International Labour Day May 1. Another demanded that Ottawa repeal section 98 and release all presently held for violating that section. The third protested Imperialistic Wars.[46] The resolutions are notable for their tone:

> delegates have reported on the cruelty, thuggery and rapine of the armed forces of the state whenever attempts to exercise the right of free speech and assembly have been made...attacks on workers have been absolutely unprovoked and committed in direct violation of the oath of office of the City...[this meeting]...protests the further usurpation of the rights of free speech and assembly and ...the abrogation of power by dictatorship on the part of city officials....[47]

Amongst many in the working class, a collective oppositional conscience was growing noticeably, and working class experience of state force was an important catalyst.

The Arena resolution links domestic events with the threat of international war. The government's response reflects its concern over the increasingly militant and collective conscience

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[45] United Front Free Speech Committee to A.F. Armor, 12 April 1932, Police Files, CAV 75(C) 6 File 2.

[46] "Labor Men Asking For Free Speech," Vancouver Sun, 18 April 1932, p.6.

[47]" Resolution of Free Speech and Assembly Committee," 17 April 1932, Police Files, CAV 75(C) 6, file 2.

of the left. While the Labour press boasted the free speech conference was the "best and most representative workers' conference [they] had yet seen in Vancouver,"[48] the municipal government was taking action to stamp out the growing challenge to constituted authority. The Vancouver headquarters of various left-wing organizations were raided in the hope of disorganizing International Labor Day protests.[49] Working class leaders claimed the city police's systematic search for organizers "violated workers homes...to learn the unemployeds' plans for their mass rally Sunday...on Powell Street grounds..."[50] RCMP Inspector F.J.Mead, defended the action in The Sun: "officers had gone to three or four places looking for men they wanted to arrest but they had done so under lawful authority."[51] The repressive tactics of the police force went even further. The May Day rally was supervised by the Canadian destroyer HMCS Vancouver. On board the ship was the Princess Pat's Light Infantry machine gun detachment from Esquimalt.[52] Further, in the "army of 200

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[48] "Free Speech Conference is Great Success." Unemployed Worker, 17 April 1932, p.2.

[49] "Red Leaders Are Sought By Mounties," Vancouver Sun, 28 April 1932, p.1; "Red Quarters Here Raided By Mounties," Vancouver Sun, 26 April 1932, p.1.

[50] "Red Leaders Are Sought By Mounties."

[51] Ibid.

[52] "4500 'Reds' Demonstrate; No Disorder," Vancouver Sun, 2 May 1932, p.1.

available officers" were 70 RCMP and forty mounted men. Present at the Powell St. Grounds was a magistrate escorted by a local inspector, prepared to read the Riot Act. This force de frappe provided the police force with the confidence to permit a rally while at the same time demonstrating its fear of an organized militant working class protest.[53]

The action reflects Ottawa's fear of communism. It also raised the tension and polarization in Vancouver. Many citizens, as well as the local media, welcomed the government's domestic gun-boat diplomacy. Nevertheless, the event strengthened the resolve of working class leaders. Although only an estimated 4,500 [54] turned up for the meeting the legacy of the event reinforced oppositional working class consciousness.

> Estevan, Section 98 and the May Day terrorism are all a development of this effort to shackle the workers of Canada in the service of capitalism...We must fight the war danger as we fight for relief, as we fight against wage cuts, as we fight against fascist

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[53] For a logistical outline of the military force amassed for the event see internal memo re: "Aid to the Civil Power", Vancouver 1 May 1932. DND Vol. 1, "Aid to the Civil Power" in MD 11--Aug31/Oct36. Brigadier J. Sutherland Brown was proud to report the Attorney General's gratitude for military support:"The Destroyer was observed by the populace from Point Grey and other places...this I am informed by the authorities, produced a moral effect which, proved an important factor in preventing subsequent trouble...the promptness with which the situation was handled will probably result in no further calls being made upon the Militia for some time."

[54] Ibid.

terrorism.[55]

The war danger, argued writers in the labour press, was at one and the same time international and domestic. It was a fascist-militarist evil that had international and domestic manifestations--the domestic manifestations extended even as far as the administration of relief to the poor. For those who met the militia when protesting for relief, it was easy to equate the fight for relief and the descent toward war: the militia was a part of relief administration.

This event is also a dramatic illustration of Bennett's and Tolmie's simplistic understanding of domestic working class dissent. For only three months before anchoring on Vancouver's waterfront for May Day, the Vancouver and HMCS Skeena were confronting militant communism on an international stage. In January Bennett sent the two destroyers to help put down a peasant uprising in El Salvador.[56] Despite Canada's limited investment and small number of Canadian nationals in the Central American country, the Canadian destroyers arrived with such pace that they preceeded by days both British and American forces--countries with considerably more strategic interest in the

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[55] "Battleships and Machine Guns For Workers May Day," Unemployed Worker, 6 May 1932, p.2.

[56] For a good coverage of the event see Harvey Levenstein "Canada and the Suppression of the Salvadoran Revolution of 1932." Canadian Historical Review, LXII, 4, 1981, pp.451-469.

region.[57] The difference between a peasant revolt in El Salvador and the protests of an industrial work force in Canada seem clear, but it is a dramatic illustration of Bennett's limited appreciation of political dissent, and his rabid fear of socialism. Vancouver citizens were concerned over Canada's use of her military force even before it was turned on themselves:

> [Why do] we stand for our boys being sent to protect foreigners and at the same time swallow the bunk about the foreigners causing all the trouble in this country and allow the police to club them down along with our native born who happen to be unfortunate enough to be unemployed and hungry...With all the cries for peace and no more war, we stand by and permit our navy to go out of their way to look for war which costs lives and money--let [the Canadian government] spend it at home for the needy.[58]

This quotation illustrates clearly another way in which anti-militarism served as moral comment on the actions of Canadian governments: this anti-war stance was inherently an attempt to expose the hypocrisy of government. Despite government claims that it could not pay for relief and that it wished to avoid war, it wasted money in search of needless foreign wars, and was prepared to hire more militia to face people who protested for relief.

Working-class suspicion of patriotism was expressed most

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[57] Ibid. pp. 457-459.

[58] Letter to the editor, Vancouver Sun, 2 February 1932, p.4. The HMCS Vancouver was kept busy: it subsequently sailed up the Coast to add a persuasive presence to police forces breaking a strike at Annyox.

powerfully through the anti-militarist statements of World War One Canadian ex-servicemen. Working-class ex-servicemen's wartime sacrifices earned them considerable social status and notable political prestige. Armistice ceremonies, for example, were part of an elaborate, symbolic political theatre directed to support a culture of patriotism and consent for state authority. Even during the nadir of the Depression Vancouver held lavish Armistice ceremonies. Thus radical veterans were, depending on the context, either an inspiration or a shocking development for a society searching for an ideological rudder.

The Worker's Ex-servicemen's League(WESL), was a radical veterans' group that formed when a group of ten ex-servicemen met in Winnipeg on 30 July 1930 to discuss the inequitable treatment they received from the Canadian state.[59] After three weeks of deliberation they decided to form "an organization that would meet the needs of the rank and file"[60] To keep this focus the group did not offer membership to ex-officers. "We are out to do every thing possible for the rank and file. And considering that most ex-officers have good government jobs, our troubles are not theirs, so we don't feel called upon to consider them."[61] By 1932

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[59] Workers's Ex-servicemen's League Bulletin No. IX, 14 November 1932, p.1. I found this pamphlet hidden in the middle of the Unemployed Worker microfiche in the BCARS. There were no other bulletins on the microfiche.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

the League boasted "branches...in almost every city in Canada."[62] Soon a WUL affiliate, the League reflected the outrage of those who had risked most for their country; they proved the folly of sacrifice for an unjust society.[63] The statements of anti-militarism disillusioned veterans expressed did not stem from their reading of international events, or from religious conviction, but from the social conditions of the 1930s. Veterans' anti-militarism was at one level a pointed question about the domestic responsibilities of the state in the Depression: to whom belongs the responsibility for maintaining the unemployed and dealing with economic crisis? The nascent anti-militarism of the veterans became strident and organized when their question was answered with frustrated enquiries and repressive state force.

A good example of the depth of discontent among some veterans is found in the following handbill. In the Vancouver City Moose Hall, September 28, 1933, The Workers's Ex-servicemen's League passed a motion to circulate this resolution:

Comrades!
Wake up to the fact that;
your King and Country does NOT need YOU.

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Little is known about the WESL. This is partly because most radical groups were aware of the dangers of documenting their actions should the state acquire such evidence. Further, it is only now that historians are gaining access to state files on the WESL (albeit in edited form) through the Access to Information Act. See G.S. Kealey, "The RCMP, CSIS, and Access to Information: A Curious Tale," Labour/Le Travail, 21 (Spring 1988), 199-226.

> Candidly, they would be overwhelmed with joy if you went A.W.L. and never returned, because the sight of ragged, hungry ex-servicemen and their dependents walking the streets is hardly an incentive to the youth of the British Empire to prepare for the next "Blood-Letting" which is drawing nearer every day!
>
> Despite the fact that 100's of millions are being spent for war preparations, there is no relief for those who were told that;-(sic) Canada will never forget! Pensions are being cut and our Comrades placed either in institutions unfit for human occupancy or else sent to forced labor camps.[64]

This quote identifies one very important strand in the fabric of anti-militarist thought--the resentment of many ex-servicemen that the society for which they had fought in war, gave them so little in the post-war years. The quote links the regimentation of the work camps, the poverty of relief programmes, and the state system which creates an environment of competitive capitalism, creating social conflict and more working-class veterans.[65]

Governments kept few statistics on unemployed veterans. What is known is that by 1932, the average CEF veteran was 42 years old--too old to qualify for the $240/year for single men, a 1927 federal pension act amendment that recognized a soldier could be 'aged' ten years by his war experience. Seventy years was the

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[64] Police Files, CAV. 75 (D) 2, file 3.

[65] See Elizabeth Lees' review of D. Morton, Winning the Second Battle, Labour/Le Travail, 22 (Fall 1988), pp.284-286. As Lees notes in her review, to date historians have given scant recognition to organized groups of left wing vets. Importantly, all the sources I have used on the WESL are located in restricted police files at the Vancouver City Archives.

contemporary standard set to qualify for this pension. The ex-servicemen had lost "training, experience, seniority and energy" to the war.[66] Discounting healthy men who never received veteran's aid (and the minimal consideration given the pensioner's family) by 1933, 14,368 pensioners needed additional relief. By 1935 the Hyndman Report estimated "38,000 Canadian veterans with overseas service, and 10,000 to 15,000 'Imperials', were out of work and in need of help."[67] Veterans were a diaspora scattered across the ideological plain: their factions included supporters of BC's fascist, Nationalist party to BC Trotskyites.

For many in the working class, the experience of the WESL and its veteran supporters represented the logical result of patriotic nativism and war glorification. The veterans were living a bitter irony: the ex-soldiers who had once carried arms and risked their lives for their country, were now confronted by the Canadian state militia. Given their unavoidably charged political image, the veterans' loss of freedom of speech and civil liberty was linked directly to anti-militarism and government authoritarianism. Impending international war was a backdrop, but anti-militarist ideas were forged on the

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[66] Report of the Veteran's Assistance Commission (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1937) p.33. For study of the veterans' plight from the most right-wing veteran group in Canada see C.P. Gilman and H.M. Sinclair, Unemployment: Canada's Problem (Ottawa: The Army and Navy Veterans in Canada, 1935).

[67] D.Morton, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1987) 214-220.

ideologically charged domestic stage. By 1933, the domestic social experience of the CEF veteran was becoming firmly established as a working-class metaphor of the fruits of authoritarian Conservative government. The militant working-class protests of the early thirties evoked a language of conflict--so it was a small step for vets to relate their First World War experiences to contemporary state actions. To a greater degree than any protest group, veteran's rhetoric was steeped in militaristic language.

Anti-militarism often emerged from specific confrontations with domestic authority or military force. One of the most important was staged at the Strathcona school on November 9, 1933. It featured the Vancouver Police Commissioners, the newly-formed Central Committee of Ex-servicemen and affiliated veterans(including many WESL members), and BC's mounted finest. The incident began innocently in the last week of October when the representative of the Central Committee of Ex-Servicemen, G.E. Laycock, rented the Strathcona School grounds for 8p.m., November 9. Committee representatives also made arrangements to meet with the "Police Commission over getting use of the Cambie St. Grounds on November 11 for Armistice Day."[68] Since the Cambie St. grounds was the venue of necessity and choice for all unemployed rallies, the Police Commission had decided in March 1932 to prohibit certain 'politically undesirable' groups--including ex-servicemen. Like many veterans groups, the Central

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[68] Police Commission Files CAV 75(D)2, file 3.

Committee claimed to be a non-political organization. And since a certain political party was given permission to use the grounds for a rally on 30 October, the organizers foresaw no trouble.[69] The resultant struggle provides interesting commentary on government perceptions of veterans--that it would be considered dangerous to allow an "apolitical" veteran group to hold a public meeting.

The veterans were so confident of securing the grounds that they distributed 5,000 handbills and placed ads in the local press "announcing that [their] final arrangements for Armistice Day would be announced" at the school.[70] Though use of the Cambie St. Grounds was not certain, they were sure--having paid the $5 rental fee--that they would meet Friday evening at the Strathcona school. Thus when the Central Committee leadership arranged by phone Friday afternoon "to see about [the cancellation of the] meeting with Police Commission over getting use of Cambie St. ...for November 11," they were unprepared for the Chief of Police's message: they were not only prohibited from use of the Grounds, but they could not use the previously rented Strathcona School.[71] News of the meeting had been circulated throughout Vancouver for over a week; Police Chief Cameron could not

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[69] Ibid. The correspondence in the Police Commission files does not specify the name of the political party. But it is certainly one of the two traditional Canadian parties.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

unilaterally cancel the meeting four hours before it was scheduled to begin--it was a fait accompli. The veterans' leadership recognized that any attempt at dialogue with the police authority was fruitless; resigned to a hopeless position they intended to go to the school and declare their meeting cancelled.

T.R. Casey, a vet leader, remembered the event vividly:

> I addressed the crowd and informed them that there would be no meeting and called Mr. Laycock to read a letter received by us,... whilst Mr. Laycock was proceeding to read such letter the Chief of Police...rushed up the steps and grabbed Laycock...instantly a squad of mounted police officers charged through the crowd, clubbing over the head and arms every man who could not get out of their way, at the same time using such expressions as 'run you degenerated sons of bitches, dirty bums and bastards.'[72]

At first glance one might believe such an inflammatory statement to be the product of Casey' outrage. However, this statement was part of a collection made with the intent of placing charges against the Office of the Police Commissioner. The plaintiff, far from a militant radical, was ex-serviceman J.E. Armishaw, Justice of the Peace for the province of BC.[73]

The incident's denouement was a dramatic lesson on state manipulation of both civil law and the media. In an effort to eschew criticism, the state addressed grievances through personal influence and extra-legal manoeuvres. But despite the Police

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

Commission's best efforts, working-class groups were outraged at the state's unwarranted use of force against veterans.

> The members of the WESL supporting the Central Committee of Ex-servicemen know enough to honour their dead in a manner that hypocrites who would capitalize on their sacrifice never will.[74]

Instead of following through with legal charges, on 23 November Armishaw's legal representative C. Willmott Maddison, 'interviewed' Oscar Orr, Crown Prosecutor for the City of Vancouver. During the meeting Orr "made the suggestion that, rather than take criminal proceedings, [Maddison] lay the facts before [him] in writing, and [he] would forward them to the Police Commission for them to take such action as circumstances might indicate."[75]

Maddison's brief condemned the illegal police brutality noting the ominous implications of such police action for the preservation of "British justice." [76]

The Strathcona school affair had a great impact on the

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[74] Correspondence, WESL to Police Commission, 16 November 1933. CAV, 75(D)2, file 3.

[75] Ibid.

[76] The contrast between the tone of the personal correspondence between Orr and Maddison and Maddison's accusatory legal presentation is revealing. Maddison's letter begins "In consequence of our friendly interview on the seventeenth..." and notes that Orr "so kindly intimated that [he] would act on [his] behalf..." Correspondence, Maddison to Orr, CAV, 75(D)2, file 3. Whereas, the presentation, filled with moral outrage, comments: "[seems] citizens/organizations cannot conduct public meetings in public buildings, without first having to curry favor with those responsible for enforcing the law..."Ibid.

nature of veterans' dissent. Henceforth they questioned the democratic ideal of the Canadian state with not only moral outrage but a strong sense of self-preservation. The government was removing their rights to free speech and democracy, which they had supposedly won on the battlefield, at a time when their demands seemed most crucial.

It was not only through nightsticks and other overt forms of state force that issues of militarism and state authority touched the lives of workers and the unemployed. Overt force, in tandem with the legal system, was only one characteristic of state directed militarism. Another was the regimentation and social control experienced by those in work camps. "...members of the Canadian Legion served in a war which was (so we were told) intended to stamp out militarism, we therefore protest the militarization of relief camps, and recommend that all relief work be carried out under a...civilian body."[77]

To deal with the growing number of unemployed in cities, and--more importantly--defuse volatile protest, the province of BC established 'holding camps' in 1931. Here, "the single unemployed could be housed and fed and paid a small allowance while they waited for the chance of a job."[78] Almost from

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[77] "Veterans Corner," Commonwealth, 20 September 1933, p.3. This is the first entry of a weekly veterans's column in the Commonwealth. That the first column would be devoted to the idea of militarism is indicative of the pervasiveness of the idea.

[78] Lorne Brown, When Freedom Was Lost: The Unemployed, the Agitator, and the State (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p.48.

conception the unemployed condemned the militaristic nature of the camps. Such camps not only revealed the government's dogmatic resolve to "wait out" the Depression, regardless of consequences, but the camps with their militaristic implications were loudly supported by such radical right-wing groups as Army and Navy Veterans and the Ku Klux Klan.

> The shacks we live in consist of a wooden frame, with canvas pulled over them...a military issue of clothes is handed out, if men leave the camp the clothes are taken back by the police. The KKK come now and then, and burn a fiery cross to intimidate the workers. As Inspector MacDonald of the Provincial Police is a member of the KKK, we can see that the government sanctions it...[79]

One of the earliest relief camp strikes, undertaken in June 1931 by the Workers' Alliance of Victoria, an affiliate of the NUWA, centered explicitly on the militaristic nature of the camps. Significantly, the strike leader, Ronald Stewart, was not charged with sedition but "inciting His Majesties' forces to mutiny." The charge was based on a provocative leaflet he had written:

> To All Soldiers and Sailors! Comrades: Refuse to shoot down hungry workers. Organize with the rest of your class who are going to end capitalism and establish workers' rule. Down with capitalism, up with the workers', soldiers', and sailors' and farmers' government. Soldiers and Sailors remember that when the workers rule, your delegates

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[79] "Preparing for War, Princeton Airport Camp," Unemployed Worker, 6 September 1933, p.7. The KKK seemed particularly active in BC during the 1930s and their presence in positions of authority in the Princeton community, and other areas, was well known. They fit well my suggestion of an active radical right response to leftist dissent during the Depression.

> will be members of the Canadian Soviets and help make your laws.[80]

Stewart was deported after serving two years in jail. It is important to note the strikers protested military force as their principal camp complaint. The unemployed were associating the use of military force with government solutions to the depression.

General McNaughton, Chief of Staff and principal manager of the camps, would later admit what most contemporary camp workers already knew.

> A relief camp system operated by the Department of Defence could provide administrative experience for armed forces personnel and it would enable the Department to construct military installations at a minimal cost which would otherwise probably not be built at all. This was particularly important when the state of the economy and public anti-military sentiment made it difficult for governments to justify increased military expenditures.[81]

So closely linked were issues of military force and the state's solution to the Depression that a basic grievance of the ultimate Depression-era mass protest, the On-to-Ottawa Trek, was the work camps' militaristic character.[82]

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[80] Labour Organizations in Canada (King's Printer: Ottawa, 1931), p.173.

[81] John Sweetenham, McNaughton, Vol.I (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), p.270. Cited in L. Brown, When Freedom Was Lost pp.48-49.

[82] Victor Howard, "We Were the Salt of the Earth!" A Narrative of the On-to-Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riot (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1985), p.36.

Reinforcing the idea of the militaristic character of the BC government were the repercussions from the series of working-class confrontations with state force from 1934-36. The relief camp walkouts, the longshoremen's strike, and the museum and post-office sit-ins reverberated in the press for months.[83] Details about state manoeuvres and use of force against popular protests were being revealed in detail. For example, New Frontier ran a story based on an interview with a member of the Department of National Defence shortly after Ottawa assumed control of relief camps. Referring to the 1934 camp walk-out the mandarin described the department's plan: "after some months to be spent in 'smoking out the reds,' the men would be placed under military discipline and given a course of military training."[84] When the walk-out started

> Old hands of the force who had won the honorable reputation of unreliability in labour clashes, were sent "to the sticks," given beats...in the suburbs. The military relief camp at Point Grey, occupied by members of the militia on relief, was carefully culled of agitators, and the indigent soldiers subjected to rousing pep-talks against the reds.[85]

As the article cautioned, "in 1933 the unemployed youth of Canada

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[83] For the Post-Office and Museum sit-ins in Vancouver see John Stanton, Never Say Die and Victor Howard "We Were the Salt of the Earth".

[84] "Where Do They Go From Here?" New Frontier, Vol.I, No.5, September 1936, p.12.

[85] Ibid.

might, had the Canadian ruling-class possessed more foresight, have been bundled into colored shirts...and rallied to a Fascist shibboleth."[86] For this was the "purpose of the attempted militarization of the camps." In the last five years, the article stated, Canadian youth had learned that "capitalism can survive only so long as the workers' standard of living can be...forced downward...[and if this cannot be done]...the sham of democracy will be cast aside and Fascism force man to the desires of capitalism."[87]

As the New Frontier writer suggests, the regimentation and social control of the work camps held the potential for dictatorial control. What was lacking was a personality who embodied the rhetorical skills, financial corporate support and reactionary political agenda of a successful dictator in the fascist mold. But this, as working-class activists would attest, was also present on the political stage of Depression-era BC.

As many in the BC working class grew more familiar with the particularities of state authority in the 1930s, an important characteristic of working-class anti-militarism emerged: many grew quick to equate militarism with the interests of employers in a variety of contexts. Even Boy scouts were suspect.

> [T]he struggle against militarization in the schools and for the diversion(sic) of cadet appropriations to the unemployed must go on. The Unemployed Councils have already obtained

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[86] Ibid, p.13.

[87] Ibid.

> the endorsation(sic) of a resolution, demanding the abolition of cadet training, from the school teachers, and will approach the school board in the near future...Already the Scout movement has brought dividends to the militarists and employers who organize and finance it....[88]

By 1933, working-class activists charged the benefactors of visual symbols of militarism such as the uniforms of boy scouts, were "militarists" and "capitalists." Soon some workers would discover para-military groups of a less subtle quality operating in Vancouver.

The fascist overtones of state activity in the early 1930s came to fruition in the Vancouver Waterfront strike of 1935. The Citizen's League, led by Tom McInnes and funded by the Vancouver Shipping Federation, embodied all the qualities of European fascist groups such as the Italian Brownshirts: they benefitted from the support of important finance capital, they had a reactionary ideology based on rigid, hierarchical social structure, they had a fiery orator capable of generating support for confrontation in an already polarized political environment, they exploited military symbolism through uniforms and parades, and they militarized the BC political scene through both their symbolism and their calls for a need of violent struggle.[89]

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[88] "War Time Preparations," Unemployed Worker, 13 September 1933, Vol.5, no.48, p.3.

[89] Several labour journals made comparisons between the Citizens' League and fascist movents in Europe. See Heavy Lift, Ship and Dock, BC Lumberworker, and the Unemployed Worker. Other leftist papers such as the Challenge also made these comparisons.

Though they called themselves an independent citizens' group, they received material support from the municipal government and the RCMP.[90] They were supplied with state procured arms and were permitted to drill in the militia's armory near the waterfront.[91] They even received a small stipend for their services.[92] The Citizen's League was so well funded and orchestrated by leaders of BC's political and economic scene that when Peter Quinn wrote of Quebec's well known fascist movement, often referred to as the strongest in North America, he had to concede, "it happens that as yet, the province has not seen the rise of vigilante or board of trade committees armed in the name of democratic institutions with the fascist technique. Quebec has no equivalent of the Citizens' League."[93]

The fascism represented by the events surrounding the Citizens' League and the 1935 Waterfront strike form a part of the militarism many workers and unemployed experienced in 1930s BC. Like the use of state force against protests and the social control of work camps, the support of hybrid fascist groups in BC was a deliberate resort to force in the state's effort to

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[90] Interview with John Stanton, Vancouver labour lawyer and activist in the 1930s, June 1990.

[91] Interview with John Stanton

[92] Police Files, CAV. Strike Bulletin.

[93] "Meet Quebec's Fascists," New Frontier, September 1936, Vol.I No.5, p.6.

preserve the status quo.

The Citizen's League was not merely another Shipping Federation tactic to overcome the new wave of militancy in the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association (VDWWA).[94] Their fascist tendencies went beyond an animosity toward leftist protests. There was a militaristic motif running through their actions and particularly their rhetoric.

Tom McInnes left no doubt of his fascist beliefs.[95] Prior to leading the Citizens' League he was leader of the short-lived Fascist Party, later known as the Nationalist Party. The headquarters of this group was at the Lumberman's Building, 509 Richards Street, where swastikas flew from the office windows.[96]

In addition to material support, the Citizens' League also benefitted from political support. Mayor Gerry McGeer was one of the loudest advocates of the League. With his eye on becoming an MP in the 1935 federal election, McGeer painted himself in the classic role of anti-communist crusader. In his campaign for the Burnaby riding, "he extolled der fuerher openly, and expressed

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[94] This is R.C.McCandless' interpretation in his whiggish study of the 1935 Waterfront Strike. "Vancouver's 'Red Menace' of 1935: The Waterfront Situation." BC Studies, no. 22, Summer 1974, 56-70.

[95] See for example, "Communism in British Columbia." N.A. pamphlet issued by the Citizens League of BC, 1935. BCARS.

[96] J.J. McGeer, "Vancouver Underground," New Frontier, Vol.1, No.7, November 1936, p.12.

the warmest admiration for his policies."[97] One could argue he was playing pragmatic politics, looking for support from the financial community, but his rhetoric openly courted the reactionary right.[98] So inflammatory were his speeches that he received enlistment offers from private citizens prepared for McGeer's vision of civil war.

> I do not offer my services for money nor to become a party to any political clique...I served 3 years in the army during the war...I know a rifle, machine gun...I have no desire to kill except in defence of the helpless and I have no desire to protect the employer who has lived off the avails of low wages....[99]

From the nature of this note, one can see that McGeer was predicting dire conflict. Even those unsympathetic to the reactionary right were concerned--if only for the lives of women and children and not capitalism's. McGeer became so evangelical in his crusade against the left that he offended various religious groups in Vancouver.[100]

> Mr. McGeer revealed himself in his true colours, that of a fascist. All he needs is a bible in one hand, a sword in the other, a swastika pinned on his breast and he can go forth as a disciple of Herr Adolph

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[97] Ibid.

[98] McCandless, "Vancouver's 'Red Menace.'"

[99] "Letter," A.T. McKinley to G.G.McGeer, 5 June 1935,(response to radio address), McGeer Papers. Vol.9, File 5.

[100] "Correspondence," McGeer Papers, Vol.9, file 3.

Hitler..."[101]

Though offensive to some, his rhetoric served the purpose of frightening the public into accepting the need for right-wing vigilantes. Not only did he create an emotional terrain for the Citizens' League to exploit, he even helped draft recruits. In response to McKinley's letter, and others more reactionary, he would reply "I am passing a copy of your letter each to Col. Foster, Chief of Police, and Gen. Victor Odlum."[102] Both men were Citizen League organizers.

Working class activists of Vancouver were only too aware that such organizational strength confronted them. Circumstances told them that an incipient fascism coloured many mid-1930s reactionaries. Given this awareness, the workers' experience in the waterfront strike was one of military confrontation and not labour relations.

The strike officially began in Vancouver on 17 May 1935 when Powell River longshoremen affiliated with the Longshoremen and Water Transport Workers of Canada(L&WTW) walked off the job. They wanted union recognition and pay equal to their Vancouver

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[101] "Bible and Sword," (letter to the Editor re: McGeer's May 1 radio address), Vancouver Sun, 2 May 1935, p.6.

[102] "Correspondence," McGeer Papers, Vol.7, file 6. Though McGeer preferred to personally answer all his mail, his radio speeches generated such a response he made a mimeographed form letter. It was this mimeographed response McGeer used to tell his more reactionary writers their letters would be sent to Col. Foster and Gen. Odlum.

colleagues.[103] As Vancouver's dockworkers refused to handle the SS Hein Maru's Powell River cargo a disagreement between the Seafarer's Union and Coastwise Longshoremen(SUCL) and the Union Steamship Co. resulted in a local strike.[104] Three labour issues dominated the subsequent dockwide conflict: union dispatching, equal wages for ship and dock workers, and higher wages. But these simple bread and butter issues symbolized a deeper malaise. The Shipping Federation wanted to preserve the company union it created in the 1923 waterfront strike--the L&WTW--something it feared it was losing as the Depression radicalized its workforce. Since 1932 when the WUL affiliated Seafarer's Union formed on the docks, and particularly since September 1933 when the formerly timid VDWWA chose new, militant leadership, longshoremen were struggling for "a little bit of heaven"[105]: "...an autonomous organization capable of directing its own affairs, protecting its members and stopping the ruthless maiming...of workers on the beach."[106]

Well before the strike, longshoremen viewed the Shipping

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[103] Labour Gazette, pp.991-993. See also "Man Along the Shore:" The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront as told by Longshoremen themselves, 1860-1975 (Vancouver: International Longshore Workers' Union, Local 500 Pensioners, 1975.)

[104] Ibid.

[105] "Progress of the VDWWA," Heavy Lift, 23 February 1934, p.4.

[106] Ibid.

Federation as a militaristic force. The need to strike was a move against pre-existing military conditions. The workers were reacting to "the military nature of the system of hiring and dispatching, with its...court martials, with its liaison officer who made his rounds and picked out this man or that for punishment, and thereby maintained fear...and consequently the speed-up."[107] Nevertheless the longshoremen were not prepared to hear McGeer's 26 May radio speech declaring "...we are prepared to mobilize 10,000 men to keep the port open and rid this city of the red menace..."[108] Three days later, the Citizens' League made its official debut with full page advertisements in the local press. Claiming to represent "average citizens," one advertisement said the League "was formed a few months ago," and it represented "no cliques, no political parties...[or] any special interests."[109] Though its identity was vague, its goal was clear: "that law, order and decency shall prevail, and that chaos, disorder and the hopeless misery that follows...Communism shall not be permitted."[110] Of course the league was quite clear that the longshoremen's strike was the communist danger.

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[107] "The Election," Heavy Lift, 13 July 1934, p.2.

[108] "'No More Disorders, No Port Tie-up'," The Vancouver Sun, 27 May 1935, P.1.

[109] "Planned Destructiveness of Communists to be Exposed," Vancouver Sun, 29 May 1935, p.2.

[110] Ibid.

The Shipping Federation, via the Citizens' League, soon turned their bravado into violence against the strikers. The Shipping Federation had the full weight of constituted authority on its side. On 4 June scab labour loaded the MS Anten. The non-union labour was taken by private boats, from Stanley Park to avoid pickets. Before these workers arrived, two hundred police, RCMP, Provincial, and City police were waiting on the docks. That evening at five o'clock the Shipping Federation alerted the VDWWA "the agreement was called off and all who wanted to work must apply to the Federation..."[111] Fascist overtones became clearer as the dispute wore on.

The most violent confrontation of the strike was filled with militaristic imagery. The Ballantyne Pier riot of June 18 was one the bitterest clashes between citizens and militia in the 1930's. Once again, the large number of World War One veterans involved in the riot heightened the symbolism. The V&DWWA was led by an ex-serviceman, Ivan Emery. On the seventeenth Emery told a longshoreman's meeting that a gathering would be held at Powell Street Grounds at ten o'clock the next day. From there the longshoremen would march to Ballantyne pier "to interview union men now working boats."[112] In Emery's words, "we are not going down in the spirit of bravado...if [the police] turn their guns

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111 "Shipping Federation Starts Attack on Trade Unionism," Ship and Dock, 5 June 1935, p.1.

112 Police Files, CAV. 75(F)1, file 1. It is notable that this file is the transcription taken by a police spy present at the longshoremen's June 17 meeting.

on us... we will know fascism in Canada has taken off its mask."[113] Emery then urged the ex-servicemen "accustomed to the clatter of machine guns," to lead the march.[114] With this prior knowledge, the police were prepared: before noon on June 18 special detectives charged Emery with inciting to riot, even though no one had yet left Powell Street Grounds.[115] Leaderless, the ex-servicemen marched to Ballantyne Pier in a column, their war medals on their chests. Without direction from Emery, other longshoremen did not join the march. The parade was ambushed by mounted police and armed specials hiding behind a freight boxcar near the pier.[116] A three hour battle ensued. "Over 75 strikers and sympathizers were injured, many seriously, two with gunshot wounds."[117]

The event marked a watershed in the workers' dialogue with the state and the Shipping Federation. "18 June 1935...is

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[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] From the arrest file one can glimpse the orchestration of the arrest. It reads, detectives Hoarz and McKay arrested Emery at 11:55 and says he was "accused, charged, and warned in presence of Gordon Grant, barrister and Major T.G.McLellan in former's office," ending curtly, "he had nothing to say." "Memo to WW Foster," Police Files, CAV, 75(F)1 file 2.

[116] Interview with John Stanton, 18 July 1990. See also John Stanton, Never Say Die! The Life and Times of a Pioneer Labour Lawyer (Ottawa: Steel Rail, 1987), Chapter 2.

[117] "Backup Waterfront Strike," BC Lumberworker, 22 June 1935, p.1. See John Stanton, Never Say Die.

historic. On that date fascism came out in the open...Canadians, whether labour or white collar, now face fascism."[118] For the longshoremen waging a strike for labour and living conditions and many other workers in Vancouver; fascism, not labour relations, was the issue. To make the point clear, the Ship and Dock reported on 20 July that several months before the dispute began "representatives from all Pacific ports were in Vancouver for some kind of parley,...the guest of honour was the vice-president of the Silver Shirts, the fascist organization of California."[119] The militaristic overtones of the dispute continued apace. On the 13 July The Strike Bulletin noted "a large number of young men wearing Blue Shirts were observed going through various drills outside the Immigration Sheds."[120] This, the bulletin noted, was "the introduction of Mussolini's and Hitler's methods to Canada."[121]

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[118] "Letter," Ship and Dock, 5 July 1935, p.3.

[119] "Shipping Federation Organizational Structure Along Lines of Super, Semi-Fascist Kind," Ship and Dock, 20 July 1935, p.2. This charge is supported by A.M. Stephen, a CCF activist. "Several months before the lockout on the waterfront, it was reported, on good authority, that a prominent official of the American Nazi organization, the Silver Shirts, attended a banquet given by members of the Shipping Federation in Vancouver. On this occasion, there is every reason to suspect the details of the plan to smash the unions on the Vancouver waterfront were worked out." A.M. Stephen, "Hitlerism in Canada," (Vancouver: The Canadian League Against War and Fascism, circa 1935, William Bennett Collection, UBC Special Collections), pp.25-26.

[120] Waterfront Strike Bulletin, No. 33. 13 July 1935.

[121] Ibid.

It was in part the type of citizen that made the special police a parallel to Hitler's fascists. "Agents Provocateur ...stools and dregs of the underworld" were hired by the state because "first, they [would] club ...the citizens for a few pennies; second...such dirty work is becoming distasteful to the regular police..."[122] In fighting against this group of people the longshoremen and their supports were not merely facing state directed militia, their struggle was against an independent, para-military force, they needed only turn to Europe to see a working model of what they confronted.

The impact of events parallel to fascist Germany occurring in Vancouver sent shock waves through left-wing groups throughout the province. Letters from such groups poured into offices of the Attorney General, Mayor McGeer, Chief of Police Foster and Premier Patullo. The number of protests and the level of outrage most groups expressed gives an idea of the profound impact of the issue.

> The Citizens' League of BC was formed for the express purpose of openly combatting the protests and struggles of the workers and their organizations who were striving for better working-class conditions. The spokesman of the C.L.of BC utilizes the radio to conduct a campaign of incitement against individuals and organizations that do not conform with their ...ideas. The extra-legal nature of this League is dangerous to the democratic rights of the people, in that it forms the nucleus for vigilante committees

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[122] "Fascism on the Waterfront," Ship and Dock, 5 August 1935, p.1.

and is based on terrorism.[123]

From a workers perspective, the most disconcerting fact was that this was merely the culmination of a trend. "Terrorism of a fascist character...duplicates...the terrorism that has already resulted from the application of Section 98, at Princeton, Vernon, Creston, Cranbrook, and Enderby."[124] That this reaction was state-produced and supported was never in doubt; workers's legal defence was even hampered through the "apprehension of those delivering bail bonds to the police station."[125]

Like his European contemporaries, McGeer was prepared to wear the clothes of a war hero despite lacking a service record. Commenting on the cannon the provincial police placed on the waterfront one longshoreman wrote:

> Field guns are becoming obsolete...They were in fashion...during the Great War, when His Worship had every opportunity...to use...field guns against an enemy force in defence of his country...but his courage

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[123] Letter to Attorney General Sloan from Prince George Workers' Protective Association. 16 October 1935. Attorney General's Correspondence Inward, Box 22, File 3. BCARS. The huge number of letters reflects the concern many working-class advocates held over the rising domestic militarist threat. Some senders were: The Finnish Organization of Canada; Canadian Labor Defence League Branches; International Union of Operating Engineers; United Brotherhood of Carpenters; Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders; Brotherhood of Railway Carmen; Burnaby Taxpayers Association; CCF clubs; Various Wards of the Ratepayers Association. Ibid.

[124] Letter to Honorable Gordon Sloan, Attorney General, 16 August 1935, Attorney General's Correspondence Inward. Box 22 file 4. BCARS.

[125] Ibid.

> failed him when his country needed him most...Now he has become a militant [buying] field guns...to shoot and slaughter defenseless, courageous heroes of the Great War....[126]

While McGeer was prepared to tell unemployed ex-servicemen "the McGeers didn't serve to get off the bread-line,"[127] it is possible the author of the above quote knew that McGeer used family connections to escape service in the first World war.[128]

Although the strike wore on into November, the duration was only testimony to the resilience of the strikers. The strike was hopeless once the forces of the State combined with the Shipping Federation's private vigilantes. The strike is a crucial episode in the formation of workers' views on militarism because of the manoeuvres of capital and the state. To paint the longshoremen as revolutionary Bolsheviks, when many had served on the docks for decades and were ex-servicemen, served to construct a false threat. From the longshoremen's perspective, there were no apparent limits to the government's advocacy of reactionary, militaristic force. If it was justified in an episode of labour relations, where asked many on the left, would it end? Were not the "dirty slanders of Mayor McGeer and the daily press...laying

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126 "Field Gun Gerry," Ship and Dock, 20 August 1935, p.3.

127 WESL letter to Police Commission. "The grossly insulting suggestion that most of the vets joined for a meal ticket, following on the use of the cenotaph form which he read the Riot Act, calls for a public apology to the vets." CAV 33(B)6 file 8.

128 "Correspondence," McGeer Papers, Vol.1, File, 4.

the base for fascism?"[129]

> First they decide that finance capital can only keep in the saddle...through the fascist programme,(ie.force) second, their fascist movement must have a mass base...this is accomplished by rousing the people to a state of alarm...a strike of camp workers becomes a communist plot...other struggles are linked...patriotism, religion...every conceivable demagogy is resorted to...Having aroused a sufficient amount of reaction, the next step is the actual formation of fascist organizations now seen in the city.[130]

Clearly, by the end of 1935, working class activists viewed capitalism and the State with a more profound level of distrust than before the Depression. And as the quote indicates, the force the ruling class used against them was directly equated with fascism. This distrust reinforced an inherited set of anti-militarist ideas and brought those ideas to the forefront of working-class protest.

With the Depression came a new degree of working-class dissent. The hardship of the early 1930s included the idea of anti-militarism as a part of the variegated skein of working-class protest. In this period working class lives were infused with the imagery and experiences of militarism. Business, law, politics--for many in the working class, militarism became a common theme of the regular function of the dominant social class. To question the hegemony of BC's dominant class was to

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[129] "Down With the Citizens' League," Ship and Dock, 5 June 1935, p.4.

[130] Ibid.

invite a suffocating response of militaristic force. Those on relief and working-class activists experienced militarism in the three means cited above: overt state force, regimentation and social control, and a BC hybrid of fascism. As the early 1930s wore on, the language of working-class dissent spoke more frequently of capitalist, state militarism. These words followed their experience like a "phonetic shadow."[131]

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[131] Leon Trotsky, Literature and Revolution. Cited in B. Palmer, Descent into Discourse, p.3.

Chapter Three

The Dialectics of Dissent

The social violence of the early 1930s shaped the BC working-class experience. The sectional leftist political scene debated the significance of the growing militarism in BC society. The experience was also expressed through the minor renaissance in workers' culture in the 1930s.[1] Various leftist interest groups engaged in a protracted dialogue on the proper response to the burgeoning militaristic reaction. As the threat of violent reaction grew, the debate shifted to the problems and possibilities of a united front in BC comprised of CPC members and the various hues of BC social democrats and progressive minded liberals. Militarism was one of the most important constitutive factors in the debate because the growing militarism of the reactionary right profoundly influenced workers' existence.

On a cultural level, through the collective experience of opposition the BC working class sustained itself by developing a social support network. Neighborhood block councils, women's labour leagues, unemployed workers councils, arts festivals, working class theatre and other group activities nurtured a left-wing dialogue on an alternative social order. Such a cultural

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[1] See Bonita Bray The Weapon of Culture. Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1990; B.Bray, "Against All Odds: The Progressive Arts Club's Production of Waiting for Lefty," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol.25, No.3 (Fall 1990), 106-22.

framework facilitated a comprehensive dialogue on the left. Critiques of the dominant ideology and socialist alternatives were routinely discussed in this atmosphere of heightened worker solidarity.

On the political level, both the CCF and the CPC in BC referred to the social problem of militarism as a major plank in their political platforms. In political speeches and journals this issue formed an important theme in the dialogue of dissent with the state. At first glance this rhetoric of dissent appears to be an expression of anti-statism, but the language suggests something more complex and multi-dimensional.[2] In rooting its critiques in local social context, many leftist social and particularly political groups developed an analysis that combined bourgeois pacifism with the contemporary, working-class experiences of the early 1930s. As the threat of international fascism grew in parallel with the domestic experiences of militarism, the issue of militarism became one around which both revolutionary and reformist socialists could rally.

In examining the rhetoric of militarism one also gains insight into the nature of the pacifist influence in the CCF and

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[2] I am indebted to Dr. Keith Ralston for comments he made to me on the issue of authoritarianism and the state. (Interview with Dr. Keith Ralston, June 1990).

how it differed from working-class anti-militarism.[3] Predecessors to the CCF's socialist/pacifist alignment had begun forming a relationship in Canada during World War One, notably at the same time that communism and social democracy rose from the ashes of the Second International. But by the mid-1930s radical pacifists in the CCF, who spoke for social reorganization as a route to peace, struggled to explain a practical application of their non-violent credo. In the League Against War and Fascism and the struggle in Spain there was a way to channel resistance against the daily experiences of relief queues, wage cuts and riot police, in other words, to actively respond against the tangible experience of militarism instead of promoting the nebulous concept of peace. These causes did not simply attract non-interventionists and pacifists in the CCF as some have claimed.[4] The socio-economic experience of many working-class people in the 1930s made them propitious to action against fascism since they experienced a form of fascism in BC. Rather than an issue that split the CCF ranks and divided the left over isolationism,[5] one

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[3] For a good outline of the pacifist heritage of the CCF see Thomas Socknat, "The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF." ed. J. William Brennan, Building the Co-operative Commonwealth: Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1984).

[4] Thomas Socknat, "The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF." p.64.

[5] This is a view taken by Thomas Socknat in "The pacifist Background of the Early CCF." It should be noted that he is concerned with the pacifist influence on the CCF whereas I am writing on the working class experience of militarism.

should regard resistance to militarism and fascism as a sort of lingua franca: it was impossible to speak of peace as a realm separate from the contemporary socio-economic problem. Anti-militarism was one of the fundamental issues around which a disunited left could have rallied, and in Spain did rally. Though the rhetoric of peace in the divided left was infused with partisan issues and political posturing that clouded the issue of militarism, mutual interest in resisting fascism and a common belief that peace could only grow from a new framework of social justice, remained constant. That it remained so was due mainly to the fact that many on the left experienced in their daily lives the growth of militaristic reaction in the province. In this sense the rhetoric foreshadowed BC's participation in Spain's civil war.

The CPC was the only group on the left to mount an active campaign directed explicitly against militarism. The depression era saw the party grow from the roots it established in the 1920s as a vehicle for social protest.[6] Importantly, the national social context was not the only source of ideological inspiration. More than almost any topic, the CPC's position on militarism was influenced by the Comintern. The combination of a

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[6] See Byan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto: Butterworth, 1983); Norman Penner, Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond (Toronto: Methuen, 1988); John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Lita-Rose Betcherman, The Little Band: The Clashes Between the Communists and the Political and Legal Establishments in Canada, 1928-1932 (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982).

Moscow-first agenda and Canadian class struggle framed the CPC's discourse on militarism.

The CPC grew slowly in the early 1920s. Because of its relatively minor international position, the Comintern paid little attention to the CPC. Ironically the Canadian movement benefitted from this high degree of haphazard autonomy. This independence permitted, for example, the development of working-class, foreign-language sections. Such groups accurately represented an economy built on immigrant labour.[7] These groups were only one way in which the relative independence of the incipient CPC gave it the opportunity to formulate policy according to the unique character of the Canadian working class. But the early potential of the CPC was subverted by two opposing forces: the pervasive influence of monopoly capitalism's expansion years and, unexpectedly, the political machinations of Stalinism.

From 1923 to 1929 the Communist Internationale experienced Stalinization. In an effort to preserve "socialism in one country," Moscow took a greater role in determining the political platforms of national communist parties world wide.[8] By 1928 the complex dynamics of national Russian politics and the international demands of global socialism produced new policy for the Internationale. In this year the Sixth Congress of the

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

Communist Internationale claimed the greater proportion of the global working class was radicalized. This move was ideally a first step to creating a greater international revolutionary workers' movement. The Internationale urged workers world-wide to stress their occupational fraternity--as opposed to previous community and ethnic cultural ties--leave the reformist trade unions and form their own dual, "revolutionary unions."[9]

In the Canadian context the most significant development of the new comintern policy was the decision in June 1929 to create the WUL. With their purpose confused and ill-defined, the Canadian Communist central committee dutifully followed the directions of Lozovsky, the Russian Red International Labour Union (RILU) strategist. By June 1930 organizing committees across the land had formed in several industries. The same month, under the national leadership of Tom Ewen, the WUL central committee adopted a draft constitution outlining its objectives and modus operandi. This document was the definitive guide for the WUL until the inaugural national convention in August 1932.[10] The constitution declared "the Canadian Section of the Red International Labor Unions" would

> organize the Canadian workers into powerful revolutionary Industrial Unions created on the basis of the widest rank and file control; to fight for the defense and improvement of the conditions of the working

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ian Radforth, "The Workers' Unity League in Ontario," unpublished PhD. research paper, York University, 1979.

> class, mobilizing and organizing the Canadian workers for the final overthrow of capitalism and for the establishment of a Revolutionary Workers' Government.[11]

Lost in the bravado of the manifesto lies hidden the most significant accomplishment of the WUL in the depression: The struggle to defend and improve working-class conditions became the WUL's hallmark. Further, the statement neglects to identify the significance of the unemployed, the working-class constituency where it would garner the most militant support. The shortcomings of this statement highlight the fundamental flaw in WUL strategy: foreign strategists could appreciate the subtleties of neither the Canadian political economy nor the character of its working class. Nowhere is this clearer than in the WUL-affiliated organizations' declarations on militarism.

For the BC working class the threat of militarism was double edged--it came from both the unique social context of 1930s BC and the international dynamics of foreign affairs. Equally, the anti-militarist position of WUL affiliates originated from dual sources. RILU strategists could not respond to economic hardship and state repression in BC any more than the BC working class--haunted by the threat of relief queues--could appreciate the need to work in defence of Russian communism. Out of this paradox grew a hybrid anti-militarism unique to BC.

With such a Leninist political structure the WUL frequently found itself responding to foreign-made directives on war and militarism. In propaganda terms such a system held only one

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[11] Ibid.

benefit: the WUL and affiliates did not show public indecision. This was particularly important since WUL activists were often the most obvious participants in confrontations with the state. Their apparent resolve on the issue of militarism stood in stark contrast to the public debates of social democratic groups. But their strength was also their weakness. When the CPC followed international directives and moved from stressing a defence of socialism in one country, and requisite attack on social democrats, to a united front against fascist militarism in 1935, their abrupt turn undoubtedly cost them some credibility.

The straightforward, parti pris flavour to the WUL's anti-militarist rhetoric was the internationalist side to its discourse. The other was its activist campaign in BC. Beyond its pro-Soviet Union position, the WUL affiliates led an information campaign informing the working class on the rise of militarist reaction in the province.

In the early 1930s public demonstrations and printed propaganda were the WUL's main methods for organizing the working class. Whereas newspapers enjoyed the privilege of a relatively abstract and detached forum, public demonstrations made a statement through the passion and intensity of confrontation. Papers could educate by analyzing the origins and function of the political economic structure; demonstrations inspired the working class through passion and created dramatic symbols of class struggle. Militant protest was an important statement against militarism because public demonstrations stripped bare the

dialectic of working-class dissent and reactive state authority.

In BC the best example of a WUL affiliated paper was The Unemployed Worker. It was connected to the WUL as an "organ of [the] Vancouver Central Council [of the] National Unemployed Workers Association."[12] Socialist education and militant activism underscored every article. At its worst, it preached abstract socialist theory, dogmatically toed the Communist Internationale line and ran esoteric features on the Parisienne Communards.[13] At its best, it was a corresponding network for unemployed province-wide, raising the working-class's collective conscience by documenting a fraternity of hardship and struggle.

The most problematic aspect of the WUL's anti-militarist rhetoric was the dogmatic Internationale line. "The most predisposing factor to growth in the early years of the CPC--the Russian connection--had been neutralized by the late 1920s."[14] Tim Buck admitted the suspicions of party leaders in 1928 "when he informed a party meeting that the party's slogans on the immanence of capitalist war on the Soviet Union had left the

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[12] Unemployed Worker, Masthead.

[13] Unemployed Worker, 8 March 1933, pp.1 and 12.

[14] John Manley, "Communism and the Canadain Working Class During the Great Depression: The Workers' Unity League, 1930-1936. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Carleton University, 1985, p.28.

masses totally unmoved."[15] Despite reservations from the highest Canadian authority, organs such as the Unemployed Worker tried to marry defense of the Soviet Union to domestic worker's anti-militarism. But it was a shot-gun wedding: the rhetoric rang hollow and was at times pleading. "We can hardly lift a copy of the local reptile press without seeing some [slanderous] reference to the Soviet Union...Campaign after campaign has been launched by the press as a part of the war preparations...[the press] sets out to mold the minds of the workers, to prepare them for the invasion of the worker's republic."[16] Many readers accepted the paper's caveat on propaganda in the popular press. But it was easier for BC workers to understand capitalism caused war than to believe Russia was the only significant theatre of

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[15] Manley, "Communism and the Canadian Working Class During the Great Depression," p.46. Cited from UofT Kenny Collection, Box 2, Tim Buck "Report of Industrial Department," CPC Fourth National Convention, 1925, pp.7-8.

Although CPC leaders wanted the working class to regard the Russian Experiment as socialist Mecca, most evidence clearly suggests bread and butter issues inspired the BC working class beyond Comintern strategists. The best examples are in the anecdotes of R. Liversedge, Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek, 1935 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1973). Typical is the encounter between "Comrade Sands," (A.K.A.Walthers) a German war veteran who fought as a Communist in fin de guerre Germany, and Red Walsh. They met at Hope while organizing the December 1934 work camp striker's march to Vancouver:

Red...saw the crowd was not as big as he had thought it would be. He asked Sands, "Are both camps here?"

"No," said Sands "...You see, according to Lozovsky-"

"Who the hell's Lozovsky?" interrupted Red, "Have the boys up, and we'll march to the top camp, everybody out, including this Lozovsky." Recollections, pp.52-52.

[16] "More War Preparations on the (sic) Against the Soviet Union," Unemployed Worker, 7 February 1931, p.3.

conflict.

In addition to endless homilies on the need to defend the Soviet Union, some articles implied the BC worker's loyalty to Russia should know no bounds.

> The Bennett government has shown that it is a...government of war...we have a duty to the workers of the Soviet Union, who have shown us how to build up socialism that will greatly improve the conditions of the workers and remove for all time the threat of unemployment and poverty.[17]

The greater proportion of such anti-war pieces concluded with a set of rousing, militant phrases. In this case, "Defeat the War Plans of the Bennett Government!/Refuse to handle war materials!/Strike for higher Wages and fight for non-contributory Unemployment Insurance!/Defend the Soviet Union!"[18] It was a common format for such motivational articles to end by exhorting workers to defend Russia.

Paternalistic rhetoric on the 'duty' BC workers owed to "the great fatherland of the toilers of the world"[19] was not successful; nevertheless, this formed a fundamental component of

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[17] no title, Unemployed Worker, 17 June 1932, p.2.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Georgi Dimitroff The United Front Against Fascism. Speeches delivered at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, July 25-August 20, 1935. New York: New Century Publishers, p.7. UBC Angus McInnis Collection.

the Unemployed Workers discourse. A more successful tactic recognized the peculiar qualities of the class struggle in BC: to struggle against reactionary state forces would reduce such groups' resources and therefore their ability to wage war. With such an approach, there is no sharp distinction between defending a foreign country, defeat of a European fascist regime and personal economic survival. This argument identifies a single war danger both international and domestic. This idea was an important part of the Unemployed Worker's propaganda.

> Bennett invokes the "Iron Heel of ruthlessness" against the militant workers in their struggle against starvation, wage cuts and war...The struggle against German fascism, against Hitlerism, is a struggle against rising fascism in Canada, against Section 98, deportation, sedition and all anti-labor laws, for freedom of speech, press and organization--it is a struggle against political reaction in Canada.[20]

The Unemployed Worker told working-class people they experienced militarism in the form of the administration of relief and other government placebos for workers such as meager veteran's aid and purposeless community work projects. The Unemployed Worker stressed the connection between state apparatus coercing a domestic work force and the threat of war--both were connected through the tangible local effects of capitalism.

In WUL rhetoric, imperialism was the root of the international war danger. Capitalism's global economy created

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[20] "Workers' Solidarity Against Fascism: Stop Hitler's Horrors!" Toronto, Canadian Labor Defense League, no date, no author. p.3. William Bennett Collection, UBC Special Collections.

imperialism through its need for foreign markets and resources. In an effort to preserve the global capitalist system, the Soviet Union was an ultimate threat. Workers in capitalist states were confronting the same forces of capital when they organized for relief or better conditions. In both realms such a political economic system would resort to armed force. Put succinctly,

> when you defend the Soviet Union against imperialist robbers and against their fascist mercenaries you are defending your own vital interests and fighting more effectively against imperialist war...Against the capitalist offensive, against strike-breaking and against the attempts to rob you of the right of combination. Against fascism...Against Imperialist war-mongers![21]

To associate local issues with international forces CPC affiliates followed the RILU argument: they described it as a manifestation of capitalist imperialism. But to argue for class struggle in Russia's defence was no more sophisticated than R.B. Bennett's claim that Canadian left-wing dissent was foreign-born. In a curious way, both ideological camps displayed their dogmatic self interest when they neglected the nature and significance of indigenous working-class dissent.

The idea of fascism was a difficult concept to explain. But it was a better propaganda model than imperialism because it had a tangible European manifestation and could be compared with the local radical right. CPC organizations used three thematic threads to weave the threat of fascism into the fabric of their

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[21] "Manifesto on August 1st, Anti-War Day." Unemployed Worker May 1932, p.5.

anti-militarist rhetoric. The threat fascism posed to international peace was a well-worked argument not exclusive to WUL affiliates. But in the social framework of 1930s BC, WUL groups made two original and genuinely influential contributions to the left-wing dialogue on fascism: they produced a detailed socialist analysis of the social function of fascism and its tactics vis-a-vis the domestic working class, and by the campaign's diligence, alerted the working class to the organizations and manoeuvres of BC's reactionary right.

To understand the mechanics of an incipient ideology was no easy task. "The concurrence of the appearance of a new social phenomenon and of the attempt to understand it is more striking in the case of fascism than in any other of modern history."[22] In the pages of the Unemployed Worker and the language of various pamphlets and speeches made by WUL affiliates communist activists engaged in the dual task of formulating a socialist analysis of the fascist phenomenon and informing workers to beware of its domestic hybrid.[23]

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[22] Ernest Mandel, p.9 of introduction in Leon Trotsky, The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971).

[23] See for example, "Will Canada Escape Fascism?" pamphlet, no date, no author. Canadian League Against War and Fascism, Toronto. William Bennett Collection, Special Collections Division, UBC;"Report of the First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism," Compiled by Fred Hodgson and A. Dresser. Toronto: League Against War and Fascism, 1935, William Bennett Collection, UBC Special Collections; A.M. Stephen, "Hitlerism in Canada," The Canadian League Against Fascism, Vancouver, circa 1935. Angus McInnis Collection, Special Collections Division, UBC.

The Unemployed Worker's discourse on fascism evolved directly from its earlier writing on imperialism and war. Until 1932 imperialism and international class struggle were the focus of the Unemployed Worker's rhetoric on militarism. With this argument the war threat was the imperialist countries' response to depression.

> Capitalism is making desperate efforts to find a way out of its internal and external difficulties by means of war. War at home... civil war against the working class! A capitalist offensive [on] wage cuts, cuts in employment and other benefits, the destruction of social legislation, the suppression of strikes...War abroad: the imperialist war against China, the suppression of the colonial peoples...war provocation against the Soviet Union.[24]

As a joint statement issued by the communist parties of Germany, France, Great Britain, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Italy, and United States of America, the quote indicates that the Internationale continued to popularize capitalist imperialism as the working class's greatest threat. But if CPC leaders found difficulty inspiring Canadian workers to defend Russia, then the same was true of the danger of imperialism in a former colony.

Beyond elaborating the link of domestic capitalism and imperialism the manifesto also foreshadows the WUL's shifting priorities."Germany is faced with the immediate establishment of a fascist dictatorship. In the government of big industrialists, agrarian Junkers, and Generals appointed by Field Marshal von

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[24] "Manifesto on August 1st Anti-war Day," Unemployed Worker May 1932, p.2.

Hindenburg...are the representatives of extreme reaction."[25] German fascists, the Manifesto stated, were fueling the "chauvinist and nationalizing incitement of broad masses in order to prepare a new imperial war," at the behest of a German bourgeoisie in financial crisis.[26]

This document indicates that workers were informed of the threat of fascism prior to Hitler's accession. It represents the volatile inter-war period in European affairs and the 6th Internationale's attempts to respond through its network of international support. It is significant that when the internationale inspired national communist parties to struggle against domestic fascism, WUL groups had been involved in such a struggle for over two years.[27]

1933 was a watershed in the WUL's discourse on militarism. Fascism was now the undisputed war threat. Unlike the nebulous concept of imperialism, fascism, if not understood, could be described in terms of an immediate danger, a local threat, and clearly a "snarling devouring monster."[28] In May 1933 the Third International decided to mobilize a 'concerted effort' to resist the fascist offensive. Two months later The Unemployed Worker

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[25] Ibid. pp.2 and 5.

[26] Ibid.

[27] In the Summer of 1933 The Unemployed Worker began to run stories on workers meeting to discuss the threat of fascism.

[28] Unemployed Worker. 2 June 1933, p.2.

relayed the decision.

> The Communist Party of Canada in keeping with the International has sent out a call to all working class organizations in the Dominion and the Vancouver Unemployed Councils has received one. The Unemployed Worker...has been told by the Provincial Bureau to popularize this call in its columns.[29]

In the full page 'clarion call to all workers' there is no mention of imperialism. But the declaration makes clear that fascism is a manifestation of capitalism. "The offensive of capital which is rapidly concentrating into open Fascism here in Canada is pushing the wage levels...downward...paring the miserable relief scales to a starvation point...protests are clubbed into silence and the right to organize in danger of suppression."[30] Domestic repression that was once described as a product of capitalism and class struggle was hereafter understood as the domestic encroachment of fascism.

An important result of the Third Internationale's decision was a more flexible position regarding other left wing groups, most notably trade unions.[31] Until then the Internationale's efforts to formulate a policy regarding fascism's unfamiliar

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[29] no title, Unemployed Worker, 25 July 1933, p.2.

[30] Ibid.

[31] For the early origins of WUL unions and a look at part of the C.P. inspiration for anti-militarism see, L. Peterson, "Revolutionary Socialism and Industrial Unrest in the Era of the Winnipeg General Strike: The Origins of Communist Labour Unionism in Europe and North America," Labour/Le Travail, 13 (Spring 1984), 115-131.

ideology is reflected in the WUL's use of the term. "Fascist" became a generalized epithet encompassing a range of associated evils and threats, even opponents within trade unions.[32]

If fascism replaced the idea of imperialism as the greatest militarist danger for the working class, then how to overcome this threat became the problematic issue. WUL writers not only labelled the three levels of government fascist, they also claimed the social democrats, by not offering stronger resistance to the reactionary right, were tacitly supporting fascism or as WUL groups described it, behaving like "social fascists". This position was spelled out in a pamphlet put out in 1932 under the auspices of the Unemployed Worker. The pamphlet was written in response to an incident in Nanaimo at a CCF rally. When Arthur Evans, WUL representative, attempted to question the guest speaker Dr. Lyle Telford, the chair of the meeting denied Evans speaking privileges because of his communist affiliation.

> In deeds these [CCF] fascists act in the same manner as those in Italy and Germany. They have their own brand of democracy, the CCF brand--an anti-working-class brand. They are justly called social fascists--that is socialists in words and fascists in deeds. The CCF of Canada lay the basis for fascism, paves the way by preaching passivity to wage cuts and hunger and at the same time pretending to be fighting for socialism and the workers....[33]

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[32] The pervasive use of the term is another example of the symbolic consciousness of impending war--a 'Titanic' mentality.

[33] "CCF Aids Bennett's Iron Heel Policy," Pamphlet published under auspices of The Unemployed Worker. No date.

I. Avakumovic cites three reasons for the communists' pre-1935 attack on the social democrats: the utopianism of the movement, the poor performance of the Albertan, CCF-affiliated, UFA government, and the gains the CCF was making in left-wing constituencies the CPC believed were rightfully theirs.[34] But with war clouds gathering in the distance there was added urgency in the dialogue. More than ever before, militancy was needed to stem the tide of global reaction. Bourgeois pacifism and parliamentary socialism became "the traitorous road of democracy, that starves, mutilates and smashes the labor organizations and the militancy of the workers in the name of social peace and harmony."[35] This period also heard the CPC describe the CCF with such terms as 'labor fakirs,' 'yellow dogs,' and 'the third party of fascism.'[36] But it is the term social fascist that plays on the working class's undefined fears of state reaction and military force.

Ironically, the European left's struggle with fascism made a valuable contribution to BC working class campaigns against militarism. WUL affiliates in BC were well informed of events in Italy and Germany. BC organs, through such reportage, could from a distance note the dangerous characteristics of European fascism

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[34] I.Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada: A History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), Chapter 3.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

such as nativism, sexism, and rigid authoritarianism. Many workers in BC thought the function and nature of these European fascist governments was very similar to Canada's. In 1934 this point was driven home when Hans Kist, the graphics artist for the Unemployed Worker was deported under Section 41 of the Canadian Immigration Act.[37] Upon arriving in Nazis Germany government forces promptly executed him for his communist affiliation. The Unemployed Worker made clear the implications of this event: the paper ran a front page graphic depicting a coffin with Kist's name on it. Kist's ultimate sacrifice, noted the Unemployed Worker, was not a result of his German nationality but as a result of struggling against the reactionary Canadian political economy. That Kist met his fate at the hands of German fascists only underlined the international--including Canadian--nature of fascism. "The struggles of the unemployed continue and their ranks are constantly thinned by the attacks of the reactionary forces in Canada."[38]

BC's resource-based economy had spawned a rich critical heritage concerning capitalism's inequities and state/worker confrontation. Thus the WUL found a receptive BC working class audience when it argued fascism's ruthless social programme--a product of capitalism--could grow in BC soil. They were not only

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[37] See pp.28-29, Chapter 2.

[38] Unemployed Worker, 13 December 1933, p.1.

"within sound of the drum" but they were part of the ensemble.[39]

The connection between Europe's struggle with fascism and BC's was solidified with the appearance of the League Against War and Fascism. The League was the Canadian model of the Internationale's most concentrated effort to confront the threat of Fascism.[40] The first efforts to form a national network began in 1934 when the Canadian Youth Congress Against War and Fascism held a national conference in Toronto August 4 and 5.[41] Prior to this congress was the smaller "All Canadian Youth Congress Against War and Fascism" June 30 to July 1.[42] These efforts culminated in the League's formative conference in Toronto, September 4 to 6. Here, there emerged a source of international writers against fascism and greater funding for BC's WUL groups.

In BC there was strong support for an anti-fascist organization at an even earlier date. On April 14 at the

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[39] Quote made by R.B. Bennett made in reference to the depression-era Canadian generation. These people, as war loomed in the horizon and played on their collective memories, were born within sound of the military drum. "For, with brief, infrequent intervals, we have been in battle, one way or another, since 1914." R.B. Bennett, 4th address to the House of Commons, 1935 in Recollections of On-to-Ottawa Trek, p.254. J.S. Woodsworth quoted Bennett's statement in the House of Commons on 26 June 1935 in reference to the On-to-Ottawa-Trek and only days before the Regina Riot.

[40] Report of the First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Youth Congress Against War and Fascism," 16 May 1934, p.8.

Vancouver Moose Temple, 636 Burrard, one hundred BC organizations representing 30,000 people drafted a manifesto and constitution to form the BC League Against War and Fascism.[43] To gain a broad audience, the league played down affiliations with the CPC and made no mention of affiliation in its draft constitution.[44] To this end, A.M.Stephen of the CCF was slated to be chair but was unable to attend (Stephen became actively involved and penned anti-fascist pamphlets for the league).[45] Further, Canon Cooper of the Anglican church gave a long speech to the meeting calling war "...one of the worst enemies of civilization."[46] Adding to the respectable air, the conference selected Rev. Mr. Willey as treasurer of the league. But the conference did not completely gainsay its communist affiliations: the conference welcomed with fanfare letters from Tom Mann, "the CPC", an "interpreted resolution from the Chinese Anti-Imperialist League", and the American anti-war congress.[47]

That the BC League Against War and Fascism preceded the national league by over six months is evidence of both the growth

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Note, this is the principal emphasis of Socknat and Avacumovic.

[45] "BC League Against War and Fascism Gets Good Start," Unemployed Worker, 18 April 1934, p.2.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

of reactionary forces within BC and the corresponding virulence of a working-class movement of protest. Although the BC league received external CP impetus, the early formation represents a culmination of working-class concern over the radical right within BC.

The organizational network of The League Against War and Fascism circulated a single message above all others: the war threat of indigenous fascism. For their part, neither I. Avacumovic, an historian of the CPC, nor T. Socknat consider fear of the domestic radical right as a formative influence on the League.[48] But the League's position was clear. Fascism "expresses the need for centralized authority which appears in a time of economic breakdown and spiritual vacuum." In essence, the system functions through a combination of four factors:

> the need in a time of economic breakdown of a centralized direction of the national economy, the need in a time of international tension of a unified direction of national policy, the need in a time of spiritual chaos of a passionate affirmation of tribal unity, and last but not least, the human desire of

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[48] Thomas J. Socknat Witness Against War; Ivan Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada. For his part Norman Penner recognizes the League's work in identifying indigenous fascism, but he underplays the work. He cites only A.M. Stephen's "Hitlerism in Canada." This ignores the report of the first National convention and the raison d'etre the "Plan of action," an outline of how to organize against domestic fascism. Finally, he also neglects to mention "Will Canada Escape Fascism," The League's most well-reasoned examination of the threat of Canadain fascism. Penner, Canadian Communism: the Stalin Years and Beyond, p.135. Penner's failure to adequately recognize the domestic agency of the CPC is the theme of David Akers' review in Labour/Le Travail, Vol.23 (Spring 1989), pp.290-92.

the Fascist leaders for power."[49]

Through these economic, spiritual, and social characteristics fascism, as the last phase of capitalism, leads to war "as in a slowly dying man unexpected powers of resistance surge forth in a last, violent struggle against dissolution..."[50] As a threat to the working class, the League stressed "the extent to which [the] movement [was] a spontaneous one, arising out of the immediate need of the workers to unite against their dangers."[51] With this understanding of Fascism 'League' representatives could reasonably ask, "Given that [Canada] does occupy a prominent place in the world economy, swept by the same social forces that sweep every land, is it possible for Canada to escape Fascism?"[52] In response to this rhetorical question, the various branches of the League went about documenting the existence of Fascist elements in Canadian society. The BC branch published several pamphlets (the number is difficult to discern exactly). All of this indicates the structure of the League and the plan of action was deliberate and well designed.[53] It was so well designed, in

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[49] "Will Canada Escape Fascism?" p.14.

[50] "Will Canada Escape Fascism," p.15.

[51] Report of the First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism, p.14.

[52] "Will Canada Escape Fascism?" p.3.

[53] See appendix for the organizational structure of the League.

fact, that many of the pamphlets published as a conclusion "The Plan of Action," a list of objectives to prevent the spread of fascism in Canada.[54] Basic to this plan was the need to educate and spread information on indigenous fascism. This project effectively influenced the many WUL-affilitated publications in BC.

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[54] The Plan of Action was consistent in the national and provincial League pamphlets:
1.To form committees against war and fascism in every important industry and centre, particularly in basic war industries. To secure the support of all organizations and individuals seeking to prevent war, paying special attention to labor, farmer, veteran and unemployed organizations, and to interest as well the middle classes. 2.To organize mass meetings, demonstrations, lectures, parades and similar activities in order to make popular this Plan of Action, and to publish leaflets, pamphlets, and journals. To agitate and propagate for the widest struggle against war and fascism. 3.To work towards the stopping of the manufacture and transport of munitions and war supplies through mass demonstrations, picketing and strikes. 4.To demand the transfer of all military expenditures to the relief of the unemployed and the replacement of the present inadequate relief measures by a system of unemployment and social insurance and an adequate public works program. 5. To expose everywhere the extensive preparations for war and to oppose all developments leading to fascism in Canada. To resist the increasing use of armed police against the workers and farmers and to fight against the suppression of the workers' rights to strike and picket. To uphold freedom of speech and assembly for the workers. To oppose such fascist measures by our federal and provincial governments as Section 98, the Arcand and David Bills in Quebec, and the growing fascist tendencies in all provinces. 6. To give effective aid to all anti-fascist fighters in those countries where fascism is either established or threatening. 7.To specially enlist women and youth in the movement against war and fascism and to secure the sympathy and interest of the teachers, university professors and leaders of all youth organizations. 8.To protest against the arbitrary and fascist-like banning of papers, books and periodicals by the federal government and to insist upon the right of the citizen to decide for himself what literature he will read and import. In this pamphlet the Plan was preceded by a list of organizations deemed fascist. AM Stephen "Hitlerism in Canada," The Canadian League Against Fascism, Vancouver, circa 1935.

Since the beginning of the 1930s working-class organizations had documented constant confrontation with extra-parliamentary, right-wing groups. For example, in February 1932 workers were extolled to "watch the Fascists" at the Military Institute at #39 Credit Foncier Building, 850 W.Hastings St.[55] The open letter was simply signed "Ex-Serviceman." The veteran described Col. C.E. Edgett's January address to the institute on the threat of BC communists and how he used "documents probably loaned him by the RCMP."[56] Edgett told his audience of "the need of their moral support of the police force."[57] Two months later, the Unemployed Worker uncovered another fascist centre when it published a copy of the membership pledge of The Fascists of Canada. Below the membership card--whose bearer pledged to "dedicate his life...to the fascist cause"--was a description of a "Fascist hangout", distinct and more forthright than the Military Institute.[58] Beyond these simple facts the article is cursory at best. For example, it cites the wrong address for the headquarters, and without investigating the relationship, it bitterly notes how Police Chief Cameron studiously avoids the office despite the

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[55] "Watch the Fascists," Unemployed Worker, 22 February 1933, p.9.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "Canadian Fascism," Unemployed Worker, 26 April 1933, p.12.

fact it shelters hooligans who attack worker's marches.[59] But its message is clear: "...getting the truth from workers publications we have an object[sic] lesson in the terrible experiences of the German workers in the last month."[60] Poorly researched, lacking analysis, and anecdotal, the article nevertheless disseminates the idea that fascism is a growing, working-class threat in BC.

Writing in New Frontier, J.J. McGeer later presented an insightful analysis of the same situation.[61] Fascism in an "embryonic" form was growing in Vancouver and its network of support was the increasingly familiar combination of industrial interests and demagogic orators. McGeer's expose links prominent men such as H.H.Stevens, Rev. William Robertson, Pastor of the Metroplitain Tabernacle, and Ian Mackenzie in a web of intrigue.[62] The Fascist Party of the Unemployed Worker's article was the latest project of Tom McInnis. Since 1932 McInnes had used his CJOR radio programmes to harangue audiences on the need of a para-military force to react to mounting left-wing protest.[63] While the Fascist party was short-lived it evolved

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[59] Ibid. It is the wrong address compared to other work such as J.J. McGeer, "Vancouver Underground," New Frontier, Vol.I, No.7, (November 1936), pp.12-13.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

into the Nationalist Party of BC, located at the "palatial" Lumbermans Building, 509 Richards St.[64] This building, claimed McGeer, was thought by most to be owned by Charles Pretty, who sat on the Nationalist Party's executive. But in fact it was controlled by an H.H.Stevens Co., Vancouver Holding Ltd. Completing the link J.J.McGeer concludes, "the Fascist Party paid no rent, nor did, at first, the Nationalist Party. Stevens was supported on the air by Tom McInnes, who also spoke for Ian Mackenzie and Gerry McGeer."[65]

And there was more: on 5 April 1933 the Unemployed Worker carried a report of a meeting on the third "heralded in the yellow press as 'the birth of fascism in Vancouver.'"[66] Dai Thomas, "a shady bond dealer" held the meeting in Room 4, Victory Hall for an audience of "about 100."[67] No significant organization rose from the meeting. On the 26 April 1933 the Unemployed Worker ran a story titled "Grandview Worker Exposes Fascist Organization".[68] This neighborhood council was "taking particular notice of the Young Canada club, which is the true

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] "Fascists Hold Public Meeting," Unemployed Worker, 5 April 1933, p.9.

[67] Ibid.

[68] no title, Unemployed Worker, 26 April 1933, p.5.

form of a National Fascist Organization under a disguised name."[69] These articles again lacked analysis, but the style of its impressionistic, advocacy journalism nevertheless raised working class consciousness to the threat of fascism in BC. The Unemployed Worker was written with a working-class accent. The paper benefitted from its accessible, worker's vernacular; but such grassroots realism sacrificed sophisticated analysis. Thus when the paper reported on a propaganda meeting held by true fascists from the German Reich, the paper missed an opportunity to critically respond to the essential, reactionary right.

On Sunday, September 3, German sailors held a Nazi rally in the Majestic Hall, 404 Homer St.[70] The audience was fairly big since the O'Brien Hall was also filled with German sympathizers. Clearly overwhelmed by the military pomp and ceremony of his nemesis, the Unemployed Worker's reporter wrote an eye-witness account of what was said. The result was nothing more than the transcript of a Nazi campaign.

> Today we are parading the streets of our fatherland, the class struggle is to an end. We have no more classes in Germany, for both the employers and the employed have only one object in view, the building up of the Third Reich...Under the regime of our leader Hitler, not one drop of innocent blood has been spilled and we never use the machine guns on ...innocent people like the

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[69] Ibid.

[70] "Hail Hitler at Majestic," Unemployed Worker, 6 September 1933, p.7.

Communists did in Russia.[71]

So faithful was the transcription of the event that an editor's note was attached to the end of the article to remind readers that the event represented the encroachment of the radical right: "workers of Vancouver must redouble their alertness to the danger of Fascism which is rearing its head right in our midst."[72] The following week George Drayton, secretary of the WUL (BC District) wrote to the Unemployed Worker criticizing the coverage of the event. Such an eye witness account, he said, "could have been written by any Fascist leader."[73] The letter demonstrates how WUL leadership shepherded the direction of anti-militarist protests; it also demonstrates their principal concern was inter-provincial. "There are plenty of workers...who can be deceived as to the merits of Fascism and it is our duty to expose the class character of Fascism and all its ruthlessness."[74] Such a polarized provincial socio-political milieu explains the early arrival of the League Against War and Fascism to the BC political stage.

The discourse of the league was framed in a set of comintern assumptions: the need to defend the Soviet Union; socialist

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

[73] "W.U.L. Criticizes Unemployed Worker," Unemployed Worker, 27 September 1933, p.10.

[74] Ibid.

doctrine held the solution to the present threat of international war; and only a society structured on a socialist programme could provide the necessary domestic conditions in which peace could reign. But from the national headquarters, room 505-146 King St. West, and the BC branch centre, 615 Hastings St., came a stream of publications critiquing the direction Canadian society seemed to be taking.[75] In a movement to resist war, the League focussed on three groups who, according to socialist critics, would suffer most if fascism should take root in Canadian society: women, youth, and trade unionists.[76] Under the militarist social system of fascism all three groups would see their social roles radically disciplined and restructured.

Women, argued League literature, were depersonalized and exploited in fascist regimes. M. Erlich (an unidentified participant) in the inaugural national conference, "pointed out that in fascist countries the status of women has been attacked and women have been forced back and treated as inferior...This same campaign against women is taking place in Canada,...big industrialists...are utilizing women in their attacks upon the working class and in their preparations for war."[77] Elizabeth Morton, who attended the World Congress of Women Against War and

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[75] see footnote 21.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Report of First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism. Compiled by Fred Hodgson and A. Dresser. (Toronto: 1935) p.5. McInnis Collection, UBC.

Fascism as a Canadian delegate, noted "under fascism women are relegated to the position of 'blind questioning creatures'. They are even classified in Germany for breeding purposes...A thinking woman," she added, "is a dangerous thing."[78]

The attitude of the WUL and its affiliates towards women is a complex issue. As Joan Sangster has pointed out, women often had prominent roles in the WUL, but their gains did not result in a significant shift of power away from a male leadership.[79] Nevertheless the rhetoric of WUL groups spoke of women breaking out of paternalistic parameters. WUL affiliates were aware of the contribution of women to labour organizations, and in rhetoric at least, they could appeal directly to women's interests. Anti-militarist rhetoric could be used to appeal to women's interest in overthrowing an oppressive paternalism, of which war was a powerful symbol.

> During the last war, politician, priest, preacher, educationalist, press, and spurred and booted military officers worked upon the emotions, patriotic prejudices, fears and ignorance of women to convince them to give willingly of their sons.[80]

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[78] Ibid.

[79] Sangster Dreams of Equality. See appendix for the League Against War and Fascism's position on how women should be enlisted to struggle against indigenous fascism. See also, Sangster, "The Communist Party and the Woman Question, 1922-1929." Labour/Le Travail, Vol.15, (Spring 1985), pp.25-56.

[80] Report of First Canadian Congress Against War and Fascism, compiled by Fred Hodgson and A. Dresser, (Toronto: 1935), Angus MacInnes Collection, UBC.

As this quote illustrates, maternalism was a popular theme in CPC propaganda, but this article ends on a more strategic note. It comments not only on how women will not happily buy into patriotic fervor, but it also notes the industrial arms contribution women will be expected to make in the factories.[81] In the WUL's language of anti-militarist dissent, women were given an important position vis-a-vis militant action against fascism. CPC groups did give women a greater voice in protest in the 1930s, but they kept their ghettoized women's sections and even published home maker columns in some publications. Juxtaposed with the retro-grade traditionalism of Nazi Germany, it was not difficult to appear to offer women a more liberated role in society.

> [In Germany] a special tax is about to be levied on all unmarried men and women. The revenue received from this tax is to be loaned to married couples to enable them to furnish their homes. One object of this scheme is to take women out of the labour market, and loans are not granted unless the new wife pledges herself not to go out to work unless her husband's income is less than 125 marks per month.[82]

The CPC set up a curious paradox: they focussed on the fascist qualities of misogyny and war in an effort to enlist women against fascism, but they did so because they believed women supported fascism since--as clerks and homemakers--women were

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[81] Ibid.

[82] "Women's Place Under Fascism," Commonwealth, 12 July 1933, p.1.

inherently traditional and conservative.[83]

By 1935 the CPC had set up a well directed plan to campaign against the threat of militaristic reaction in Canada. In their resistance to militarism, they were distinguished by their deliberate and focussed position. BC's social democrats lacked such deliberateness. Though as socialists they were the CPC's equal in rejecting fascism and the militaristic tendencies of the Canadian state, they struggled to formulate an official plan of action. When rank and file members of the CCF began to take part in organizations such as The League Against War and Fascism, CCF leadership in BC underwent an unprecedented period of internal debate that ultimately left supporters of the League expelled or distanced from sensitive positions.

The CCF acknowledged, though not without debate, the danger of incipient Canadian fascism and recognized its inherent militarism and war-drive; but the question of proper action remained. The party's response to encroaching militarism was ill focussed. Many argued that fascism could not grow in a nation with a strong British tradition. Those members of the CCF who acknowledged such a threat could not formulate a direct plan of action. Thus the CCF formulated an uncertain position on how to respond to fascism--the greatest contemporary militaristic threat. The reason for this hesitancy is threefold: unlike the CPC, some CCF members remained caught in the question whether the

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[83] Joan Sangster pp.131-143.

CCF was a movement or a party: as a movement some wondered if it could formulate direct, coherent policy on an issue such as how to resist fascism.[84] The CCF was also aware of the threat the CPC's united front posed to its very existence: if the CCF joined, as the CPC wished, in anti-fascist organizations such as the League, many believed the CCF risked becoming little more than an adjunct in CPC policy formulation. As democratic socialists, many found the CPC's strict leadership policy distasteful. Finally, the CCF was struggling to come to terms with its pacifist/socialist heritage.[85] While these party concerns troubled the formulation of policy, CCF organizations noted domestic militarism was increasing.

The CCF found the BC radical right too virulent to ignore. From its inception in 1933 The Commonwealth, the official organ of the CCF (BC branch), closely followed the actions of the radical right. In contrast to the Unemployed Worker, the writing was more literary, it did not use worker's idiom, and it emphasized its copy with a professional layout and graphics. But gone with the worker's accent was the militant commitment. The Commonwealth could strongly disapprove of the actions of the

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[84] See "CCF Plan Greater than Magna Carta," The Challenge, 9 August 1933, p.9.Also, on the issue of movement versus party see Walter Young, Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-61 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

[85] Thomas P. Socknat, "The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF," in Building the Co-operative Commonwealth, edited by J. William Brennan (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1985); Socknat, Witness Against War, pp.162-191.

domestic right, but rather than formulate a campaign directly aimed at combatting it, their response too often involved paralyzing, internal debate.

Such a dilemma was clear from the very first edition of The Commonwealth. The lead editorial in this edition was an article taken from The Advertiser, a Burnaby weekly edited by J.A. McDonald. Noting that "fascism has hit Vancouver. Big headquarters have been opened..." [86] the article comments how impossible it is for fascism to grow in Canada. "[Fascism] does not grow out of the conditions and soil of Canada; the traditions of British peoples...is yet a potent psychological fact...fascism in Canada is not a natural growth; it is not indigenous to Canada...."[87] Considering the BC CCF included the radical socialists from the Socialist Party of Canada, the fact such an article was published is indicative of the broad perspective of left-wing views the CCF encompassed. Small wonder a definitive, political response to militaristic reaction and the CPC's united front overtures was difficult.

Despite the claim of this article The Commonwealth found itself covering a growing number of radical right events in Vancouver. For example, The Commonwealth covered the lecture presented by Signor Mario Colonna, an Italian Duke and ardent

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[86] "Editorial,"The Commonwealth, 17 May 1933, p.5. While the editorial notes neither the organization nor the location of the building, the fascists are doubtless the National Party located in the expansive Lumberman's Building.

[87] Ibid.

fascist, on 16 February 1934.[88] The contrast between this coverage and the Unemployed Worker's report of the German fascist rally at the Majestic Hall is revealing. The Commonwealth did not offer an eye-witness account but instead was highly critical.

> He made no mention of castor oil, of the exile of the intelligencia, of the secret societies and the disappearance of progressives; he carefully avoided all such unpleasantries.[89]

The article closed with a quote from Signor Colona: "fascism can be put into effect in Canada without any dictatorship or force."[90] The following week the paper returned to this event with an article rhetorically demanding "what is the National Council of Education(NCE) up to?"[91] The NCE, located at the Military Institute, had been bringing in a host of right-wing lecturers. After noting the group could be "financed by big business anxious to introduce...fascism...or...by military chaps ready to rattle the fascist sabers," the article closes with Strachey's definition of fascism: "a movement to defend by violent means the private ownership of the means of production from socialization."[92]

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[88] "Military Clique Welcomes Fascist Envoy," The Commonwealth, 22 February 1934, p.2.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

[91] "Ironies," The Commonwealth, 8 March 1934, p.3.

[92] Ibid.

This article demonstrates the CCF was actively criticizing an incipient domestic fascism. It also demonstrates that theoretically at least, the CCF was as anti-fascist as the CPC. But unlike the WUL organs, The Commonwealth did not say the lesson to be learned was that the domestic right must be resisted, although this was implied in the article; rather, these articles were written in a detached tone. Without a single, clear tactic on how to confront fascist insurgents, the articles seemed unengaged, clinical observations, though no less anti-fascist.

The Commonwealth did its best to elaborate the relationship between democratic socialism and militarism. Like the CPC, CCF organs clearly stated that international war was a result of the market forces of capitalism. Capitalism generated war because it needed to "empty the warehouses and reduce the manpower, so that capitalism could renew its process of exploitation."[93] It was easy to theorize that the solution was to replace the capitalist social system. In explaining how this could be done The Commonwealth sounded vague. "It must be noted that they, the owning class, retain their present ruling power mainly by coercive methods, i.e. the army, navy, air force, and police."[94] To overcome this difficulty the CCF would have to 'capture' the 'control of parliament.' This description of the CCF plan of action betrayed the movement's ambiguity--they could only

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[93] "Socialism or War," The Commonwealth, 8 November 1933, p. 8.

[94] Ibid.

describe their "peaceful" seizure of power with the language of conflict. Following this act, civil law and military force would be restructured on principles "based on common ownership of the means of the living."[95] This socialist/pacifist alignment, which had been taking place since the First World War, found its fullest expression in the Regina Manifesto and was never fully elaborated in CCF papers.[96] One finds only the homily: "the co-operative commonwealth was to be brought about by non-violent political action," not "change by violence."[97] In the confrontational Vancouver political scene, CCF spokespersons found their arbitrary line between militant activism and political campaign was frequently blurred.

The question of the united front subsumed the energies of CCF activists who recognized the need for activism and particularly the obvious need to confront rising militarism.

> The problem of 1938 will be to unite the democratic forces in Canada for the defence of such liberties as we already have and to extend them into the wider sphere of our economic and social relationships. Our battle against the forces of reaction therefore, must not be purely defensive but an offensive struggle for wider political and economic

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[95] Ibid.

[96] T. Socknat, "The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF," p.57.

[97] Ibid.

democracy.[98]

Many CCF supporters saw "that the nearest approach to a united front in Canada [was] the League Against War and Fascism."[99] Graham Spry, in a report to the 1937 CCF National convention in Toronto, wrote of a need for "the unity of all progressive anti-capitalist forces as essential at the present time."[100] He noted the CCF could be the basis of such unity. Shortly after the convention he wrote in the New Commonwealth, the CP "was more of an organization and less of a movement, and the CCF more of a movement and less of an organization." One political commentator noted "he might have added, the CP knows where it is at and whither it is going and the CCF seems to know neither one nor the other."[101]

In BC a single incident embodied the CCF's need for activism but fear of a united front. A.M. Stephen, a prominent member of the CCF in BC was the CCF's greatest supporter of united action in such activist bodies as the League. Following the 1935 federal election a split in the BC CCF resulted in Reverend Connell, a prominent Victoria member, leaving while accusing the party of

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[98] M.J. Colwell, Nationl Chairman of the CCF in Fred Rose "Fascism Over Canada: An Expose." (Toronto: New Era Publishers, 1938), p.6.

[99] Charles Herbert Huestis, "A united Front in Canada?" New Frontier, Vol.I, No.9, January 1937, p.20.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

going communist (the feud can in fact be traced back to the original 1933 union of the BC confederated CCF clubs and the Socialist Party of Canada). He took The Commonwealth and some support with him but the result of what some described as the BC CCF's left turn was theoretical at best.[102] The events of the 1935 unemployed's work-camp strike reinforced this description.

> Under the influence of the headquarters cell, the CCF raised no official finger to their support for months. In fact, the issue was closed and the boys away before the Provincial Executive appeared to recognize their existence. A distinct split between the Executive and the rank-and-file was created, and subsequent events have not served to close the fissure.[103]

A similar lack of activism in the leadership occured over the Spanish Civil War.

> When the Spanish Delegation visited Vancouver, an enthusiastic mass-meeting was marred by the distribution of an unsigned leaflet which not only accused the Spanish Government of betraying the people, but even attacked the character and bona-fides of the delegation... Two distributors of the pamphlet were members of the Stanley Park (CCF) Club, one being the chairman.[104]

The CCF rank and file in BC actively participated in Spanish support groups, but the byzantine politics of the CCF leadership, with its many cross-currents of influence, made action difficult.

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[102] B.A. Ward, "Trotskyism In British Columbia," New Frontier, Vol.I No.12, April 1937, p.13.

[103] Ibid, p.15.

[104] Ibid, p.25.

A.M. Stephen flew in the face of CCF leadership by openly proclaiming his membership in both the League Against War and Fascism and the Spanish Defence Committee.[105] In 1934, he was a founding member of BC's section of the Canadian League Against War and Fascism. He also wrote pamphlets and gave speeches under auspices of the League. In early 1937, following a period of debate the provincial executive decided to suspend both Stephen and his arch opponent, Rodney Young, a suspected Trotskyite.[106] In spite of suspension Stephen ran in the 1937 election with the full support of his Nanaimo riding committee. As a compromise, the provincial executive offered to re-enstate Stephen on the condition he renounce his support of communist-affiliated organizations. He refused and following the party's mediocre performance in the election, the issue was debated in the 1937 provincial convention and the suspension upheld. Inevitably, the suspension debate turned into an argument over the united front. Another vote was held on the idea of an united front and the notion was rejected 129-40. This was the definitive pre-war anti-unity statement of the provincial party.[107] During the debate, the party's leadership was outspoken in its anti-unity sentiment. Though Colin Cameron and Len Sheppard, MLA's elect, advocated

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[105] Patrick George Hill, A Failure of Unity: Communist Party-CCF Relations in British Columbia, 1935-1939. unpublished MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1977, p.47.

[106] Ibid, p.47.

[107] Ibid, p.57.

unity at least at the local level, they were defeated by the more prominent leaders such as Angus McInnis and Harold Winch: "...no good purpose can be served by any attempt to weld together political organizations, the policies and working methods of which differ in principle and practice."[108] Though it seemed clear at the time that the CPC would make a power grab if they could form a united front with the CCF, in the end they formed the only organizations that, in an organized way, tapped into the popular feelings of discontent that were exacerbated by the BC working class's experience of militaristic reaction. So strong was this sentiment that rank-and file members of the CCF were prepared to join such orgnizations. The CPC did not create these working class proclivities. Thanks to the CCF's inaction, they became the only conduit through which to channel these energies of dissent.[109] Thus they were able to smugly comment

> If the Socialist leaders [in Spain] had taken the positon of the CCF opponents to unity, the iron jackboot of Franco-Hitler-Mussolini fascism would now be on the necks of the Spanish people.[110]

The CCF could not prevent individual members from joining CPC parades and protest groups and finally resolved to reject CPC initiatives but permit individual members to join such actions if

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[108] Ibid, p.46.

[109] Some important CCF leaders were keenly aware of the need for more action. See M.J. Colwell quote, p.109.

[110] People's Advocate, July 16, 1937 cited in ibid, p.57.

they wished.[111]

When confronted by a bellicose, domestic right the CCF most often responded with inaction. For example, when harangued by Tom McInnis, BC's best known fascist, CCF leaders seemed most concerned that rural British Columbians did not confuse the party with the Nationalist party. "The fascist organization...is spreading its...propaganda...in such a way that the public...is becoming confused, [fascism] is being considered as some sort of expression of the CCF."[112] The article closes thanking McInnes for his "vicious attack...via the radio, upon the CCF."[113] The most damning commentary on the CCF policy was its own inaction. Their response to Tom McInnis and his type was usually to avoid comment and ignore the problem.

As Thomas Socknat has noted, the pacifist influence in the origins of the CCF was strong. J.S. Woodsworth personified the synthesis of fundamental christian social ethics and socialist doctrine. Though the party debated how to resolve their pacifist colours official policy was not formed. For example, when the Commonwealth reviewed Beverley Nichols' book on impending war, Cry Havoc, the reviewer commented,

> A passive attitude towards this great problem

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111 Walter Young, The Anatomy of a Party: the National CCF, 1932-61. pp.255-269.

112 "An Explanatory Note," The Commonwealth, 24 May 1933, p.4.

113 Ibid.

> (the threat of war) is not enough. Active propaganda against war is needed to offset active official propaganda for war...[Canada has] become badly infected with that "militarism" which we condemned so much in our German opponents."[114]

As the review suggests, some members of the CCF were aware of the need for the party to come to terms with its pacifist cross-currents. Further, the quote recognizes the CCF leaders were aknowledging the growth of militarism in BC society and were searching for proper responses.

Even the Society of Friends married their Quaker pacifism to social struggle and endorsed a non-violent social revolution as a means to perpetuate peace. Such Christian groups combined with early Canadian feminists in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom(WIL) to create a pacifist radicalism. Richard Allen has described how this pacifist radicalism united with liberal internationalism and beyond its inherent rejection of the first world war it sublimated the social gospel's socio-political reforms.[115] "...As progressivism waned, popular imagination was captured by the new pacifist/socialist argument for the co-operative ideal."[116]

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[114] Review of Cry Havoc, Commonwealth, 6 December 1933, p.2. This was a well read book in BC left-wing cirles, John Stanton identifies it as the first work to make him realize war and militarism were undeniable threats. Interview with Stanton.

[115] Richard Allen, The Social Passion (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1971).

[116] Socknat, The Pacifist Background of the Early CCF," p.58.

> To socially conscious pacifists in the CCF, ...pacifism had come to symbolize the ideal of radical social change; the perfection of democratic socialism. Others went even further and viewed pacifism as a realistic strategy for social action, but this relatively new dimension of non-violent resistance was never fully articulated....[117]

Lacking a well-articulated strategy, socially radical pacifists found themselves rudderless at a time when response to the threat of militarism was crucial. Many, like Woodsworth, turned to isolationism in the face of fascism.

In BC, Tom McInnis's hybrid-fascism asserted an immediate plan of action, though long term objectives were ill-defined. In response, social pacifism did not offer an activist social alternative and the threat of militarism made many members of the BC working class choose the anti-militarist activism of organizations such as the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the League Against War and Fascism. In these latter groups, members of the working class found organizations willing to actively respond to an increasingly polarized political environment. The experience of many members of the working class in the early 1930s brought a more tangible sense of urgency to their situation. Many CCF leaders and social pacifists never addressed this working-class sense of urgency bred of the experience of militarism.

In the leftist dialogue on militarism in the early 1930s a strong and increasing anti-militarism grew from a taproot of

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[117] Ibid. p.64.

working-class dissent extending back to the turn of the century. The expression of this dissent culminated in the support of BC working-class activists for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War. Unable to respond, BC pacifists were suspended above the conflict of working class anti-militarists who were willing to fight fascism by any means.[118] Until now, the On-To-Ottawa Trek has symbolized for historians the Canadian working-class dissent of the 1930s--this despite the fact that in the Mackenzie-Papineau movement the working class sacrificed more for a much longer period of time. In terms of influencing public opinion and the media, the Trek may well be described as successful. In contrast, the failure of the Mac-Paps belies the grass-roots magnitude of the movement. In recognizing the potential of this collective effort, one is struck by the dearth of historical study of the event. And once again we are reminded of "the enormous condescension of posterity."[119]

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[118] Ibid.

[119] E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.12.

Chapter Four

Shoelaces on Hastings Street

At first glance the significance of the Spanish Civil War to BC social history seems tenuous. Spain has lacked a significant relationship with BC since Europeans first explored the west coast of North America. The question becomes simpler when narrowed to working-class ideas on militarism: the approximately 300-350 BC working-class Spanish Civil War volunteers is the obvious reason.[1] But the men who carried arms against the fascist "nationalists" were only a part of the effort the BC left mounted against Franco. For to send these men across the Atlantic and sustain them in conflict required a well developed and efficient support network. While BC veterans of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion boasted Vancouver sent more men per capita than any nation's city in the International Brigade,[2] the people in BC who raised material and funds for the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion

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[1] "Plan Mass Welcome," The Peoples' Advocate, 10 February 1939, p.1. This article approximates the number of BC volunteers. It would be very difficult to calculate the precise number of "Mac-Paps" from BC. William Beeching's study, Canadian Volunteers, offers the most comprehensive tabulation of volunteers. He admits, given the clandestine and ad hoc nature of the volunteers' journey, that he can only estimate the number that arrived in Spain. His count is 1,448 and he does not attempt an accurate break down by province. William Beeching, Canadian Volunteers: Spain, 1936-1939 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1989).

2 "Plan Mass Welcome," The Peoples' Advocate, 10 February 1939, p.4. This comment was made by many Mac-Paps, including Joe Kelly who said upon returning to Vancouver, "...Vancouver furnished more volunteers than any other city in the world on the basis of population."

were equally vigilant in their effort to fight fascism. It is the people who made this latter contribution--the women's labour leagues, CCF clubs, Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion branches, and others--that are significant to my study of working-class anti-militarism. The volunteer effort of the people in these groups represents a powerful collective effort against the most obvious threat of militarism in the 1930s. It is in this sense that the Spanish Civil War is significant to a study of BC working-class ideas on anti-militarism: the indigenous, provincial response to the conflict is a means of examining the depth of anti-militaristic resentment in the BC working class. Furthermore, the response gives an indication of how the social conflict of the early 1930s, as discussed above, inspired a more profound resentment of militarism in the BC working class. For the Civil War also lends an insight into the nature of anti-mililtarist thought in the BC working class. Their effort tells us that the peace they wrote and spoke for so often in the early thirties was one for which they were prepared to fight. In Spain they were not going to wage war; they went to stem what they believed to be a groundswell of global fascism. In this sense it was entirely consistent and logical for the working class of BC to support a quasi-military organization like the Mackenzie-Papineau; Spain was another arena in which opposition to the international and domestic bogey of militaristic fascism could be reaffirmed. Viewed in this light, the battle they waged was for peace.

Until now, historians have given scant attention to the Canadian effort in the Spanish Civil War. The two significant monographs on the issue both concentrate on the soldiers and their battle experiences in Spain.[3] Such a focus on Spain is understandable when viewed from an international context: one cannot separate the civil war from the stream of international events flowing from contemporary ideological struggles.

This ideological tension is but one of the explanations for the international flavour of the war. In light of social history, the principal question is why at least 40,000 men and women from at least twenty-one countries volunteered for the war and others made a domestic contribution.[4] Pundits have suggested many reasons: it was the last good (i.e. romantic) fight of the twentieth century, it offered a chance to stop the European advance of fascism, and it provided an opportunity to escape the economic deprivation in occidental countries.

Given the international character of the Fifteenth (foreign) Brigade of the Spanish republican army, it is difficult to believe the volunteers' odyssey was inspired by general

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[3] Victor Hoar with Mac Reynolds, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil War (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1969) and William Beeching, Canadian Volunteers: Spain, 1936-1939.

[4] For the international perspective see, for example, Academy of Sciences of the USSR. International Solidarity with the Spanish Republic (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974); Frank Ryan, ed. The Book of the Fifteenth Brigade (Madrid: 1938), and Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

characteristics of any particular nation.[5] What can be done, however, is note the specific domestic experiences of certain volunteers and gain insights into those nationals and the regions of their origin.

No author has attempted to explain why BC contributed a number of volunteers so far beyond its proportion of the Canadian population. One even crassly suggests "a few must have gone to get away from their wives."[6] But when one examines how support for the Spanish republic was mobilized in BC, it is clear a principal source of inspiration was the BC working class' confrontation with the provincial, reactionary right.

Like the anti-fascist rhetoric of BC activists prior to 1936, one must appreciate the response to Spain as an amalgam of Comintern influence and local, grass roots activism. Thus the first question one must ask is what was the international situation in 1936 vis-a-vis the Comintern. Following Hitler's victory in Germany, his destruction of the domestic Communist party, Social Democratic party and other non-fascist groups, it was obvious the Communist International could not afford to divide the strength of the international left. Accordingly, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935

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[5] This is how Allen Guttmann credits the American volunteers motivation: "It was one more manifestation of the liberal tradition in America." A.Guttmann, The Wound in the Heart: America and the Spanish Civil War (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962.), p.3.

[6] Victor Hoar, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1969), p. 26.

made the united front principle its central tactical theme.[7] A communist-socialist alliance was necessary--like communists around the world, leaders of the BC section of the CPC like Tom Ewen held their noses and rallied to defend bourgeois, liberal democracy.

Although there were differences amongst leaders, "the coincidence of Soviet diplomatic interests and the needs of the French and other Western Communist parties"[8] made united front tactics possible in Spain. Since April 1931, when King Alfonso XIII abdicated in response to popular dissent, Spain had managed a coalition, republican government. While nominally liberal, it had the support of several left-wing groups consisting of Anarcho-Syndicalists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, and Socialists. Beyond this leftist division of working-class parties, the relations within the Republic's administration were exacerbated by regional antagonism and competing trade union movements.[9]

By 1936 several political intrigues, including a brief but turbulent conservative interlude, had prepared the political terrain for a united left-wing front. Although comintern

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[7] See Bryan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1983.) and Norman Penner, Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond (Toronto: Methuen, 1988) for outlines of the Comintern's tactical shift.

[8] Norman Penner, Canadian Communism, p.132.

[9] William Beeching, Canadian Volunteers; Victor Hoar and Mac Reynolds, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

strategists formulated the idea of an electoral popular front for France, Spain was the first practical opportunity. Three months before its success in France, a popular front was elected in Spain on February 16, 1936.[10]

It took six months for General Franco to mount a military coup on July 17. The highest bishops of the Catholic church, wealthy landowners, capitalists and sections of the middle class supported the revolt. Beyond the support of the traditional Spanish hierarchy, Franco immediately benefitted from Mussolini and Hitler's support. Both Italy and Germany contributed arms, soldiers, and military advisors to Franco's fascists.

Placed in historical context, it is not surprising the western democracies, led by Washington and Whitehall, did not rally to the support of the democratically elected Republican government. In the inter-war period, Britain and America framed their international policy with three predominant concerns: the containment of revolutionary nationalism, "promotion and protection of foreign investment...," and "expansion of international trade."[11] Fearful of Bolshevism, London and Washington quickly saw any foreign, popular movements of

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[10] So closely linked were the united front campaigns in France and Spain that Jacques Duclos, "a leading member of the French Communist Party," represented the comintern when the Spanish united front negotiated a coalition. Norman Penner, Canadian Communism, p.135.

[11] Douglas Little, Malevolent Neutrality: The United States, Great Britain, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.27.

progressive reform as Soviet subversion. Although the Spanish Republic was not Bolshevik, many diplomats viewed it as only a "Kerensky interlude."[12] In Spain, then, leaders in the U.S. and Great Britain found the three features most inimical to their foreign policy as practiced since the Great War: a strong (albeit divided) extreme left, a "nationalist campaign against multinational corporations, and the proliferation of inequitable commercial policies."[13] All three features were exacerbated by western economic depression. By August 1936, London and Washington were promoting a position of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Behind the mask of impartiality they were able to deny the United Front the means to defend its democratically elected government.

Canadian duplicity in the international policy of "malevolent neutrality"[14] cannot be ignored. In 1932 Canada sent battleships to help crush a popular peasant revolt in El Salvador; in Spain the Canadian government went so far as to try to prevent volunteers from participating by their own means. Despite these differencs there is a logical connection to these actions: both situations occurred within the foreign relations framework of international capitalism. Canada shared U.S.

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid, p.33.

[14] Douglas Little attributes this term to a foreign relations deputy in the Republican Government.

interests in preserving a Spanish, pro-capitalist government. Spain's international political influence was low enough that western democracies like Canada could afford to view political economy as the single overwhelming consideration. The event in El Salvador also indicates that when necessary, Canada was able to forget her non-intervention policy. Canada quickly seized the opportunity to defend a dictator in El Salvador; four years later the Canadian government was not interested in defending a democratically elected Spanish government.

Canada was not concerned with funding and arms contributions to Spain; rather its principal objective was the prevention of Canadian volunteers. To this end, on 31 July 1937 the government passed an order in council applying the Foreign Enlistment Act to the Spanish Civil War.[15] Beyond merely supporting the policy of "malevolent neutrality," the Canadian press, both establishment and alternative, ran many stories documenting Canadian enterprises selling resources and equipment to countries and

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[15] The Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe introduced bill 23, which was a slightly revised Foreign enlistment Act, on February 18. The crucial portion read,"If any person, being a Canadian National, within or without Canada, voluntarily accepts or agrees to accept any commission or engagement in the armed forces of any foreign state at war with a friendly state, or, whether a Canadian National or not, within Canada, induces any other person to accept or agree to accept any commission or engagement in any such armed forces, such person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act. " The penalty was a $2,000 fine or two years imprisonment, or both. Victor Hoar, p.103 and William Beeching, p.7.

interest groups supporting Franco.[16]

The only country the republican government could turn to for full materiel support was the Soviet Union; equally, the Comintern was concerned about the consequences should Spain join the forces of European fascism. The two quickly came together. The U.S.S.R. aided Spain in two ways: "direct shipment of arms, ammunition, tanks, artillery, and aircraft...[and]...advisors,"[17] and, through the Communist International, it offered basic support for volunteers to go to Spain.[18]

The CPC fits the latter contribution. "It recruited and made all the arrangements for sending Canadians to the International Brigade, and it channeled all other aid through the League Against War and Fascism."[19] The League organized the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy, raising funds for such work as Norman Bethune's blood transfusion unit.[20] Funds and aid were also raised through the network of the Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion.

The "Friends" were officially formed on May 20, 1937, almost

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[16] "Blood For Spanish Democracy," New Frontier, February 1937, Vol.I No. 10. p.12.

[17] Norman Penner, Canadian Communism, p.136.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

nine months after the Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy was created.[21] The latter, closely connected to the League Against War and Fascism, boasted an executive comprised of both CPC and CCF members. Graham Spry, Chair of the Ontario CCF, for example, was vice-chair of the "Committee."[22] But to best highlight BC working-class ideas on militarism, I must focus primarily on the "Friends." The reason is twofold. First, the "Friends" had nothing to do with recruitment; they ran campaigns for money, food, and clothing and helped repatriate volunteers.[23] They were thus active throughout BC and were more concerned with social matters within the province. Furthermore, through the nature of their support-drives--sporting events, dances, theatre, knitting bees--one gains a sense of the BC working class culture and its awareness of the issue of militarism. Second, after the House of Commons passed the Foreign Enlistment Act in July, 1937, it was unwise to openly campaign for recruits. Thus in left-wing newspapers one finds detailed descriptions of fund-raising campaigns, including individual sources of donations to the "Friends." Descriptions of recruitment and overall coverage of

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[21] Hoar, 27.

[22] "Spanish Committee Under League," BC Workers' News, 27 May 1937, p.1.

[23] Penner, p.136.

the "Committee" seem prudently vague.[24]

More than any paper in the province, the BC Workers' News, official organ of the CPC (BC section), gave close coverage of the issues of the Spanish Civil War. Its rhetoric openly argued the BC working class should support the effort in Spain. Running through its pro-Republican rhetoric was a powerful current of anti-militarism. The paper argued that BC workers, familiar with authoritarian militarism in BC, should know the dangers of a rising tide of European fascism. Workers in BC were urged to draw on their past experiences of militarism to understand the issues in Spain.

> The events in Spain are not limited to the confines of that country; they are full of import for good or ill for the whole world ...The tentacles of the Nazis...reach even into Canada...The struggle against the fascist menace must be intensified...What is happening in Spain must not be allowed to happen here.[25]

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[24] A good example of the caution volunteers needed is illustrated by Ron Liversedge's efforts to get a passport. He eventually went to Dr. Lyle Telford, a prominent CCF member and Gerald McGeer's successor as Mayor of Vancouver. "As soon as the good Dr. saw me he said, 'My God not another one. I've signed enough to get me locked up already.' I said 'Oh, come on Doc, in for a penny, etc.' and he smiled and signed." Ron Liversedge, "Memoir of the Spanish Civil War," (unpublished, undated manuscript). Dr. Telford, in his capacity as Vancouver Mayor, would later greet Mac-Pap veterans at the Vancouver train station as they returned from the civil war.

[25] "It Must Not Happen Here!" BC Workers' News, 31 July 1936, p.4. It is worth noting that this is the first editorial on the Spanish Civil War in this paper. The tone of the piece indicates that the events of Spain did not create a willingness for British Columbians to fight fascism. Such a spirit already existed in BC.

The threat of fascism existed in the province. What workers saw in Spain was only another manifestation of the familiar fascist threat.

The reason for the widespread working-class support for republican Spain, argued The People's Advocate, was that the Spanish war presented a mirror image of domestic conflict.[26]

> The capitalists of Spain, like every other ruling class in history, has flaunted constituted authority and resorted to fascism ...to preserve their class privileges...There is a grim warning...for the people of Canada in the blood-letting...of the Spanish fascists. For there is, right here in Vancouver, writhing nests of fascists, one of these mouthpieces is Tom MacInnes. These anti-labour, anti-democratic, potential Hitlers are organizing and only waiting to be strong enough to do as ...the Spanish fascists....[27]

Tom MacInnes as Franco was normal rhetorical fare for the BC Workers' News. Since 1932, his radio broadcasts on CJOR had been offending workers with open calls for violent vigilante reprisals against working-class organizations. So in a curious way, the "Mac-Paps" were vicariously fighting the BC radical right when they fought Franco. Many who went to Spain were following Bill Bennett's angry words: "[The Spanish Rebels]...should get the bullets and ropes that their kinsman Tom MacInnes promised the

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[26] "Spain Calls British Columbia," The People's Advocate, 21 May 1937, p. 6.

[27] "Fascist Rebellion in Spain," BC Workers' News, 24 July 1936, p.4.

Communists in Vancouver."[28]

For all the violent imagery of the pro-Republican rhetoric, there was an underlying argument for peace. The only way to work for peace was to overcome the fascist threat.

> ...A mere glance at the Nazis menace to world peace, at the fascist-inspired civil war in Spain, shows that peace is something that may have to be fought for. Accept the challenge and destroy fascism once and for all as the only sure way to peace...the people of Spain are fighting for peace in their time... and who can maintain they were not fully justified in doing so...Peace in our time lies only in the destruction of fascism at home and abroad, in thwarting...the efforts of the fascist to wipe out democracy....[29]

Again, this quote reiterates the most common theme of all anti-fascist propaganda: a blow against European fascism was also a blow against the reactionaries in BC. Both groups presented a single war danger.

By 1936 many left-wing journals in BC were filled with rhetoric on and coverage of class conflict in BC. This reinforced the notion of the state growing authoritarian and turning to militarism to suppress dissent. The contemporary, left-wing news coverage of Spain paralleled this writing on BC. Franco's supporters, frequently quoted in BC, described the insurgency as a reaction to "the anarchy and democratic disorder, the anti-militarism and anti-Catholicism of the Republic." The Falange

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[28] "Short Jabs," BC Workers' News, 7 August 1936, p.6.

[29] "The Desire For Peace and the Fascist War Menace," BC Workers' News, 14 August 1936, p.2.

represented "authority rather than anarchy, militarism and service rather than un-Spanish anti-militarism..."[30]

As well as blind force, Franco's supporters, like Italian and German fascists, espoused authoritarian views on the social fabric of the country. This included the limited opportunity for women outside the traditional role of motherhood. In opposition to this, one finds very powerful women like Emma Goldman and La Passonaria leading the Republican movement in Spain and popularizing their cause to the world.[31] Many Spanish women also fought in the ranks of the Republican army. Even those Spanish women who remained civilians experienced the threat of fascism. With the air forces of Germany and Italy at his disposal, Franco claimed willingness to eliminate 50% of the Spanish population if necessary for victory.[32] Well before London, Dresden, and Tokyo, Madrid experienced the massive bombing of civilians. It fell to women and children to bear the worst of such attacks since most men enlisted.

As a consequence of the role Spanish women played in defending the Republic, many BC women on the left were attracted to the issues of the civil war. The attraction also speaks of the

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[30] A. Guttmann, The Wound in the Heart. p.19.

[31] See Emma Goldman, Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution (New Paltz, New York: Commonground Press, 1983).

[32] "Red Atrocities, Read All About Them," New Frontier. September 1937, p27.

influence and predominance of maternalism in the Canadian feminist movement--for many of the campaigns concentrated on helping the children of Spain and sending food to the Spanish people.[33] Nevertheless, the strong response of many BC women to the Spanish Republic reflects their rejection of the principles of authoritarian society and its militaristic qualities.

In the Autumn of 1936, as news of the events in Spain slowly reached the shores of BC, activists in the province gathered at rallies and meetings to discuss the issue. Even at this early date there was obviously a large groundswell of support for the Spanish cause. The most important meeting centre was Sunday nights at the Moose Hall on Burrard St. On September 25, in response to the Canadian League Against War and Fascism's call for a conference on Spain, a committee of forty was elected "to broaden and speed aid."[34] Represented at the Moose Hall were "forty-nine organizations of trade unions, CCF clubs and

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[33] For a complete coverage of the progressive Canadian women's movement in the 1930s see Joan Sangster Dreams of Equality. On women and peace see Veronica Strong-Boag, "Peace-making Women: Canada 1919-1939," in Ruth Roach Pierson, Women and Peace (London: Croom Helm, 1987) and Barbara Roberts in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, Beyond the Vote (University of Toronto Press, 1989). Although the strong contribution women made to the Canadian peace movement in the twentieth century is still a relatively new question, one gains a sense of the rich tradition in Barbara Roberts "Why Do Women Do Nothing to Stop the War." Though nothing is conclusive, clearly, the image of the patriotic mother knitting socks for soldiers and younger women filling men's places in munitions factories is a caricature of Canadian women's wartime experience.

[34] "Spanish Aid is Organized," BC Workers' News. 2 October 1936, p.2.

political parties, fraternal and cultural organizations."[35] The group included such notable BC activists as A.M.Stephen, Roger Bray of the provincial executive of the CCF, and Tom Bradley, secretary of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers, District Council. Bradley concluded the meeting noting, "all local unions of loggers will do something, and we should begin to do something here in BC not only to defend Spain but to defend ourselves."[36] By mid October, the Sunday night meetings were very popular. Already, many were calling Spain the rallying point for a united left in BC. "One of the greatest demonstrations for unity ever made in this city was expressed by one thousand people at the Moose Hall...Sunday night. The issue of support for Spanish Democracy provided the anvil on which unity can by welded."[37] Soon reports from the Sunday-night meetings boasted overwhelming numbers.

> The large ballroom was packed to the doors very early and the numbers who kept streaming in to hear first hand news from Spain necessitated the Committee renting a smaller hall downstairs to handle the overflow. It too was packed to the doors and a large number of protesters were turned away.[38]

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] "United Front Meeting to Assist Spain," BC Workers' News, 23 October 1936, p.3.

[38] "Spain is Battleground of World Peace, Democracy," BC Workers' News, 6 November 1936, p.1.

The following week another meeting was at least as impressive. A large gathering at the Auditorium on Denman donated $1,512 after listening to emissaries from Spain. The Speakers were Senor Marcelino Domingo, President of the left Republican Party, Father Luis Sarasola, and Isabella de Palencia. So many turned out that in the Moose Hall "another capacity audience listened in to loud speakers."[39] The Spanish issue was now in the foreground of the collective conscience of the BC left. If the depression was the soil where a BC working-class consciousness grew, then Spain was its Spring; a collective movement of resistance blossomed against fascism and the militarism it espoused.

The BC left's awareness of militarism continued to grow when the federal government announced a "national defence" program costing $35 million. In response to the government's plan the CCF called an anti-war week for March 8-13.[40] The League Against War and Fascism focussed on the domestic threat.

> Government leaders have intimated on more than one occasion that their concern was not the remote...possibility of an attack by a foreign power, but was the growing unrest of the masses of the people against their precarious existence...When Arthur Meighen referred to the danger from "subversive" elements he exposed the purpose behind

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[39] "Large Audience Moved by Spain's Emissaries, Give $1,512 to Cause," BC Workers' News, 13 November 1936, p.1.

[40] "CCF Proposes Anti-War Week," BC Workers' News, 19 February 1937, p.1.

the...defence appropriation.[41]

The irony of a government spending such money while many could not receive relief was not lost on the unemployed. "Canadian militarists are hooking Canada to the tail of the kite of the British nationalist government's foreign policy. Canada is not menaced by a foe on her border. The people of Canada are menaced by starvation."[42]

By the end of May 1937, when a letter to the Toronto Daily Clarion announced the formation of the "Friends,"[43] it was already apparent that BC's support for the Spanish cause was widespread and profound. Two months before this fundraising network was established the BC Workers' News ran a bold front page headline claiming BC had already raised $5,000 for Spain. Meetings and dances for Spain were becoming common place. Typical was the "Bazaar" to aid Spanish Defence on April 24, at the Orange Hall. The bazaar featured a "large number of men's handknitted socks contributed by expert knitters."[44] Additional attractions included bingo, raffles, and a dance later in the

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[41] "Fight Against Armaments," BC Workers' News, 5 February 1937, p.4.

[42] "Not One Cent for War," BC Workers' News, 19 February 1937, p.4.

[43] Victor Hoar Mac-paps first mentioned The People's Advocate, 30 April 1937, p.1.

[44] "Bazaar to Aid Spanish Defence," The People's Advocate, 16 April 1937, p.5.

evening. The entire spectacle was not sponsored by a political cabal of the CPC, but was rather the combined effort of the International Women's Sewing Circle and the Women's Auxiliary of the Spanish Defence Committee.[45] With support from such various collective organizations, BC was well disposed to run a successful section of the "Friends."

Coinciding with the formation of the "Friends," and reflecting the interconnected effort of the two groups, the Canadian Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy announced a Spain Week May 30 to June 9. Tom Ewen, his son already fighting in Spain, announced both events with a rallying article.

> 400 Canadian boys are in [the] International Brigade...many...have paid the supreme sacrifice on Spanish soil...let this message echo in every town and hamlet of BC. Deep in the mines and in the logging camps. Out in the fishing grounds and far back in the hinterland. ...Spain is our fight. Organize mass meetings, tag days, special services in churches, demonstrations in schools...Make it a BC, Spanish week.[46]

The "Friends" organizers were truly unprepared for the response. On July 27 the "Friends" met to choose an executive committee "to lead a province-wide campaign."[47] Two weeks later, organizers

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[45] Ibid.

[46] "Spain Calls British Columbia," The People's Advocate, 21 May 1937, p.6.

[47] "BC Launches Campaign to Aid Battalion," The People's Advocate, 30 July 1937, p.2. The following people were elected to the executive committee: Mrs. B. Ewen, Secretary; J.C. Chivers, Organizer; Mrs. H. Matheson, Treasurer. Other executives were: Alex Fordyce,"well known trade unionist"; Fred Fox, Lecturer; J.

were boasting Spanish aid groups were "springing up everywhere."[48] Doubtless the campaigners were driven by the spirit of conviction but the response of small-town BC must have been encouraging. Beckie Ewen used both sources of inspiration for her tireless campaign. She covered an impressive distance in a short time.

> Sub-committees at Victoria, Nanaimo, White Rock, North-west Vancouver, and East Vancouver have been set up...Beckie Ewen, just back from a three-week tour of Vancouver Island is heading north: Sointula, August 11-17; Prince Rupert, August 20-26; Smithers, August 27-31; Prince George, August 30-September 5.[49]

Most of the "Friends" work focussed on humanitarian issues: adoption of Spanish children, food and clothing for Spanish citizens. Another campaign strategy was to highlight the celebrity status built up around the Mac-Paps. Nationalism and local pride combined with a certain degree of hero worship to inspire people to aid the Spanish cause through aiding the Mac-Paps.

> In the past two or three months The Peoples' Advocate has received a number of letters from BC members of the Mac-Paps:...Peter Neilson, ex-assistant editor of the Relief Project Workers' Union(RPWU) and organizer in the RPWU ....Joe Kelly, our old organizer for

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Matts, Secretary, Project Workers' Union.

[48] "Canadian Boys in Spain," The Peoples' Advocate, 13 August 1937, p.6.

[49] "Mrs. B.Ewen Leaves for Coast Tour," The People's Advocate, 13 August 1937, p.2.

> the RPWU is at the front with the British boys. Bob Kerr is a political commissioner...When a few of us from Vancouver get together...we like to sit around and talk about old times and wonder how the RPWU and the SUPA are coming along. If you organize against fascism in Canada, we'll do our best here.[50]

Like Che Guevera in revolutionary Cuba, citizens of BC were urged to "be like Mac-Paps," and resist the growing militaristic statism in Depression-era BC.[51]

To popularize and personalize the Spanish cause, The Peoples' Advocate began to run weekly profiles of the "BC Boys." Beginning August 6, 1937, each week on page five a different photo of a BC volunteer would be shown with an accompanying description of the individual. Letters from BC volunteers were always given prominence, particularly when the sender was an identifiable personality belonging to a BC working-class organization. By November, in a clever publicity move, letters and diaries from volunteers were collected and published in a booklet titled "Hello Canada." In the last week of December one Vancouver salesman sold 430 copies of the booklet.[52]

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[50] "Letters From Spain," The Peoples' Advocate, 25 June 1937, p.6. Bob Kerr assisted Local 7293 of the United Mine Workers Union in Cumberland to set up their local in 1935. The local later donated money to the "Friends" in his name. See "Miners Praise Kerr," The People's Advocate, 4 June 1937, p.1.

[51] Jay Cantor, The Death of Che Guevera

[52] "February Shipment For Spain," The Peoples' Advocate, 31 December 1937, p.1. See review by Harold Griffin, The Peoples' Advocate. 12 November 1937, p.4.

Far from mercenaries, BC supporters depicted the Mac-Paps as innocent working-class men with a class consciousness born of their Depression experience in BC. Descriptions of BC volunteers always highlighted their place in a working-class community. For example, when Charles Parker, a sports instructor from the Vancouver Sports Club was killed on the Aragon Front, the BC Workers' News emphasized his popularity in sports circles and the fact he was "sentenced to three months imprisonment in a relief camp strike."[53] For weeks afterward, sports columns mentioned his name in articles covering current sporting events. Later, the club devoted proceeds from an entire evening's wrestling slate to the Mac-Paps. "[T]he boys [were] standing in the aisles," watching the main bout as "Tarzan" Potvin had "both the referee and his opponent hanging in the ropes and then, not satisfied, proceeded to plant his number tens...where the ordinary person rests his spinal column."[54]

Not only was local workers' sports culture enlisted in the fight against fascism, but so was theatre. On the announcement of Paddy O'Neil's death in Spain, his role as leader of the WESL was not the only point of emphasis. His popular role in workers'

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[53] "Sports Instructor Killed in Spain," The Peoples' Advocate, 1 October 1937, p.1.

[54] "Benefit Staged: Vancouver Sports Aids Spanish Vets," The Peoples' Advocate, 23 September 1938, p.5.

theatre was also stressed.[55]

The greatest accomplishment of the "Friends" was their Mac-Pap Christmas campaign. With the slogan "Christmas for every BC boy in Spain," branches began to raise funds and collect goods in October.[56] The project, like most, was integrated into daily working-class cultural practices.

> Busy fingers are knitting various articles of clothing from wool obtainable at Battalion Headquarters. This week, an ardent supporter, 80 year-old Mrs. O'Brien of the Mothers' Council called for her second bundle of wool to start on another three pair of socks.[57]

The campaign was not only significant for the large volume of goods and funds collected, it was also important because it streamlined an already efficient support network. In the process, the drive's success brought national recognition to the "Friends." Even before the campaign began BC led the nation in support for the Mac-Paps. This prompted Becky Ewen to predict a successful campaign. For as she explained, the mainstay of the "Friends" "is the number of quite small but efficient committees which are springing up all over the province..."[58] By the end of the month, the national executive of the "Friends" recognized the

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[55] "Two City Men Die in Spain," 23 July 1937, p.1. O'Neil, the article states, "played with the Progressive Arts Players in Waiting For Lefty and Private Hicks." Both plays, it should be noted, contained elements of anti-militarism. See B. Bray, "The Weapon of Culture," unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1990. See Chapter Two above for a description of the WESL.

[56] "Many Groups Give Active Support to Canadians," The Peoples' Advocate, 8 October 1937, p.2.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "BC Leads in Support of Canadian Battalion," The Peoples' Advocate, 1 October 1937, p.2.

work of Becky Ewen by appointing her national organizer.[59] In less than two months, when the donations were prepared to be shipped, the BC contribution amounted to $650 in goods and $1,100 cash.[60]

From January to May the "Friends" maintained a frenetic pace. Immediately following Christmas, J.C.Chivers, the new secretary of the BC "Friends" announced BC would join a national drive and send $750 in cash and $750 in goods to Spain by February 15. This was easily accomplished through contributions from every region of BC. The depth of support is illustrated by a single column in The Peoples Advocate. In the late summer of 1937 the paper began a weekly article on page three listing weekly contributions; by mid-February the column was bursting its margins.

> Following gifts received this week: Local 252, Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, Atlin,$50.00; Salmon Arm,$4.00; Cedar Valley, CP,$9.00; Carlin, CP,$8.30; Vancouver Centre,$5.55; Pacific Coast Fishermen,$10.00; Extension, $20.45; Project 104,$2.65; and tobacco to the value of$22.45; Womens' Section, ULFTA,$25.21, and goods worth$24.75; Mount Pleasant FMPB, $10.00; D.Rush,$3.00; Project 10,$3.00; IWA,$1.00; South Slocan,$7.10; Coalmont,$6.00; Grassy Plains,$1.20; Bradner,$10.15; Croation Womens' Section,$7.25; Local 28 Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union,$1.00; Newton Station, Knitted Goods, $6.25; Petrie-

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[59] "Mrs. B.Ewen Now Friends of the MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion Organizer," The Peoples' Advocate, 29 October 1937, p.6.

[60] "Volunteer to Speak in City," The Peoples' Advocate, 19 November 1937, p.1.

Fromberg, FMPB,$13.65; White Lake,$30.00.[61]

The Easter Gift campaign was a similar success. "The national office of the "Friends" had set a quota... a number of committees [thought]...was too small....[O]ur supporters...reached...50% more than was asked."[62] Perhaps the most distinguishing honour for BC supporters came when a "flag presented to Co.3 of the Mac-Paps" was given to the BC branch in recognition of "proficiency." Chivers best explained the situation. "There can be no doubt but that the splendid work of the Mac-Paps has captured the public imagination...and my job is to see that such support is shown in tangible form."[63] The collective conscience of the province's working class had been prepared for such a cause: their experience with "tangible" militaristic forces began at home.

Since the experiences of the BC working class in the 1930s fertilized the growth of a working-class consciousness of militarism it is not surprising that unemployed workers, who knew the harshest experiences state of coercive force, comprised a significant proportion of the Spanish Volunteers. One Spanish veteran estimated five hundred of the volunteers had taken part in the On-to-Ottawa Trek.

> I think that the terrible life of the Canadian unemployed during the depression,...the box cars, the flop houses, the demonstrations for relief, seeing the

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[61] "Shipment to Mac-Paps Late," The Peoples' Advocate, 11 February 1938, p.3.

[62] "Bralorne Miners Donate $171 to Gift Campaign," The Peoples' Advocate, 1 April 1938, p.3.

[63] "3 BC Volunteers Are Cited," The Peoples' Advocate, 27 May 1938, p.5.

> police clubbing men, women and even children unconscious on the city street for asking for food, the twenty-cent-a-day slave camps, the "On-to-Ottawa Trek," all this had conditioned the men who volunteered to go to Spain to make the decision without much soul searching.[64]

The anti-militarism of the early 1930s remained fully intact through the support for the Mac-Paps. Far from contradicting the anti-militarism of the 1930s, the Mac-Pap support was its culmination. It was because anti-militarism was so central to so much working class politics in the 1930s that support for the Spanish republicans could be so strong. The Spanish fascists became the symbol, the archetype, of the evils identified by workers in course of domestic class conflict.

Perhaps the last and most inspirational rally of solid support before it became obvious that Spain was to fall into the hands of Franco, was May Day 1938. The event also makes an important symbolic distinction between a fight for peace and military struggle for conquest. An estimated twenty to twenty-five thousand people attended a rally at Stanley Park where Senor Preteceille from the Republican government addressed "the largest and most inspiring open air meeting he had addressed since leaving New York."[65] The parade halted at the cenotaph for a ceremony for Spanish volunteers. The occasion was "made more

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[64] Ron Liversedge, "Memoir of the Spanish Civil War" (unpublished and undated manuscript in the possession of William Beeching). Cited in Spanish Volunteers, p.11.

[65] "City Stages Largest Parade in Dominion," The Peoples' Advocate, 6 May 1938, p.1.

poignant by the fact that it was the white haired Mrs. Mathieson, who herself has a son fighting in the ranks of the Mac-Pap Battalion, who laid the wreath."[66] The event was a rejection of the "war-mongering of Remembrance Day" as much as a recognition of the Mac-Paps. The Mac-Paps, although soldiers, embodied a working-class rejection of state-directed military tradition. Armistice Day was "an insult and a challenge to all people who are suffering from the lash of hunger and terror, and who are opposed to war...."[67] For many, the popular response was "to strengthen the anti-war, anti-fascism forces...."[68]

The ceremony at the cenotaph answers with drama the central question of this chapter. Namely: how does one relate working-class ideas on anti-militarism with a distinctly working-class contribution to armed struggle? In the context of BC society in the Depression, working class spokespersons argued that militarism was a particular set of qualities. These characteristics included, for example, military work-camps, parsimonious relief, and low veteran pensions. These were features of a political economy structured to burden the working class with the task of weathering an "economic downturn." To accomplish this, the state found it necessary to remove, often

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[66] Ibid.

[67] "Armistice Day War Mongering," BC Workers' News, 26 November 1936, p.4.

[68] Ibid.

with force, the civil liberties the working class had grown to claim as their own. This included, when possible, the state providing the stirrups for the reactionary right to mount a campaign against left-wing organizations. Through this conservative political economy the state helped marry in the working-class conscience the cultural trappings and force of militarism to the hardship of the Depression. Tiny Anderson described this relationship in distinctly human terms: before he gave his life at the battle of the Ebro, Anderson's Mac-Pap comrades heard him declare, "I'm not going back to Hastings Street to sell shoelaces."[69]

Shoelaces and riot clubs were objects that symbolized the working class' struggle with the capitalist economy and state authority in the depression. These articles of reference defined the material experience of the working class. The energies of dissent this experience created highlighted a pre-existing anti-militarist heritage in the BC working class. This suggests that the anti-militarist dissent manifested in the 1930s in BC was not of the CPC's own creation. They offered, however, the only clearly defined network for the working class to express their anti-militarist protest. In Spain one finds a cross-sectional, left-wing movement against domestic militarism. The grass-roots character of the occasion implies anti-militarism was a basic principle of the BC working class that could have led to a wider

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[69] William Beeching, Canadian Volunteers. p.139.

united front movement.[70] The sectional politics of BC's divided left subsumed the energies of this genuine discontent.

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[70] Patrick Hill misses the significance of a large number of rank and file CCF members joining CPC organizations like the League Against War and Fascism. Hill, A Failure of Unity.

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[70] Patrick Hill misses the significance of a large number of rank and file CCF members joining CPC organizations like the League Against War and Fascism. Hill, A Failure of Unity.

Conclusion

The anti-militarism in the foregoing study is one that is fundamentally rooted in the class structure of Canadian capitalism. Canadian war-time experience bred a socially radical pacifism. Over the inter-war decades non-sectarian pacifists argued for economic and social change in order to eradicate violence amongst nation-states. Combined with the protestant ethics of the social gospel, social justice and a more equitable distribution of wealth were advocated by the new socially radical pacifists such as F.J. Dixon, J.S. Woodsworth, and William Ivens. Though the relationship between social justice and war was recognized in the 1920s, the relationship was not profoundly explored until the social upheaval of the Great Depression forced the issue.

Before such an exploration, the influence of nineteenth-century pacifism predominated. The socio-political philosphy of this pacifism was a hybrid of European liberalism--it held that conflict resolution was possible by the application of rational persuasion, moral suasion, or some form of democratic or representative institutions within and between nations.

The socio-economic experience of the Depression forced many to question the political economy of monopoly capitalism and in the process how the state maintained popular consent for such an apparently inequitable system. Such a direct challenge to the state brought forth a complex of statist reaction designed to preserve the contemporary political system with limited reform.

Militarism is this complex of reactionary measures and how they are linked to the function of the state. Anti-militarism is organized resistance to militarism, or resistance to the institutionalized military systems by which capitalist society defends itself.

The social turmoil of the 1930s was a solvent to the bonds that were growing between pacifism and social radicalism. Though the international threat of European fascism was a factor, social radicals and working-class activists informed their ideas on pacifism and militarism with the material experiences of the depression. The working-class experience of the Depression gave them a discrete perspective on the question of peace and militarism. The inspiration for working-class anti-militarism grew from what may seem a disparate assembly of state coercive means--militia, work camps, relief programmes, and the state's provision of bureaucratic stirrups for right-wing reactionaries to mount an assault on working-class organizations. The three principle characteristics of the working-class's experience of militarism were state directed social control and regimentation, overt state force, and the growth of incipient fascism.

In studying the response of workers to the rapid growth of statist reaction I have stressed the agency of the domestic working class. Though some writers have stressed the international sources of this protest I have tried to show that the BC working class was more than an empty vial to be filled with the ideas of working-class intellectuals, brainworkers, and

foreign socialist thinkers. In this sense I have looked at a discrete source of anti-militarism. Essentially inchoate and unfocussed it nevertheless was a genuine expression of the working class's disapproval of the state's militarist activities. As the Depression deepened the working class' protest increased correspondingly. Unwilling to consider systemic changes in the social system the state's militarist reaction grew in response to the working class' protest--the circle was complete.

The working class was not interested in the pacifist organizations in Canada in spite of the reality of increasing militarism. This was because Canadian pacifists did not specifically address the life experiences of the working class. In a time of urgency, the Canadian pacifists of the 1930s struggled to express in an applicable way, a non-violent credo dealing with the threats of fascism and domestic militarism. The Communist Party of Canada offered the working class the only activist channels of expression directly responding to militarism. They thus benefitted from a working class sentiment that was not of their own creation. Though the potential for a united front on the left, and a greater collective movement against militarism, seemed great, the byzantine politics of BC's divided left remained. Thus such energies of discontent were subsumed in political posturing: although anti-militarism was rooted in working-class experience, and did reflect an indigenous class response to domestic conflict, nevertheless divisions within the working class prevented a popular front against war.

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APPENDIX

REPORT OF FIRST CANADIAN CONGRESS AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM

CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE REPORT
(Chairman Bert Robinson)

Organizations represented-- 211
Official Delegates--305
Interested Observers--415
Number of persons represented by Delegates--337,000

ORGANIZATIONS

By Provinces:
Ontario (23 cities)--175
Quebec--10
British Columbia--3
Alberta--3
Manitoba--3
Nova Scotia--3
Sascatchewan--3
Newfoundland--1
Nation-wide Organizations--11
Total--211

By Organizations:
-Trade Unions--30
-Political Parties(CCF Clubs, Labor, Socialist Parites)--25
-Local Conferences--25
-Miscellaneous (workers associations, cultural societies, Women's organizations, Defence Leagues, etc.)--131
Total--211.

ORGANIZATION

1. That the First National Congress initiates a wide movement against war and fascism with the title:
Canadian League Against War and Fascism.
2. That the structure be as follows:
(a) A National Committee of 35, elected at the Congress, to be representative of the various sections of Canada.
(b) A National Bureau of 15 residents in Toronto and district to serve as the National Bureau.
(c) Affiliated national organizations (trade unions, political parties, fraternal organizations, farm groups, churches, etc.) which shall affiliate to the League and work in co-operation with the National Committee and National Bureau.
(d) In localities the local branches of national affiliates as well as local groups shall form Local Councils of the League which shall maintain contact with the National Committee and with the Provincial Conferences, where such are set up.
(e) In addition local groups of unorganized persons or persons not affiliated to the League through their organizations, shall form branches of the League which shall be represented on the Local Council on the same basis as all other local units.
(f) Special efforts shall be made to form branches of the League

or committees of the Local Council in factories, mines, mills, railroad apartments, etc., with particular attention to the strategic war industries. These committees or branches must be an integral part of the Local Council.
(g) To promote the League in centres and localities where as yet there is not a committee or conference. Local groups of sympathizers should form Initiative Committees with a view to organizaing a Local Council of the League.
(h) In order to bring professional people, artists, writers, teachers, etc., into the League special efforts must be made to organize these into special groups which shall also be linked up wiht the Local Council.

In rural areas farmers and farm women must be activized to support the League and contact made with the nearest Local Council.
(i) The basis of representation on the Local Council shall be two delegates for every affiliated group up to one hundred members with an additional delegate for every additionalone hundred members, with a maximum representation of five members from one organization.

Local Branches

Local Branches of the League, appealing particularly to unorganized individuals, shall be set up in all districts, and the Local Branch must be affiliated to the Local Council. Members of the League Branch shall pay monthly dues of 10 cents.

Annual Supporting Membership

Individuals wishing to support the League in an unorganized capacity can become Supporting Members at the rate of $1.00 per year, which entitles the member to a year's subscription to the League magazine and information as to the work and activities of the League.

Women

Special attention should be paid to enlist women in the work of the League and the report of the women delegates to the Congress will be used as the basis of organizing this work.

World Movement Against War and Fascism

The Congress decided to affiliate to the World Movement Against War and Fascism of which Henri Barbusse is chairman, with headquarters in Paris and instructed the National Committee to work in closest co-operation with the World Committee.

Resolutions Report

Resolution on a letter to be sent to the National Council of the C.C.F. and the executives of the Trades and Labor Congress, the All-Canadian Congress of Labor, and the Federation of Catholic Workers of Canada.

Whereas: It is urgent that the forces of labor unite against the twin menaces of war and fascism irrespective of their industrial or political affiliations; and

Whereas: It depends primarily upon the working class as to whether or not the war plans of the governments are carried

through; and

Whereas: Fascism has proven by its actions in Germany and other countries that it destroys the trade unions and the political parties of the workers; and

Whereas: There is every reason to believe that the policies of the Canadian Government are producing fascism and war; and

Whereas: There are present at this Congress representatives of many sections of the labor movement, A.F.of L., A.C.C.of L. C.C.F. and other, who are jointly agreed on the necessity for accord in the struggle to prevent war and fascism; therefore be it

Resolved: That this Congress instructs the incoming National to address urgent and friendly appeals to the National Council of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the Executive of the Trades and Labor Congress, the Executive of the All-Canadain Congress of Labor and the Executive of the Federation of Catholic Workers of Canada to enter the movement against war and fascism, to sink their differences in the face of these threats which are common to all workers, and to request their affiliated bodies to link up with the League Against War and Fascism which has been initiated by this Congress.

Report of the Women's Committee

The women's meeting was held on the first night of the Congress Sessions. Forty-five women attended, representing every province in Canada. A representative of each large city or province was asked to outline the situation in her locality,the type of women's organizations in existence, and the possibility of uniting them in our cause. This brought out some valuable and instructive data that will be used to build up the movement. The meeting then proceeded to discuss a tentative structure suitable for the setting up of a women's movement in Canada and the outline of a plan of action.

It was recommended:

That Local Councils of a similar nature be set up in towns and cities. (sic, missing) the Women's Movement against War and Fascism and the establishment of a Women's National Committee.

That the work of these Councils will be to enlist and unite all women's organizations in the fight against War and Fascism(italics theirs). To expose the real nature of fascism and to explain the real causes of war and to enlist their mass participation in our program of resistance against War and Fascism.

That in order to draw into the movement thousands of housewives, professional women, farm women, women in industry, women now unattached to any organization, that special efforts be made to organize them into groups for the specific task of educating themselves as to the causes of War and Fascism and the effects of these evils upon their living standards and rights, and to rally them into the fight against the present preparation

for war, against fascist organization, and to carry out mass action against them.

That special efforts be made to penetrate the Women's Auxiliaries of Trade Unions and Women's Unions, and link them up with our movement because of the important part they play in the manufacture of war materials.

That a Women's Conference be called as soon as possible to affiliate the Canadian Movement to the Intenational Women's Congress at Paris, thereby making it part of the World Movement against War and Fascism.

A provisional National Committee to further the Women's Work was elected by the Congress as follows:

Mrs. W. Wilson, Vancouver
Margaret Crang, Edmonton
Mona Weiss, Montreal
Dorothy Livesay, Halifax
Mrs, Baxter, Kitchener
Octavia Millar, Regina
Miss Rose, Winnipeg
Mrs. Mendelssohn, Montreal
Betty Hodgson, London, Ont.
Mrs, Farquhar, Brantford

The following from Toronto to act as a national bureau:

Alice Loeb
Mrs. Geizke
Julia Collins
Mrs. Bain
Ann Cowan
Mrs. Jean Laing
Miss Alice Chown
Elizabeth Morton, secretary.
Rose Henderson
Mrs. Buhay Ewen
Eve Cunningham
Mrs. Berizanke
Henrietta Beder
Mrs. I. Siegel
Dorothy Livesay

VITA

Surname: Frogner Given Names: Raymond Oscar

Place of Birth: Port Alberni, B.C. Date of Birth: 22 April 1964

Educational Institutions Attended:

Malaspina College	1982-1984
University of British Columbia	1984-1985
Universite Laval	1985-1986
University of British Columbia	1986-1987
University of Victoria	1988-1991

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. University of British Columbia, 1987

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Title of Thesis: "Within Sound of the Drum:" Currents of Anti-militarism in the British Columbia Working Class in the 1930s.

Author: [redacted]

RAYMOND OSCAR FROGNER

10 June 1991