

When Red Meets Green: Perceptions of Environmental Change in the B.C. Communist  
Left, 1937-1978.

by

Eryk Martin  
B.A. (Honours), University of Victoria, 2006

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of

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Abstract

From the 1940s to the 1970s the communist left in British Columbia used debates and perceptions of environmental change as a means to engage in a critique of capitalist society. In engaging in these debates, communists articulated a Marxist understanding of the connections between capitalism and environmental change. However, these articulations were heavily connected to broader occurrences that situated the communist left alongside a diverse group of social actors. Beginning in the 1940s the communist left situated their critique of provincial forest policy into a wider social debate over the management of forest resources. During the 1950s and 1960s, concerns over environmental change were transformed into debates over the effects of nuclear weapons and industrial pollution. From the late 1960s through to late 1970s elements of the communist left once again engaged with the environmental changes taking place in the forest sector, as renewed concerns developed over the status of the forest economy and the preservation of wilderness areas. To investigate the communist left's perceptions and politicization of these issues this thesis focuses on the activities of communist controlled unions such as the International Woodworkers of America as well as the B.C. section of

the Communist Party of Canada/Labour Progressive Party. In addition to these organizations, this thesis also follows the experiences of Erni Knott. As a woodworker, a founding member of the IWA, a member of the Communist Party, and an active environmentalist, Knott's experiences highlight the complex way in which communist politics merged and conflicted with perceptions of environmental change.

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thank, most profoundly, the love and support of my partner Kendra Milne. Without her, graduate studies, let alone this thesis, would not have been possible.

## Dedications

This thesis is for Allan Ginsberg and Zack de la Rocha, whose writings and poems pushed me into an obsession with the past. It is also for Kendra and Diesel, fellow members of the pack.

## Introduction

The Raging Grannies are a well known presence in Victoria's activist circles because of their creative use of direct action as a mechanism of political resistance in the fight for peace and environmental justice. It was not protest, however, but commemoration that brought them to the Metchosin Community Hall on 11 January 2003 to celebrate the life of their friend and comrade, Erni Knott (1919-2003).<sup>1</sup> The Grannies' "Song for Erni", which was sung to the assembled mourners, is a particularly emblematic way of introducing the individual that he was and the life that he led:

Erni, Erni, we'll always remember you.  
Freda's mainstay and friend of the Grannies, too.  
We were all his sisters and brothers  
'Cos he fought for the rights of others.  
A worker, leader, union man-  
You were our hero, too.

Not many loggers have fought to protect the trees,  
Grown a mighty garden with a prodigal crop of peas,  
Strawberries and potatoes  
Garlic and tomatoes.  
Erni knew a thing or two  
About all those birds and bees.<sup>2</sup>

Erni left an impression on the world, of that there can be no doubt, and his impact was felt in more than just the communist left to which he had been dedicated. Obituaries of his life experiences can be found in activist newsletters, local community papers, large trade union periodicals, and even national papers such as the *Globe and Mail*. These

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling of the short form of Ernest's name "Erni" is sometimes spelt "Earni" or "Earnie". I will use the spelling "Erni". Where alternative versions of this spelling occur, it is the quoted or cited authors' usage rather than my own.

<sup>2</sup> Freda Knott's personal papers, "Song for Erni."

obituaries, with the exception of the one in the *Globe*, underlined three interlocking aspects of Erni's life: his experiences as a logger and mill worker, his work as a union activist and long standing member of the Communist Party of Canada, and his commitment to environmental activism.<sup>3</sup> It is the goal of this thesis to explore the intersecting relationship of these three aspects of his life, to help to explain how a commitment to socialism and environmentalism mutually reinforced one and other, and how they were applied. At the same time, Erni's experiences can help to augment and enrich a greater understanding of larger political, economic, and social themes in British Columbia. In order to do so, however, this introduction begins with a brief history of forest sector from the colonial era through to the immediate post-war years.

As Roger Hayter argues, the forest industry in British Columbia began in a context of marginality. Situated on the western edge of the North American continent and on the outer reaches of the British imperial domain, the exploitation of forest resources in what would become the province of British Columbia was shaped dramatically by geography and geo-political occurrences. Beginning in the colonial era, settlers transformed the wood from trees into important commodities for international trade and commerce. In the 1850s, supplies of spars, lumber, and shingles were exported to San Francisco, Hawaii, China, and South America.<sup>4</sup> Thus from its colonial roots, the west coast was integrated into a commercial global system. The increase in gold exploitation

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<sup>3</sup> "Founding IWA member was part of a pioneer generation," *The Allied Worker*, March 2004, 18; "Longtime Communist never gave up activism," *Times Colonist*, 28 December 2003, C1; "Erni Knott, A Life Well Lived," *Taproot: Together Against Poverty Society*, 35 (February-March, 2004), 3; "Ardent B.C. Communist could never get elected," *The Globe and Mail*, 2 January 2004, R5. The obituary printed in the *Globe* focused entirely on the number of electoral losses that Erni endured during his thirty some years running under the Communist Party/Labour Progressive Party slate in various ridings on southern Vancouver Island.

<sup>4</sup> Roger Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads, The Restructuring of British Columbia's Forest Economy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 37; Ken Drushka, *Working in the Woods: A History of Logging on the West Coast* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1992), 29.

in California and the Fraser Canyon allowed the industry to expand its continental roots. Sawmills and production facilities developed along the colonial and American coast. Expanding levels of timber exploitation transformed Burrard Inlet into a major industrial centre for the British colony.<sup>5</sup> However, prior to the 1880s no railway network existed to link the coastal forests to other continental markets, hindering the industry's growth potential significantly. It was not until the completion of the transcontinental railways in the 1880s and 1890s that large scale development of the industry commenced.<sup>6</sup> With this transportation infrastructure in place, production increased dramatically. In 1895 the annual timber harvest totaled roughly 127 million board feet and supported seventy seven sawmills. In 1913 the annual harvest was thirteen times what it had been in 1895 and the number of sawmills had more than tripled.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to rail transportation, technological developments in harvesting were fundamental in transforming the industry. Richard Rajala argues that harvesting developed along a three stage process: falling the tree to the ground and bucking it into smaller more manageable pieces; yarding (transporting) those logs to a central point (the landing); and finally, transporting the logs from the landing to either a pulp mill or sawmill in order to be processed.<sup>8</sup> Falling and bucking remained dependent on human strength through the use of axes, saws, wedges, and sledge hammers until the development of chain saw in the 1930s and early 1940s, but it was changes in yarding

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<sup>5</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 38; Richard Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), xvii; Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 28-30. For a detailed study of the early export activity of saw mills in Vancouver and other early coastal communities, see G.W. Taylor, *Timber: History of the Forest Industry in B.C.* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1975), 18-33.

<sup>6</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 38; Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, xvii;

<sup>7</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 38. For a yearly breakdown of production levels for the coastal section of the industry, see Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 301. For a summary of provincial production and export levels from 1888 to 1940, see Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 39.

<sup>8</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 7.

that led the way to a truly industrialized system. Tracing these developments, Rajala has illustrated that the application of steam-powered yarding equipment beginning in the 1880s radically transformed the forest industry by imposing upon it the mechanized regime of the factory. The first major application of this new technology was the steam-donkey, a large steam engine connected to a winch that used cables to drag the felled trees from the woods. For forest company operators, the steam-donkey provided greater control over the production process by increasing the speed at which logs could be moved from the forest to the landing. This resulted in lower costs and more profitable operations. The steam-donkey also helped to reduce the reliance on animal labour, which could be inconsistent and slow in hot or muddy weather. More important than replacing the animals, however, was the elimination of the skilled position of the teamster, the worker who managed and piloted the teams of oxen or horses that had previously yarded the timber. Nevertheless, Rajala maintains that the steam-donkey's abilities were still limited in many cases. Because it dragged timber along the ground (called ground-lead logging), poor weather conditions and rough terrain often marred the speed, ease, and regularity of these forms of production.<sup>9</sup>

Although the steam-donkey was an important initial step in the mechanization process, it was not until the development of over-head yarding methods that the industry felt the full effects of this steam powered revolution. These overhead systems combined a steam engine with an elaborate system of cables and pulleys suspended in the air and attached to one or two trees called spars. From this overhead web of steel, cables ran down to attach to the recently felled tree. Instead of pulling the log along the ground, the suspended system of overhead cables partially lifted up the log at one end, making

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<sup>9</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 14-17.

transportation to the landing quicker and easier. At the heart of his analysis, Rajala emphasizes how capitalist relations of production informed these technological developments. This Marxist framework recognizes that overhead yarding systems have the principal goal of increasing labour exploitation. In this way, we can understand the implementation of these forms of logging not because they necessarily made logging easier, but because they heightened productivity through deskilling, or eliminating altogether, positions in the yarding workforce and through generally reducing the “degree of control exercised by skilled workers over the pace of production.”<sup>10</sup> It was through these processes that over-head yarding systems brought “routinization” to the workplace and helped to transform the forest into an outdoor factory setting.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond these mechanized systems, with their dramatic ability to expand the exploitation of labour by capital, the forest was being transformed in other ways as well. As the British colonial regime consolidated its grip over this western edge of empire, legal systems for the management and administration of land use became increasingly important. The history of forest land tenure in B.C. is a long and complex one, but its general contours provide an important frame of reference for any discussion of the history of the forest industry. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the colonial administration of James Douglas selectively created timber grants in order to supply local manufacturing needs, such as the 17,000 acres granted to Captain Edward Stamp in order to supply his sawmill at Port Alberni in 1859.<sup>12</sup> The government also used grants to help

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<sup>10</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 25-30. For further discussions on early applications of steam power and yarding technology see chapter three “Early Steam Power” (58-94), and chapter four “Yarding Them Out” (98-124) in Drushka’s *Working in the Woods*. For a short discussion on the early technological developments of saw mills, including the use of steam, see Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Ken Drushka, “Forest Tenure: Forest Ownership and the Case for Diversification,” in *Touch Wood: BC Forests at the Crossroads*, Ken Drushka et al., eds. (Mederia Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1993), 5.

attract outside investment. During the railway booms of the nineteenth century, firms willing to undertake rail construction received large land grants, such as the nearly two million acres provided to Robert Dunsmuir for the construction of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo (E & N) rail line on Vancouver Island in 1883-1884.<sup>13</sup> Provincial legislation technically abolished this granting of private timber rights in 1896, although Ken Drushka argues that it was not until after the first decade of the twentieth century that the enforcement of these prohibitions began to be effective. A public ownership system that granted cutting rights to operators in exchange for lease payments to the Crown replaced the private grant system, a policy first made possible by an 1865 Land Ordinance.<sup>14</sup>

In 1905, the provincial government modified these tenure agreements by creating Timber Licenses. Renewable every twenty-one years, these new licenses granted cutting rights on Crown land in exchange for royalty payments and carried with them no replanting obligations. A series of external factors also aided the state's desire to promote economic development, including growing timber depletion in the east, and a conservationist ethic in the United States. After Theodore Roosevelt's administration placed 150 million acres of U.S. forest land into a national reserve system, American capital redirected investment strategies to take advantage of the B.C. timber resources. To further facilitate the northward flow of American investment, the government made licenses transferable, enabling them to be bought and sold by competing investors. The resulting boom in speculation and investment was massive. In 1900, the government granted 143 licenses and received \$135,000 in revenue. In 1907, two years after the

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<sup>13</sup> Ken Drushka, *Stumped: The Forest Industry in Transition* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), 65-66; Patricia Marchak, *Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983), 35.

<sup>14</sup> Drushka, "Forest Tenure: Forest Ownership and the Case for Diversification," 5.

creation of the long-term transferable licenses, the government granted 10,456 licenses and collected \$1.25 million in revenue payments. Caught off guard by such an incredible rush in speculative buying, the government stopped issuing the licenses in 1907. The enactment of the 1912 Forest Act once again changed land tenure arrangements in the province. Based on the recommendations of a 1907 Royal Commission established to inquire into the conditions surrounding the boom years of 1905-1907, the Forest Act rejected the further use of previously established tenure agreements. Instead, the Act created a system based on three to five year renewable timber sale licenses; this system remained intact until changes made in 1947-48 after a second Royal Commission headed by Chief Justice Gordon Sloan.<sup>15</sup>

Although the importance of the Sloan Commission will be discussed in later chapters, a few cursory remarks are helpful. On a very basic level, the decision to create the Sloan Commission came from a growing concern, manifested in a wide range of governmental and popular channels, over the management of forest resources. The unease emerged after a series of government reports surfaced during the 1930s, indicating that the method of harvesting of vast areas of forest land could be devastating to the industry. As Jeremy Wilson noted, the “bible” of this conservation effort was a report commissioned by the Forest Service and written by F.D. Mulholland.<sup>16</sup> Drawn from investigations commenced during the previous decade, Mulholland’s 1937 report cited inadequate levels of reforestation compounded by high rates of over-cutting.<sup>17</sup> The framing of the debate is an important example of the understanding and perception of

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<sup>15</sup> Drushka, *Stumped*, 30-31; 67-69; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 35-36; Taylor, *Timber*, 49-50; Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 83.

<sup>17</sup> F.D. Mulholland, *The Forest Resources of British Columbia*, (Victoria: 1937), 9-12.

environmental concerns related to forestry. Unlike movements highlighting the preservation of wilderness areas and attempts to set land aside for purposes other than logging, the debates of the 1930s were synonymous with a conservation movement aimed at the rational and planned development of natural resources.<sup>18</sup>

However, as Paula Eng demonstrates, preservationist movements did exist in British Columbia during the early years of the twentieth century. This form of conservation influenced the creation of Strathcona Park in 1911. While preservationist movements often succeeded in lobbying for park creation, it is vital to understand this form of wilderness advocacy as a specific form of economic development rather than as a desire to remove forest land from human use and exploitation. In the case of Strathcona Park, Eng speaks of the movement toward the “commodification of scenery” as economic values were applied to geographical landscapes as a way to evaluate their social benefit. In this sense, the preservationist movement reconfigured industry to mean tourism and recreation. The designation of parkland did not mean that the land would not be developed along more conventional industrial lines in the future. As Eng notes, Strathcona was often the setting for more conventional industrial use despite its park status. Yasmeen Qureshi also argues this point, stating that if tourism and recreation did not prove profitable enough, then mining, logging, or, in later years, hydro-electric operations would expand to justify the existence of the park.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Yasmeen Qureshi, “Environmental Issues in British Columbia: An Historical-Geographical Perspective,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1988), 12-13; Robert Gottlieb, *Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 12-15; *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, revised edition (Washington: Island Press, 2005), 52-60.

<sup>19</sup> Paula Eng, “Parks for the People? Strathcona Park, 1904-1933,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1994), 4; 30; Qureshi, “Environmental Issues in British Columbia: An Historical-Geographical Perspective,” 13.

While the consumption of wilderness experiences was the primary concern of the preservationists, the more efficient and planned use of timber resources was the primary concern for the conservationists in B.C.'s forestry sector. Often organized under the auspices of forestry experts, the notion of sustained yield enshrined these conservation concerns. Sustained yield characterized a belief that proper management of forest lands could provide, in Mulholland's opinion, a "continuous production of timber."<sup>20</sup> As Rajala argues, this approach to forestry science became firmly committed to methods of logging based on clearcutting. Overhead logging systems were configured for clearcutting. Any trees left after cutting the most merchantable timber were often destroyed or irreparably damaged as the machines pulled the felled logs to the landing. To ensure that this voyage was as smooth and unentangled as possible, and to facilitate the readjustment of system's rigging cables, operators cut all of the timber in the harvesting area.<sup>21</sup> Thus, in conjunction with increased labour exploitation, operators had a vested interest in maintaining clearcut logging methods, a position that Rajala argues they then successfully imparted on public policy.<sup>22</sup>

The immediate post-war years institutionalized this productive aspect of conservationism, through new tenure agreements called Forest Management Licenses (later called Tree Farm Licenses) that granted operators extensive cutting rights on Crown land. With these new forms of tenure, government planners favored the transfer of licenses to large forest companies. These companies developed investment strategies in various areas of the industry, such as in the creation of logging, pulp and paper, and plywood production. The products from these sectors were in turn integrated into other

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<sup>20</sup> Mulholland, *The Forest Resources of British Columbia*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 100.

<sup>22</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 89.

areas of production. For forest firms in the post-war era, these “vertical” integration strategies were particularly common as the cellulose gained from wood pulp formed an important ingredient in a wide array of consumer products. In this way, the forest industry was part of a larger global shift in industrial expansion defined by a reliance on technologically complex and capital intensive forms of mass production.<sup>23</sup>

It was in this context that Erni Knott began working in the forest industry. It is no wonder, then, that Knott often used discussions of these political and structural developments in his analyses of the industry and in his personal reflections on the origins of his own growing connection to socialism. Growing up in the forestry sector during the 1930s and 1940s, Knott entered an industry infused with debates over forest conservation, sustained yield politics, changes to the tenure system, and an increasingly mechanized factory regime predicated on clearcutting. Also of importance and directly related to Knott’s connection to radical politics was his experience as a trade union activist and member of the International Woodworkers of America. It was through the IWA that Knott came into contact with and eventually joined the Communist Party. In doing so, Knott became part of an important group of leftist radicals who played a central part in the building of the trade union movement in B.C.’s forest sector.

As Myrtle Bergren illustrated, prior to the formation of large and powerful trade unions, the physical conditions of logging camp life were extraordinarily harsh, as exemplified by the experiences of Charlie Hemstrom. Hemstrom was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). He emigrated from Sweden in 1906 and lived out his life in a shack on Honeymoon Bay, on the south west shore of Cowichan Lake.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Myrtle Bergren, *Tough Timber: The Logger of B.C.—Their Story* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1979), 23.

Commenting on the deplorable conditions in the camps, he recalled almost being fired for taking straw from the camp's pigpen to pad his "bed." "The pigs had some nice straw," he recalled, "they pretty near canned me for that. You were supposed to sleep on boughs or nothing. We washed in a hole outside."<sup>25</sup> In addition to horrible working conditions, camp life was infused with political repression, which was an important challenge facing early attempts to organize workers. As Mark Leier and Richard Rajala have shown, isolated logging camps did not look kindly on workers advocating for trade unions. This was a significant constraint that hindered early trade union work. Leier argues that workers were often searched prior to coming into camp, an anti-union tactic that made organizing difficult, while Rajala notes the openly coercive methods of firing that were used to discipline labour agitators.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Gordon Hak and Stephen Gray have shown how the employer-funded Loggers Agency in Vancouver, the main hiring agency for the logging camps, was able to create a worker monitoring system. Each time an employee left a job, the head office in Vancouver received notes relating to the reason for leaving, a description of the worker's employment habits and personal conduct. Citing union sources, Hak claims that B.C. employers used this surveillance system to blacklist 1,500 union organizers and sympathizers by 1922, while Gray argues that the blacklist system was augmented by the use of "operatives" (company spies) to engage in "labour investigations."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver, New Star Books, 1990) 41; Richard Rajala, "Bill and the Boss: Labor Protest, Technological Change and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930," *Journal of Forest History* 33 (Oct. 1989), 170.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon Hak, "British Columbian Loggers and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, 1919-1922," *Labour/Le Travail* 23 (1989), 85; Stephen Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy: The IWA in Canada, 1937 to 1957," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 1989), 19. For a detailed account of the use of company violence and intimidation, see Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: A*

At the same time, the same technological developments that had transformed the woods into an industrial factory also had adverse effects for workers. Commenting on the lack of effective trade union action prior to the 1930s, Bergren argues that effective unions only developed when combined with the creation of a thoroughly industrial system, symbolized by high levels of capital investment and mechanization. Such conditions, she argues, enabled capital to “extract the maximum in profits from their investments. They owned the most modern machinery, and set the pattern for bare subsistence wages paid in the industry as a whole.”<sup>28</sup> High levels of exploitation, the onset of the depression in 1929, wage cuts, mass layoffs, and policies based on “indiscriminate firing” created fertile conditions for organizing workers throughout 1932 and 1933.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to these factors, Bergren also notes issues surrounding the changing mobility patterns of workers. Increasingly permanent settlements of loggers, which Rajala argues was a key tactic in capital’s ploy to increase workplace efficiency and curb militancy, ironically played a significant part in union organization. Bergren notes that as more resource communities developed, unions played an increasingly important role in sustaining the community.<sup>30</sup> Expanding on this theme, both Rajala and Sarah Diamond provide examples of how the Vancouver Island town of Lake Cowichan became an important base for the development of the IWA. Providing a safe haven for many labour radicals and communists, strong worker’s movements surfaced at Lake Cowichan’s Camp #6 and Camp #10, becoming “the backbone of the union in the fight for better

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*Political History of the International Woodworkers of America* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1984), 38-42; Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 47-52.

<sup>28</sup> Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 25.

conditions.”<sup>31</sup> The creation of a women’s auxiliary in 1935 further supported this movement toward unionization. Auxiliary members formed support networks for women while their husbands were away in camp, hid and fed union organizers, raised money for the union through social events, campaigned and lobbied government for increased community services, and developed hospital committees to care for workers who were injured or maimed on the job.<sup>32</sup> Commenting on employers’ hope that a stable home and family life would work as a conservative check on worker radicalism, Diamond argues that “the opposite occurred. The existence of a permanent community fostered the development of unionism and auxiliaries in this single industry town.”<sup>33</sup> Taking a similar line of argument as Bergren, Diamond concludes that “[t]he possibility of a home and of a wage capable of supporting a wife and children provided an incentive to organize.”<sup>34</sup>

As Gordon Hak, Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam have noted, communists played an important role in the growing radicalization of the trade union movement of the 1930s. Communists were especially active in major labour battles such as the 1934 Vancouver Island Loggers Strike, where 350 loggers trekked fifty miles through the bush to picket the use of replacement workers at a logging operation at Great Central Lake. In explaining the effectiveness of these activists, Hak argues that communists were able to combine struggles for better working conditions with social and political analyses linking the fate of workers to a broader understanding of class struggle; in addition, the communists were able to do this more successfully than any other group of radical

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge: A Century of the Forest Industry at Lake Cowichan* (Lake Cowichan: Lake Cowichan Heritage Committee, 1993), 63.

<sup>32</sup> Sara Diamond, “A Union Man’s Wife: The Ladies’ Auxiliary Movement in the IWA, the Lake Cowichan Experience,” in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women’s Work in British Columbia*, Barbra K. Letham and Roberta J. Pazdro eds. (Victoria: Camosun College, 1984), 290-93.

<sup>33</sup> Diamond, “A Union Man’s Wife,” 290.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

leftists. In this sense, a communist world view was an important factor influencing action because of its ability to conceptualize the intimate connection between economic and political conditions. As Hak concludes, “[i]n the depths of the depression, the non-communist labour movement was paralyzed in both thought and action.”<sup>35</sup> Hak argues effectively that, while communist ideology was important in demonstrating a “zealous commitment to unionization” and an “antagonistic attitude to employers and the state,” communists still placed the immediate demands of loggers at the forefront of union policy. Moreover, as committed militants, communists were less likely to have a “sit and watch” attitude. This too could be attributed to communist thought, which tends to stress active resistance and organized direct action in order to affect political and economic change.<sup>36</sup>

Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam, in their study of the IWA, also explained much of the union’s success throughout the 1930s and 1940s by the fact that its organizers were committed communists. Conceptually, they make many of the same arguments as Hak. “The Communists were successful,” Lembcke and Tattam assert, “because they had an understanding of the class relations that lay beneath the crisis of the Great Depression and were able to translate that understanding into successful strategy and tactics.”<sup>37</sup> Not only did communists have an ideological advantage, but they also had the resources of the Communist Party at their disposal, enabling them to make connections across community, occupation, ethnic, and national divides. In addition to this political base, communists also had a sense of legitimacy based on a strong track

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<sup>35</sup> Gordon Hak, “Red Wages: Communists and the 1934 Vancouver Island Strike,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 69 (July 1989), 89.

<sup>36</sup> Hak, “Red Wages,” 90.

<sup>37</sup> Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 46.

record of activism on behalf of their communities, often gained through their work supporting the unemployed during the Great Depression.<sup>38</sup>

The 1930s strikes at Fraser Mills, Elk River Timber, Campbell River Timber, and Sproat Lake Camp 3 (where a young Erni Knott was working) signaled labour's growing agitation. The IWA formed in 1937, rising out of these conflicts and a series of previous trade union formations, including the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) and the Federation of Woodworkers. With its close connections to the province's communist movement, the IWA was, in its early years, a militant union that retained a strong commitment to direct action and rank-and-file participation.<sup>39</sup> In 1942 the union applied for, and won, union certification for workers in the Chemainus mill. This organizational drive kicked off a string of organizational victories in Hillcrest, Youbou, New Westminster, and Vancouver.<sup>40</sup> The wartime economy's need for massive amounts of wood products was vitally important to the IWA's growing influence.<sup>41</sup> As Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby argue, these rising economic conditions contributed to a rise in worker militancy in the early years of the war with over one thousand work stoppages taking place between 1941 and 1943. New forms of labour legislation designed to stabilize war production and contain worker militancy also facilitated the expansion of the IWA. To this end, the federal government introduced Privy Council Order 1003 (P.C. 1003) in 1944, which enshrined the right to compulsory collective bargaining. This meant that, from then on, the legal certification of a trade union compelled the employer to

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 429.

<sup>40</sup> Lembecke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 103-104.

<sup>41</sup> For a breakdown of the amount of wood needed for war time products such as air planes, air craft carriers, ammunition boxes, road supplies and other items, see Lembecke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 135.

recognize and negotiate with the union. Unions were given further forms of state-sanctioned authority the following year as a result of the creation of the Rand Formula, which compelled all workers to pay dues to the union. The employer automatically deducted these dues from the worker's pay and transferred them to the union.<sup>42</sup>

This new legislative framework formed an important part of what is often referred to as the "post-war compromise." Through legal structures such as P.C. 1003 and the Rand Formula, unions gained increased legitimacy, legal rights, and economic resources in exchange for collective bargaining agreements that marginalized radical elements by narrowing their activities to issues surrounding wages and benefits. Thus, while workers received higher standards of living, collective bargaining legislation attempted to subvert, in Andrew Parnaby and Andrew Neufeld's words, "the possibility of a working-class revolt that would threaten the capitalist system." These authors note that the IWA remained a radical union in the immediate post-war years, but the adoption of labour legislation created new opportunities for the state to intervene in industrial relations. Thus, post-war bureaucratic measures undermined the power of strikes and other forms of working-class direct action.<sup>43</sup> While these events, processes, and themes will be expanded on in throughout the thesis, this short history forms an important starting point for following discussion.

In a 1937 article celebrating fifty years of labour history in British Columbia the Communist Party of Canada's *B.C. Workers' News* marked the anniversary by printing an acidic tirade of historical analysis.<sup>44</sup> The author, "Ol' Bill" Bennett, argued that the

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<sup>42</sup> Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2000), 66; 155.

<sup>43</sup> Neufeld and Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada*, 154.

<sup>44</sup> Bill Bennett, "Fifty Years of Labour History in B.C.," *B.C. Workers' News*, 23 January 1937, 4.

interpretation of Vancouver's transformation into a "highly industrialized" and "imperialistic" city needed to be revised. He argued that the "real estate sharks, timber barons, mine speculators, fishery pirates, oil brokers, stock gamblers, and political heelers," those "argonauts" of industry that were mythologized within the annals of B.C. history as "builders of Empire," needed to be re-described through the language of class conflict. Bennett's revisionist text declared that the province's settler-capitalists ought to be characterized not as progressive and hardy pioneers, but rather as "capitalist thieves" and "parasite builders of Empire" who "batten like leeches on the workers," "rape the earth of its mineral treasures," and engage in "a game of 'put and take,' in which the workers 'put' and they 'took.'"<sup>45</sup>

The emphasis placed on the relationship between the leeching of workers and the "rape" of the earth is an important and understudied theme within the history of the radical left in British Columbia. Linking developments in labour, political, cultural, and environmental history, the relationship between exploited workers and exploited physical environments is a revealing and multifaceted way of viewing the history of the communist left. The approach taken here will be to begin within the terrain of the forest industry during the 1930s and 1940s, when the expansion of a socialistically-inspired critique of timber capitalism and forest policy in B.C. linked exploitation of the working-classes to the exploitation and devastation of the physical environment. Prior to 1950, this critique was situated within three overlapping leftist formations: the Communist Party of Canada/Labour Progressive Party, the communistically-influenced International

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. For more information on Bennett, see Tom McEwen, *He Wrote for Us: The story of Bill Bennett, pioneer socialist journalist* (Vancouver: Tribune Publishing Company, 1951); Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 72; Mark Leier, *Rebel Life: The Life and Times of Robert Gosden, Revolutionary, Mystic, Labour Spy* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1999), 97-98.

Woodworkers of America (IWA), and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). While all these organizations linked the exploitation of workers to processes of environmental change, these themes were particularly prevalent within the communist left. Moreover, communists linked these emerging debates over forest policy to larger forms of political struggle. In this sense, the province's forests were transformed into an important setting for the acting out of a multiplicity of economic, political and cultural themes within the communist left.

The substance and character of these themes will be informed and enriched by following the experiences of Erni Knott. A woodworker and an elected officer within the IWA and the Communist Party and holding deep beliefs in environmentalism, Knott's experiences provide an excellent way to explore different aspects of B.C.'s left history. While the gaps in the historical record remain plentiful, Knott's experiences nevertheless show important parallels to larger historical developments within the left. Moreover, while many of the conclusions that can be drawn from examining Knott's life remain conjectural, they serve as an important base from which to approach his involvement in environmental campaigns and debates in later decades.

Certainly it is not possible, prior to 1960s, to speak of "environmentalism" as we understand it today. And yet it is clear that during the 1930s and 1940s the relationship between humans and the physical environment formed an important part of the radical left's criticisms of capitalism. The CCF, the CPC/LPP and the IWA each developed a critique of forest policy that focused on the physical harm perpetuated by private forest operators. In their discursive constructions these leftists argued that forests were being "despoiled," "devastated" and "raped" by capitalism, while operators and their state

collaborators exploited and cheated the public out of its rightful share of Crown resources. As a result, we can speak of the politicization of certain environmental issues and themes that sought to explain environmental destruction by placing that destruction into a wider social, political, and economic context. In the case of Erni Knott, his personal experiences show how his own views on environmental change were rooted in a Marxist analysis of capitalism, perceptions and understandings which were gained working in the forest industry beginning in the 1930s.

The first two chapters provide an introduction to Knott's early life in the forest industry, his work as a trade unionist within the IWA, and his connections with socialism. While Knott's experiences are important, the narrative encompasses a broader history of the connections between the IWA and the communist left. Chapter one addresses the social, economic, and political conditions of the industry in the 1930s as a way of showing how woodworkers like Knott saw their role as workers in class terms. This chapter will also point to the development of organizations and events where workers and owners attempted to assert their own conception of how work and labour ought to be organized. After laying this groundwork, chapter two will consider the expanding controversy over forest policy and conservation beginning in the 1930s. In this context I will pay particular attention to the way in which a diverse, socialistically inspired critique of forest policy emerged in the province, and how this emergence was linked to larger political, social, and cultural developments within the left. While the communist left is the main subject of this thesis, the arguments and policies of the CCF are included to provide context and points of contrast. Debates over forest policy will be explored through communists' articulated understandings of environmental change that were

intimately linked to the expanding power of U.S. capital, the politics of anti-communism, and the political aspirations of the communist influenced IWA. These macro-level events also provide an opportunity to explore the origins of Knott's emerging environmental consciousness, a development linked to broader themes of conservationist thought during the first half of the twentieth century.

Chapter three argues that by the 1950s the communist left no longer used environmental concerns as a base for its critique of forest policy. Instead, concerns over the management of forest resources were framed by debates over foreign control of provincial forests. While forest policy remained an important focal point for the communist left during the post-war years, communists projected concerns over environmental change into new areas and settings. Chapter four addresses how the proliferation of nuclear weapons generated a host of fears over the possible environmental and health effects of radiation and nuclear fallout, while chapter five explores how the large-scale industrial development of the province's natural resources produced considerable debate over the effects of industrial pollution. As with the debates over forest policy and conservation during the 1930s and 1940s, communists were only one part of a diverse group of peace, conservationist, and environmentalist groups that mobilized to meet these changing environmental conditions. While communists often drew upon and made connections to the activities and critiques of these non-communist social movements, communists continued to interpret and construct the debates in terms that placed the critique of capital at the center of their analysis. This was particularly true of Erni Knott, who was active in the peace movement as well as in debates over the industrial development of wilderness areas such as parks.

Chapter six considers the communist left's interaction with a rejuvenated set of debates over the forest industry during the 1970s. Although significant aspects of these communist arguments remained rooted in analyses of forest tenure, there was an increasing emphasis placed on over-cutting, waste, and insufficient reforestation, as well as an expanding call for strong government measures to promote "public forestry" and manufacturing in the face of a deteriorating economic situation. For the CPC this meant government control with enhanced influence for workers and the public in the formation of forest policy. After addressing the Communist Party's specific concerns with land tenure agreements and the continuing influence of corporate control over the sector, chapter seven focuses on a land use dispute in the Tsitika-Schoen area on north eastern Vancouver Island. In response to government-industry plans to log the Tsitika, one of the last "untouched" areas on the eastern side the Island, Erni Knott and fellow communist Elgin (Scotty) Neish joined forces with environmentalists, conservationists, and students to oppose the development of the Tsitika. The Tsitika, then, is not only significant in illuminating the expanding influence and limitations of environmental activism during the 1970s, but also functions as an important setting for an analysis of the communist left.

In moving through these tangled and overlapping areas, the main focus is the unfolding and exploration of different aspects of the communist left. As a result, this thesis takes a twisting path, weaving its way through different events, groups, and themes. Obviously, it is not possible to follow the communist left into every area of activity. Nevertheless, this thesis will contribute to existing scholarship in these areas by tracing how perceptions of environmental change merged with Marxist analyses of political economy. This relationship produced both consistency and contradiction, and as

a result, provides an illuminating example of the opportunities and challenges that came from combining ecological understandings with the political aspirations of the communist left. Erni Knott was one of several individuals who were deeply involved in linking environmental debates to more traditional settings for communist activism, connections that were inseparable from the experiences gained from working and living among the forests, lakes, and rivers of British Columbia. As a result, Knott and his fellow communist's have much to tell us about this relatively unexplored aspect of Canadian communism.

## Chapter One

### Entering the Woods

If 1937 was an important year for the communist press, given the opportunity to mark fifty years of working-class struggle, it was also an important year for young Erni Knott. Born in 1919, Knott spent his early years working around his family's small farm in the rural village of Hilliers near Cameron Lake on the way to what is now Port Alberni. While attending high school in Qualicum Beach, Knott spent the summer breaks of 1934 and 1935 working for the Chinwhisker Log Company as a choker setter and a whistle punk.<sup>46</sup> While Knott's experiences in the woods during the 1930s and 1940s were pivotal in creating his political consciousness, his home life was also of great importance. Growing up the son of an English anarchist during the 1930s, Erni Knott had, by his own admission, received a good bout of radical influence both from his father and by the poverty and destitution of his childhood.<sup>47</sup> Already poor to begin with, in 1929 Knott's father suffered a debilitating injury while working in the woods, resulting in two injured legs and a crushed pelvis. These injuries, along with the physical and mental suffering that he had endured during his service in the First World War, prevented Knott's father from ever working again. This left a young Erni and his mother to support their small family of four. A testimony to their poverty, Erni Knott sent his first pay cheque home to his mother in order to buy her some much-needed clothing. After the prolonged suffering

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<sup>46</sup> Ernie Knott, Interviewed by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 3. Choker: a steel cable that is wrapped around a log in order to transport the log from where it is cut to the landing. The workers who set the chokers were called "Chokemen." Whistle punk: a worker who relays signals on the job site by pulling on a long line that is connected to a whistle. Whistle punks were usually younger workers.

<sup>47</sup> Erni Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C., Some Personal Reflections," (Unpublished manuscript, 1996), 13.

and eventual death of his mother from complications brought on by a “poverty-driven, self-induced abortion,” 19 year old Knott paid for his mother’s funeral.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to labouring in the woods during the summer, Knott also worked as a caddy on the Qualicum Beach golf course. Ironically, one of the events that Knott remembered most about his work on the links was caddying at the B.C Lumbermen’s annual golf tournament in Qualicum, an event that would have drawn some of the region’s most notable timber capitalists. In fact, it was the owner of Elk River Timber, a large American operation near Campbell River, who offered Knott his first full time position in the industry. During one round the capitalist turned to Knott and asked, “Kid, when you get out of school, what are you going to do?” Knott replied that he wasn’t sure. “Well,” the man responded, “if you’re ever stuck, write me.” Knott did just that, and was subsequently hired at the age of eighteen.<sup>49</sup>

As a younger logger, Knott began his work at Elk River Timber at the bottom of the workplace hierarchy, in the “section gang” maintaining the extensive railroad systems that were an integral part of larger logging operations at the time.<sup>50</sup> From working on the tracks with the grading crew or laying down the heavy steel rails, a younger worker would often be promoted to other positions such as a whistle punk, eventually moving on to become a choker man, a rigging slinger or, later, a hook tender.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in the fall of 1937 Knott moved from the tracks to a position as a whistle punk.<sup>52</sup> Then that December,

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<sup>48</sup> Ernie Knott, Interviewed by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 5. Rigging slinger and Hook tender: these workers set up and managed the cable and pulley systems that enabled the transfer of logs from the forest to the landing.

<sup>52</sup> Ernie Knott, Interviewed by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 4. Elk River Timber was one of the few Vancouver Island camps to have its own shop for repairing locomotives, see Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 165.

he left Elk River Timber and returned home to Hilliers for a Christmas holiday. That year Knott's sister Kay also came home for Christmas, taking leave from her job as a domestic servant in the home of a local businessman named Manning. In the process of dropping Kay there, Knott met Manning, the owner of Sproat Lake Sawmills. After learning that Erni had finished grade twelve, Manning offered him a job as a time keeper at his Camp 3, a float camp on Sproat Lake about twenty miles east of Hilliers.<sup>53</sup> When Knott got to camp, however, he found himself doing more than just time keeping. His work at Camp 3 was, in his words, a "combination job" where, in addition to his time keeping responsibilities, he worked as a part time blacksmith and log scaler, as well as cutting and providing wood for the bull cook in order to heat the bunk houses at night.<sup>54</sup> Knott's entry into the Elk River and Sproat Lake camps marked the beginning of his career as a woodworker, taking part in a particular working-class history where experiences of class conflict, socialist action, and militant trade unionism were prevalent.

In varying ways and degrees, recent works on the forest industry in B.C. have all stressed the profound role that class has played within the history of the sector.<sup>55</sup> This was no less true for Erni Knott. Whether it was in his first camp as a non-union worker, or during times when he was more active in the IWA, Knott worked and lived in a world defined by what he described as "the adversarial system of labour relations" where

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Log scaler: a worker who measures the fallen tree in order to determine how much lumber it will produce. Bull Cook: a worker who manages many of the basic chores in a logging camp such as feeding livestock, washing laundry, as well as heating and cleaning the bunk houses.

<sup>55</sup> While the literature on the forest industry in B.C. is extensive, the following works are particularly useful in their discussions on the role and use of class. Gordon Hak, *Turning Trees into Dollars: The British Columbia Coastal Lumber Industry, 1858-1913* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); "British Columbian Loggers and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, 1919-1922," *Labour/Le Travails*, 23 (Spring 1989), *Capital and Labour in the British Columbia Forest Industry, 1934-1974* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge*; "Bill and the Boss," *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*; Bergren, *Tough Timber*; Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It? The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935-1939," *Labour/Le Travails*, 44 (Fall 1999); Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*; Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy".

operators did what they could to disrupt, break, stall, or subvert the power and influence of organized labour. Moreover, many of the same events and themes discussed by academic historians were also adopted by Knott to convey his own historical understanding and place within the industry.<sup>56</sup>

For example, Knott described in detail the blacklist system that the B.C. Loggers Association (BCLA) used against labour radicals. Knott remembered it being “run by a guy named Black” who had a mind that “could remember 10,000 faces. If he smiled at you when you came up to the counter, you had a job. If he didn’t, you could forget it.”<sup>57</sup> Knott also noted the significance of major labour battles such as the 1934 Vancouver Island loggers strike and the 1937 Blubber Bay strike in the history of the industry.<sup>58</sup> The LWIU organized the 1934 strike when Bloedel, Stewart, and Welch refused union demands for pay raises, overtime pay, the six-day working week, and the recognition of worker run camp committees. They also fired forty fallers for belonging to the union. In response, the LWIU set up a picket camp at Campbell River, drawing 2,500 supporters from twenty different logging camps around the Island. When the company tried to re-open one of its operations at Great Central Lake, union members and their supporters paraded in the streets of Port Alberni before hiking through the bush to picket the camp. In the end, the company was able to deny the workers’ demands, granting only a pay increase for fallers.<sup>59</sup> While Knott recognized these as modest gains, more significant is his recollection of the violence that often accompanied such strikes, describing the police

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<sup>56</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 10.

<sup>57</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 8.

<sup>58</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 9-10.

<sup>59</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 44-45; Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 33-52; Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge*, 61-62; Hak, “Red Wages”.

bringing in machine guns to support the replacement workers and intimidate union members.<sup>60</sup>

Three years later at Blubber Bay, on Texada Island, a similar showing of violence and intimidation took place when the Pacific Lime Company blocked a unionization attempt by quarry and sawmill workers. During the ensuing strike, battles erupted between police and picketing workers, leading to arrests and the death of one worker. For the newly created IWA, it was a bitter defeat.<sup>61</sup> In explaining this outcome, Andrew Parnaby focuses on the enactment and interpretation of legislation governing the industrial relations process. In 1937, the provincial government introduced the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (ICA Act). Worried about the expanding radicalism of the IWA in Washington State and Oregon, and the potential ramifications for B.C., the government introduced the ICA Act to provide a system of labour arbitration that would, in Parnaby's words, "place significant restrictions on collective working-class political action" and "stifle the growth of militant industrial unionism in BC."<sup>62</sup> It did so by transporting conflicts between labour and capital into state settings such as conciliation and arbitration boards. These highly bureaucratic institutions limited the opportunity for spontaneous and flexible forms of militant direct action, forming part of a larger state-centered approach to social and economic conflicts. In the U.S., the 1935 Wagner Act gave U.S. workers the right to organize and bargain collectively and created state structures such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to administer solutions to

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<sup>60</sup> Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 9. For additional comments on the use of machine guns and police intimidation in the context of 1934 strike, see Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 47-53; Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 56-63; see also Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?," 9-45; Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 112-122.

<sup>62</sup> Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?," 10.

industrial conflicts. The Liberal government of Duff Pattullo created the ICA Act in a similar effort to use the state as a way of dulling down the harsher effects of a capitalist society, with mixed results.<sup>63</sup>

Labour both used and challenged these developing legislative frameworks depending on the situation. Union members in B.C. hotly contested the use of the ICA Act after it failed to give the IWA the uncontested right to represent workers at the conciliation hearings at Blubber Bay. In addition to demanding the right to represent the Island's workers, the IWA wanted the unconditional right to strike and organize without fear of company retaliation and subversion. The ICA Act, however, did not have the same teeth as its American counterpart, permitting the use of company unions, and providing loopholes for employers to avoid dealing with militant unions.<sup>64</sup> For Knott, the "vicious" nature of the Blubber Bay conflict signaled the need for collective bargaining institutions.<sup>65</sup> Knott's reflections on Blubber Bay and the 1934 Vancouver Island Loggers' Strike help not only to situate him in a particular historical context, but also to trace the characteristics and origins of his political consciousness. Knott inserted these events into a historical narrative in order to explain what it was like to live and work in an industry where violence, intimidation, and resistance were defining themes of everyday life.

Knott's treatment of dramatic events such as Blubber Bay may signal to the reader the enduring significance that such labour battles held for a particular generation of activists. And yet, we can also benefit from his reflections on more obscure

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid; Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 49; Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge*, 67.

<sup>64</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 49; Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?," 10-21.

<sup>65</sup> While Knott associates the Blubber Bay Strike with the development of the *ICA Act*, he describes it as being enacted after the strike, rather than before it, see Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 10.

expressions of working-class resistance, including examples of day-to-day forms of class struggle that may seem less spectacular than great treks of loggers marching against the police. Nevertheless, the lesser-known status of these day-to-day events is what gives them their quality. In trying to recapture, as much as it is possible, the past experiences of individuals like Knott, we would be doing a terrible disservice if we ignored these localized examples of class conflict and struggle; they hold great explanatory power for the people who experienced them. To illustrate, Knott recounted the story of Snoosy McGargile, a small gyppo<sup>66</sup> operator:

Very often paycheques were late or long overdue. In this case, on Christmas Eve, Snoosy McGargile, a gyppo operator, was late as usual. So that night the crew knocked on his door asking for their pay. His wife answered and called to him saying that the men wanted their pay. Snoosy, who was already drunk, replied, "Fuck'em. Give 'em an apple and tell 'em to go home."<sup>67</sup>

In this case, McGargile's scrooge-like demeanor reflected the combination of indifference and hostility that owners could take towards their workers. Knott, however, placed the event in a wider context, describing it as a "not untypical incident."<sup>68</sup> Moreover, he observed that late paycheques needed to be seen in conjunction with the absence of holiday pay, and that overtime frequently went unpaid. Bankruptcies, particularly during the worst periods of economic decline, could also add up to workers being "cheated out of, sometimes months of wages."<sup>69</sup> Conflicts between owners and workers, however, could also take on a more violent form as Knott's experiences at Elk River and Port Alberni illustrate.

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<sup>66</sup> Gyppo: refers to a small independent logging operation.

<sup>67</sup> Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

At Elk River, Knott worked under a company that took a heavy-handed approach towards workers during the 1930s, especially those known to be union supporters.<sup>70</sup> As Bergren notes, Elk River was one of the largest Island camps associated with the B.C. Loggers Association and was renowned for the “union-hating” attitudes of its superintendent, Pete Herenborn.<sup>71</sup> While Knott enjoyed some positive experiences with the administration, he characterized Herenborn as a particularly “vicious” and “brutal man”, and a “real fascist.” Particularly galling for Knott was how the superintendent would physically kick the loggers if they were too slow climbing into the “crummie” as they left for work in the morning.<sup>72</sup> Physical violence, however, also operated in the other direction, and bosses who pushed their workers too far sometimes received a beating at least as good as they gave, although these forms of resistance often led to the firing of the worker. Such was the case in Port Alberni while Knott was working at one of the local sawmills. One day, a company official “verbally abused” one of Knott’s co-workers who was stacking some lumber. In response, the man slapped the official in the face with his leather apron, challenging him to a fight. When the official declined the invitation and “retreated” back to his office, the man, knowing that he was out of a job, retrieved his lunch pail and left the mill. He did not get very far before he was arrested by the police and thrown in jail.<sup>73</sup> More dramatic still was Knott’s retelling of the abuse suffered by Colin Cameron, CCF MLA for Comox. In the fall of 1937, Cameron and communist

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> The image of the rough and tough superintendent is drawn out further by Bergren’s discussion of Hank Phelen, Herenborn’s counterpart at Campbell River Timber. Wearing a notorious red wig, Phelen enjoyed finishing a night of drinking in Vancouver with a bar-room brawl, see Bergren, *Tough Timber*, 38; 56. For a more sympathetic representation of company managers, see Bus Griffiths’, *Now You’re Logging*, (Mederia Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1978).

<sup>72</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 12. Where Bergren uses the spelling ‘Herenborn’, Knott used ‘Hernbourne.’ Crummie: a vehicle used for transporting woodworkers to and from the job site.

<sup>73</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 10-11.

trade union organizer Todd McLennan were forcibly ejected from the Elk River camp where Knott was working.<sup>74</sup>

In his official work as MLA, Cameron spent parts of September 1937 canvassing the logging camps around Comox talking with loggers about their experiences in the camps and promoting the need for increased union organization. According to internal union correspondence areas such as Comox, Courtenay, and Campbell River were key sites for labour agitation because of the size and influence of the companies and the large number of workers that they employed.<sup>75</sup> Companies such as Bloedel, Stewart & Welch, the Lamb Lumber Company, Campbell River Timber, and Elk River Timber had set up large logging operations in the timber-rich area.<sup>76</sup>

It was in this context that Knott wrote of Cameron and McLennan's attempt to make their way into the Elk River camp. Theorizing that company officials could throw them off "private property," the two organizers decided to try and make it to the camp's postal outlet, with the hope that since that space was technically "federal property" they would be able to communicate with the workers free from company interference. After walking miles along the railway track, Cameron and McLennan finally made their appearance in camp, only to be confronted by the "fascist" Herenborn, who arrived at the post office with a "goon squad" and, in Knott's recounting, "beat up" McLennan and Cameron.<sup>77</sup> Although Knott abhorred the use of violence against union organizers, it was

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<sup>74</sup> Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 13.

<sup>75</sup> University of British Columbia, Rare Books and Special Collections (hereafter UBC-RBSC), Arne Johnson Fonds, Box 1, File 1-4, Correspondence, Incoming, Lumber and Sawmill Worker's Union (1937-38), Jack Brown to Arne Johnson, 23 July 1937.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 13.

the outcome of Cameron's appeal to the legal system that he stressed as the more important lesson to be taken away from these events:

The MLA went to Campbell River and laid charges of assault and battery against the company. Of course, the local magistrate, being in the pocket of the company, didn't want to hear the case. He backed off and called in a rural beak from Quathiaski Cove on Quadra Island nearby, who heard the case. This magistrate then found Cameron guilty [for trespassing] and fined him \$25! This illustrates the influence the employers wielded in the legal justice system and politics of the province.<sup>78</sup>

Thus for Knott, the assault on Cameron illustrated the larger themes of class conflict produced by the friendly relationship between capital and the state.

The *B.C. Lumber Worker (Lumber Worker)*, organ for the B.C. district of the IWA, also covered the events surrounding Cameron's ejection from Elk River, charging that the magistrate further assisted the "campaign of the boss loggers' association to turn the logging camps into prison compounds."<sup>79</sup> Cameron used a similar metaphor while representing himself before the court. By first outlining that the company both denied his written requests to visit the camp, as well as denying a request to have the company's statement of refusal placed in writing, Cameron argued that the loggers he was trying to reach were not just employees, but also "tenants" he should be able to access as an elected member of the provincial legislature.<sup>80</sup> Following this statement, he accused not just Elk River Timber, but all large forest companies of trying to set up "virtual kingdoms" in order to "keep their employees incommunicado, as in Oakalla prison."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. In this case "beak" is used as a slang term for judge.

<sup>79</sup> "Cameron Case is Threat to Lumber Workers' Union," *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 27 October 1937, 1. Discrepancies exist between Knott's account and the version of events set out by the *Lumber Worker* surrounding the level of violence used against Cameron. Knott refers to Cameron being "beat up," while the *Lumber Worker* refers to "grabbing" and "shoving." Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 13; "Cameron Case is Threat to Lumber Workers' Union," 1.

<sup>80</sup> "Cameron Case is Threat to Lumber Workers' Union," 1.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

Although Knott interpreted Cameron and McLennan's ejection from Elk River as an expression of the power of companies, trade union organization nevertheless gained strength throughout the latter years of the 1930s. Coincidentally it was in 1937, the same year that Knott formally began working full time in the industry, that veterans of previous unionization attempts transformed the Federation of Woodworkers into the IWA. Although the IWA drew its support from many sources, dedicated communist activists occupied leading elected positions within the province (District 1) as well as in the *Lumber Worker*. IWA District 1 had two camps under union control in its first year: one in Lake Cowichan, the other Sproat Lake's Camp 3. It was at this time, propelled by his experiences at Elk River, that Knott joined the union "on the sly" while working at Sproat Lake.<sup>82</sup>

It was also at this point that Knott began to read the literature and propaganda put out by the Communist Party, material no doubt received through his connections to IWA-communists in Camp 3. In joining the communist-IWA, Knott represented an expanding communist influence that was taking place throughout the Canadian trade union movement. From 1936 to the latter years of the 1940s, communists were often active in key positions within the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers Union, the United Electrical Workers Union, the Canadian Seamen's Union, the Vancouver Civic Employees Union (Outside Workers), the Fur and Leather Workers Union, the United Textile Workers Union, the B.C. Shipyard Workers Union, the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, and the United

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<sup>82</sup> Ernie Knott, 2 September 1997, 3. For material dealing with the early years of the IWA, its radical roots, and the role of communists in the B.C. District, see Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 18-46; 47-74; Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 4-31; 34-62; Rajala, *The Legacy and the Challenge*, 54-66; Gray, "Woodworkers and Legitimacy," 18-45; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 101-108; "Red Wages," 82-90.

Auto Workers Union. Communists also made headway in national, provincial, and civic labour federations such as the Trades and Labour Congress, the Canadian Congress of Labour, the B.C. Federation of Labour, and the Vancouver Labour Council.<sup>83</sup>

This was the world in which Knott lived and breathed. And while he could have come into contact with IWA-communists in any number of work-related or social contexts, he cites his participation in the IWA's quarterly district council meetings as a particularly important opportunity for radical interaction. During his attendance at these meetings, Knott met a group of well-known communists. These included Alf Dewhurst, secretary of IWA local 1-85 based in Alberni and notable communist theoretician in later years; Nigel Morgan, future LPP provincial leader and International board member for the IWA; and Al Parkin editor of the *Lumber Worker*, future head of the IWA's Educational Committee and dedicated critic of provincial forest policy.<sup>84</sup> In the company of this collective of influential IWA-communists Knott began his woodworking and union career. These gatherings were important spaces for the exchange of union tactics and radical working-class culture, transmitting to the rank-and-file both local and international developments, and bringing them news about the success and failures of their fellow comrades and workers. At the same time the substance of these meetings also helps place the union into a broader historical setting by illustrating how its members conceptualized their role as labour activists. Take, for example, the fourth annual meeting for IWA local 1-80 held in November of 1940 at Lake Cowichan. Although there is no

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<sup>83</sup> Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen, 1988), 223; Benjamin Isitt, "Moscow on the Fraser," Paper Presented to the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting (Vancouver: June 2008), 6; "Tug-of-War: The Working Class and Political Change in British Columbia, 1948-1972," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of New Brunswick, 2008), 77-98; Leier, *Rebel Life*, 130-131; Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 77.

<sup>84</sup> Ernie Knott, 2 September 1997, 5. Knott does not mention Parkin by name but instead refers to him through his position as editor of the *Lumber Worker*.

available attendance list, it is almost certain that Knott was present. Not yet an elected union official, Knott had nevertheless increased his participation in the union during the previous year when he was named to a camp committee representing workers at Sproat Lake Camp 3. With a roster of notable IWA-communists such as International President Harold Pritchett, International Executive Board Member Nigel Morgan, District President Hjalmar Bergren, and local 1-71 Secretary Erni Dalskog, it is unlikely that Knott would have missed such an important union event.<sup>85</sup>

Citing one of the greatest economic booms the industry had ever seen, organizer Hjalmar Bergren argued that at no time in the history of the labour movement had conditions been more favorable for organizing.<sup>86</sup> Despite the recovery from economic depression, the Officers' Joint Report argued that forest company operators were utilizing "economic domination" and "reactionary government officials" as a means to increase profits by keeping wages low and labour unorganized, factors which had increased the popularity of the union.<sup>87</sup> The officers reported that the organization of workers was progressing, with main areas of focus in 1940 being Port Renfrew, Jordan River, and Courtenay.<sup>88</sup> Given persistent operator hostility the local avowed that the union's fundamental goal was the creation of stable work-place conditions within the camps. If camp committees run by rank-and-file members became successful tools for negotiation, if seniority rights were established to keep workers' jobs secure, and if wages improved, then increased membership would permit further goals to be achieved.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> "TWA Local 1-80 Holds Annual Meet," *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 13 November 1940, 1.

<sup>86</sup> UBC-RBSC, Harold Pritchett Fonds, International Woodworkers of America, District Council #1, Box 8, International Woodworkers of America Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 7-8.

<sup>87</sup> Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 2.

<sup>88</sup> Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 5-6.

<sup>89</sup> Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 6.

While “success” was certainly conceptualized in terms of how well the union organized the unorganized, or how effective its members were in improving wages and working conditions, the IWA conceptualized its role as an agent for working-class struggle in very broad terms, often expanding its political aspirations beyond industry-specific goals. Nigel Morgan maintained that the IWA measure its successes as a union by its ability to fight for the “social and economic needs” of working people in general. In fact, the resolutions passed at the local 1-80 November meeting reflected the merging of industry-specific and wider working-class goals. So, at the same time that members lobbied to re-elect specific candidates to head international labour organizations such as the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO), they also pointed to the need for repairs to the Youbou road in order to meet community needs. Members also called for the creation of press committees to increase the amount of rank-and-file participation in the *Lumber Worker*, and advocated repeal of the Defence of Canada Regulations that had resulted in the internment of labour leaders and subverted “Canadian democracy.” The local also demanded revision of the ICA Act to permit for more effective forms of union organization. In addition, significant changes were needed within the entire Canadian taxation regime in order to shift the burden from the poor by eliminating all sales, wage, or consumer taxes, replacing them with a system taxing the country’s rich and powerful citizens and their “large aggregates of wealth and income.”<sup>90</sup>

In this case, the success of these resolutions in affecting large-scale social change is not paramount. Instead, what matters is that these calls for social change can be seen as an expression of what Malek Khouri has called the “‘labouring’ of the Canadian culture landscape” whereby labour increasingly pushed for an enhanced role in shaping society

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<sup>90</sup> Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 21-24.

“based on the practice of grass-roots democracy and the collective use of economic and social resources.”<sup>91</sup> In defining themselves not just as woodworkers, but also as part of a larger working-class community, local 1-80 members conceptualized their role within society in the broadest possible terms, advancing their rights as workers to participate in everything from the status of their wages, to the road work in their communities, to the structure of national tax regimes, to the viability of their political rights.<sup>92</sup>

As one might expect, this “labouring” of the Canadian cultural landscape undertaken by the IWA was strongly influenced by connections to the CPC/LPP. Expansion of the union throughout the 1940s corresponded with an increasing desire by the IWA leadership to link the union’s work to broader goals of working-class struggle, including the extension of rank-and-file participation into areas of social policy and partisan politics.<sup>93</sup> In order to facilitate this process, local 1-80 members passed a 1944 resolution calling for the establishment of “Political Action Committees” (PAC) in every local or sub-local to “further the cause of labour in the economic and political fields.”<sup>94</sup> In a new series in the *Lumber Worker* called “A Guide to Political Action” Nigel Morgan elaborated on the role that these committees were to play in furthering working-class struggle. In his initial column, Morgan stated that every local and sub local should elect a five-member PAC to organize political action and dialogue between rank-and-file

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<sup>91</sup> Malek Khouri, “Counter-Hegemonic Discourse on the Working-Class in National Film Board World War II Films,” *History of Intellectual Culture*, 2001. < <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/issues/vol1/2> >, (29 August 2008), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Such a commitment to working-class empowerment has been well articulated by Stephen Gray in his work on the IWA. While there are many examples of these themes within Gray’s excellent study, the conflict between the Federation of Woodworkers and its relationship to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners Union in 1936, or, the 1948 conflict between the communist “reds” and social democratic “whites” within the IWA are particularly revealing, see Gray, “Woodworkers and Legitimacy,” 29; 394.

<sup>93</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 103-104; Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 2.

<sup>94</sup> Local 1-80, Minutes, 10 November 1940, 2.

members and the IWA hierarchy.<sup>95</sup> Every gain made in the area of labour legislation had come only from united and well organized labour pressure, Morgan advised, requiring that all members be registered to vote in provincial and federal elections and that “every local, every sub-local, and every member must be mobilized to carry on political work in support of our legislative demands-not just this week or next week-but 52 weeks of the year.”<sup>96</sup>

To an extent, the creation of PACs reflected a greater movement towards providing as many settings as possible for labour to exercise a sense of agency. As events such as the Blubber Bay Strike or Colin Cameron’s ejection from Elk River exemplify, conflicts between capital and labour were often transported from the picket line into more formalized state settings such as the court room where lawyers, judges, and legal procedures influenced the balance of power dramatically. Moreover, legislative frameworks that governed the collective bargaining process often functioned as a constraint on labour’s ability to exercise power and influence. As Knott’s use of Cameron’s legalistic challenge against Elk River demonstrates, labour was more than willing to take its fight into statist areas of influence. It is important, then, to see the legislative and electoral aims of the PACs for what they were: alternative settings for working-class resistance. As Stephen Gray has shown in the context of the IWA, however, we need to conceptualize these legalistic and partisan political maneuverings as only one form of resistance to be used in combination with grass-roots forms of militant direct action and rank-and-file activism.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Nigel Morgan, “A Guide to Political Action,” *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 12 January 1944, 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Gray, “Woodworkers and Legitimacy,” 44-45.

These developments are central to understanding both Erni Knott and the world that he inhabited. Class conflict and class struggle not only appeared as a pivotal expression of Knott's early experiences in the forest industry during the 1930s and 1940s, but they also helped to shape an entire culture of working-class activism. By placing these experiences into a wider historical context, we can see both Erni Knott and the communist-influenced IWA as part and parcel of a larger leftist formation that was genuinely motivated by a desire to enhance the power and influence of the working-class in increasingly broad terms. Moreover, these conclusions take on additional meanings when placed within the context of a growing communist preoccupation with forest policy and environmental change during the 1930s and 1940s, as well as helping to contextualize Knott's environmental activism in latter decades. Once we have come to recognize the desire of the communist left to expand their authority into a diverse array of economic, political, and social areas, it becomes much easier to conceptualize why the CPC/LPP and the IWA were increasingly concerned with provincial forest policy and conservation issues. As will become clear, not only were aspects of forest policy directly relevant to communists due to their potential consequences for woodworkers and their communities, but we must also recognize how concern over the fate of the forests fit into a larger picture of working-class empowerment. Not surprisingly, the CPC/LPP and the IWA conceptualized the provincial forests in distinctly working-class terms, rooting concerns over forest policy in a host of local and international developments. The first of these was an expanding social concern over the status of the province's forests. As a diverse group of critics gathered to question the methods of production and administration that underlay the forest sector, the communist left came forward with their

own set of concerns. At the same time, the international political ramifications attributable to expanding Cold War tensions also had effects for the communist left in B.C. by integrating localized conservation struggles into a wider debate over the politics of anti-communism and expanding American economic and political influence. In order to draw these themes out in more detail, however, we must return once again to the 1930s.

## Chapter Two

### Forest Policy, Environmental Destruction, and the Cold War

The 1930s saw the development of a socialist critique of capitalism in the forests, and the creation of a communist-controlled woodworkers' union. The decade also witnessed the expansion of vigorous critiques of forest practices and policies. There was no single critique, but rather a plurality of positions, drawn from a patchwork of social-political groups that reflected a great range of perspectives. This chapter will show that the communist and IWA critique, while borrowing from and sometimes resembling the others, was rooted in a specific and distinct class analysis of forest capitalism. However, since the communist left was embedded within a wider social debate over forest policy, the positions and critiques of non-communist individuals and groups such as the Forest Service's F.D. Mulholland and Colin Cameron of the CCF must be considered. By placing the communist left into a wider debate, we gain a greater understanding of the social and political climate in which communists situated their criticisms of provincial forest policy and environmental change.

While the CCF contributed to the province's forest debate during the first half of the 1930s, it was the publication of F.D. Mulholland's *The Forest Resources of British Columbia* in 1937 that motivated the Party to take a more active stance on conservation issues.<sup>98</sup> Commissioned by the Forest Service, Mulholland's report utilized inventory data of forest resources to argue that over-cutting was taking place at astronomical

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<sup>98</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 156.

rates.<sup>99</sup> Bolstered by the data provided by Mulholland as well as by the active lobbying efforts of Chief Forester E.C. Manning, the CCF provided a significant voice of dissent, led by newly elected Comox MLA Colin Cameron.<sup>100</sup>

Following the line of argument that he had pursued in his legal challenge against Elk River Timber, Cameron argued British Columbians were increasingly becoming subjugated through the power and influence of corporate “kingdoms” run by the province’s timber capitalists. Standing before his fellow MLAs in the legislature in 1937, Cameron launched into a critique of forest company practice that linked the physical and political abuse heaped upon labour and its representatives to the exploitation of natural resources under a particular conception of private property. “The right of these corporations to use force is derived from an interpretation of the meaning of private property, which is nothing short of fantastic,” he argued.

The idea that we must place in the same category as private property and individual dwelling-houses the huge holdings of a logging company is, to my mind, patently absurd. These people, exploiting the natural resources of this province, now seek the unquestioned right to set up forbidden areas throughout the whole of the lower mainland and Vancouver Island, areas on which members of the governing body of British Columbia may go only at the risk of bodily assault.<sup>101</sup>

For Cameron, who was well versed in Marxist theory, it would have been bad enough that private enterprise was ruthlessly exploiting the province’s resources, but for operators to apply the concept of private property to what was, in the opinion of the CCF, a public resource, would no doubt have been an anathema. Although over 90 percent of

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<sup>99</sup> Jeremy Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia, 1935-1985: Reflections on a Barren Political Debate,” *BC Studies*, 76 (Winter 1987-88), 9.

<sup>100</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 163.

<sup>101</sup> “Colin Cameron Flays Closed Log Camps at House Opening,” *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 3 November 1937, 1.

forest land remained in Crown ownership, large sections on Vancouver Island, such as the E & N land grant, were privately held. Not only was private property being actively used by firms such as Elk River to maintain the corporate status quo within the camps, keeping out elected representatives such as Cameron, it also served as a symbolic and material constraint on the ability of labour to organize.<sup>102</sup>

While Cameron constructed a narrative depicting timber capitalists as exploitative autocrats, ruling as “kings” over the people’s resources, Al Parkin, member of the Communist Party, the IWA, and acting editor for the *Lumber Worker*, took a slightly different approach. In a 1938 article in the *Peoples Advocate*, Parkin argued that timber capitalists were part nobility and part thief, existing simultaneously as “barons” and “pirates” who exploited workers while destroying the forests.<sup>103</sup> Citing the oppressive social relations within the industry and the “confident statements of the timber pirates” over the perceived “limitlessness” of the “forest wealth,” Parkin argued that very few people in the early days of the industry came forward to challenge “the wasteful, criminal methods of logging which were ultimately to bring the people of BC face-to-face with [the] complete destruction of the forests.”<sup>104</sup> If a general aura of silence presided over these issues in past years, the current “public outcry” against high-lead logging and deforestation proved, in Parkin’s opinion, that the public was now taking the issue of reforestation and conservation seriously.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> One example of Cameron’s familiarity with radical socialist theory was his use of arguments set out by Marx, Engels, and Lenin in a debate with LPP national committee member Harvey Murphy, see “Cameron Loses Debate to Harvey Murphy,” *The People’s Advocate*, 3 February 1945, 3.

<sup>103</sup> Al Parkin, “Golden Timbers of the Pacific Coast: Organized Loggers Rally Public Opinion to Save them from Extinction,” *The People’s Advocate*, 16 December 1938, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

Likely citing Mulholland's work, Parkin argued that the actual amount of marketable timber left in B.C. was estimated at ten billion feet while industry's yearly output corresponded to roughly one to two billion feet annually. Echoing the dire predictions made by other contemporary observers such as the CCF's Max Paulik, Parkin argued that the end of the province's most important industry was a distinct possibility.<sup>106</sup> "Left to the 'discretion' of the logging operators," Parkin predicted only further devastation. "In the greed for profits, even at the expense of human lives—an average of 60 loggers are killed every year—the lumberman will continue smashing and burning their way through the standing timber until BC becomes another Michigan," he argued.<sup>107</sup> Motivated by the logic of capitalism, these "lumber barons" and "timber pirates" would destroy the forest, a process that was based upon the ruthless exploitation of workers who were literally being worked to death.

For Mulholland, there was no doubt that North American forest land had been significantly misused. With American timber supplies dwindling, Mulholland quoted U.S. Forest Service records to argue that, as sawmills shut down for lack of material, "hundreds of thousands of workers were thrown of their jobs...creating ghost towns and rural slums throughout the Lake States, the South, and on the Pacific Coast."<sup>108</sup> Avoiding a similar scenario in B.C., he argued, required organization and planning that would shift development based on "devastation" to polices where "forests are managed according to plans designed to secure reforestation, regulate the cut, provide sustained annual yields,

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<sup>106</sup> Parkin, "Golden Timbers of the Pacific Coast," 3. Parkin's data corresponds closely to Mulholland's estimates, see Mulholland, *Forest Resources of British Columbia*, 40-41 (merchantable timber); 67 (Average Annual Cut). Figures for merchantable timber are broken down into species categories, as well as into figures detailing "total" versus "accessible" timber resources. It is the latter category that corresponds to Parkin's estimation of supply.

<sup>107</sup> Parkin, "Golden Timbers of the Pacific Coast," 3. When Parkin refers to creating another "Michigan" he is alluding to the vast levels of deforestation that took place in the American mid-west.

<sup>108</sup> Mulholland, *Forest Resources of British Columbia*, 10.

and stabilize forest industries.”<sup>109</sup> In this sense Mulholland represented a notion of conservation based on the promotion of efficient production. Forest conservation in the province forest industry was dominated, Qureshi and Wilson agree, by small groups of experts such as foresters Mulholland and Manning, who championed better use of forest land to further long term economic development.<sup>110</sup> While local conditions created these debates, they also retained connections to European notions of “scientific” forest management and American patterns of conservationism.<sup>111</sup> Hence, in promoting the planned and regulated use of forest resources, Mulholland can be seen as an example of what Robert Gottlieb has termed “resource managers” who advocated a form of conservation predicated on a desire for enhanced production and “extensive development.”<sup>112</sup>

Parkin’s perspective is an interesting one because it mirrors the diverse ways in which perceptions of environmental change could be understood. On the one hand, the wider social debate over forest policy and its connections to “resource managers” clearly influenced his analysis. And yet, Parkin had something more in mind than a technocratic approach to forest policy. Reading conservation through the lense of labour activism, Parkin argued that forest policy had much to gain from the participation of labour. With 90,000 members strong throughout British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, he maintained that the IWA was taking the issues of reforestation to heart, and with support

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<sup>109</sup> Mulholland, *Forest Resources of British Columbia*, 9.

<sup>110</sup> Qureshi, “Environmental Issues in British Columbia,” 27; Wilson, *Forest Conservation in British Columbia*, 8.

<sup>111</sup> The key architect of the development of scientific forestry practices in North America was the German-born Bernhard (Bernard) Fernow. For discussions on Fernow’s influence in the shaping of forestry management practices, see Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 54-56; Drushka, *Stumped*, 26-37; Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 13; Qureshi, “Environmental Issues in British Columbia,” 29. For a good introduction into the American conservationist movement, see Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 52-60; *Environmentalism Unbound*, 12-15.

<sup>112</sup> Gottlieb, *Environmentalism Unbound*, 12-13.

from the public, they could “curb the destruction and preserve the ‘golden timbers’ for the future.” Moreover, Parkin asserted that a strong organizing effort combining the power of the IWA with the influence of “several progressive MLA’s” (of which Colin Cameron was undoubtedly one) would be able to build government support for the issues.<sup>113</sup> Parkin implicitly acknowledged that the forest sector, which was perceived as a public resource, would be better managed by reducing or eliminating the power of timber capitalism. Given the wide ranging economic, political, and cultural facets that forests fulfilled for the general public, their protection would be to the benefit of all social groups. In this sense, Parkin’s comments hinted at how the protection of forest resources transcended environmental debates and working-class concerns. Nevertheless, the main thrust of Parkin’s analysis focused on capitalism’s exploitation of labour and the environment, and advocated political action that would tap into the organizational power of labour as exercised by the IWA.

Through Parkin’s interpretation we can start to see how the communist left drew on a Marxist understanding of capitalism in order to link working-class struggle to debates over the form and nature of forest conservation and provincial forest policy. Although Parkin produced harsh criticisms over how forestry had been practiced we must not take his comments as a call to end logging. For Parkin and his contemporaries, the

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<sup>113</sup> Parkin, “Golden Timbers of the Pacific Coast,” 3. Parkin’s description of ‘golden timbers’ is in reference to his argument that the real “Gold Rush” in B.C. did not take place in the Caribou or on the banks of the Fraser, but in the forests. Accordingly, it was here that woodworkers laboured to extract the province’s “golden timbers” creating profits that greatly outstripped those produced in the gold fields. Using a Marxist argument to stress that these processes of capital accumulation were founded upon the exploitation of working people, Parkin reconstructed a history of the industry by placing its class characteristics at the forefront of his analysis. Specifically, Parkin focused on the shift from ground-lead to high-lead systems of production where trees were increasingly being moved at “express train” speeds from the woods to the landing, substandard working conditions and a general lack of labour rights, as well as processes through which the state was transformed into a “mouth piece” for capital. In many ways this analysis has much in common with the historical sketches of the industry traced out by ‘Ol’ Bill Bennitt and Erni Knott.

forest was still to be conceptualized as the base of an “industry” whose goal was to produce “profits.”<sup>114</sup> Parkin and others on the socialist and communist left remained committed to seeing the forest in commodified terms. As historian Tina Loo has shown, this way of seeing “nature” was hardly a unique phenomenon. In her analysis of the culture and politics of post-war resource use in B.C., Loo argues that physical geographies were often conceptualized through a “high modernist” view of the world that linked particular conceptions of nature to perceived human needs. Drawing on the work of the James C. Scott, Loo argues that high-modernism can be defined by an ideological belief in the progressive advancement of technology and science in order to transform nature to achieve social benefits.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, Loo argues that high-modernism superseded partisan political formations, spanning from the communist left to the capitalist right.<sup>116</sup> While Loo’s work on high-modernism is situated within the post-war era, Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald have also argued that a general belief in “modernism,” based on a similar set of cultural and ideological beliefs in science, progress, and planning, have been particularly influential in Canada since the early twentieth century.<sup>117</sup>

If a particular modernist/high modernist undercurrent transcended political formations, the diverging cultural and political aspects that differentiated how the communist left viewed the forest are nonetheless apparent. As we have already seen, Parkin saw the quest for profits at the hands of capital as a decisive threat to the fate of

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<sup>114</sup> Parkin, “Golden Timbers of the Pacific Coast,” 3.

<sup>115</sup> Tina Loo, “People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on British Columbia’s Arrow Lakes,” *BC Studies*, 142/143 (Summer/Autumn 2004), 165.

<sup>116</sup> Loo, “People in the Way,” 184-185.

<sup>117</sup> Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, “The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 36, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 9.

the forests. And yet, the notion of profits per se was not the crux of the problem. For communists like Parkin, profiting from the forest could be reconciled so long as the domineering and destructive influence of capital was curbed. For those on the communist left during the late 1930s and 1940s then, the relationship between the forest and labour can be seen as representative of a particular modernist framework. However, the particular historical development through which the forests and workers were exploited by capitalism tinged and transformed this modernism according to distinct political and cultural values.

To deal with these conflicting views, we can gain much from the notion of “multiple modernities,” an analytical device utilized by Loo, Keeling, and McDonald.<sup>118</sup> As Keeling and McDonald argue, the concept of multiple modernities enables one to think outside of a single and monolithic conception of modernity. Once this perspective is adopted, an analysis that incorporates aspects of multiple modernities will be better at incorporating and explaining the differences and contradictions that emerge when various or competing notions of modernity come in contact with one and other. As Keeling and McDonald have argued, such a perspective can act as a more inclusive way of viewing the past by recognizing the influence of “historical and geographical contexts” that produce a host of differing and “individual” interpretations of “modern ideals.”<sup>119</sup> It is an approach, in fact, that has much in common with Ian McKay’s quest for a more “inclusive narrative” of Canada’s left history, one that can, to borrow his words “track leftist formations in all their complex diversity.”<sup>120</sup> This framework of multiple

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<sup>118</sup> Keeling and McDonald, “The Profligate Province,” 7.

<sup>119</sup> Keeling and McDonald, “The Profligate Province,” 19.

<sup>120</sup> Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 144.

modernities is quite useful for seeing and analyzing the diverse approaches that communists within the IWA, as well as radicals within the CCF, took in their attempts to set a new course for provincial forest policy. Before turning to an analysis of these differing perceptions and policies, we will briefly return to developments taking place within the forest sector to better understand the historical setting where these differing leftist interpretations were being acted out.

As Richard Rajala argues, the growing controversy over provincial forest policy was side tracked by the Second World War as well as by the unexpected death of Chief Forester E.C. Manning in 1941, removing from the debate a key advocate for government regulation.<sup>121</sup> Whereas Manning had wanted to increase the regulatory power of the state, his replacement, C.D. Orchard, took a collaborationist approach to industry by creating forest policy regimes that ensured that industry's increased access to the forests was free from effective public intervention.<sup>122</sup> Under Orchard, the Forest Service aimed to stabilize the sector by creating new economic opportunities for business that would produce a continual and stable supply of forest resources through a policy of sustained yield.<sup>123</sup> In order to accomplish this, capital needed greater access to supplies of Crown timber. This position was predicated upon the assumption that by integrating private lands and pre-1908 tenures with large sections of Crown land, thereby creating a large pool of land to draw resources from, industry would find an incentive to implement sustained economic development.<sup>124</sup> Originally called working circles, this combination of Crown and private land became the basis of the Forest Management License system

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<sup>121</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 166.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 191.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

(later called Tree Farm Licenses or TFLs). If Orchard was keen on the idea of sustained yield on the basis of greater integration of public and private land, forest operators were likewise committed to increasing their access to public land. With an expanding war-time market and a desire to increase profits by expanding into new areas of production such as pulp, operators argued that they needed increased access to timber resources in order to draw in investment capital.<sup>125</sup> These conditions formed an important part of the government's 1943 decision to create a Royal Commission to explore the inner workings of the forest industry. While industry supported the opportunity it would get at the Commission to rearticulate desires for secure supplies of timber resources, Rajala also notes that the continuing pressure of the CCF was likely an important factor in the government's decision to create the Commission.<sup>126</sup>

Placed under the leadership of Gordon Sloan of the B.C. Court of Appeal, the Commission sought to investigate all major aspects of the forest industry. Having little of the polemic flare associated with either Cameron's pronouncements to the legislature or the communist press' denunciation of industry as a collective of rapists and thieves, the formal submissions made by the IWA and CCF to the Sloan Commission are nevertheless revealing. In one sense, the IWA and the CCF briefs were quite similar in perceiving the historical and contemporary challenges that were facing the province's forests as a product of capitalism. But while they shared a common understanding of who was to blame for many of the problems, they differed over how the industry should be reorganized. With these similarities and contradictions in mind, we can gain additional insights by viewing these submissions as reflective of a complex set of conflicting and

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<sup>125</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 192.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

conjoining political, cultural, and ideological beliefs located in two competing leftist formations.

Compared to the volatile pronouncements made in the communist press, Pritchett's submission to Sloan was quite tame in its rhetoric. He expressed no polemical denunciations of the evils of the capitalist system nor issued calls for the nationalization of the industry. Rather, Pritchett focused on connecting current conditions in the sector to the general welfare of the working and middle-classes. While he refrained from using polemic language, his critique drew on an understanding of the class dynamics at work within the industry. The depletion of forest resources in the first place was, for example, the direct product of the economic and political forces unleashed by capitalism. Pritchett argued that in using ever more expensive forms of capital to achieve the maximum levels of profitability and control, operators were under continued pressure to secure high returns on their original investments. The need for high returns, coupled with the pressure to compete with other likeminded corporations created the "alarming condition" the industry faced. Furthermore, Pritchett opined that if action was not taken soon matters would only get worse, a prediction he based on deforestation in the American mid-western states.<sup>127</sup>

Attributing the collapse of lumbering in that region to the "owner's" destructive logging methods, Pritchett declared that B.C. needed conservation now or working-class communities would be transformed into the "ghost towns" that were common in the United States.<sup>128</sup> "Let no one believe that forest conservation will not be necessary for many years to come," Pritchett stated. "We woodworkers know better. We know such a

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<sup>127</sup> British Columbia Archives (Hereafter BCA), Commission on Forest Resources (1943-1945), GR-0520, Box 17, File 13, "Statement of the International Woodworkers of America," 11.

<sup>128</sup> "Statement of the International Woodworkers of America," 6.

statement is motivated by a desire for quick profits and not an interest in the continued social and economic stability of our province and our nation.”<sup>129</sup> Citing woodworkers’ intimate familiarity with the destructive “cut and run” tactics of forest companies, Pritchett stressed that it was the workers and small merchants in the province’s lumber towns that would suffer.<sup>130</sup> In combination with fire, insects, and disease, “unlimited” and “unrestricted” cutting practices were “liquidating” the forests, causing “incalculable damage”; processes dramatically facilitated by technological developments that were making previously inaccessible or unprofitable timber available for exploitation.<sup>131</sup>

Although the IWA situated its analysis in reference to the economic and political positions of its members, Pritchett also framed his arguments in social and ecological terms. While the “perilous depletion” of forest resources should have been enough to force a widespread study of the industry, he argued that forests served a multitude of roles beyond the immediate concerns of the forest economy. “We must not forget” he argued, that challenges facing the forests were

linked up with the farm problem and that we are paying additional penalties for our abuse of the forest in terms of erosion and floods; in terms of reservoirs, rivers, and harbours choked with silt. We must not forget that forests protect huge watersheds and keep dams and reservoirs secure. They save fine farms and industrial cities in the low lands from damage and afford shelter and refuge for wildlife and provide opportunities for the people to enjoy healthful recreation. Forests are part and parcel of national security.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 4.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. A similar critique of existing forest policy as based on cut-and-run methods of exploitation was also made by Nigel Morgan. See “Sloan Forest Inquiry Reaches Final Stage,” *BC Lumber Worker*, 2 July 1945, 8.

<sup>131</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 6-8.

<sup>132</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 6.

Pritchett went on to emphasize briefly the importance of forests to salmon habitat, sharing the concerns of commercial and recreational fishers with the impact of logging on that resource.<sup>133</sup>

Just as analyses of class relations and the structural workings of capitalism formed the basis of Pritchett's critique of past forest policy regimes, notions of class informed his proposal for how the industry ought to be run in the future. For Pritchett, forest policy should further empower labour in the management of the forests, while at the same time, decreasing capital's monopolistic influence. While it might seem paradoxical at first glance, the IWA argued that the empowerment of labour could be facilitated through supporting the notion of sustained yield. In order for this proposition to make sense, however, sustained yield has to be seen as a flexible concept that can be read in a myriad of ways. Thus, it is understandable that the IWA's position would lead scholars like Scott Prudham to argue that the support for sustained yield indicates that the IWA was putting forward a "prosaic" position. After all, Pritchett did call for the implementation of a sustained yield approach to forestry, a policy that seemed to echo the goals and intentions of the Forest Service and private operators. Nor did Pritchett advocate nationalization of the forest industry. Prudham's analysis is important, then, in illuminating the diverse debates that revolved around the understanding of sustained yield. However, Prudham's interpretation of the IWA does not use the union's communist connections as effectively as it might. This is not to say that these relationships are ignored. Prudham argues that the

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<sup>133</sup> "Statement of the International Woodworkers of America," 18. In April of 1944 the *Lumber Worker* reported on the harmful effects that logging could have on fish habitat by summarizing the arguments made to the Sloan Commission by Major J.A. Motherwell, supervisor of fisheries in the province, as well as arguments made by the Malahat Board of Trade. Specifically, the *Lumber Worker* reported that the destruction of the forest floor near streams and lakes, increased erosion and run-off, the depositing of debris into rivers, and the destruction of salmon spawn and spawning grounds were the most harmful environmental challenges that salmon populations faced from the forest industry, see "Evidence Before Commission on Depleted Salmon Run," *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 3 April 1944, 8.

well known communist Pritchett and the IWA were under pressure due to an increasingly hostile cold war political environment. In this context, Prudham argues that “Pritchett’s testimony to Sloan takes on an entirely different connotation in light of these struggles.”<sup>134</sup> This is a compelling interpretation, one that helps to explain why a communist-controlled union failed to articulate a stronger role for the state and a more comprehensive challenge to the structural underpinnings of capitalism. Nevertheless, Prudham’s discussion of the communist connections to the IWA is quite limited. Rather than refer to the deeply ingrained influence of the communist movement within the IWA, Prudham limits his analysis to Harold Pritchett, and even this analysis is only marginally addressed.<sup>135</sup> By focusing on these radical connections in conjunction with the proposals that Pritchett put forward, we can come to some additional conclusions.

Support for “sustained yield” and a lack of support for a publicly controlled forest industry does not necessarily mean the IWA was taking a submissive role in forest policy, although it does seem puzzling given its communist influence. In order to untangle this seemingly contradictory position, we can gain much from an analysis that problematizes the idea of sustained yield. Just as Loo and others have rejected the assumption that there has been one overriding conception of “modernity”, we can apply that insight to the concept of sustained yield, recognizing that, as a particular expression of modernism, sustained yield meant different things to different people. An understanding of the IWA’s submission to Sloan demands that we situate Pritchett’s comments and policy suggestions into a broader historical understanding of the union, taking into account its communist connections and commitments to the empowerment of

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<sup>134</sup> Scott Prudham, “Sustaining Sustained Yield: Class, Politics, and Post-War Forest Regulation in British Columbia,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 25, no. 2 (2007), 278.

<sup>135</sup> Prudham, “Sustaining Sustained Yield,” 277-278.

labour, while at the same time recognizing the political and social constraints against which any effective policy must be placed.

While government foresters and the Commissioner defined sustained yield primarily in terms of increased production, the IWA had a broader understanding of the concept. For Pritchett “liquidating” forest resources had created “incalculable damage.” Instead of a policy where industry was able to run roughshod through the forest, a more measured approach needed to be taken. For Pritchett, then, sustained yield meant a higher commitment to regulation by increasing controls over cutting, fire, disease and waste. Newly logged areas needed to be “nurtured” and “rehabilitated” through a commitment to sustained yield that stressed rigorous levels of replanting and cultivating the natural regenerative processes of the forest. Harvesting levels ought to be made to fall into a synergetic relationship with sawmill capacities, with the latter limited to what the forests could actually produce sustainably.<sup>136</sup>

Yet increased levels of regulation and control were not the only hallmarks of the IWA’s conception of sustained yield. Pritchett also defined sustained yield as a means to re-conceptualize the purposes and values of the forest in ways that expanded beyond its role as an exchangeable commodity. Central here was Pritchett’s argument that “the great multiple-use values” of the forest must be recognized and factored in to policy decisions that reached beyond the traditional framework of industrial forestry.<sup>137</sup> Again, the foundation of this argument was a view of the forest in broader social and ecological terms, stressing that wildlife habitat, soil preservation, healthy watersheds, and places for human recreation were all valuable uses of the forest in their own right and worthy of

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<sup>136</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 8-10.

<sup>137</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 9.

consideration in sustained yield policy.<sup>138</sup> It is important, however, to keep Pritchett's concerns over the environmental consequences of logging and non-industrial forest values within their particular context. These concerns occupied a small aspect of Pritchett's overall presentation; nevertheless they remain important in illustrating the IWA's place in the evolving conservation movement.

At the same time, recognizing the context of the IWA's communist connections is also vitally important. This is particularly true in light of Prudham's assertion that, in contrast to the nationalization plan tabled by the CCF, the IWA "was willing to cede control over forest commodity production to capital, and forest regulation to a technocratic state apparatus—one in which the union sought no participation or direct representation."<sup>139</sup> As previously mentioned, Pritchett's unwillingness to articulate plans for a state-run forestry sector illustrates that capital would retain a central position within the sector. However, the argument that labour was to have no say in the administration of the forest industry is overstated. Pritchett advocated the creation of joint committees to oversee forest policy that were to be made up of government, industry, *and* labour. The IWA would therefore be empowered by increasing its direct participation into the affairs and management of the forest sector. In addition, the purpose of these joint committees would not be limited to dealing with aspects of production, but would, drawing on Pritchett's conception of sustained yield and multiple-use, function in a larger social context, expanding to encompass the needs of the working and middle-classes. Pritchett saw these committees as a means to create safer conditions for workers, to protect the rights and needs of consumers, and to establish a more just redistribution of industry

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<sup>138</sup> "Statement of the International Woodworkers of America," 8.

<sup>139</sup> Prudham, "Sustaining Sustained Yield," 272.

income by increasing the taxation of corporate profit in order to pay for forest maintenance.<sup>140</sup> Thus, while the IWA continued to see timber as a “crop”, viewing the forest through its relationship to human needs, it was not completely reduced into a setting for monetary transactions. Like Parkin, Pritchett’s arguments also recognized that labour’s participation transcended the needs of the working-class itself. Through its organizational abilities and its intimate relationship to the processes of production Pritchett articulated a vision of labour’s participation that hinged upon its role as a defender, not only for the working-class, but for a larger public interest.

With this in mind, there is much to gain from seeing the IWA’s endorsement of sustained yield in its own terms. Once the connection is made between the specific values and political aspirations of the IWA and the form of its proposed forest policies, one can conceptualize these policies as alternative settings for political resistance. The IWA’s expressed purpose was to reject the defining policies set out by industry while promoting policies which would see labour strengthen the role of the working-classes in new and important ways. Nor should we understand these developments as anything other than an expression of the political and economic goals of the IWA’s PACs, or the socially progressive resolutions tabled by individual locals like 1-80. To varying degrees they were all forms of political resistance that reflected the specific concerns of the communist left.

Nevertheless, Prudham’s analysis remains important, illustrating that no policy decisions are ever made in a political vacuum. It highlights Pritchett’s contradictory stance, where labour’s rights are championed and yet capital remains relatively unscathed. Moreover, there is room to speculate that the IWA’s unwillingness to call for

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<sup>140</sup> “Statement of the International Woodworkers of America,” 13.

the abolishment of capital's place in the sector could be linked to changing political orientation of the CPC during the closing years of the war. In order to bypass an increasingly hostile relationship with the CCF and create a more "respectable" image that would hopefully translate into electoral and trade union victories, CPC leaders put forward the notion of a Liberal-Labour Coalition. In this instance two outcomes are noteworthy. First, the policy of a Liberal-Labour Coalition both highlighted and contributed to a growing split within the communist left. These tensions were especially pronounced in B.C. where provincial CPC leader Fergus McKean charged Tim Buck and his associates with attempting to transform the CPC into a "bourgeois parliamentary party." Although the Party was eventually able to expel this "traitor" to the working-class, the national leadership admitted that it had made some mistakes. One of these was that the CPC had, in some instances, taken a soft line in its critique of capital, a position which had stemmed from various statements arguing that the boom and bust nature of capitalist development could be avoided and that full employment could be reached without discarding the capitalist system.<sup>141</sup> While it remains to be seen just how influential the idea of a Liberal-Labour Coalition was on other aspects of Party policy, it is plausible that it influenced Pritchett's submission to Sloan. In this case, a reading of the IWA's position would take into account shifting political maneuvers that were less likely to replace capitalist structures and more likely to call for reforms that would be accepted by a Liberal audience. Therefore, in evaluating Pritchett's submission, there is much to gain from focusing on both external and internal political developments.

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<sup>141</sup> Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 60-65.

Just as the IWA constructed one particular leftist critique of provincial forest issues, the CCF also had its own distinct analysis to add, undertaken by Colin Cameron. No stranger to conservation and forestry issues, Cameron was actively involved in agitating for the development of a state-run provincial forest industry. In his war-time pamphlet, "Forestry...B.C.'s Devastated Industry," Cameron questioned the effectiveness of private enterprise, advocating strict control by the state. These criticisms formed the basis for Cameron's more thorough analysis before the Sloan Commission in which he advocated a state-controlled forest industry.<sup>142</sup> Cameron, advancing a critique of the proposed sustained yield working circles, argued that private enterprise was incompatible with conservation. Cameron rejected these new land tenure agreements on two bases. First, while operators and the Forest Service argued that the proposed working circles were central to their ability to achieve sustained yield, Cameron argued that there was no way of guaranteeing that, once operators received this access to public land, adequate reforestation would take place. Nor, he maintained, did the working circles address how the enormous amount of previously-cut-over lands were to be restocked.<sup>143</sup> Cameron proposed that the amount of required financial reinvestment in reforestation was vast and should come from private enterprise, not the public.<sup>144</sup> For Cameron, a forest industry where capital was responsible for production and the government oversaw the maintenance of the resource was intolerable. Through an agricultural metaphor, Cameron

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<sup>142</sup> Wilson, "Forest Conservation in British Columbia," 15.

<sup>143</sup> BCA, Commission on Forest Resources (1943-1945), GR-0520, Box 15, File 12, Colin Cameron (CCF MLA), "Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on Forestry," 7 September 1944, 6.

<sup>144</sup> Cameron, "Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on Forestry," 3.

argued that such a situation was the same as saying that “the people of B.C. should raise cows for [private enterprise] to milk.”<sup>145</sup>

Second, Cameron foresaw that working circles would further concentrate economic power in the hands of a few forest corporations, monopolies that would not only control the industry, but would also exert increasing influence over social and political policy given the economic and political status of the sector.<sup>146</sup> With these considerations in mind, Cameron pressed the question of whether or not an industry based on private enterprise was “compatible with a comprehensive program of forest rehabilitation and conservation.” Following the conclusions he had made in his previous works he argued that “there is every reason to believe that it is not.”<sup>147</sup> In its place, he argued that a publicly-owned and operated forest industry was the only answer to the problems facing the sector.<sup>148</sup> Thus, where Pritchett’s submission advocated an increased role for labour, Cameron argued primarily for a more comprehensively public forestry system. While the topic needs greater analysis than can be undertaken here, there is room to speculate that the differences between Pritchett’s and Cameron’s submissions can be further linked, at least partially, to the ideological, cultural and political specificities of their respective left formations.

As the 1-80 resolutions and the establishment of PACs illustrate, during this period the B.C. section of the IWA was keen to increase, as much as possible and in as many places as possible, the influence and power of organized labour. These goals were not limited to the communist-inspired IWA, but were representative of a more general

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<sup>145</sup> Cameron, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on Forestry,” 5.

<sup>146</sup> Cameron, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on Forestry,” 6.

<sup>147</sup> Cameron, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on Forestry,” 7.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

tendency within the Canadian communist left to empower labour through a combination of working-class organization and a Bolshevik-inspired vanguard party. As McKay put it, to be a communist “was not to imagine a distant inevitability. It was to fight for an immediate reality.”<sup>149</sup> In this regard IWA communists developed multiple forms of activism, alternating between militant forms of direct action to the more legalistic or moderate measures reflected in Pritchett’s submission to Sloan, or attempting to use collective bargaining institutions such as the ICA Act at Blubber Bay.

In contrast, Cameron’s prognosis for the future of the forest industry hinged upon the empowerment of the state rather than labour. This is not to say that he contemplated no role for labour. As his activities at Elk River Timber suggest, Cameron was a dedicated socialist who fought for trade union organization and workers’ rights. Nevertheless, his proposal to Sloan signified a version of the future that was distinct from Pritchett’s. In order to help explain why Cameron’s analysis and proposals placed more emphasis on the empowerment of the state, it is necessary to review some of the deeper political traditions within the CCF. As Ian McKay has shown, a defining characteristic of the CCF during Cameron’s time was its commitment to “radical planism,” a process whereby a planned socialization of the economy would lead to the careful implantation of a new socialist state based on modernist beliefs in the mobilization of objective, scientific, and rational planning to meet the social, economic, and political needs of the people.<sup>150</sup> With the emphasis placed on “radical planism,” it is helpful to note that the

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<sup>149</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 160.

<sup>150</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 170-176. In keeping with an analysis that stresses the potential for fluidity between the boundaries of leftist formations, McKay stresses that the CCF’s commitment to radical planism had much in common with the CPC/LPP. This was particularly true in a shared admiration that the two groups had for the perceived gains in state run planning that were undertaken by the Soviet Union. See *Rebels, Reds, and Radicals*, 170.

middle-class played an increasingly powerful role, as the university-trained cohort that would facilitate much of the “scientific planning” underwriting the CCF’s vision of modernity. In this formation middle-class planners became a central force in the struggle for a socialist Canada.<sup>151</sup> To be sure, labour was to play an active role, but one where power was to be exercised and controlled through a more restrictive form of labour bureaucracy,<sup>152</sup> rather than through the more militantly rank-and-file participation as conceived by the communist-IWA.<sup>153</sup> As such, we can begin to see why Pritchett’s submission tended toward the empowerment of labour while Cameron’s focused mainly on the challenges facing an implementation of radical planning in B.C.’s woods. While the two leftist proposals had a common element, that is a common understanding of the exploitative and destructive power of capitalism, the differences were expressed through competing views of what a socialist Canada was to look like and how it was to be achieved.

Despite Pritchett’s and Cameron’s efforts to articulate an alternative form of forest policy, they were unsuccessful in influencing large-scale policy changes. Labour was not granted a meaningful role in deciding how the forest was to be administered nor were the powers of private enterprise curtailed or replaced by state-centered forms of management. While Sloan argued that the state ought to regulate cutting on land owned by private industry, the government decided not to include this regulatory aspect when they created the new Forest Act in 1947. What the government did decide to include in

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<sup>151</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 177.

<sup>152</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 182.

<sup>153</sup> This statement should not be interpreted to mean that the IWA was a non-hierarchical organization. The point is to stress that there was a strong perception among the communist leadership that in order to be effective the IWA needed to be an autonomous organization where rank-and-file members could participate in running of their organization.

the Act, however, were the changes in tenure that the Forest Service, the forest operators, and Sloan had recognized as being central to the implementation of their conception of sustained yield production. The new FMLs, which combined private land with large amounts of Crown land, would be managed by private operators under loose government supervision.<sup>154</sup> With the Minister of Forests gaining the authority to issue the new licenses, large U.S. firms were particularly active in taking advantage of the new tenure agreements, promising new pulp mills in order to increase the utilization of timber resources.<sup>155</sup> For example, in 1948 the U.S. based Celanese Corporation received a FML that entitled them to two million acres of Crown land in exchange for the building of a pulp mill at Prince Rupert. The following year, another American firm, Crown Zellerbach, took over the Canadian Western Lumber Company and received just short of 300,000 acres of land on Vancouver Island in return for promises to build a pulp mill at Duncan Bay.<sup>156</sup>

As might be expected the response from the LPP, the IWA, and the CCF was outrage. The CCF press publicly denounced the notion that the people of the province be compelled to hand over their “treasure” to the “thieves” of industry.<sup>157</sup> For the communist left, the debates that developed in the wake of the Sloan Commission and the 1947 Forest Act were similar to those of the late 1930s and early 1940s. For instance, private enterprise was still ruining the public’s forest resources while simultaneously exploiting labour and working-class communities. Where the debate differed, however, was over the marked increase in how these themes were situated within a complex set of

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<sup>154</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 197.

<sup>155</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 198.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 196.

post-war national and international developments. In this context U.S. imperialism and the politics of anti-communism were connected to local concerns over land tenure, sustained yield policies, and the increasingly-contested communist leadership of the provincial IWA. While these grand economic, political, and social changes were taking place, Erni Knott's life was also taking some dramatic turns. A few years after returning from the war, Knott joined the LPP, a decision that would greatly affect his relationship with the labour movement and the radical left. Overlapping with these political maneuverings, Knott's return to logging in the immediate post-war years allowed his views on environmental politics and conservation to become more clearly articulated. Like many other members of the IWA, Knott's experiences were shaped by developments associated with post-war economic expansion and the political climate of the Cold War.

The IWA summarized the influence of these changing political currents in January of 1948. On the front page of the district council's report for the previous year, the iconographic image of an IWA logger strides through a forest drawn thick with trees and high-lead logging equipment, stepping *over* the dwarfed image of Paul Bunyan. "HOLY OL'MACKINAW HE'S OUTGROWN EVEN ME!" states an amazed Bunyan as he looks up at the towering woodworker. In the background, every high-lead spar tree has at its base a reminder of the gains won by labour through the IWA: decent wages, the 40 hour week, union security, the blacklist smashed, improved safety, vacation with pay, and job security. Despite these significant gains, the IWA officers stressed that union

policy could not be measured in isolation from a host of national and international developments that took place throughout 1947.<sup>158</sup>

Of central importance to the IWA was the expanding influence of U.S. economic imperialism, military rearmament, and the advent of aggressive anti-communist laws and policies which were being pushed both domestically and internationally. Of all the symbols that represented this changing international political climate, it was the development of the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine and the Taft-Hartley Act which concerned the IWA the most. The U.S. Taft-Hartley Act, for example, gave employers the ability to deny organized labour the right to strike, the right to mass picketing, the right to contribute to political parties, and banned the closed shop. On top of all that, Taft-Hartley also required all union officers to swear an oath that they were not members of the Communist Party.<sup>159</sup> At the same time, the IWA linked these growing forms of anti-communism to the expanding influence of U.S. economic power in Europe and North America. "It should also be clearly understood" the IWA argued in the same 1948 convention report:

that the economic program of American big business is one that will tie together the economies of all nations which receive aid under the Marshall Plan, or which become part of the operation of that plan, to the economy of the United States. For instance, Canada, which has been called upon for supplies under the plan, would have to gear its economy to fit in with what is demanded of Canada from United States big business.<sup>160</sup>

Concerns over the expanding influence of the United States and its support for anti-communist politics were important issues for all associated with the world-wide

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<sup>158</sup> "IWA District Officers Report to Eleventh Annual Convention," *BC Lumber Worker*, 12 January 1948, 9. For further discussion on the IWA's post-war breakthrough, including the dramatic 1946 strike where 37,000 woodworkers left their jobs, see Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 98-107.

<sup>159</sup> Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 117.

<sup>160</sup> "IWA District Officers Report to Eleventh Annual Convention," 9.

communist movement headed by the Soviet Union. As Norman Penner has illustrated, Canadian communists were, in various ways, heavily influenced by the policy initiatives and political currents dictated through the Communist International or the USSR generally.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, local communists such as those associated with the forest industry had their own ways of understanding and interpreting these political developments. For example, since the IWA was an international labour organization that spanned the United States and Canada, the Taft-Hartley Act was a blatant threat to the union's communist leadership and internal stability. The effects of American anti-communist policies for Canadian communists were reflected in Harold Pritchett's struggles with the U.S. Immigration Service during the late 1930s, despite his position as the head of the IWA.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, the expansion of U.S. capital in the post-war years was of local concern as the new land tenure agreements built into the 1947 Forest Act attracted foreign economic interests. Thus a growing concern over the political ramifications of anti-communism, expanding forms of U.S. economic and political influence, along with the structural changes taking place in local forest policy worked together to facilitate a particular discursive shift within the communist left. From these changing forms of perception and articulation we can come to see how the communist left linked political struggle to concerns over environmental change in its conceptions of the forest.

Stating that it was too soon to know the full impact of the changes that had been proposed by Sloan and implemented through the modifications to the Forest Act, the IWA's 1948 convention report nevertheless saw that there were two immediately

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<sup>161</sup> Examples of these influential connections can be gained from almost any chapter of Penner's *Canadian Communism*.

<sup>162</sup> Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 75-102.

recognizable outcomes. First, the industry was being monopolized by a small group of corporations and their subsidiaries, which controlled nearly half of the province's lumber production and virtually all of its pulp and plywood production. Their influence and control was further magnified by their significant holdings in the marketing, shipping, and retail aspects of the industry.<sup>163</sup> Second, it was clear to the IWA that such concentrated production was contrary to the goal and intention of its own notion of sustained yield:

The IWA favors our forests to be managed in a manner that will conserve our natural resources to the greatest degree under a [sustained] yield program. We want the forests to be conserved in the interest of the people of this province and we cannot see how the interest of the people will be conserved by turning the forests over to management by private enterprise.<sup>164</sup>

Based on this analysis, the IWA condemned the government for disregarding the people's interests in favor of monopoly capital and renewed its call for greater participation on behalf of organized labour in the control and management of the industry.<sup>165</sup>

In May and June of 1948 the IWA again called into question the implementation of the coalition government's sustained yield program, through two articles written by Al Parkin, the IWA's newly-appointed Education Director.<sup>166</sup> In May, under the title "Fire Blackened Stumps Or Perpetual Forests?" Parkin argued that, perhaps better than anyone, loggers knew first hand the devastation that could result from irresponsible logging methods. Referencing what was undoubtedly the Bloedel Fire of 1938, he estimated that

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<sup>163</sup> "IWA District Officers Report to Eleventh Annual Convention," 11.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> According to the District Officers' Report, the general goals of the Education Department were to create adult education programs for the training of job stewards, to collect and publish general educational material such as leaflets and pamphlets, as well as developing a service for distributing these materials among the membership. "IWA District Officers Report to Eleventh Annual Convention," 11.

Thousands of Coast Loggers have witnessed, at one time or another, that scene of almost unparalleled devastation stretching from north and west of Campbell River where only a vast “forest” of fire blackened stumps is left to mark one of the finest timber stands in North America.<sup>167</sup>

The fire started in July of 1938, fifteen miles from Campbell River on lands worked by Bloedel, Stewart, and Welch. Ignoring Forest Service regulations that placed restrictions on logging during the hot and dry summer months, a spark from a company locomotive ignited a neighboring pile of timber. The fire spread rapidly, devouring piles of dry slash, seasoned felled timber, along with the living stands and anything else that got in its way. When the fire finally burned out, it was the largest ever recorded on the Coast, burning 75,000 acres of land and sending clouds of ash to Vancouver, Victoria, and Seattle.<sup>168</sup> Parkin went on to argue that all woodworkers knew that “such scenes” were reproduced continually and could be found in every part of the province.<sup>169</sup> As yet, however, they had not organized any sort of concrete resistance. Interpreting this lack of action as symptomatic of a lack of understanding, Parkin recommended that members read Max Paulik’s most recent pamphlet, *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia*. After highlighting Paulik’s role as a chief forester in Germany and a local B.C. expert, although nowhere does he mention his CCF connections, Parkin argued that Paulik’s conclusions were sound and fully supported by the province’s IWA District Council. Further elaborating on Paulik’s work, Parkin argued that the sustained yield policies of the Department of Lands and Forests were farcical. Instead of being a progressive approach to forest management, these forms of sustained yield added up to nothing more than “a

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<sup>167</sup> Al Parkin, “Fire Blackened Stumps or Perpetual Forests?” *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 5 May 1948, 4.

<sup>168</sup> Richard Somerset Mackie, *Island Timber: A Social History of the Comox Logging Company* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 2000), 272-274.

<sup>169</sup> Parkin, “Fire Blackened Stumps or Perpetual Forests?,” 4.

big political bluff” that facilitated “prolonged inaction”, secured private ownership over public land, and furthered the exploitation of forest resources for private use.<sup>170</sup>

As Wilson notes, Paulik was an active forestry critic and part of the wider social ferment over forest conservation that took place in the second half of the 1930s. He was also probably an important inspiration behind the CCF’s Economic Planning Commission and the creation of a series of posters promoting the benefits of a state controlled industry.<sup>171</sup> Paulik reiterated his vision of a state-centered approach in his *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia*, the pamphlet that had apparently made an impression on Parkin and others within the IWA hierarchy. As Parkin suggested, Paulik based his analysis of the forest industry on a criticism of conventional conservation policy that put the private and economic rights of individual operators over the social and economic rights of the people and the state. For Paulik, the growing realization that forests were being cut faster than they were being restocked, leading to the denuded land being “abandoned” as a “public liability,” was scandalous.<sup>172</sup> This plundering of the public good was reflected in forestry practices, particularly policies of sustained yield advocating the “liquidation” of mature timber. “Only when all of this conservation blocking timber has actually vanished from our province then only are we told can we permanently enjoy the benefits of forestry, i.e., conservation,” he charged. Yet Paulik felt that this argument fell apart when placed against the history of the industry. As he reminded his readers “[w]e have already accumulated some 102 million acres of such useless, worthless and unrecuperable denuded lands in B.C., and yet neither forestry nor conservation has

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia,” 8; 14.

<sup>172</sup> Max Paulik, *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia: A Critical Analysis*, (Vancouver: 1948), 5.

sprung up on this vast new public domain.”<sup>173</sup> Such results necessitated that individual rights be subjugated to the collective good, and that “democracy” and the “rights of man” be asserted through the creation of stable economic conditions organized under the state.<sup>174</sup> These goals were all the more important for Paulik due to the growing “economic aggression” of the United States. He argued that, unless “public interests” were put before private rights, national independence was in grave danger.<sup>175</sup>

Paulik’s description of the power of capital fit perfectly into the political context of 1948, where the expansionist tendencies of U.S. capitalism were causing significant social concern within the communist left. Significant too, is the fact that in the IWA’s endorsement of Paulik’s work, as well as in the 1948 convention’s criticisms of private enterprise, there was an evident shift toward a stronger position on the dominating role of capital as a manager of forest resources. While the reasons behind this shift remain somewhat unclear, it is reasonable to infer that the growing power of U.S. capital and anti-communist politics in the post-war years signaled to the communist-IWA the need for tougher political measures that could only be mobilized by empowering the state. Indeed, in May and June of 1948, the communist press reiterated concern about the growing power and influence of foreign capital and its relationship to forest policy.

Summoning memories of previous attempts by the United States to expand its influence northward, Bruce Mickleburgh’s article “‘54-40’ - without a fight” was the first of these two communist responses. Contesting the legitimacy and intent of the legal and policy frameworks emerging after the Sloan Commission, Mickleburgh suggested that the 1947 Forestry Act be renamed either the new “forest steal” or, better yet, the “Timber

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<sup>173</sup> Paulik, *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia*, 12.

<sup>174</sup> Paulik, *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia*, 47.

<sup>175</sup> Paulik, *Reforestation Policy of British Columbia*, 48.

Steal Enabling Act.” This renaming would, in the Mickleburgh’s opinion, more effectively express the terms through which the Celanese Corporation received 800,000 acres of land to feed its Prince Rupert pulp mill. Mickleburgh argued that this land transfer not only robbed the public of natural resources, but also symbolized the formation of a new economic-political relationship where the people of the province were increasingly beholden to exploitation by U.S. capital. In addition, Mickleburgh stated that Celanese was drawing Canada into a post-war military build up through Celanese’s connections to the “notorious Dupont monopoly chain” who might wish to turn the province’s pulp over to military purposes such as gun cotton.<sup>176</sup>

Like Parkin, Mickleburgh also argued that the “forest steals” undertaken by corporations like Celanese were directly connected to the state’s notion of sustained yield. For Mickleburgh, sustained yield was nothing but a piece of legislative “propaganda” used to cover the “devastation” of the forests and convince the public that private enterprise was best suited to safeguard the province’s forests.<sup>177</sup> With the government serving the interests of U.S. capital, Mickleburgh charged that it was impossible to conclude that sustained yield policy’s true intention was forest conservation. Echoing arguments made by Cameron and the IWA, Mickleburgh argued that handing over control to private enterprise did not compel industry to ensure that forest resources would be maintained, which was, after all, one of the main reasons for implementing the tenure changes in the first place. Concluding that sustained yield and forest conservation were incompatible, Mickleburgh went further and addressed what Wilson has referred to as the “liquidation” aspect of sustained yield whereby old growth

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<sup>176</sup> Bruce Mickleburgh, “‘54-40’ ---without a fight,” *Pacific Advocate*, 21 May 1948, 5.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

was removed and replaced with second growth forest.<sup>178</sup> For Mickleburgh, such a policy was absurd and “tantamount to saying we can only have a garden when we have made a desert.”<sup>179</sup>

These themes were further elaborated on in Alf Dewhurst’s “The Coalition steals forests for Uncle Sam,” published in the communist press the following month. Taking a different tack than Mickleburgh, Dewhurst’s analysis centered on a shrewd detailing of how government compliance in increased U.S. investment in pulp production undermined the possibility for conservation. With huge amounts of cheap land and increasingly large amounts of electric power being provided to attract outside investment for the pulp industry, the government was setting the conditions for an influx of American capital. These growing patterns of economic imperialism were compounded by the technical nature of pulp production. Because producing pulp entailed the use of far fewer workers than in other areas of the industry, future jobs were being lost. Those jobs that were produced were also generally lower-skilled positions. Not only were the forests being stolen, then, but the nature of production was also shifting, creating fewer jobs at lower levels of pay.<sup>180</sup> To make matters worse, the falling of the province’s economy into the hands of U.S. capitalists witnessed the shipment of unfinished pulp across the border to feed American markets. Arguing that this was part of Finance Minister Abbott’s plan to create industries specializing in “semi-raw materials,” pulp became “the convenient form in which the forest wealth of our province is smuggled across the line.”<sup>181</sup> Once again, Dewhurst placed these developments in an imperialistic discourse:

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<sup>178</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 86.

<sup>179</sup> Mickleburgh, “‘54-40’---without a fight,” 5.

<sup>180</sup> Alf Dewhurst, “The Coalition steals forests for Uncle Sam,” *Pacific Advocate*, 18 June 1948, 4.

<sup>181</sup> Dewhurst, “The Coalition steals forests for Uncle Sam,” 4.

Through the Abbott Plan, which is the Marshall Plan in Canada, our forest industry is being fitted openly and brazenly into the economy of the U.S. The capital invested in the pulp industry is predominantly American. The industry is dependent upon the U.S. for all its machinery and replacements. And the market, in the main, is an American market...Pulp will increasingly replace lumber as the dominating factor in the economy of the province and as a result the whole economy of the province will be increasingly subjected to “boom and bust” policies of Wall Street.<sup>182</sup>

Rather than seeing sustained yield tenures as means to create a more stable and economically viable forest industry, the communist left viewed these policies in class terms that highlighted themes of theft, anti-imperialism, nationalism, the devastation of forest lands, and increased labour exploitation. Pushed by international economic and political events, local concerns over forest policy were increasingly described and understood in relation to the expanding influence of U.S. capitalism under the Marshall Plan, Truman Doctrine, and the Taft-Hartley Act.

As various scholars note, the end of the Second World War was a time of great expansion for the pulp industry.<sup>183</sup> Previously used primarily for paper products, during the 1930s and 1940s advances in applied chemistry and manufacturing transformed pulp into a base for thousands of new consumer products. By 1975, G.W. Taylor estimated that wood pulp contributed to over twenty-five thousand different forms of manufacturing.<sup>184</sup> Expanding on the themes set out by Dewhurst nearly forty years prior, Marchak argues that the “enunciation” of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan greatly facilitated the economic connection between the United States and Canada. As Canadian military production facilities, security apparatuses, and personnel fused with

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 242-243; Taylor, *Timber*, 161-173; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 38-40; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 157-158; Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 51-53; Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 42.

<sup>184</sup> Pulp formed an important ingredient in products such as rayon, plastics, explosives, surgical supplies, construction materials, film for movie and still cameras, as well as forming important components in packaging for a wide range of foodstuffs, see Taylor, *Timber*, 161; Drushka, *Working in the Woods*, 242.

American counterparts through NATO and NORAD, and as American resources dwindled, key Canadian resources such as pulp took on greater significance. Drawing on the work of Melissa Clark and Mel Watkins, Marchak contends that Canada was transformed into a “peripheral state,” functioning as part of a larger system of “continental resource capitalism” where multinational corporations siphoned off locally produced resources for U.S. markets. The fact that the American government identified newsprint and pulp, along with mineral and fuels, as a “strategic material” for U.S. defense policies further secured this continental integration, ensuring that economic policies focusing on pulp received high priority.<sup>185</sup>

Where Dewhurst, Parkin, and Mickleburgh offer a host of communist perspectives on the interconnections between timber capitalism and environmental change, the experiences of Ernie Knott can further enrich this understanding. Returning from the war in 1945 after serving as a mechanic in the air force, Knott again took up work in the forest industry where he recommenced his political activities. The years of 1945-1946 were particularly tumultuous for Knott as he gradually shifted his position within the left. From 1937 until sometime during his war time service (1941-1945) Knott was a member of a CCF youth group.<sup>186</sup> Despite this CCF affiliation he was strongly influenced by the IWA communists he met at Sproat Lake, connections which were apparent in Knott’s understanding of the Second World War. Beginning in 1939, Knott adopted the Communist Party’s position on the hostilities developing in Europe, opting not to join the armed forces in a war that saw the working-classes being used as “cannon

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<sup>185</sup> Marchak, *Green Gold*, 39.

<sup>186</sup> Ernie Knott, Interview by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 6.

fodder” for the “imperialist powers.”<sup>187</sup> When Germany invaded Soviet Russia in 1941, Knott’s position on the war changed. For he and many communists previously opposed to military service, the war could no longer be defined as a conflict between squabbling imperialist powers; the situation had been transformed, in Knott’s words, into a “worldwide struggle against fascism.”<sup>188</sup> Despite adopting this communist inspired perspective on the international situation, Knott remained a CCFer, even joining the provincial party when he returned home in 1945. This affiliation, however, lasted less than two years.

In recounting his decisions to join the communists, Knott did not dwell on his formal connections with the CCF. Of the few comments that exist in reference to this part of his life, it seems that he was uncomfortable with what he saw as a tendency within the CCF towards anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, observing that these policies “didn’t make much impression on the working people.”<sup>189</sup> It is also possible that, given his close association with local communists during his time in the forest sector, the rising tides of anti-communism were difficult for Knott to accept on a more personal level. These connections with communist activists increased as he reengaged in trade union and political activity after returning from the war. Knott cites his participation in the pivotal 1946 strike where he was introduced to communists Mark Mosher and Walter Yates as a defining moment in his movement towards the communist left.<sup>190</sup> At the same time, Knott also engaged in what he deemed a “thorough” studying of classic Marxist-Leninist texts. Describing himself as an “avid reader,” he completed all three volumes of *Capital*.

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<sup>187</sup> Ernie Knott, Interview by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 5.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 13.

<sup>190</sup> Ernie Knott, Interview by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 6. For more discussion on the 1946 strike, see Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 100-103.

Knott also met with Alf Dewhurst in Nanaimo to, in his words, “clear up some theoretical questions which were bothering me.” It was also Dewhurst who recommended that Knott read Engels’ *Anti-Duhring*, a book that quickly became one of Knott’s favorite classical texts and one of the final factors that influenced him to formally join the LPP in 1947.<sup>191</sup>

It was also during the latter 1940s that Knott came to a more critical understanding of the politics and environmental effects of the forest industry. Much like Parkin, Knott argued that the devastation of the province’s forests was facilitated by the widely-held perception that forest resources would last forever. He argued that “[a]ll of the authorities, the professionals, the foresters, the forest service, the government, the employers assured us that our forests were inexhaustible, that they would last forever. So the companies went ahead and creamed the very best from the valley bottoms.”<sup>192</sup> The perception of an endless supply of forest resources had been widely criticized since the mid-1930s, but Knott describes understanding in 1946 that forests were in fact not “inexhaustible.”

At that time, he was working as a logger for a company at Nanaimo Lakes. When the company decided to log everything in the valley where he was working by extending the clearcut right up to the lakeshore, Knott decided that something needed to be done. Describing the area around the water as full of large beautiful trees and old miners’ cabins built during the 1930s Depression, Knott wrote a letter to the government asking that a quarter mile strip be left around the lakeshore to preserve recreational use. He received an answer to his letter, but the results were less than ideal:

The response I got from the cabinet minister to my letter was to thank me for writing and telling me that no doubt further representations from

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid.; Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 14.

<sup>192</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 6.

concerned citizens like my self would shape government policy. In the meantime they went ahead, logging and despoiling everything, making a virtual desert.<sup>193</sup>

These ‘deserts’ were often made worse by the large amounts of waste that accompanied the logging process. Fires were often set with the mistaken notion that this would reduce the amount of slash debris and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of larger fires. Ironically, these smaller fires often got out of control anyway, and would race up the hillsides burning the best of the merchantable timber. Furthermore Knott argued that:

Often we despoiled, wasted and burned more than we yarded out. They took only the very best timber leaving the rest to rot on the ground....All this took place without taking into account the enormous destruction of fish habitat in most of our rivers and streams, resulting from slash debris, slide silting and lack of shade protection in most of the riparian zones. This is to say nothing of drinking water quality destruction in most of our watersheds, such as in Victoria.<sup>194</sup>

While Knott’s reflections regarding the “despoiling” of the forests as he experienced it during the 1930s and 1940s are revealing in their own right, they must also be viewed in the broader context of post-war conservationism. Knott’s discussion on the destructive forms of logging reflected concerns as set out by a diverse group of social critics such as Mulholland, Parkin, Paulik, and Cameron. Central to these varying forms of conservationism was a belief in creating a more rationally-planned and productive forest. And yet Knott’s arguments for preserving the beauty and recreational potential of the lake shore, as well as his concern about the damaging ecological effects of logging for wildlife populations such as fish, reflected a conservationist ethic that transcended a utilitarian conception of forest land use.

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<sup>193</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 18.

<sup>194</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 6.

As Tina Loo argues, post-war expansion in economic development, along with increased levels of recreational and leisure time, created problems for wildlife resources. As more people headed to the outdoors, attendance in Canada's national parks exploded from half a million visitors in 1940 to nearly two million visitors a decade later.<sup>195</sup> Qureshi has documented the dramatic rise in hunting and fishing licenses after the war, and the corresponding provincial government revenue drawn from these increasingly popular pastimes.<sup>196</sup> As more British Columbians used the outdoors for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, and sightseeing they constructed understandings of nature that were often at odds with a brand of conservationism based solely on the vision of nature as a site of industrial production. Reflecting this tension, the periodicals and digests of outdoor recreation clubs expanded their coverage of conservation issues, while hunting and fishing organizations more thoroughly engaged with policy issues concerning wildlife management.<sup>197</sup> These developments help to expand the scope of what constituted post-war conservationism, as well as providing context for Knott's own budding environmental consciousness.

Despite the important role that outdoor recreation played in promoting conservation, Knott was not experiencing these environmental changes through leisure. Rather, as he notes so strongly, his experiences as a worker actively participating in processes of industrial forestry fueled his perceptions of environmental destruction. But in these experiences too, he was not alone. In addition to some of his fellow IWA

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<sup>195</sup> Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 122.

<sup>196</sup> After 1945 state revenue from game and fishing licenses increased from just over two hundred thousand dollars in 1945 to roughly one million dollars in 1954. Qureshi, "Environmental Issues in British Columbia," 77.

<sup>197</sup> Qureshi, "Environmental Issues in British Columbia," 69-73.

members, we can see Knott's concerns in the broader context of a growing conflict between the fishing and forest industries. As Rajala argues, it was during the post-war years that commercial fishers and their union, the UFAWU, expressed growing concern over the effects of clearcutting on salmon-bearing streams. Just like Knott, these workers gained their understandings of environmental change from their time at work, where they witnessed first hand the "ravages of the clearcutting regime."<sup>198</sup> Yarding equipment, for instance, destroyed stream banks, loosening debris that eventually choked the waterway. Logging roads crossed streams and increased erosion problems, while the removal of the forest cover altered seasonal water flows, resulting in either too little water for spawning or too much water too quickly. This destroyed eggs and fry. At the same time, cutting trees along the waterway removed the much-needed shade that moderated water temperatures. Since these ecological processes affected everyone who had a stake in fish stocks, concerns over clearcutting brought commercial fish workers into alliance with fish managers and recreational wildlife enthusiasts.<sup>199</sup>

In addition to his growing environmental awareness, Knott's expanding associations with the communist left were also greatly influenced by the political and economic climate of the post-war years. Joining the LPP in 1947, Knott was soon fully immersed in a communist political culture rooted in Cold-War debates over the power and influence of the United States, its domineering relationship to Canada, and the growing political influence of anti-communism. Conflicts between the social democratic-whites and communist-reds were increasing in intensity within the trade union movement

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<sup>198</sup> Richard Rajala, "Clearcutting, Multiple Use, and the Politics of Salmon Habitat in British Columbia, 1945-1970," American Society for Environmental History, Annual Meeting, Boise, Idaho, March 12-15, 2008, 7.

<sup>199</sup> Rajala, "Clearcutting, Multiple Use, and the Politics of Salmon Habitat in British Columbia, 1945-1970," 8-9.

as a coalition of CCF supporters and anti-communist allies in the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) and the international office of the IWA expanded their attacks against the communists.<sup>200</sup>

In August of 1947, International IWA president James Fadling demanded that all International board members support the Taft-Hartley resolutions. Two American IWA-communists resigned their seats on the board rather than comply. When Jack Greenall, an IWA-communist from B.C. refused to step down he was subsequently fired. Allegations over missing funds within the IWA's B.C. district were also used to discredit the communist leadership. In addition, the white-bloc harnessed its influence in the CCL to expel the communist-controlled Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers Union (Mine-Mill) from the B.C. Federation of Labour (BCFL). With that, the BCFL was firmly in the hands of the anti-communist camp. It was the era of McCarthy, as Knott recalled some years later, where an anti-communist uprising attempted to "clean the communists out of the leadership of various unions, including the IWA."<sup>201</sup> With these constraints stacking up, and with rumors spreading that the International office would take control of the B.C. District, the IWA executive collaborated with the Communist Party to organize the removal of its supporters, secede from the IWA and form the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada (WIUC). The vote to secede came at the quarterly district council meeting on 3 October, 1948.<sup>202</sup>

As an elected representative and leader in the Duncan local of the IWA, Erni Knott spoke at length at the now famous October meeting, launching into a forceful

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<sup>200</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 111-112.

<sup>201</sup> Knott, "Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.," 14.

<sup>202</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 112-117.

critique of the white-bloc and linking the tensions within the union to the broader political and economic struggles of the Cold War:

As always, there are certain people within the labour movement who are bought and sold to the employers. As always there are people within the labour movement who perform the tasks within the ranks of labour as lieutenants of the boss....These same people support the policies of American imperialism. They support the Marshall Plan. And what is the Marshall Plan but an extension of the Truman Doctrine which is nothing but unabashed imperialism. They support the Marshall Plan which is the foreign policy of Wall Street Big Business, and when you support the foreign policy of Wall Street Big Business, you are bound to support the domestic policy of Wall Street Big Business.

What is the domestic policy of Wall Street Big Business?—the Taft-Hartley Law.<sup>203</sup>

These comments clearly show how Knott was embedded in the political climate of his day. Like his fellow IWA communists, it was impossible for Knott to speak of politics without recognizing the interconnected influence of U.S. imperialism and anti-communism. The internal divisions in labour, the growing political and social significance of anti-communism and political repression, and the expanding power of U.S. economic control in resource industries such as forestry, formed the sub-text of his speech. In this sense, to be a communist at this time was to live and breathe the overlapping and interconnected political and economic relationships tying together labour, capital and the state. Erni Knott was no exception. His analysis provides another example of how communist IWA members perceived the world around them, and how they approached the tactical questions tied up with trade union policy. The cold war tensions between the reds and whites that culminated in the secession should also be seen in the context of differing sets of trade union tactics. Stephen Gray argues that the war-

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<sup>203</sup> Freda Knott's personal papers, International Woodworkers of America, "Proceedings of District Council No. 1 Meeting," October 3, 1948, 69-70.

time context of labour relations and the ensuing shift toward legalistic forms of trade union management attempted to narrow and thus marginalize the radical goals and methods of the communist-IWA. In resisting what Gray refers to as an overly bureaucratized “pure-and-simple” trade unionism, the leaders of the break-away faction of the IWA attempted to hold on to the communist traditions of militant direct action and rank-and-file participation by establishing an independent union.<sup>204</sup>

The WIUC, however, failed to survive and quickly became known by Knott and others as a “terrible Leftist blunder.” The WIUC and IWA were eventually reconciled, but Knott and forty two of his fellow comrades remained expelled from the union. Officially expelled because of his participation in splitting the union, Knott stated that “real reason was because I was a well-known active communist.”<sup>205</sup> Like IWA founders Hjalmar Bergren and Harold Pritchett, Knott was able to keep working in the industry despite being barred from the union. Thus while Knott argues that he continued to struggle throughout the 1950s and 1960s to promote aspects of forest protection and conservation, he was unable to influence much within the union for over twenty years.<sup>206</sup>

It was fortuitous, then, that the time of his rehabilitation back into the IWA in the early 1970s coincided with an expanding environmental movement, a development that provided Knott with significant opportunities to engage in environmental activism. While the particulars of these interactions are the subject of the following chapters, it was his experiences in the woods during the 1930s and 1940s that played a pivotal role in influencing his own particular approach to environmental activism, an approach that was based on his belief in socialism and his position within the communist left.

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<sup>204</sup> Gray, “Woodworkers and Legitimacy,” 429.

<sup>205</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 14.

<sup>206</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 18.

The expanding power and influence of American capital was a key facet in the communist left's critique of forest policies. Handing over control of forest lands to U.S. capitalists subjected what was perceived as a vulnerable resource to outside interests, which would plunder the forest in a quest for profit, causing significant environmental damage as a result. Infused into this argument was an understanding that developments in the forest industry were intrinsically linked to broader post-war political and economic policies such as the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, and Taft-Hartley. These same concerns informed much of the red-bloc/white-bloc conflict within the IWA, as communists such as Knott made abundantly clear in their reasons for succeeding from the union. As a result, local concerns over environmental change within the forest sector, as well as struggles to maintain militant forms of trade unionism, shared a strong connection to larger post-war political and economic developments. Moreover, communists consistently situated local political concerns into broader political and economic processes in their analyses. This was particularly true in the case of the forest sector, where the expanding power of foreign capital remained a pivotal concern for B.C. communists.

## Chapter Three

### Foreigners, Fordism, and the Second Sloan Commission

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, discussions on the fate of the forest once again changed within the discursive landscape of the communist left. In treating communist proposals on forest policy such as the Party's submission to the second Sloan Commission of 1955 chapter three explores how the forests were rarely described in a way that linked conservation debates to a critique of forest capitalism and U.S. imperialism. Unlike the period from 1937 to 1948, there was little conversation alluding to the creation of vast "deserts" of charred stumps or to the possible extinction of the province's "golden timbers." While forest policy remained a common subject for the communist left, it was understood mainly in terms of the broader alienation of provincial natural resources undertaken by W.A.C. Bennett and his Social Credit Party during this period. Although the exploitation of the forest continued to be characterized as monopoly thievery, unlike past decades there was a marked silence on the ecological and environmental effects that accompanied the logging process, the themes explored previously in chapters one and two. Instead, the Party and its press focused intensely on exposing and criticizing the power and influence of U.S. monopoly capital. Arguing that foreign control over the public's resources was not only morally unjust, but also would lead to disastrous economic and social consequences, provincial communists called for the development of a Canadian controlled industry to achieve domestic industrialization, promote jobs, and contribute to a locally driven and viable economy.

This was the message that Nigel Morgan, leader of the provincial section of the LPP, brought to the second Sloan Commission in December of 1955. In his first term as

Commissioner, Sloan recommended the creation of an additional commission within ten years. While there is no doubt that Sloan's suggestion carried significant weight, a growing sense of public unease over the shortcomings of provincial forest policy also influenced the creation of the second Sloan Commission. The Liberal Party, the CCF, and the province's small and independent operators called for investigations into the granting of Forest Management Licenses. By the time the Commission got underway, the government had approved eighteen licenses, twenty eight more were in the processing phase, and an additional one hundred requests were waiting in the ranks.<sup>207</sup> Questions surrounding the granting of FMLs were particularly relevant in light of the fact that Social Credit Minister of Forests, R.E. Sommers, accepted a series of bribes in exchange for granting a tenure agreement without Forest Service approval. While Sommers was eventually found guilty in 1958 and served jail time for his offence, his fellow government officials, and the company officials who bribed him, remained relatively unscathed.<sup>208</sup> The Forest Service and private enterprise approached the Commission looking for policies that would create stable relations for industrial development.<sup>209</sup>

In this context, Nigel Morgan submitted a brief to Sloan arguing that the development of forest resources ought to create progressive economic returns and social benefits for Canadians. Maintaining the LPP's firm commitment to socialism and belief that forest industrialization would be best realized under a regime not driven by profit, Morgan nevertheless stated that his party's proposals were fully realizable under the current political order. Like Pritchett's submission on behalf of the IWA ten years previously, Morgan presented a forceful critique of mainstream forest policy. At the same

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<sup>207</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 58; Drushka, *Stumped*, 73; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 51.

<sup>208</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 59.

<sup>209</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 48-50; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 51.

time, he tried to ensure that his proposals and recommendations would be effective in creating a forest industry that met the perceived needs of the people of the province as interpreted by the LPP.<sup>210</sup>

For Morgan, the key aspect of forest management was utilizing resources as a means to provide “increasingly higher standards of living” for British Columbians. Unlike Pritchett’s submission, the constraints standing in the way of this goal were not based on the perception that forest resources were running out because of the destructive and harmful logging techniques of timber capitalists. In fact, Morgan began his submission by expressing confidence that the province had a “vast reservoir” of trees. He used no cataclysmic language alluding to the violent denuding of the provincial forest. This shift in perspective reflects a wider social and cultural perception of forest resources that extended beyond the communist left. As Wilson argues, by the 1950s a series of economic, technical, socio-political changes undermined a widespread debate over processes of forest devastation. Expanding markets, prolonged periods of high prices, new manufacturing opportunities, and expanding public infrastructure created, in Wilson’s words, “a more optimistic mood” surrounding the forest sector.<sup>211</sup> The replacement of railroads by truck-logging pushed these economic changes by opening up more resources for exploitation, reducing public concern over the supply of resources. The industry’s expansion in the interior of the province also increased the productive

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<sup>210</sup> BCA, Record of the Commission on Forest Resources, GR-0668, Vol. 36, Proceedings, “Brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry Submitted by the Labour-Progressive Party, British Columbia,” 7 December 1955, 9627.

<sup>211</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia,” 21.

capabilities of the forest sector contributing to “step-by-step reductions in public worries about perpetuation of the resource.”<sup>212</sup>

At the same time, Sloan’s recommendations did little to shake up the system. FMLs were renamed Tree Farm Licenses (TFLs) but Sloan endorsed the general policy objectives set out in the previous Royal Commission.<sup>213</sup> With support for sustained yield policies running high, even the CCF dropped its radical critique of forest policy. In 1956, a moderate faction of the Party aligned with the now non-communist IWA in order to defeat a series of resolutions calling for a state-centered form of forest management. As a result, Wilson argues that the CCF, the organization “in the strongest position to challenge government implementation of the policy was unable to do so in an effective way.”<sup>214</sup>

This did not mean, however, that all was well within the forest economy. As Wilson notes, battles over tenure policy continued.<sup>215</sup> Despite the optimistic perception of resource supply, the LPP joined this debate, arguing that the people of the province were barred from controlling and managing these resources for their own needs. Government policy, in Morgan’s view, had evolved to a degree where public forest resources were being alienated by the increased power and influence of U.S. monopoly capitalism.<sup>216</sup>

Morgan identified the root of this problem as the Forest Management License system. To illustrate the trend toward monopoly, Morgan reported that the four individual FMLs held by McMillan Bloedel, B.C. Forest Products, and Celgar Development covered 1, 855, 205 acres, more than two thirds of the total land granted in the nineteen

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<sup>212</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia,” 22.

<sup>213</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 59.

<sup>214</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia,” 21.

<sup>215</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia,” 18.

<sup>216</sup> “Brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry Submitted by the Labour-Progressive Party,” 9628-9631.

FMLs approved since the system was developed. While the Crown technically owned much of this land, the actual power over how these areas were to be administered and managed was in the hands of the licensee. Moreover, the trend towards monopolization was greatly facilitated by the fact that the FMLs had become, in the eyes of forest corporations, a form of speculative capital. To demonstrate his point further, Morgan documented the case of FML no. 2. In this case, the large U.S. firm Crown Zellerbach mobilized its subsidiary firm, Pacific Mills, to buy controlling shares in the Canadian Western Timber Company (CWTC), which controlled FML no 2 through its own local subsidiary. This maneuvering by Crown Zellerbach resulted in a corporate takeover of CWTC and the effective transfer of FML no. 2 to Crown Zellerbach.<sup>217</sup>

Indeed, the fact that these firms were increasingly American concerned the LPP greatly. As Morgan reported, of the sector's largest five monopolies, three were outright American firms, while one, MacMillan Bloedel, was jointly controlled by American and Canadian interests. While Morgan admitted that U.S. corporations provided employment for British Columbians, like Dewhurst he expressed concern with the processes through which American capital sought to export raw resources from the province, transforming it into a resource hinterland for U.S. manufacturing interests. By creating export-based industries, monopoly was robbing the working classes of tens of thousands of future jobs. Such a policy, Morgan concluded, "means reducing British Columbia workers to the status of hewers of wood for U.S. corporations. It means the U.S. will take the cream of our forest wealth, leaving the skim milk for us."<sup>218</sup> Not only was this skimming hindering the economic progress of the nation, it also represented an example of gross moral

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<sup>217</sup> "Brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry Submitted by the Labour-Progressive Party," 9639-40.

<sup>218</sup> "Brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry Submitted by the Labour-Progressive Party," 9657.

corruption on the part of government, which, through the FML system, was betraying the public good. He argued

no Government, past, present or future has the moral right to alienate from public ownership the vast forest heritage we possess. Governments come and go, but no Government, ought to be permitted to alienate in perpetuity the forests on which the economic well-being of this and future generations of British Columbian's depend. The Labour-Progressive Party is fully in favor of forest management aimed at ensuring a perpetual yield. But we are opposed to the Forest Management License scheme which hands over effective control of these forests to private companies for private profit....<sup>219</sup>

These arguments display another example of how communists like Morgan attempted to divorce their articulation of sustained yield from the promotion of private enterprise. And yet, these comments also betray something else quite significant. In exploring the development of large, heavily capitalized, and monopolistic corporations engaged in the mass export of natural resources, Morgan's comments provide a window into the blooming years of the Fordist age. While the characteristics of Fordism are complex and can differ depending on specific local contexts, there are some basic commonalities. As Hayter argues, the Fordist era had, at its core, large, stable, and bureaucratic corporations, labour organizations, and governments. These three groups worked together to create "Keynesian" forms of economic planning and highly mechanized systems of mass production.<sup>220</sup> These economic policies form, in Hak's words, the "cornerstone" of Fordism. Furthermore, Hayter draws on the work of J. Jenson to argue that there was an altered form of "permeable Fordism" in Canada because of a

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Roger Hayter, "'The War in the Woods': Post-Fordist Restructuring, Globalization and the Contested Remapping of British Columbia's Forest Economy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vo. 93, (2003), 708-709.

high dependence on “exports, foreign ownership, and foreign technology”.<sup>221</sup> Beginning in the 1940s, these relationships were defining features of the forest industry, lasting until a combination of factors changed the social-political landscape dramatically beginning in the 1970s.

While Morgan opposed the growing influence of the large forest companies, Hayter maintains that the policy decisions associated with the Sloan Commissions “anticipated a forest industry dominated by big firms and factories.”<sup>222</sup> Large firms rooted in economies of scale would be best suited to create a stable and efficient industry, and corporate strategies based on vertical and horizontal integration became a key facet of the Fordist age. Vertical integration ensured that forestry firms could retain control over everything from the supply of resources, which they pursued through the FML system, to the creation of favorable markets for their finished products. Likewise, horizontal integration aimed at creating common networks for marketing and research. Such policies enabled firms to expand in a multitude of directions. Thus, in its B.C. operations, Crown Zellerbach, the antagonist in Morgan’s analysis of foreign monopoly control, produced eighty-six thousand tons of newsprint, sixteen thousand tons of market pulp, and forty-four thousand tons of paper products, all in 1950. By 1970, not only were all those figures approximately four times what they had been in 1950, but the firm’s integration strategies also expanded to produce 373 million board feet of lumber and 195 million square feet of plywood. As Hayter concludes, under Fordism “growth and size themselves were objectives, a desired characteristic of industry culture.”<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Hayter, “‘The War in the Woods’,” 709.

<sup>222</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 53.

<sup>223</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 53-55.

In the forest sector, pulp mills were the “signature” industry of Fordism,<sup>224</sup> particularly kraft pulp, which took advantage of new bleaching technologies to surpass sulphite and chemical pulp by the 1950s, symbolizing all of the elements of a Fordist boom. It was produced in massive quantities, by extremely sophisticated, technologically-advanced processing plants run by unionized workers and funded by extensive capital investment. Moreover, kraft pulp mills, such as those established in Port Alberni in 1948 and near Nanaimo in 1950, used wood waste that came from other processing facilities, fueling integration as pulp and paper production became linked to wood processing.<sup>225</sup> Once again, corporate executives planned these investment strategies in ways that integrated their pulp and paper mills into larger industrial networks. The government, for their part, pitted potential investors against one another in order to obtain the quickest and most extensive forms of investment possible.<sup>226</sup>

Analyzing the FML system’s central place in the emerging Fordist regime, the LPP argued that these tenure agreements ought to be abolished and replaced with a system of state ownership and operation that would guarantee the protection and perpetuation of both the public and private forest resources. In addition, such a policy would entail establishing secondary manufacturing industries, more revenue collected from the exploitation of resources, an expansion of the Forest Service and other administrative mechanisms in order to facilitate effective Crown ownership and control, as well as the creation of a Forest Resource Commission and Forest Advisory Board. The Resource Commission would consist of five seats held by capable representatives from

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<sup>224</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 53.

<sup>225</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 53; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 26-32; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 38-40; Taylor, *Timber*, 164-170.

<sup>226</sup> Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 174-175.

labour, industry, and the public, and its function would be to administer the forest policy of the province. The Forest Advisory Board would be larger in scope, encompassing fifteen seats and drawing its members from “all sections of the public” in order to address potential problems facing the industry as well as make recommendations to the Resources Commission.<sup>227</sup>

While implementing committees as a facet of forest management was similar to past proposals advocating an increased participatory role for the public and labour, the LPP brief did not engage, as Pritchett had, with the notion of protecting the “multiple use values” of the forest. As a result, with the exceptions of a few off-hand remarks about “protection” and mandatory reforestation, Morgan was silent on the effects on recreational use, watersheds, fish stocks or wildlife habitat that could result from industrial logging. Morgan’s submission, then, effectively laid out the main position of the LPP towards not only the forest industry, but also the development of natural resources in the province more generally. When seen in a broader context, the proposal nicely encapsulated how the changing perceptions of resource use were characterized by a turn away from analysis linking ecological and environmental concerns to the critique of monopoly capitalism.

An expanding analysis of the effects of monopoly also appeared in the pages of the communist press. In 1954, a year before Morgan gave his proposal to the Sloan Commission, future B.C. Communist Party leader Maurice Rush wrote an extensive critique of the growing power of U.S. monopoly capitalism in the forest industry.<sup>228</sup> For Rush, processes of capital integration through mergers and corporate amalgamations

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<sup>227</sup> “Brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry Submitted by the Labour-Progressive Party,” 9673-75.

<sup>228</sup> Maurice Rush, “They’re giving our forests...and your future to the U.S.,” *Pacific Tribune*, 3 December 1954, 9.

were drastically expanding U.S. influence over forest resources. At the same time, he stressed that the trend toward monopoly ought to be placed into a wider social and economic context. This was particularly true in the case of an expanding export business that was shipping locally harvested resources to feed American manufacturing needs. Anticipating the phrase used by Morgan the following year, Rush argued that the American monopolization of forest resources had the potential to turn B.C. workers into “hewers of wood for U.S. trusts.”<sup>229</sup> This exploitative position was fused, once again, with a discursive focus on themes of theft. Not only were monopolies “robbing” the public through the FML system, they were also robbing Canada of manufacturing jobs since most of the secondary processing was done in the U.S. In this case, a nationalistic discourse was used to describe how the economy was being “stunted” and how workers were being “deprived” of jobs in their own country as they witnessed their “birthright” being “sold to others.”<sup>230</sup>

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, similar *Pacific Tribune* articles situated the communist analysis of the forest industry within the context of monopoly control.<sup>231</sup> This perspective was at the heart of Rush’s analysis of the 1960 merger of MacMillan Bloedel and the Powell River Co. Ltd., two of the five largest forest corporations in B.C.<sup>232</sup> Rush used this merger to illustrate some of the intimate connections linking the American and Canadian economic elite. Described as having an “octopus like” character,

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Rush, “They’re giving our forests...and your future to the U.S.”, 9.

<sup>231</sup> For further examples, see “Forest Act amendments won’t eliminate monopoly abuses,” *Pacific Tribune*, 7 March 1958, 6; Maurice Rush, “Merger tightens US grip on BC forest industry,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 March 1960, 2; Maurice Rush, “Ghost Lumber Towns Unless U.S. Trade Plan Rejected,” *Pacific Tribune*, 31 August 1962, 12; “Demand Bennett stop forest sellout,” *Pacific Tribune*, 13 March 1964, 1; 3; Maurice Rush, “Forest saw-off reached, still need overall review,” *Pacific Tribune*, 4 September 1964, 10. For a fascinating and cheeky analysis of the effects of private control over hunting rights, see “Island news, views and comments: Games and Gates,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 September 1964, 10.

<sup>232</sup> Maurice Rush, “Merger tightens US grip on BC forest industry,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 March 1960, 2.

MacMillan Bloedel and Powell River Co.'s tentacles were made up of an all male board of directors that produced links to ninety-five other companies, including the Bank of Montreal, the Royal Bank, and Canadian Bank of Commerce, as well industrial and manufacturing firms like Western Steel and Bridge, B.C. Packers, the Kitimat Pulp and Paper Co., The Ford Motor Company and elite American capitalists like R.D. Merrill and the Brooks family.<sup>233</sup> "Free enterprise indeed!" scoffed Rush. "One sees here a clear picture of how a handful of powerful men control, through directorships on numerous companies, a very large slice of B.C. and Canada."<sup>234</sup>

Communists, however, were not the only ones lamenting the shift toward an industry dominated by the archetypical Fordist corporation. As Drushka, Marchak, and Hak note, the shift toward a concentrated tenure regime resulted in hard times for the province's many small and independent operators who blamed the FML system for marginalizing their position within the forest economy.<sup>235</sup> The Truck Loggers Association, which was formed in the early years of the 1940s to provide a voice for small independent operators, engaged in a "biting critique" of the FML system, which aroused what Hak calls "the spectre of monopoly," where "a few well-capitalized corporations would gobble up all the FMLs, leaving no timber for the little guys."<sup>236</sup> Above all else, these independents advocated a diverse and competitive business climate, where small entrepreneurs could advance their own interests and contribute to the overall

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Drushka, *Stumped*, 73-80; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 55-74; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 33-40.

<sup>236</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 51.

betterment of their communities. Fearing being pushed out of the industry, the province's small operators did not look kindly on the state or its FML system.<sup>237</sup>

The critique of the FML system and its monopolistic overtones was, therefore, not confined to the left. Although this general critique of monopoly helps to situate communists such as Morgan into a broader debate, there were, as one might suspect, important differences between the two opposition groups. While the LPP and the Truck Loggers Association both despised the expanding power of monopoly, their visions of the future were diametrically opposed. As Hak notes, the province's small operators were "[p]ro-capitalist and anti-state...and saw monopoly as a creation of governmental policies, not as a result of the dynamics of capitalism".<sup>238</sup> The communists, of course, took the opposite view. Monopoly was a product of capitalism, and the monopolistic conditions affecting a host of Canadian resource and manufacturing industries were firmly rooted in the power of foreign corporations. Putting it succinctly, the LPP argued in 1952 that "Canadian monopolists are bound body and soul to U.S. monopoly capital. Fearful of Canadian democracy, they betray our country's true interests and become the creatures of the U.S. in the hope that they can hang on to their power and privileges."<sup>239</sup>

It was this form of analysis, one that stressed the expanding power and influence of American monopoly capital, which replaced a critique linking the exploitation of workers to the perceived destruction and exploitation of the forest. A Marxist inspired engagement with the environmental effects of capitalist society did not, however, disappear from B.C.'s communist left. As the forest industry became a less probable

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<sup>237</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 55; 64-66.

<sup>238</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 66.

<sup>239</sup> Author's personal papers, Labour Progressive Party, *Canadian Independence and People's Democracy: Program adopted by the National Committee of the Labour-Progressive Party* (February, 1952), 6.

setting for communists to connect the relationship between environmental change and monopoly capitalism, post-war industrialization, militarization of nuclear science, and the political configurations of the Cold War produced new settings for just such an analysis to take place.

## Chapter Four

### Using Peace

The immediate post-war years witnessed, not a neglect of environmental themes within the communist left, but rather a shift in the location of such debates. This chapter explores how the peace movement became a new forum for the expression of environmental concerns. Emerging out of the Second World War and encompassing an extremely diverse array of topics and goals, the peace movement's most important contribution to the development of environmental awareness within the communist left was its ability to promote resistance against the various ill effects of nuclear weapons. Like peace activists around the world, communists in B.C. not only saw nuclear weapons within the context of such catastrophes as Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also mobilized in recognition of the long term environmental effects of American nuclear testing. Radioactive fallout, nuclear waste, perceived changes in weather and climate, and the effects on human and non-human health were seen as direct products of the militarization of nuclear science.

Similar to notions of sustained yield, peace was not a stable concept. Rather, it was a notion which had a multiplicity of associated meanings and uses. For example, on the front of Erni Knott's 1963 provincial election pamphlet, a worker in coveralls stands in front of an image of British Columbia. Using one hand, he points to the background where a patchwork of industrial symbols such as a smoking factory, power lines, and railroad track are placed below a section of text that reads "Develop B.C.'s Resources." At the same time, the worker's other hand is projected out before him in order to stop the entry into the province of a nuclear device. Below the worker, the text reads "Keep Out

Nuclear Arms!” Expanding on the connections between resource use and the peace movement, Knott’s election platform went on to argue that Social Credit, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party had all taken weak stands on Canadian sovereignty by tacitly endorsing the entry of U.S. nuclear arms into the province. The failure to resist this intrusion was, in the Communist Party’s opinion, adding “immeasurably” to the danger of nuclear war. At the same time, this issue of peace was directly connected to resource politics. While peace and war were the most important issues of the coming election, they were “closely—inseparably—linked with the sellout of our province and our country to US monopolies. We must have a provincial government that says NO to nuclear arms and YES to peace and Canadian sovereignty.”<sup>240</sup>

Erni Knott did not win the electoral race in his Victoria riding, nevertheless his election poster demonstrates how communists linked issues like peace and disarmament to other vital concerns such as who was to benefit from the industrial development of the province’s natural resources. At the same time, this debate drew on concerns over environmental change and ecological disaster. The peace movement filled an important role in the debate over environmental change since the use of increasingly sophisticated military armaments had the potential to cause significant environmental damage. Beginning in the late 1940s and expanding rapidly throughout the 1950s, the expansion of the Cold War and the militarization of nuclear science formed the central hub around which such debates revolved. As Frank Zelko illustrated in a case study of Greenpeace

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<sup>240</sup> Library and Archives Canada (Hereafter LCA), Communist Party of Canada, MG 28, IV 4, Vol. 23, Reel H1592, B.C. Elections, “Election Pamphlet for Ernie Knott (1963).” For additional coverage on Knott’s various election campaigns during the 1950s and 1960s, see “LPP Candidate Urges Peace Plan Action,” *Daily Colonist*, 24 March 1953, 16; “Candidates Win Applause, Boos At Big City Rally,” *Daily Colonist*, 14 September 1956, 1; 2; “LPP Candidate,” *Daily Colonist*, 14 March 1958, 7; “Five Seek Esquimalt-Saanich Seat,” *Daily Colonist*, 30 March 1958, 2; “Ernest L. Knott Communist Choice,” *Victoria Daily Times*, 4 June 1960, 17; “People Now Listening As Communists Speak,” *Daily Colonist*, 10 September 1966, 32

Canada, fears over nuclear radiation and fallout formed an important radicalizing element among many middle-class American peace activists.<sup>241</sup> The presence of strontium 90 in women's breast milk and human bone tissue, for example, served as a powerful reminder of what "modern" science was capable of. A growing body of scientific research exploring the long term genetic effects of radiation amplified these concerns.<sup>242</sup> Gottlieb traces the development of anti-nuclear movements in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s to concerns over radioactive fallout, thermal pollution, and the unknown health consequences of low-level radiation.<sup>243</sup> More recently, Benjamin Isitt illustrates how peace issues in B.C. acted as a magnet, drawing together a wide range of leftist organizations and groups. In this highly fluid movement, LPPers supported CCF resolutions to end nuclear tests, while organizations such as the B.C. Peace Council and The Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards brought together a wide range of socialists including Trotskyists and social democrats.<sup>244</sup> Thus, communists were one part of a diverse leftist experience that coalesced around issues of peace. Although the peace movement became an important setting for debates about environmental change, a brief discussion is needed to flush out its additional meanings. This is because peace was, and is, a political topic of enormous scope and complexity, one with constantly shifting contours and characteristics.

As Norman Penner argues, the involvement of Canadian communists was heavily influenced by a 1949 Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) policy placing peace

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<sup>241</sup> See also John-Henry Harter, "Social Justice for Whom? Class, New Social Movements, and the Environment: A Case Study of Greenpeace Canada, 1971-2000," (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University: 2001). For a published version of Harter's MA thesis under the same name, see *Labour/Le Travails*, 54 (Fall, 2004), <[www.historycooperative.org/journals/lt/54/harter.html](http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lt/54/harter.html)>.

<sup>242</sup> Frank Zelko, "Making Greenpeace: The Development of Direct Action Environmentalism in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, 142/143 (Summer/Autumn, 2004), 202-203.

<sup>243</sup> Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 135; 235-236.

<sup>244</sup> Isitt, "Tug-of-War," 280.

at the center of attention for communist action and political work. This resulted in a heavy communist presence in the formation of new, broadly based peace organizations such as the Canadian Peace Congress.<sup>245</sup> Soviet influence was no doubt great, but the personal connections that many communists made to the peace movement required a focus on local experiences. For many communists, especially those who had served overseas during the Second World War or whose family and relatives were involved in the peace movement, the struggle for peace was a deeply personal experience. This was certainly true for both Erni and Freda Knott. Standing before the 1948 meeting that fractured the IWA, Erni argued that, as a veteran and a member of the “international labour movement,” he was well qualified to speak of the horrors of war and the need for peace. This was because Knott felt that, of all those who had been exposed to war, the working-classes of all countries had suffered the most.<sup>246</sup> Freda, for her part, was an active member of the Victoria Peace Council and the Voice of Women, where she vigorously opposed the war in Vietnam and the arms race. When asked some years later about the experiences in the fight for peace that stood out most for her, Freda recalled the execution of the Rosenbergs: “I can remember that very strongly. I was seventeen when they were executed. It was always around us. My brother who was nine at the time, even wrote a poem to the Rosenberg children which was published in the Tribune, and other places. As I said it was around me. In Vancouver, we would march in front of the American Embassy time after time.”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 226. For more information on the Canadian Peace Congress, see Garry Moffatt, *History of the Canadian Peace Movement until 1968*, 67-73. This work has no publishing information, see University of Victoria, MacPherson Library, call number JX1961 C3M63. See also, Maurice Rush, *We Have a Glowing Dream: Recollections of working-class and people's struggles in B.C. from 1935 to 1996* (Vancouver: Centre of Socialist Education, 1996), 95-98.

<sup>246</sup> IWA, “Proceedings,” 3 October 1948, 71.

<sup>247</sup> Freda Knott, Interview by Dan Keeton, 3 September 1997, 2.

In the wake of continuing military and political conflicts throughout the immediate post-war years, such as the Berlin Blockade, civil war in Greece, and the Korean War, along with the continued development and testing of nuclear weapons and atomic experiments, peace became a defining area for struggle for communists. In trade union work, resource politics, election campaigns, educational matters, cultural work, internal Party correspondence, and especially the communist press, issues of peace were diffused in multifaceted ways throughout the entire communist left.

As Knott's election pamphlet illustrated, one particular application of peace was its intrinsic connection to issues surrounding the power and influence of monopoly capitalism. Nigel Morgan made this connection during a special convention of the provincial LPP in 1957. Citing military conflicts in Egypt, Hungary, Vietnam and Korea, Morgan argued that, although another world-wide war was far from inevitable, peace was in constant danger of being overrun by imperialism and monopoly capitalism. For Morgan, as for many Marxists and radical socialists, monopoly capitalism was driven by its own internal contradictions. In the quest for profit, it was constantly driven to "aggressive, predatory acts and desperate, adventurist moves" that could instigate cataclysmic levels of damage and destruction. That tendency could only be curtailed by the "enormous strength of the socialist, anti-imperialist and other peace forces that confront it" and by the realization that monopoly capitalism, like the rest of human society, would be unable to survive a world-wide atomic war.<sup>248</sup> Nevertheless, so long as imperialism existed, the LPP argued that preserving peace was the top priority for Canadian communists. "For that is the issue," Morgan stated, "that will determine, more

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<sup>248</sup> LAC, Communist Party of Canada, MG 28, IV 4, Vol. 24, Reel H1593, Conventions and Committees, "Special Convention, Introductory Report (1957)," 3.

than anything else, the rate of advance toward freedom, national independence, security and elimination of exploitation of man by man.”<sup>249</sup> Morgan crafted his speech to his provincial comrades to evoke the feelings of commitment and seriousness which communists ought to apply to their work on peace and disarmament. It assumed that as communists they were naturally members of the peace community, just as monopoly capitalism and imperialism were naturally associated with the threat of war and potential world-wide destruction.

In trying to understand and uncover the history of the communist left, however, one needs to move beyond the realization that peace was important to elaborate on how the issues of peace was used, and explore its associated meanings. By focusing on the “uses” of the peace issues, I do not mean that communists mobilized issues of peace and disarmament only as a means to conquer other political goals. Many communists, such as Erni and Freda Knott, were dedicated peace activists who actively opposed war and oppression for the entirety of their adult lives. Rather, I mean that by focusing on perceptions of peace, and by concentrating on how, when, and what peace was related and connected to, we can come to a better understanding of the communist left.

Because peace was a major political topic, it is extremely useful in viewing how the Party attempted to conduct its organizational work. In a 1950 letter to members of the provincial committee, B.C. LPP organizer Alf Dewhurst argued for a “concentration approach” to work conducted by the Party. By this he meant that “key political problems” needed to be singled out so as not to waste time and energy on secondary issues. These secondary issues were of importance in their own particular way, but Dewhurst

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<sup>249</sup> “Special Convention, Introductory Report (1957),” 3.

maintained that they would only ever be solved as part and parcel of a sharper focus on building a “mighty” movement in defense of peace.<sup>250</sup>

In Dewhurst’s opinion, the only way that local Party clubs and associations would be able to mature and develop was by successfully translating and applying key political issues into a workable form in their own communities. Moreover, these issues needed to be linked to other local struggles. This was particularly true of peace. Moreover, Dewhurst argued that different local conditions would inevitably produce a host of different approaches and tactics:

For example, the defence of peace in Trail at this moment assumes, as one of its forms the defeat of the union raiders, and the Party organization in Trail has the task of integrating concrete action for peace with the fight for trade union unity. In Vernon the comrades have the problem of integrating action for peace with the struggle for apple markets. These are examples of local problems. Every locality has its own specific problems and these will have to be solved, in the main, by the local Party organizations. Every local Party organization has the responsibility of finding the way by which the majority of the people in their community can be won to the defence of peace.<sup>251</sup>

Such a position would hopefully add to a wider movement for peace across the province, but also root effective communist activism in the perceived needs and day-to-day struggles of a given community. In order to accomplish this, Dewhurst argued for a disciplined and organized Party, with each bureaucratic section assigned specific responsibilities. While there certainly was pressure on the upper echelons of the Party hierarchy to form and support the implementation of key political issues, it is important to note the amount of pressure that Dewhurst placed on the local party club or regional committee to link key issues such as peace to other forms of struggle within the

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<sup>250</sup> LAC, Communist Party of Canada, MG 28, IV 4, Vol. 24, Reel H1593, Circular Letters, Alfred Dewhurst to the Provincial Committee, 25 May 1950.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

community.<sup>252</sup> This approach to political work also illustrates how difficult it could be to create linkages between local community issues and international developments such as the peace movement.

Dewhurst's approach to linking local struggles to wider political issues was a dominant motif evident in a multiplicity of contexts. At the 14<sup>th</sup> Provincial Convention of the Party's provincial section, held in 1961, the relationship of inner Party organization was tied to peace and its associated connection to the organized power of labour.<sup>253</sup> Citing a move by the B.C. Federation of Labour to send a delegation to Cuba, as well as a resolution from the Vancouver Labour Council to end Canada's participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the Party advised making a larger effort to enhance the power of labour in relation to the peace movement. Through tighter organization labour would be better suited to take on its "rightful role in the liberation of Canada from involvement in U.S. war plans, and U.S. economic, political, and military domination."<sup>254</sup> In this case, the legislative and economic demands of labour were to be "interwoven" with the "all-decisive questions of disarmament and peace." Shorter hours without loss of pay, better working conditions, lower taxes, and increased organization among the unorganized were placed side-by-side calls for disarmament, greater contact with socialist countries like Cuba, and national political policies that would ensure Canadian "neutrality" and

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> LAC, Communist Party of Canada, MG 28, IV 4, Vol. 24, Reel H1593, Conventions and Committees, "14<sup>th</sup> Provincial Convention, Draft Resolution on Organization," 3-4.

<sup>254</sup> "14<sup>th</sup> Provincial Convention, Draft Resolution on Organization," 1.

“independence” from the United States. Through such methods, the convention hoped to link the specific concerns of B.C. workers to the larger peace movement.<sup>255</sup>

To understand how peace could apply and integrate into a diverse set of local conditions, we can gain much from returning once again to Ernie Knott. In 1964, two American naval vessels arrived in the Victoria area for what was probably a routine stopover. The symbolic significance of American war ships in Canadian territory, however, was an opportunity that Knott was not going to squander and he wasted little time linking the arrival of the war ships to the problems facing the provincial economy. After outlining how American control of provincial resources would likely result in fewer jobs for Canadians, Knott followed up by proclaiming that “as if to make the point of their domination clear, the Yanks in keeping with their missile-gunboat style of diplomacy have sent two atomic missile equipped destroyers on a ‘courtesy’ call to Victoria during the past week while the Legislature is sitting.”<sup>256</sup> Knott also utilized criticism of military spending in connection with the plight of shipyard workers in Victoria. Faced with heavy layoffs, seventy-five percent of the city’s shipyard workers had recently voted in favor of a strike in order to resist the cancellation of a three year building contract that would have bolstered local employment. At the same time as these workers were idle because their contract had been canceled, Knott found it ridiculous that a Victoria city council delegation was traveling to Ottawa in order to try to secure a “useless” military contract with the federal government. The contract was to be carried out by the city’s shipyards when more peaceful and productive work should be the

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<sup>255</sup> “14<sup>th</sup> Provincial Convention, Draft Resolution on Organization,” 3.

<sup>256</sup> Ernie Knott, “Nimsick hits power pact in House debate,” *Pacific Tribune*, 7 February 1965, 3.

subject of the council's efforts.<sup>257</sup> In using peace to tie together U.S. coercion and control over B.C. resources with arguments stressing the importance of less militaristic forms of employment for local workers, Knott provides an excellent example of the connection between key political issues set out by the Party and local community issues.

Knott used these "atomic" American warships to symbolize the influence, power, and imperialistic characteristics of both the American state and American monopoly capitalism. But the militarization of nuclear science also ran to the heart of a growing concern over various aspects of environmental change. In April 1954, residents of British Columbia experienced a mysterious grey ash settling on car windshields and other surfaces after the United States conducted a series of hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific Ocean. While the *Pacific Tribune* could not relate the ash directly to the explosions, the coverage nevertheless reflected a growing public concern over the environmental effects of nuclear weapons.<sup>258</sup>

Broadly speaking, these fears were twofold. The first concerned the effects of nuclear radiation on the human population. In this sense, there was much trepidation over the perceived health effects of "atomic burns" and other injuries linked to radiation sickness and nuclear fallout.<sup>259</sup> One month after the "grey ash" incident, the *Pacific Tribune* ran a story where Dr. Albert Bellamy, a biophysicist at the University of California and chief of the state's division of radiological services, and Dr. John Heslep, consultant to the university's atomic energy project, testified about the harmful effects that nuclear explosions could have for people around the world. Bellamy and Heslep reported a dramatic increase in the rate of radiation that human populations had been

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<sup>257</sup> Knott, "Nimsick hits power pact in House debate," 3.

<sup>258</sup> "Stop H Bomb Tests! B.C. Coast Endangered," *Pacific Tribune*, 23 April 1954, 1.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

exposed to over the preceding ten years, revealing that the explosion of even one atomic weapon left behind 100,000 curies of radioactive matter one year after the fact. Translating that number into popular terms, Heslep estimated that such an amount of radiation was equal to one hundred times the amount of all the processed radium available in the world. He also pointed out how radiological experiments on “lower animals” had resulted in genetic defects, and that radiologists, whose work environments exposed them to radioactive material, were known to have higher than normal incidents of leukemia.<sup>260</sup>

In June, the paper ran another article, this time by Dr. F.A. Walton. He set out in greater detail the effects of radiation sickness among exposed workers, such as uranium miners and nuclear technicians. For these workers, anemia, leukemia, cataracts, skin and bone cancer, obesity, problems with fertility, hair loss, and impotence resulted from their exposure to radiation in the workplace.<sup>261</sup> By 1956, the *Pacific Tribune* reported a United Nations prediction that the Eniwetok and Bikini atolls, sites of many of the U.S. hydrogen bomb tests, were in danger of becoming uninhabitable. Other South Pacific island residents had reportedly suffered varying levels of radiation sickness from nuclear fallout, while newborns in Japan whose mothers had been exposed to radiation in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear attacks had unusual incidents of birth defects.<sup>262</sup> This concern over the passing of radiation-related illnesses to offspring was elaborated upon further two years later when the *Pacific Tribune* again ran a summary of a United Nations

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<sup>260</sup> “Radiation is health menace,” *Pacific Tribune*, 14 May 1954, 3.

<sup>261</sup> F.A. Walton, “Does radiation pose threat to humanity?,” *Pacific Tribune*, 4 June 1954, 4.

<sup>262</sup> “H-tests have made atolls uninhabitable,” *Pacific Tribune*, 22 June 1956, 12.

report warning that the atmosphere was being contaminated in a way that could drastically affect human populations.<sup>263</sup>

The second general concern about the effect of nuclear weapons linked these detonations to health problems in humans through a broader contamination of environmental settings such as wildlife habitats, water supplies, as well as to the possibility of significant climactic problems.<sup>264</sup> In 1958 the *Pacific Tribune* reported that 250 protestors had gathered in Berkeley, California to protest against the contamination of rain water by nuclear fallout. With signs that read “Rain, rain go away. Come again without gamma rays,” the protestors were only one part of world-wide series of protests building momentum in the wake of proposals for further nuclear testing.<sup>265</sup> Concerns over the transfer of radioactive material in rain water were also fueled in 1954 by the linkage of erratic weather and atomic testing. Citing a record number of hurricanes, rainfall, and cold snaps throughout the world, the *Tribune* noted that in Britain, Europe and Canada people were starting to refer to the existence of “atomic weather.”<sup>266</sup>

While speculation flourished about how nuclear testing might negatively affect the physical environment, the accidental irradiation of a Japanese fishing crew in 1954 illustrated how issues of peace were connected not only to human health, but also to a broader understanding of human beings’ relationship to complex ecological systems. Although more than eighty miles from the blast site, the twenty-three person crew of the Japanese fishing boat all received significant injuries from contact with radiation that swept over their vessel after a U.S. hydrogen bomb test in a remote area of the Pacific. In

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<sup>263</sup> “H-tests menace world health, UN scientific committee warns,” *Pacific Tribune*, 15 May 1956, 3.

<sup>264</sup> “Stop H Bomb Tests!,” 1.

<sup>265</sup> “Increase in radiation ‘alarming’,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 April 1958, 2.

<sup>266</sup> “Atomic Weather,” *Pacific Tribune*, 19 November 1954, 9.

addition to the human casualties, the tuna that the men had caught were also tainted by the exposure to radiation, causing a panic among Tokyo's fish mongers.<sup>267</sup> The following month the B.C. United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union (UFAWU) warned that contamination from nuclear tests could ruin the B.C. fishing industry.<sup>268</sup> Drawing upon the experiences of its membership as workers, stressing their practical and everyday understanding of the ocean's ecosystems, the union urged a complete ban of nuclear weapons:

As fishermen, we are aware of many matters pertaining to the sea that do not necessarily fall within the scope of nuclear knowledge. We know that certain species of fish are scavengers and would readily feed upon the carcasses of other fish killed by atomic blasts. We know that the sea is filled with animalcule matter and that this is the sole diet of many species of fish. We know that with radioactive ash falling upon and contaminating this animalcule matter, the tides could carry it thousands of miles to be fed upon by fish in remote parts of the Pacific...Logically, if the experiments are continued, it is only a matter of time before these fish show up in our own waters bearing the deadly contamination.<sup>269</sup>

Challenging the scientific understanding of military and nuclear officials, the UFAWU not only expressed how labour could be involved in the struggle for peace, but it also displayed how environmental issues could be used to link the goals of the peace movement to more localized concerns. The Shoreworkers local of the UFAWU from Prince Rupert followed up the next month with a letter to External Affairs Minister Lester B. Pearson calling on him to help end nuclear tests in the Pacific and to support the complete banning of "such weapons of mass destruction" before "geiger counters are standard equipment on fishing vessels, farms and in processing plants."<sup>270</sup> These arguments illustrate how the UFAWU linked perceptions of environmental change to

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<sup>267</sup> "H-Bomb 'Out of Control' Spurs Call for Ban," *Pacific Tribune*, 26 March 1954, 1.

<sup>268</sup> "Stop H Bomb Tests!," 1.

<sup>269</sup> "Fishermen fear H-bomb menace," *Pacific Tribune*, 23 April 1954, 12.

<sup>270</sup> "End to H-bomb tests sought by fishermen," *Pacific Tribune*, 4 June 1954, 7.

larger debates over peace and disarmament, and demonstrates how these perceptions were drawn from a particular working-class connection to the physical environment.

Despite a marked decrease in attention paid to environmental themes within sectors such as the forest industry during the 1950s, the development of a broadly-based peace movement in which the communist left was firmly rooted created a space for environmental concerns to be reconnected with other key political issues. Instead of being situated within a context focusing on the exploitative nature of timber capitalism and its link to processes of environmental change in both human and non-human environments, perceptions of environmental destruction were transported into a different setting. With a growing social awareness of the potential threats to all living things from nuclear weapons and testing, environmental issues took on an atomic character. As a key political issue, however, peace was never extrapolated from more established forms of communist activism and struggle. In this sense, we should see the peace movement not only as a means to view the interpretation of environmental issues, but also as a means through which the communist left attempted to connect emerging social concerns with older ideological imperatives and forms of struggle such as the fight against monopoly capitalism and U.S. imperialism.

## Chapter Five

### Pollution, Parks, and Profit

The peace movement was not the only setting from which the communist left engaged with environmental and ecological debates. During the 1950s and 1960s issues of “atomic weather,” radioactively charged oceans, and a plethora of related human illnesses overlapped with an increased concern over the production of industrial waste, urban expansion, and the protection of natural resources and wilderness areas. While many of these debates reflected a more general social awareness of everything from the ill effects of smoking and smog resulting from excessive amounts of automobile traffic, to the returning concern over the supply of natural resources and wilderness protection, the communist left situated these emerging environmental critiques within its own Marxist framework. Just as communists like Dewhurst and Mickleburgh had connected the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, and the Taft-Hartley Act to local struggles over resource use and the politics of anti-communism, so too did local communists link issues of peace, pollution, and resource use to larger issues of class struggle and the fight against monopoly capitalism. In the following analysis I will first address how communists integrated a growing awareness of pollution into a debate on the relationship between environmental change, monopoly capitalism, and the state. The experiences of Erni Knott will then once again be highlighted to show how these themes also projected into debates over the protection of natural resources and parkland.

As in his relationship to debates over forest policy and conservation during the 1930s and 1940s, Knott never fit seamlessly into these discussions. In the narrative that follows, as in the previous chapters, the presence of Erni Knott comes and goes,

emerging periodically to illustrate some point or to contextualize some event, before again disappearing. To some extent, this reflects his absence from many areas of the communist documentary record. Although during the 1950s and 1960s he appears less frequently than some of the better known provincial communists such as Alfred Dewhurst, Nigel Morgan, Tom McEwen, or Maurice Rush, Knott's experiences nevertheless form an important historical reference point. While his expulsion from the IWA effectively barred him from participating in many aspects of the union and the labour movement, he began to expand his activities within the Communist Party in the mid-1950s. And, while he still remains elusive in many respects, Knott's growing involvement as a political candidate for the Party as well as a writer for the *Pacific Tribune* attest to his increasingly influential position in the provincial communist movement. Most important, by the mid-1960s Knott had begun to develop a critique linking processes of environmental change to industrial forestry.

As the early post-war debates over nuclear fallout and radiation illustrate, the *Pacific Tribune* often reported on what we might think of as a particular form of pollution. During the mid-1960s, however, new forms of pollution increasingly symbolized the destructive power of monopoly capitalism. It was at this time that the communist press constructed a more focused and aggressive critique of *industrial* pollution. It did so by mirroring larger forms of social protest while simultaneously advocating a distinct communist perspective on connections between industrial pollution, environmental change, and monopoly capitalism. The fact that pollution formed such a vibrant basis for political debates is not at all unique to B.C. Drawing on the work of Arn Keeling, we have much to gain from an expanded view of the meanings and definitions

of pollution. For Keeling, the continual temporal shift in the meanings associated with the term indicates that pollution is never merely a technologically-rooted issue. Instead, polluted places and perceptions of pollution and environmental change must also be viewed as settings for “political and social conflict,” as well as the products of industrial, environmental, and ideological developments.<sup>271</sup>

Just as in the peace movement, communists only formed one small part of a large and diverse movement involved in varying forms of conservation and environmental awareness. In addition to the political roles played by the CCF during the 1930s and 1940s, environmental activism in B.C. also had roots in older wildlife, conservation, and recreational organizations. As Jeremy Wilson has noted, the B.C. Wildlife Federation (BCWF), the Natural History Society of B.C., and the British Columbia Mountaineering Club engaged in many conservation and preservationist activities beginning in the late nineteenth century.<sup>272</sup> While Wilson argues that these organizations formed the historical roots of later environmental organizations, he also argues that the 1960s brought about a new phase of environmental politics. For Wilson, the growing influence of new forms of environmental dissent were symbolized in the clash between expanding industrial development and a conglomeration of social protest resulting from increased leisure time and enhanced mobility. These emerging forms of environmentalism placed greater weight on the social values associated with wilderness and “altered social beliefs about the acceptability and efficacy of citizen activism.”<sup>273</sup> Moreover, these cultural and ideological developments were linked to wider social transformations of the public

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<sup>271</sup> Arn Keeling, “Sink or Swim: Water Pollution and Environmental Politics in Vancouver, 1889-1975,” *BC Studies*, No. 142/143 (Summer/Autumn 2004), 70.

<sup>272</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 99-100.

<sup>273</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 101.

consciousness. As Wilson argues, “[s]ociety’s political imagination transformed as British Columbians heard about Quaker activists sailing protest ships into South Pacific nuclear test zones, watched the sacrifices of American civil rights activists, saw thousands of students demonstrating in the streets of foreign capitals, and heard their prime minister exhorting citizens to practise participatory democracy.”<sup>274</sup> In addition to these changing social attitudes, widespread fears over the environmental consequences of expanding urbanization and industrial development also grew. By the mid-1960s it seemed, to use Arn Keeling’s words, “that pollution was everywhere.” From Rachael Carson’s work on DDT to the mass of industrial waste that had left Lake Erie almost dead ecologically, pollution became a definitive issue in the development of a “second wave” of environmentalism in the post-war years.<sup>275</sup>

These changing social perceptions over environmental change spawned a great number of public organizations and interest groups across Canada, beginning in the 1960s.<sup>276</sup> Among the most important for B.C. was the formation of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) in 1969.<sup>277</sup> As Keeling has shown in one of the most detailed analyses so far produced on the organization, SPEC quickly became one of the most influential environmental organizations in the province, bringing together a diverse collection of middle-class professionals, students, scientists, and counterculture activists. While this diversity often caused internal problems, it also symbolized the

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<sup>274</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 101.

<sup>275</sup> Arn Keeling, “Sink or Swim,” 92.

<sup>276</sup> Paul George has listed an informative historical timeline of events that connect to the development of environmentalism, see Paul George, *Big Trees not Big Stumps: 25 Years of Campaigning to Save Wilderness with the Wilderness Committee* (Vancouver: Western Wilderness Committee, 2006), 467-497.

<sup>277</sup> While the acronym SPEC was kept, the name was later changed to the Society for Pollution and Environmental Control.

profound importance of environmental issues for a great many British Columbians.<sup>278</sup> For all its diversity and complexity, SPEC functioned as an effective environmental organization because of its commitment to the principals and ideas of ecology. For SPEC activists, and for many other environmentalists of the 1960s, ecology symbolized a scientific approach to studying the physical environment, as well as a more responsible interaction between humans and the environment.<sup>279</sup> Ecologists formed an emergent influential group of professionals who were central in creating a scientific critique of many of the precepts and assumptions of growth.<sup>280</sup> Furthermore, Zelko's work demonstrates how the expanding influence of environmentalism during the 1960s was firmly tied to criticisms developed in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s over the militarization of nuclear science. For many ecologists, the horror of the "unchecked growth of scientific power" was most dramatically illustrated by the development of the atomic bomb, which undercut the faith placed in human beings' ability to dominate nature and use science as a means to create a more rational world. Situated in both the peace movement as well as movements to quell pollution and other threatening forms of environmental change, ecology became, in Zelko's words, the "wellspring from which environmentalism drew its core values."<sup>281</sup>

Based on the mass exploitation of resources, the industrial structures produced during the Fordist era were a common target for ecologists. This was particularly true of its "signature" representative—the pulp mill. Continually having to rebuff criticisms of their operations, corporations spent millions of dollars throughout the 1960s on pollution

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<sup>278</sup> Arn Keeling, "The Effluent Society: Water Pollution and Environmental Politics in British Columbia: 1889-1980," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2004), 302.

<sup>279</sup> Keeling, "The Effluent Society," 303.

<sup>280</sup> Zelko, "Making Greenpeace," 211.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

control measures. Between 1950 and 1970, kraft pulp production grew at an annual rate of sixteen percent, with the construction of fifteen new mills between 1947 and 1970.<sup>282</sup> In order to investigate the industry's compliance with pollution standards, the government established a Public Inquiry into Pollution Control in the Forest Industry in August of 1970. As might be expected, the inquiry heard submissions from a host of environmental organizations, including SPEC.<sup>283</sup> Reflecting on the problems associated with expansions and growth, SPEC linked the industrialization of the province with the growing power of ecology:

[o]nly a short time ago, here in British Columbia, the conception of economic and population growth was a political shrine and all political men were to be seen, at one time or another, counting the beads of that particular religion: Jobs, pulp mills, capital investment, tax yields, personal fortune, access to the cornucopia of commodities generated by modern economy—more of more—bigger of bigger. Yet in a startlingly brief period of time the linear religion of growth has been dethroned, dishonoured, cast aside and replaced by a motley creature showing strange symbols and given to rude iconoclasm. We are into the age of ecology.<sup>284</sup>

While it was an exaggeration to say that the “linear religion of growth” was totally discredited, SPEC did its best to champion environmental concerns in a myriad of settings, using ideology based on an ecological understanding of environmental change. SPEC sought to promote environmental protection, to combat pollution, and, drawing on its scientific base in ecology, conduct scientific studies of environmental issues.<sup>285</sup> Opposition to strip mining in the Elk Valley, to oil exploration off the B.C. coast, to dumping mine tailings into an inlet off Vancouver Island, as well as campaigns against

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<sup>282</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 176; Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 52-53.

<sup>283</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 176

<sup>284</sup> University of Victoria Archives (Hereafter UVA), Derrick and Gwen Mallard fonds, Box 5, file 5.27, S-13/180, “SPEC--Forestry Brief (1970)”, 1.

<sup>285</sup> Keeling, “The Effluent Society,” 308.

air and water pollution from local pulp and paper mills were all examples of the type of actions SPEC undertook.<sup>286</sup>

According to both Keeling and Zelko, SPEC intended to create an “avowedly non-political” or “apolitical” environmental organization.<sup>287</sup> While SPEC may have shunned formal political ties, its reports and activities were incorporated into the pages of the communist press and politicized alongside the Communist Party’s own growing critique of the environmental consequences of industrial capitalism. In a very general sense, the communist press no doubt covered the emerging environmental movement because of the Party’s desire to be kept up-to-date on local forms of community activism. More specifically, however, the CPC found common ground with SPEC through a shared emphasis on the role of industry as a significant cause of environmental despoilment. For example, in its 1970s forestry brief, SPEC argued that a common citizen would “undoubtedly” be charged for polluting the environment if he were to throw a pail of garbage into a stream, but companies such as MacMillan Bloedel were able to dump masses of “bark, wood chunks, steel bank bands, chips, and wood fiber” into Vancouver Island’s Sproat Lake without any reasonable fear of government intervention.<sup>288</sup> In this sense, SPEC highlighted how the production of pollution and the problems of regulation had specific class dynamics.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Keeling, “The Effluent Society,” 308-309.

<sup>287</sup> Keeling, “The Effluent Society,” 311. See also Zelko, “Making Greenpeace,” 220.

<sup>288</sup> SPEC--Forestry Brief (1970), 13.

<sup>289</sup> The connections between SPEC and the politics of class are fascinating, although they need to be explored more intensely. As Hak argues, despite its “new-left” and middle-class roots, SPEC activists often distrusted middle-class support for environmental activism. Most professionals, they argued, were too caught-up in their careers or blinded by their addiction to consumer/materialist culture to be of any use to the movement. Instead, SPEC attempted to cultivate alliances with labour. Hak maintains, however, that SPEC often failed in this regard due to a lack of understanding of the culture and inner-political workings of the labour movement. See Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 183-184. Keeling’s work, however, demonstrates

In 1956, the *Pacific Tribune* ran an article in its health section regarding the combined health concerns associated with cigarette smoking and the inhalation of more general forms of “atmospheric pollution” associated with the burning of diesel and coal. Citing sources from the *British Medical Journal*, the communist press argued that while smoking was a major contributor to illnesses such as bronchitis, atmospheric conditions had the potential to become the most significant factor in the development of an unhealthy and insalubrious environment. Concerns over the health effects associated with smog, however, were not conceptualized as an abstract threat that applied to all places and peoples equally. Citing a high number of smog-related deaths in London between 1952 and 1956, the *Pacific Tribune* connected pollution to issues of class and industrial capitalist development. Mortality from chronic forms of bronchitis, for example, was much higher in industrial areas and much higher among the poor. It was increasingly apparent to the communist press that with five million tons of sulphur dioxide and three million tonnes of “smoke, grit and dust” pumped into the air every year in Britain chronic bronchitis was “above all a disease of industrial capitalism.” Capitalist society, then, “pollutes the air literally as well a metaphorically,” creating conditions where the attainment of “clean air” was dependent on the creation of a “cleaner,” non-capitalist, society.<sup>290</sup>

While this analysis shows that the communist left employed a Marxist interpretation to link pollution to capitalism, it was not until the mid-to-late 1960s that communists would apply a similar critique to events in B.C. As Gordon Hak has shown, much of the early debate over pollution within the forest sector focused on pulp

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that, in some instances, SPEC was able to successfully engage in working-class forms of environmental action. See Keeling, “Urban Waste Sinks as a Natural Resources,” 65; “Sink or Swim,” 95.

<sup>290</sup> “Air pollution factor in cancer, bronchitis,” *Pacific Tribune*, 11 May 1956, 8.

production which entailed the discharge of waste into air and water supplies. This was certainly true of the Bloedel, Stewart, & Welch pulp mill constructed at Port Alberni in 1947 in accordance with standards set by the federal *Fisheries Act*. Two years after it opened, however, the mill had already attracted the ire of local residents as environmental concerns were raised over the effect of the mill's effluent on water and air quality in the region.<sup>291</sup> Although it was not until the mid-1960s that the protest over pollution from the Alberni mill seems to have achieved widespread popular support, we can gain a small glimpse into how this pollution could affect local individuals through the experience of Erni Knott. Knott decided to settle in Port Alberni somewhere around 1940 when he met his first wife. While looking around town for a place to live, the couple came across a small cabin on the city's River road. Purchasing the property for three hundred and fifty dollars, the Knott's had a cabin paid for within the year. Knott's time in Port Alberni, however, was limited, and he soon moved to Nanaimo at least in part because of the local pulp mill: "When I came back after the war in Port Alberni, and had to suffer the effects of pulp mill emission, which was very hard on my chest, we sold the place."<sup>292</sup> Although this experience with industrial pollution did not motivate Knott to oppose the operation of the mill, it was motivating factor in his growing environmental consciousness.

By the mid-1960s, the concern over pollution from the pulp mill in the Alberni valley had expanded considerably. In addition to the everyday experiences of having to live with the effluent produced by the mill, a local court furthered popular protest in February of 1966, when it reduced the assessed value of two local properties due to

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<sup>291</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 175.

<sup>292</sup> Erni Knott, Interviewed by Dan Keeton, 2 September 1997, 6.

damage caused by the “fallout” created by the mill.<sup>293</sup> By the following week, over 6,500 residents had signed a petition demanding that the provincial government take effective regulatory action to address the problem. Led by labour activist and IWA member George McKnight and New Democratic Party M.P. Colin Ward, the campaign also received support from the Communist Party, which argued that the protest over pulp pollution ought to expand to other pulp producing communities in the province.<sup>294</sup>

Drawing on a medical study that placed Alberni valley citizens among the most likely in the nation to develop respiratory diseases, Nigel Morgan stated that the provincial government failed the public in its role as a regulating body, a failure that was all the more definitive given the fact that pollution control mechanisms were already in place. After all, the government’s Pollution Control Board created in 1956 under the Pollution Control Act, had the ability to “determine what constitutes pollution, to control the quantity and quality of effluent discharged and to order treatment.” But, according to Morgan, the regulatory measures were not enforced. In fact, the degree to which pollution could be regulated on a province-wide scale was constrained by the scope of the 1956 legislation. As Anthony Dorsey argues, the Pollution Control Board was established under the authority of the Department of Municipal Affairs. Consequently, its ability to contribute to a province-wide regulatory system was limited.<sup>295</sup> In addition to chastising the government for these failures, Morgan placed the “moral responsibility” and “financial onus” for redressing industrial pollution entirely on the shoulders of industry.

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<sup>293</sup> “Pollution Dangers Recognized, Assessments cut in Pt. Alberni,” *Pacific Tribune*, 11 February 1966, 8.

<sup>294</sup> “People of Alberni valley continue pollution battle,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 February 1966, 1. Gordon Hak has noted the participation of the CPC in reference to pulp pollution in Port Alberni. See *Capital and Labour*, 176.

<sup>295</sup> Anthony H. J. Dorsey, “The Management of Super, Natural British Columbia,” *BC Studies*, 73 (Spring, 1987), 16.

Implementing the appropriate pollution control measures would be costly, but as Morgan argued, “these highly profitable monopolies which create the problem, must be made accountable for eradicating it.”<sup>296</sup> As it had earlier in the case of British air pollution, the Communist Party attributed pollution in the Alberni valley to profit-orientated capitalist industrial development and a lack of government intervention.

By participating in the debate in Port Alberni, the Communist Party was also participating in a growing social movement that was beginning to question some of the underlying assumptions that came with industrial growth. Certainly the Party continued to support local forms of industrialization and economic development. In this sense, the “linear religion of growth” was far from “dethroned.” And yet, communist perceptions of industrialization and resource use were not unscathed by debates over pollution and environmental control. By embedding themselves in localized expressions of resistance, communists often contributed to a cultural and political revolt against industrial pollution, challenging the cultural associations connecting the factory to notions of progress and human betterment.

One way of viewing these shifting perceptions of industrialization is through the popular representations of the industrial factory as a producer of pollution. Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, the image of the factory was often used as a popular and positive image bundling together meanings of progress, economic development, and employment. Moreover, these depictions cut across political lines that separated the social democratic and communist left, and the rival Socreds. In a 1945 CCF election poster, an image of a smoking factory symbolized a new “contract” for the province that

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<sup>296</sup> “People of Alberni valley continue pollution battle,” 1.

would enable labour to “plan,” “build,” and “prosper.”<sup>297</sup> Likewise, such representations also held similar meanings of progress and development for the political right. In the election of 1956, Social Credit advertisements placed smoking factories within an even larger industrial landscape that included massive building projects, pipelines, rail and road construction, sky scrapers and airplanes. “KEEP YOUR PROVINCE IN HIGH GEAR!” the ad exclaimed, and vote for Social Credit, “the government that gets things done.”<sup>298</sup> As mentioned earlier, Erni Knott’s 1963 election poster also depicted a smoking factory, in combination with other industrial symbols, in associating industrialization with positive descriptions of growth and development.<sup>299</sup>

By the mid-1960s, however, the communist press was beginning to challenge the connection between the factory and notions of progress. As debates over the effects of pollution began to intensify, the image of the factory took on a new set of cultural meanings. Of course, this re-description of the factory was never monolithic or totalizing, and the factory never completely sloughed off its progressive overtones (particularly those associated with employment), but nevertheless there was an increasing willingness to depict this symbol of industrial development in negative rather than positive terms. Eunice Parker’s multi-page 1966 attack on industrial pollution in the *Pacific Tribune* began with a half page picture of the Columbia Cellulose mill at Port Edward, B.C., a notorious polluter. With the factory stretching across the background, producing large plumes of white smoke, the foreground of the image was a mixture of dark mud and

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<sup>297</sup> “Plan, Build, Prosper,” [CCF election poster], *B.C. Lumber Worker*, 8 October 1945, 4.

<sup>298</sup> LAC, Communist Party of Canada, Communist Party of Canada, MG 28, IV 4, Vol. 23, Reel H1592, B.C. Elections, “Election Pamphlets for Social Credit (1956).”

<sup>299</sup> Election Pamphlet for Erni Knott (1963).

water, symbolizing a barren and polluted landscape.<sup>300</sup> In the same year, a black and white print of a factory with effluent plumes streaming from its many smoke stacks adorned the cover page of another *Pacific Tribune* article describing the growing problems of air and water pollution.<sup>301</sup> These images represented a dramatic reconfiguration of the factory from a setting that represented progress and production to one where productive processes were creating a polluted and unhealthy environment. Two cartoons from 1970, however, took the criticisms of industrial production further by highlighting the class-based nature of industrial pollution.

In the first cartoon, behind the walls of a factory that belches black smog into the air and polluted liquids into the water stands a giant cigar-smoking capitalist in the process of addressing a man who is half submerged in industrial waste outside his factory. While trying to drag himself out of the toxic sludge, the man holds up a news bulletin that reads “Pollution Latest: Science Foresees End of Life On Earth in 35 Years!” The capitalist, who is obviously relieved, proclaims in response “Boy you had me worried for a moment there—I thought you said three to five years!”<sup>302</sup> In the second cartoon, a factory produces a cloud of smoke that forms the words “pollution.” While these clouds drip a toxic looking substance back onto the ground, a capitalist stands outside his factory holding the flag of profit high above his head. “You’re undermining the free enterprise system!” the capitalist proclaims, as he points accusingly at man who has come demanding that the mess be cleaned up.<sup>303</sup> Evoking notions of greed, pollution for profit, and a general contempt for public intervention, these images flipped the

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<sup>300</sup> “The effluent society,” *Pacific Tribune*, 15 July 1966, 3.

<sup>301</sup> “Foul air and water: Problem of industrial society,” *Pacific Tribune*, 7 October 1966, 3.

<sup>302</sup> Cartoon, *Pacific Tribune*, 1 May 1970, 3.

<sup>303</sup> Cartoon, *Pacific Tribune*, 2 February 1970, 11.

progressive notion of the factory on its head. Instead of being symbols of employment and economic development, the factory became primarily a setting for the production of pollution. Moreover, this production was making the rich increasingly wealthy while the public suffered the environmental costs. A series of events that situated a critique of capitalism's connection to industrial pollution within an expanding set of environmental concerns during the late 1960s and first years of the 1970s also illustrated these thematic changes. While anti-pollution sentiments transcended political affiliations, the communist left differentiated itself from much of the environmental movement through emphasizing the class-based nature of pollution.

In April and September of 1969, provincial and federal governments permitted Shell and Gulf Oil to explore for petroleum products in various areas of the coast, including the Strait of Georgia and near the newly-created Long Beach marine park on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Protest against these decisions drew a wide base of support from organized labour, municipal governments, university ecologists and SPEC activists, in addition to well known conservationists such as Roderick Haig-Brown and the B.C. Wildlife Federation.<sup>304</sup> The communist press also actively criticized the proposal, generally basing its critique on three interrelated approaches. First, the *Pacific Tribune* summarized and promoted the ecological arguments made by SPEC and officials from the Vancouver aquarium regarding the devastating effects of oil spills on coastal environments. Previous oil spills, such as one off the coast of California earlier in the

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<sup>304</sup> Maurice Rush, "Oil Pollution Disaster Threatens B.C. Coast," *Pacific Tribune*, 19 September 1969, 1; 12; Maurice Rush, "Socreds Favor Monopolies, Profits Put Before Pollution Curbs," *Pacific Tribune*, 21 November 1969, 12; "Demand Legislature Act," *Pacific Tribune*, 23 Jan 1970, 1.

year, had created significant damage, which the *Pacific Tribune* used to help signify what an oil spill would mean in the highly populated Strait of Georgia area.<sup>305</sup>

The second approach, and the one that signified its communist difference, traced these ecological threats to the normal functioning of monopoly capitalism. Since large foreign corporations would undertake the proposed exploration, the communist press easily incorporated these environmental concerns into a narrative emphasizing the exploitative power of monopoly capitalism. Rush claimed that corporations, with profit as their motivating factor, would continue to “pollute B.C.’s environment so long as the financial statements show a sizeable profit.”<sup>306</sup> Finally, the third approach mobilized by the communist left involved linking this environmental threat to the provincial government. “It is becoming increasingly clear,” Maurice Rush wrote, “that the Socred government puts monopoly profits before pollution controls. In every instance it callously ignores public protests and demands for action to curb pollution where these demands would interfere with plans by big monopolies, mostly foreign, to exploit our resources.”<sup>307</sup> While government indifference could be interpreted as putting industry profits before pollution control, government bodies and agencies were also willing to support industry more actively by using state authority to override, subvert or change regulations in a given area.

This was particularly true in the way that the provincial government facilitated industrial development within the province’s parks. Through legislative changes

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<sup>305</sup> Rush, “Oil Pollution Disaster Threatens B.C. Coast,” 1. Rush’s reference to the 1969 Santa Barbra oil spill is revealing. As Gottlieb argues, the devastation at Santa Barbra, along with the 1965 New York City garbage strikes and power black-outs, and the 1969 burning of the Cuyahoga River in the industrial districts of Cleveland, were motivating factors for many young American radicals during the 1960s, see Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 137.

<sup>306</sup> Rush, “Socreds Favor Monopolies,” 1.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

introduced in 1933, 1939, and 1940, the government acted within its authority to manipulate, shift, dissolve, and create parks with impunity. It continued to do this throughout the 1940s and 1950s to serve the interests of industrial projects such as those developed by Alcan and B.C. Hydro.<sup>308</sup> Eng's work on Strathcona Park, however, illustrates that the industrialization of parkland has a much longer history. As mentioned earlier, the formation of Strathcona Park in 1911 was accompanied by a strong preservationist push among wilderness advocates aiming to create a tourist industry through the commodification of scenic beauty and picturesque landscapes. However, in 1918 the provincial government passed the Strathcona Park Act, enabling the owners of mining claims that pre-dated the creation of the park to apply to begin exploration and development at Myra Creek, near the south end of Buttle Lake.<sup>309</sup> Plans for further economic development in the park increased during the positive economic climate of the 1920s. While the development of timber resources was eventually pulled from the agenda, the government passed a Bill to allow the damming of Buttle Lake in the hopes of providing hydro-electric power for pulp and paper production. The lake was eventually "saved" when economic conditions soured in the early 1930s, but the government once again attempted to dam Buttle Lake two decades later.<sup>310</sup> This plan drew widespread opposition, including the support of the well known writer and conservationist Roderick Haig-Brown. Representing the Allied Fish and Game Association of Vancouver Island, Haig-Brown argued that damming the lake would destroy both the potential for tourism and the wildlife habitat. In response to these forms of protest, the government created a "compromise." Buttle Lake would not be dammed. Instead, the project was moved to

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<sup>308</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 93-95.

<sup>309</sup> Eng, "Parks for the People?," 62-63.

<sup>310</sup> Eng, "Parks for the People?," 71-82.

nearby Upper Campbell Lake. But, because the two lakes were proximal to one and other, the damming of Upper Campbell raised Buttle Lake's water levels by fifteen feet, transforming the two bodies of water into a large, single reservoir.<sup>311</sup> Despite the resistance of Haig-Brown and others, the campaign to save Buttle Lake ended in a loss as the rights of heavy-industry prevailed over a proposal that incorporated recreational and wildlife values. While the issue surrounding the industrialization of Buttle Lake does not appear to have drawn the attention of the communist left, the fierce opposition to the plan provides important context for the communist criticisms over the logging of parks during the 1960s.

Parks, as Eng notes, were often settings for competing notions of production and consumption.<sup>312</sup> That became abundantly clear in early 1964 when the *Pacific Tribune* reported that the government intended to log Buttle Lake and Wells Grey Park, quoting Haig-Brown to the effect that the theft of parks would lead to "incalculable damage" in the future. These comments resonated with Erni Knott, the author of the *Pacific Tribune* article, who used Haig-Brown's words as an opening statement in his response to the government's decision to log the parks. For Knott, Haig-Brown's "caustic comments" were more than just one person's opinion. They were an expression of the popular outrage emerging in the wake of the government's decision to allow industrial

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<sup>311</sup> Qureshi, "Environmental Issues in British Columbia," 100-101.

<sup>312</sup> Eng's analysis illustrates how local boards of trade and commerce groups, concerned about the ramifications of development on tourism, joined the cause to halt the damming of the lake, see Eng, "Parks for the People?," 80. Similar themes linking conservation and tourism can be seen in the work of the Division of Parks and Recreation. In 1952, two years after the Buttle Lake issue resurfaced, the Division of Parks produced a lengthy market analysis for the B.C. Natural Resources Conference. The report outlined the potential revenue that could come from tourism, arguing that wildlife ought to be managed as "a major crop." See Division of Parks and Recreation, B.C. Forest Service, "Role of British Columbia in the North American Recreation and Wildlife Picture," in *British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, Transactions of the Fifth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria: February, 1952), 88-121.

development within the province's parks. "This latest move" Knott argued, "serves to illustrate the insatiable lust of monopoly (mainly U.S.) which will not rest until it has seized control, with the help of a compliant provincial government, of every last stick of timber in B.C."<sup>313</sup> Furthermore, Knott questioned what the corporate repercussions of such a policy would be. If one operator was allowed to log, what would stop other companies from demanding the same right? Buttle Lake, for example, was surrounded by a host of "hungry monopoly giants" such as Elk River, Crown Zellerbach, Englewood and Tahsis, all of which were eager to expand their reach into new sources of timber. Assuring the reader that the government decision to open the parks was more than just an "announcement of intent," Knott reported that he had witnessed bulldozers working at all hours of the day and night to install a logging access road into Wells Grey Park during the previous December. Nor did Knott see these actions as anything particularly new; instead he described them as the "latest attack" in a long series of raids against the interests of the public.<sup>314</sup> As in other debates over the lack of controls on industrial pollution, Knott argued that the Social Credit government was an active agent in the theft of the forest because when "monopoly lays down the line," the government could be counted on to "faithfully fight for and implement" the will of capital.<sup>315</sup>

Tying the industrial development of parks to a longer running communist discourse centered on monopoly control and the management of natural resources, Knott also added an additional environmental aspect to the debate. Integrated into a critique that stressed the loss of control over natural resources, Knott argued that these processes of

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<sup>313</sup> Ernie Knott, "Capital Comment: Big steal of parks launched by Socreds," *Pacific Tribune*, 28 February 1964, 2.

<sup>314</sup> Knott, "Capital Comment: Big steal of parks launched by Socreds," 2.

<sup>315</sup> Erni Knott, "Capital Comment: Changes in Municipal Act now before house," *Pacific Tribune*, 13 March 1964, 8.

theft also had profound social and environmental ramifications. The logging of the parks represented a loss of “public heritage” through the commodification of nature. Quoting the president of the Victoria Fish and Game Club, Knott maintained that leaving places such as Buttle Lake and Wells Grey to the desires of industry and the provincial government would lead to their complete ruination “for the sake of a few lousy dollars.” Knott argued that this destruction was all the more significant because the increasingly rare old growth forests needed to be preserved. It was Knott’s opinion that there was “not a prime stand of fir anywhere in the B.C. interior comparable to the forest grants around Placid Lake in Wells Grey Park. They don’t even grow much bigger on the coast.”<sup>316</sup> It was therefore paramount that the public stand up against the power of monopoly that was promoting the “wholesale pillage and rape...of that last precious bit of our natural heritage.” Knott continued with these themes later in the year when he reproduced the arguments made by Rev. R.M. Goodall in his presentation to the fifteenth annual B.C. Natural Resources Conference. Characterized by Knott as the “hardest hitting” of the conference presenters, Goodall criticized the belief that “resources should be developed as intensely as possible and consumed as liberally as possible, leaving the future to take care of itself.” Such a policy was founded upon the sacrifice of “future interests for short term gain” and could lead to significant social problems.<sup>317</sup>

Once again fusing a plurality of political issues together, Knott reiterated his argument concerning the management of natural resources and the protection of parks in a prepared statement he made in support of his nomination to contest the Victoria

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<sup>316</sup> Knott, “Capital Comment: Big steal of parks launched by Socredits,” 8.

<sup>317</sup> Ernie Knott, “House session winding up—resources conference opens,” *Pacific Tribune*, 6 March 1964, 10. For the full version of Goodall’s submission, see Rev. R. M. Goodall, “A Philosophy of Resource Development,” in British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, *Transactions of the Fifth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria: February 1964), 30-34.

constituency in the 1966 provincial election. As party secretary for the Victoria Communist Club, Knott argued that in order to create a “dynamic society,” the election platform of the Communist Party in Victoria would be based on a dual policy that advocated for labour rights and greater control and protection over natural resources and parks. The connecting thread linking these two political fronts hinged on the exploitative power of private enterprise. One could not create a dynamic society, Knott argued, as long as companies had access to “stone-age labour laws,” like the use of court-issued injunctions to disrupt picket lines and other forms of working-class direct action. At the same time, a dynamic society was also threatened by turning over the public’s natural resources to “American interests.” Citing a “terrific overcut” of timber, Knott stated that the forest monopolies had to be forced to carry out extensive programs of reforestation while parks needed to be protected and expanded to suit the needs of a growing population.<sup>318</sup>

Knott’s analysis of the controversy over logging in parks connected traditional communist issues such as the power and influence of monopoly capitalism with contemporary environmental issues. It also demonstrates how the arguments and activities of non-communist activists and lobbyists were being appropriated by the communist left. Whether it was a summary of a SPEC report on oil exploration, the use of medical experts to point out the growing health effects of air pollution, the “caustic comments” made by conservationists such as Haig-Brown, or the use of a growing popular movement centered around environmentally sensitive issues such as industrial pollution or the development of natural resources, there was often common ground in which communists could situate a wide range of criticisms and analysis. Haig-Brown, for

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<sup>318</sup> “Knott named Communist candidate for Victoria,” *Pacific Tribune*, 2 July 1966, 3.

example, articulated his concerns over the potential damming of Buttle Lake through a combination of economic concerns mixed with, in Qureshi's words, the "scientific, educational, and inspirational values of wilderness."<sup>319</sup> As illustrated above, Knott also spoke of resource policies that would ensure the promotion of parks as places of "heritage" and drew on the words of Haig-Brown to help make his argument.

But while Knott and Haig-Brown were both opposed to the devastation of parks, they were not men cut from the same cloth. As Keeling, McDonald, and Qureshi argue, Haig-Brown was not a radical. He opposed neither the mass economic development of provincial resources, nor the structural foundations of capitalism. Rather, his conservationism was uniquely founded on his profound love and connection to the outdoors and his background as a socially conservative, English gentile.<sup>320</sup> The forms and limitations of Haig-Brown's conservationism are reflected in a 1968 editorial piece he wrote for *BC Digest*, an outdoor recreational magazine that covered a mixture of hunting, sporting, outdoor recreation and conservation topics. Writing on the relationship between fish, wildlife and development in B.C., Haig-Brown argued that the extensive clearcutting of the provincial forests, a process that "is and always will be carried on," could provide opportunities to increase the productive capacity of wildlife. Arguing on behalf of sportsmen, he stated that clearcutting "opens up new ranges, ensures a flowering of population and relatively easy harvesting."<sup>321</sup> This uncritical analysis of industrial logging was compounded by the limited scope of Haig-Brown's analysis. While he spoke disparagingly about Tree Farm Licenses as "little private kingdoms," he

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<sup>319</sup> Qureshi, "Environmental Issues in British Columbia," 100.

<sup>320</sup> Qureshi, "Environmental Issues in British Columbia," 102-103; Keeling and McDonald, "The Profligate Province," 14-15.

<sup>321</sup> Roderick Haig-Brown, "Fish and Wildlife in the Development of B.C.'s Future," *BC Digest*, (August, 1966), 35.

argued that it was “reasonable to suggest that commercial enterprises exercise their somewhat tarnished virtues on the other 98 percent of the land area and leave the parks alone.”<sup>322</sup>

The similarities and differences between critics such as Haig-Brown and Erni Knott illustrate two important points. On the one hand, by reproducing the arguments of Haig-Brown, Goodall, and the Victoria Fish and Game Club, Knott placed himself into a wider conservationist debate, illustrating how popular concerns over the industrialization of parkland filtered into the communist left. On the other hand, Knott used these non-communist discourses in a particular way. By inserting his own personal experiences and understanding of resource politics, he converted and contextualized these popular forms of revolt into a communist framework that linked notions of environmental destruction and resource development to the power and influence of monopoly capitalism and its main political ally, the provincial government.

Knott’s, however, was not the only example of a communist critique of forest policy during the latter years of the 1960s. Between 1967 and 1970, expanding levels of harvesting and inadequate reforestation policies created a resurgence of unease within the communist press over the state of timber resources. As a result, it re-rooted the connection between monopoly capitalism, the forest industry, and the potential for substantial environmental consequences. Reflecting discursive themes developed by Parkin some twenty years earlier, William Turner argued in the *Pacific Tribune* that the province’s timber operators have “cut and slashed their way through the forests to record production levels” leaving in their wake a “residue of denuded forest acreage.” Citing government sources, Turner reported that while the total harvesting levels for 1968

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<sup>322</sup> Haig-Brown, “Fish and Wildlife in the Development of B.C.’s Future,” 34-38.

produced 1.3 billion cubic feet of timber drawn from 400,000 acres of forest land, the projected reforestation target was set at a mere 80,000 acres. More worrisome still was a Ministry of Forests estimate that round-wood production requirements would double to 2.3 billion cubic feet by 1975. Turner went on to report provincial Bureau of Economics and Statistics estimates that plywood production would increase forty-three percent from 1967 to 1975, while pulp production would increase a staggering ninety percent over the same period. With these statistics in hand, Turner argued that the TFL system had not created a sustainable forest economy since production was significantly out-pacing reforestation levels. Turner insisted that TFL holders ought to be compelled to promote reforestation at rates that matched production.<sup>323</sup> Building on this analysis, Maurice Rush argued the following year that Forest Service data revealed that for every seven acres harvested, reforestation replaced only one. Citing the utter failure of sustained yield polices used to justify the TFL system, Rush called for a new public inquiry into the forest industry in order to over come the “rape” of the forests and protect “jobs and prosperity for the future.”<sup>324</sup>

Although the communist press tended not to situate its critique of forest policy within an analysis of the methods of production, the expanding levels of production cited by Turner and Rush can be further contextualized by placing them into the structural changes taking place within the development of harvesting technology. As Rajala has illustrated, the increasing desire by forest operators to create more flexible and maneuverable logging methods resulted in the development of portable-steel-spar machines in the 1950s and automatic grapple-yarders during the 1960s which enabled a

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<sup>323</sup> William Turner, “B.C. Forests Overcut,” *Pacific Tribune*, 4 July 1969, 7.

<sup>324</sup> Maurice Rush, “Save our forests, Overcut for profit threatens resource,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 September 1970, 1; 12.

dramatic increase in the rate of forest exploitation.<sup>325</sup> Mirroring the expanding levels of production cited by Turner, Rajala notes that grapple-yarding increased patterns of growth that had already seen the output per man-hour double between 1950 and 1968. By the same token, the use of newly mechanized forms of yarding lowered costs substantially, as evidenced by a sixty two percent decrease in yarding expenditures in Crown Zellerbach's Nitinat division on Vancouver Island.<sup>326</sup> At the same time, the growing levels of production cited by Rush and Turner, as well as the destruction of old growth forests noted by Knott, were also reflected in a return to an expanded form of clearcut logging. In order to reduce the capital costs associated with expanding road networks and increasingly expensive forms of technology such as steel-spars and grapple-yarders, operators increasingly insisted in expanding the size of their clearcutting operations. Not only would expanding clearcuts reduce the operators' budgets, but it was argued that they would also easily pay for replanting of the cut-over land.<sup>327</sup> The Forest Service was also happy to see clearcutting measures increased. As Rajala argues, foresters maintained that they could only fully realize their authority as planners of the forest once old-growth stands had been removed. In this sense mature forests were both a hindrance to sustained yield forestry as well as an obstacle to the development of the profession.<sup>328</sup>

While both Turner and Rush's analyses utilized symbols such as denuded forest land or violent metaphors such as "slashing" or "raping" to describe the abuse of the forest by monopoly capitalism, their analyses also illustrate important gaps,

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<sup>325</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 43. Steel-spar: a moveable spar mounted on a truck. Grapple-yarder: a large moveable machine involved in yarding.

<sup>326</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 48.

<sup>327</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 212.

<sup>328</sup> Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 214.

contradictions, and questions regarding their particular interpretation of these environmental changes. For example, despite a 1967 article in the *Pacific Tribune* that highlighted how clearcut logging significantly damaged rivers and streams, neither Rush nor Turner addressed these ecological outcomes.<sup>329</sup> Likewise, arguments set out by Knott regarding the protection of old growth areas for the sake of “public heritage” were also, for the most part, absent. Instead, Turner and Rush stressed the need to place a limit on the power and influence of monopoly capital by creating a forest industry where effective control of the resources would be held and administered by the public. Such statements reflected the continuing influence of Morgan’s proposal to the second Sloan commission, where he called for the creation of a forest economy controlled by the Crown, augmented by joint-committees that represented various aspects of the public.<sup>330</sup>

At the same time, Turner created a discourse of environmental destruction to illustrate monopoly capital’s violent stripping of forest land, but did not follow up with a discussion of how these forms of ownership might address environmental issues. While such an analysis might assume that a more tightly controlled and regulated forestry sector would be better suited to implement reforestation policies or more ecologically attuned cutting practices, no such prognosis was made at this time. Nor did Turner question how progressive and expanding levels of production would relate to other forms of ecological and environmental change. Nevertheless, the continued tactic of linking criticisms of the systems of tenure that had facilitated capitalist development in the forest industry to themes of environmental destruction would not only continue as the 1970s progressed, but would increase. As in previous decades they would continue to be linked by

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<sup>329</sup> Eunice Parker, “Where the Fraser River Flows—There is only pollution,” *Pacific Tribune*, 18 August 1967, 8.

<sup>330</sup> Maurice Rush, “How Lumber Barons Rape B.C. Forests,” *Pacific Tribune*, 2 October 1970, 12.

communists to a mixture of historical and contemporary concerns, forming an important frame of reference for understanding the concerns, tactics, and values held by the communist left.

The expanding criticism of forest policy also helps to contextualize and inform the actions and experiences of individual communists such as Knott. As his criticisms over the incursions of industrial forestry into parks suggest, he was enmeshed in a wider communist and provincial debate over resource use. His analyses were firmly rooted in a communist critique of the TFL system, and yet his concerns over the development of parks such as Wells Gray and Buttle Lake illustrated a concern with the non-material values encompassed in the preservation of old growth forests. It is significant that such arguments were not to be found in his comrades' interpretations and analyses. These experiences reflect the importance of focusing, not only on formal partisan structures of the Party and its official declarations, resolutions, and policy programs, but also show the value of turning towards individual expressions and experiences of rank-and-file members.

In debates over pollution and the industrial use of park land, communists were, once again, only one of large group of social actors. Situated in wider forms of environmental protest, communists produced their own analyses of the environmental effects of industrial expansion, placing local developments into a larger political, economic, and ecological framework. These analyses often produced a host of revealing contradictions, such as the challenges that came from championing industrial production while calling for increased attention to ecological matters. At the same time, linking pulp mill pollution or the industrial development of park land to larger questions surrounding

environmental change illustrated the communist left's insistence that pollution and environmental change were inseparable from issues of class and the development of monopoly capitalism.

## Chapter Six

### The Communist Party of Canada and the Continued Struggle to Define the Forest

As illustrated by the previous chapters, the dramatic expansion of the forest industry from the 1940s to the early 1970s constituted the “the glory days” of the sector. The economic good-times, however, were soon to end. Beginning in the 1970s, factors such as high and unstable energy costs, recession, inflation, falling levels of productivity, increased competition in world markets and an increasingly “disenchanted” work force signaled the end of Fordism.<sup>331</sup> In its place, a Post-Fordist era developed where size and stability in production was replaced by flexibility, specialization, and corporate restructuring, presenting significant challenges for many woodworkers.<sup>332</sup> As economic conditions soured in 1974 and 1975, workers were laid off in droves as international markets for products such as lumber and pulp shrank.<sup>333</sup>

Changes in provincial partisan politics further complicated the shifting political and economic climate of the 1970s. The election of a New Democratic Party (NDP) government (1972-1975), and Bob Williams’ arrival as the new Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources alarmed both company executives and Forest Service officials as Williams sought to challenge, as Wilson puts it, the “core precepts of the state-industry bargain.” Central to Williams’ agenda was his desire to reformulate the FML/TFL tenures, which concentrated economic and political influence over the sector

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<sup>331</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 5; Hayter, “‘The War in the Woods’,” 709.

<sup>332</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 5-6.

<sup>333</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 2-3.

into the hands of a small group of multinational corporations. This would be achieved by promoting more “diverse ownership and management structures,” and encouraging smaller-scale forest operations. Williams also advocated furthering the state’s ability to collect higher amounts of rent from the development of its resources, believing that past forest policies had resulted in industry unfairly receiving too much of the profit derived from the forest.<sup>334</sup>

At the same time, the new NDP government drew upon and provoked a growing criticism of sustained yield forest policy through a series of government-initiated studies developed under the auspices of the newly created Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat (Secretariat).<sup>335</sup> In 1971, the Social Credit government had created the Cabinet-level Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC), chaired by the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. In 1973, the NDP created the Secretariat to function as a coordinating body for the ELUC.<sup>336</sup> Reports produced for the Secretariat by Ray Travers, Alan Chambers, and Ken Farquharson concluded that, in many cases, the presumptions fuelling sustained yield forestry were inadequate, resulting in inflated levels of harvesting and resource allocation. While Wilson maintains that these inquiries did not lead Williams to implement large scale structural changes within the sector, they nevertheless rejuvenated a growing critique of sustained yield programs, which spilled out over the bureaucratic walls of government and into the public sphere, helping to support and encourage the expanding environmental and conservationist movements of

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<sup>334</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 112-117.

<sup>335</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 116-123.

<sup>336</sup> In addition to the Ministry of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, the departments of Agriculture, Mining and Petroleum Resources, Recreation and Conservation, Economic Development, Health, Highways, and Municipal Affairs were all included in the makeup of the ELUC, see Dorsey, “The Management of Super, Natural British Columbia,” 18.

the 1970s.<sup>337</sup> However, the NDP's years were numbered, and the election of a refurbished Social Credit government in 1975 produced significant challenges for those attempting to implement alternative forms of resource use and planning.

In many ways, communist analyses and prognosis of the industry were not radically different from those of the 1950s. Certainly the greatest continuing thread linking the communist position of the 1970s to past critiques was a sustained attack on the structural forms of land tenure. Communists stepped-up their calls for state controlled systems of forestry that would offer labour and the public an expanded say in forest management. While fears over the supply of timber resources had been prominent during the 1930s and 1940s, these concerns reemerged during the 1970s in response to a growing body of information illustrating that sustained yield policies failed to adequately “reinvest” in the province's forest resources. The communist left was only one of a growing number of social groups debating the intentions, meaning, and organizational structure of resource use in British Columbia.<sup>338</sup> Nevertheless, the communist left added to the debate its own ideologically distinct understanding of the structural underpinnings of B.C. forest policy.

In December of 1972, Maurice Rush argued that recent data released on rates of reforestation in the province proved, once again, that TFL agreements were not serving the best interests of the public. Twenty five percent of cut-over lands were not being reforested, resulting in 9.3 million acres of inadequately managed forest land. Continued negligence on the part of companies and government, Rush added, would increase that

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<sup>337</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 122-125

<sup>338</sup> A revealing example of how different groups were approaching the forest can be found in Wilson's discussion of SPEC and the Slocan Valley Community Forest Management Project, see Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 143-144; “Forest Conservation in British Columbia, 1935-1985,” 27-28.

total by 150,000 acres every year. To maintain a “healthy” forest system, Rush argued that 140 million seedlings ought to be planted per year, necessitating an annual budget of roughly eighteen million dollars. According to forestry figures, however, in 1971 only forty million trees were planted and 1.8 million dollars spent on reforestation investment.<sup>339</sup> “This latter fact,” stated Rush, “points to where the problem lies.” TFLs were predicated on the understanding that reforestation would sustain yields. It was on this “theory” that “B.C.’s forest industry was and is to this day based.” Rush argued, however, that such notions were “completely false,” as the discrepancies between reforestation policies and practices clearly illustrated. Instead of a properly functioning system of sustained yield forestry, the industry was an example of the largest “rip off” in B.C. resource history.<sup>340</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, the communist answer to this predicament insisted on the extermination of the current TFL system. This was not a new policy recommendation; it took on additional significance, however, since many of the province’s TFL agreements were approaching their renewal date in 1979. The agreements should not be renewed, Rush argued, until there had been a thorough public analysis of the fundamental structural issues of the tenure system and new policies put into place that would safeguard the public’s interests. In attempting to set the tone for what a radically new set of forest policies might encompass, Rush had three main suggestions: all forms of tenure involving private control of public forests should be dissolved and “transferred back to public control;” this control would then be administered by an expanded Forest Service that would undertake “extensive” reforestation programs; and finally, all timber harvested

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<sup>339</sup> Maurice Rush, “Strop the Rip-off in B.C. Forests, NDP Gov’t Urged,” *Pacific Tribune*, 8 December 1972, 1.

<sup>340</sup> Rush, “Strop the Rip-off in B.C. Forests, NDP Gov’t Urged,” 1; 12.

from public land ought to be sent to auction for sale to the highest bidder, with the revenues reinvested into “adequate” reforestation programs.<sup>341</sup>

These core propositions for the forest industry were reiterated five months later in a report developed and published by the Woodworkers Committee of the B.C. Communist Party, developed at a conference held on Vancouver Island. An abridged version was also released in the *Pacific Tribune*. Since Knott was the head of the Vancouver Island Region of the Party, an active woodworker at Victoria Plywood, and a participant in debates over forest policy it is reasonable to assume that he attended the conference which discussed tenure agreements and other “special privileges and concessions” that were bestowed on powerful foreign monopolies. But the Committee also argued that the exploitation of forest resources had to be understood in the context of the increasingly “productive” level of labour, the “straight-jacketing” of unions, and “divisions” within the ranks of labour, all of which made it possible for companies to “strip the forest with abandon amassing huge profits in the process.”<sup>342</sup> With the echoes of 1948 no doubt present in the minds of its older members, and with a considerable amount of union “raiding” taking place throughout the 1970s, the Committee also used the opportunity to place considerable stress on labour unity and the creation of “one union” in the industry “from the stump to the finished product.”<sup>343</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>341</sup> Rush, “Strop the Rip-off in B.C. Forests, NDP Gov’t Urged,” 12.

<sup>342</sup> “A Fighting Program for BC Woodworkers,” *Pacific Tribune*, 11 May 1973, 12.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid. Parnaby and Neufeld have described the tensions associated with union raiding primarily as a result of an expanding nationalist sentiment among Canadian unionists. They argue that, after seceding from their American-based colleagues, newly created unions like the Canadian Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada (PPWC) raided operations previously controlled by other unions. This resulted in the PPWC taking over three Vancouver sawmills in the early 1970s that had previously been represented by the IWA, see Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 198-200. In his analysis of the PPWC, Gordon Simon argues that the decision to establish the PPWC was based on a desire by unionists to create a union more open to rank-and-file member control, a facet that PPWC unionists argued was lacking in unions such as the IWA, see Gordon Simon, “A Comparative Historical Explanation of the Environmental Policies of Two

Committee advocated a number of economic and political goals such as: public control of the forest industry; increased investment in reforestation; expansion in manufacturing; worker participation in aspects of forest policy; and the end to “political,” “racial,” and “religious” discrimination within the IWA, with particular emphasis on ending the “blacklist” that had been used to purge radicals from the union.<sup>344</sup> In linking these issues to the power of capital to ruin forest resources, the Communist Party’s Woodworkers Committee used environmental change to tie together a collection of diverse political and economic issues. Of course, not all of the above-mentioned goals were achieved, but it is noteworthy that, by September of 1973 the “errant members list” and “political” clauses that were used to bar communists who had split from the IWA in 1948 were dissolved.<sup>345</sup> With this impediment removed, Erni Knott returned to the union.

In addition to concerns over union politics, worsening economic conditions also influenced the Party’s approach to forest policy. When a federal election was called for July 1974, the B.C. section of the Communist Party organized its campaign around the “key issues” of inflation and unemployment. Erni Knott was nominated to contest the Cowichan-Malahat-Islands riding, joining the ranks of other well known B.C. communists Maurice Rush (Vancouver East), Harold Pritchett (Fraser Valley West), Mark Mosher (Comox-Alberni), and Homer Stevens (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta).<sup>346</sup> In addition to urging stronger trade relations with socialist states and the complete ban of all

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Woodworkers Unions in Canada,” *Organization & Environment*, 16 (Sept. 2003), 293-295. For further insights into these conflicts, see Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 119-121. Hak also notes the meeting of Communist Party’s Woodworkers Committee, arguing that it reflected the continuing presence of communists within the IWA, see Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 110.

<sup>344</sup> “A Fighting Program for BC Woodworkers,” 12.

<sup>345</sup> Nigel Morgan, “IWA International Convention Restores Rights of Communists,” *Pacific Tribune*, 5 October 1973, 12. See also Nigel Morgan, “IWA Parley Charts Progressive Course,” *Pacific Tribune*, 31 August 1973, 12.

<sup>346</sup> “B.C. Communists Plan Major Election Drive,” *Pacific Tribune*, 17 May 1974, 3.

American nuclear weapons, Knott's campaign called for the nationalization of major industries and enhanced regulatory oversight to deal with inflation. Enhancing governmental control over the forest industry and certain real estate companies, as well as bolstering the influence of consumer protection organizations, would counter the power and influence of "profiteers" and "rip-off people."<sup>347</sup>

Knott's calls for governmental intervention increased as the economic position of woodworkers worsened from 1974 to 1976. Foreshadowing the rough economic years ahead, the price of crude oil quadrupled in 1973, while inflation skyrocketed through 1973 and 1974.<sup>348</sup> In August of 1974, the *Pacific Tribune* reported that nearly four thousand woodworkers had lost their jobs, through plant closures, shift reductions, and curtailments in production. Nigel Morgan deemed the losses to be part of larger economic trends that were "affecting countries throughout the capitalist world" as governments refused to take stricter measures to control price inflation and rising interest rates. Compounding these problems was the close economic integration between the Canadian and American economy, a falling U.S. housing market, and an "artificially created" American oil crisis.<sup>349</sup> Drawing on union records, Knott reported that the number of unionized workers in the Victoria area in 1976 totaled 1,500, a slight rise from the 1,200 employed in 1975, but a precipitous drop from the 2,100 employed in 1974.<sup>350</sup> Citing the layoff of 14,000 workers, Jack Munro estimated that unemployment rates for the union stood at thirty percent in 1975.<sup>351</sup> A province-wide collapse in residential construction, Knott reported, contributed to Victoria's twelve percent unemployment rate. Similar

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<sup>347</sup> "Communist Candidates Speak Out on Top Issues," 3.

<sup>348</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 201.

<sup>349</sup> "Liberal Policies Blamed for Wood Industry Layoffs," *Pacific Tribune*, 23 August 1974, 1.

<sup>350</sup> Erni Knott, "Forest Policies Prompt Layoffs," *Pacific Tribune*, 10 December 1976, 3.

<sup>351</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 201.

themes were evident in other parts of the Island, compounded by a “massive” month-long layoff of workers employed by MacMillan Bloedel, Crown Zellerbach and other large operators. This resulted in the unemployment of 12,000 woodworkers, Knott estimated.<sup>352</sup> In 1975, an additional 10,000 IWA members stayed off the job as pulp unions, food-workers, sections of the retail industry, teamsters, and railway workers set up massive picket lines across the province.<sup>353</sup>

While unfavorable economic conditions contributed to these hardships, Knott argued that the domestic and international policies of the large forest companies worsened the challenges facing the forest industry. First, he charged that, unlike a host of small operators such as Sooke Forest Products, Plumper Bay Sawmills, and Victoria Plywood (where Knott himself was employed), large firms like MacMillan Bloedel had become “complacent and have not modernized to meet competition.” Attributing this to the security of their TFL holdings, Knott went on to assert that the most intense layoffs were directed against militant loggers, some of whom interpreted these layoffs as a tactical maneuver to weaken the workforce just prior to a new round of labour negotiations set to take place in the new-year. While cutting back costs in British Columbia, firms such as MacMillan Bloedel were continuing to export capital to countries such as Brazil, in order to take advantage of low wages, non-union labour, large tax concessions, and comparatively inexpensive raw resources.<sup>354</sup> Determined to diversify holdings and expand markets for its production facilities, the early 1960s and

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<sup>352</sup> Knott, “Forest Policies Prompt Layoffs,” 3.

<sup>353</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 201-202. These economic conditions were countered by a brief “boom” in 1978 as Federal restrictions on wage and price controls were lifted, see Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 204. However, this short reprieve would not last long. Citing federal records, Hayter argues that in the provincial forest product industries 21,341 workers were laid off between 1979 and 1982, while the industry lost just over one billion in revenue between 1981 and 1984, see Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 67.

<sup>354</sup> Knott, “Forest Policies Prompt Layoffs,” 3.

1970s saw MacMillan Bloedel develop joint ventures and subsidiaries in Alabama, the United Kingdom, Spain, Malaysia, Indonesia, France, Holland, and Japan, in addition to Brazil.<sup>355</sup> Speaking on the company's turn toward foreign investment, L.G. Harris, vice-president and general manager of MacMillan Bloedel's pulp and paper operations, put it this way: "I was a great one for expanding and becoming multinational. My whole point in foreign acquisitions was to get an interest in a company and have it absorb our raw material."<sup>356</sup> To Knott, however, it was clear that firms such as MacMillan Bloedel were "operating with a total disregard for the national and public interest and are exporting their B.C.-produced capital abroad in pursuit of superprofits and to further their own interests exclusively."<sup>357</sup>

Multinational corporations were not the only ones expanding their holdings. In an effort to buttress the industry from further economic calamity, Williams and the NDP purchased Crown Zellerbach's operation at Ocean Falls, the Celanese Corporation's Canadian Cellulose, the Eddy Match Company's Kootenay Forest Products, and locally owned Plateau Mills. These government takeovers reflected, in Wilson's opinion, a practical approach to dealing with a souring economic situation, rather than symbolizing a desire on the Minister's part to nationalize the industry.<sup>358</sup> But Knott argued that the acquisitions demonstrated that it would be economically "feasible" to transform the forestry giants into publicly-run institutions. "[E]ven if it were to cost \$750 million to purchase the largest company, MacMillan-Bloedel, the annual profits of that company,

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<sup>355</sup> Donald MacKay, *Empire of Wood: The MacMillan Bloedel Story* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1982), 150-173; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 94-95; Hayter, *Flexible Crossroads*, 116-117. For an examination of the multinational holdings that firms active in the province held during the 1980s and 1990s, see Marchak, *Logging the Globe* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 101-104.

<sup>356</sup> MacKay, *Empire of Wood*, 260.

<sup>357</sup> Knott, "Forest Policies Prompt Layoffs," 3.

<sup>358</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 127-128.

the bulk of which are channeled into special reserve and depletion funds, as well as tax deferment accounts, when combined with the tax savings of a crown corporation, would yield more than the total purchase figure in five years,” he observed.<sup>359</sup> It was not the political or economic feasibility of such a nationalization project, but the use Knott made of it that is important; the way in which Knott connected economic downturn, the plight of the unemployed, examples of a functioning public forestry, and the irresponsible character of the domestic and international forest policies of big business should be emphasized. Knott’s critique provided another example of how communists attempted to place analysis of the forest industry into a variety of overlapping contexts.

Bob Williams’ decision to hold a Royal Commission added additional opportunities for another round of attacks on the TFL system. With a poor economic climate, increasing political fallout from the government takeovers, and fearing the possibility of a “capital-strike” by industry, Williams created a Royal Commission to investigate the tenure system of the forest sector in 1975.<sup>360</sup> Stating that the decision was “long overdue,” Nigel Morgan urged Williams to consider particular “terms of reference” in the Royal Commission by posing a series of questions. Was the public getting “the full benefit” from the present tenure system? Should public forest lands be transferred to public control? To what extent have the suggestions for the development of processing and manufacturing as outlined by Gordon Sloan been implemented? And finally, with high levels of unemployment in the industry “staring us in the face” he argued that it was

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<sup>359</sup> Knott, “Forest Policies Prompt Layoffs,” 3.

<sup>360</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 128.

important to know what role the export of capital by “multinational corporations” played in the current crisis?<sup>361</sup>

Morgan noted that such questions should also be viewed in conjunction with the understanding that all forms of tenure ought to be considered for review, along with investigations into the extent to which public land had been alienated to foreign corporations, and what measures would be effective in curbing the power of monopoly with the goal of bringing their operations under public control.<sup>362</sup> Citing the exodus of capital and high levels of employment, Morgan linked long-standing critiques of forest capitalism to contemporary concerns facing the sector.

In his oral submission to Pearse Royal Commission in December of 1975, Morgan argued, much as he had some twenty years previously before the late Gordon Sloan, that the most “decisive” issue under investigation revolved around the question of who was to “control and operate” B.C.’s forests, the great majority of which were the property of the Crown. However, Morgan framed the issue of monopoly ownership in contemporary terms by focusing on levels of resource supply and reforestation. Reproducing statistics drawn from the *Vancouver Sun* and forester E.W. Robertson, he argued that only one acre was being replanted for every seven cut, resulting in 9.3 million acres of insufficiently stocked forest land.<sup>363</sup> This “rip off” was further intensified by developing wood products only in a “semi-processed” form, robbing the public of the full

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<sup>361</sup> “Communists Urge Probe of B.C. Forest Industry,” *Pacific Tribune*, 1 April 1975, 3; 11.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>363</sup> BCA, Royal Commission on Forest Resources (Pearse Commission), GR 0347, Proceedings, Box 28, Vol. 53, File 3, “Submission by Communist Party of Canada, B.C. Provincial Committee,” 15 December 1975, 9193-9197. This oral submission followed the themes drawn out in his written submission, see BCA, Royal Commission on Forest Resources (Pearse Commission), GR 0347, Box 2, File 35, “Submission by Communist Party of Canada, B.C. Provincial Committee”.

value of their resources.<sup>364</sup> From this analysis of the ills of TFL-inspired monopoly control, Morgan argued that, unless fundamental changes were made, “it will not be long before the term ‘public forests’ will have no meaning in British Columbia except as it would apply to parks, mountain peaks, and economically unworkable forests.”<sup>365</sup> To address these concerns, Morgan suggested a wide range of recommendations including phasing out all TFL agreements and implementing a publicly controlled forest industry co-managed by representatives of labour, industry and the state, and members of the general public. Foreign control of the industry would be removed and strict controls placed on log exports. Production and manufacturing would be given greater priority, new markets would be sought in “socialist and undeveloped” countries and more of the revenue was to be returned to the public purse. Reforestation and conservation requirements would also be upgraded as would provisions for increased security and compensation for workers.<sup>366</sup>

Morgan’s submission was not well received by Pearse, although not for the reasons one might expect. Rather than opposing the CPC’s plan based on political or ideological grounds, it appears Pearse and his staff found the report lacking in other ways. First, much of the data informing the communist submission was based on statistics that were five years old.<sup>367</sup> Whatever the reason for using data from 1970, it did little to impress Pearse, who, in a set of written comments that do not appear to have been presented to Morgan, described the communist brief as “pedestrian” and criticized its lack of “basic data.” The second problem that Pearse identified seemed to imply a lack of

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<sup>364</sup> Proceedings, “Submission by Communist Party of Canada,” 9197-9198.

<sup>365</sup> “Submission by Communist Party of Canada,” 12.

<sup>366</sup> “Proceedings, Submission by Communist Party of Canada,” 9201-9204.

<sup>367</sup> “Proceedings, Submission by Communist Party of Canada,” 9196-9197.

nuance or imagination in Morgan's discussion on land tenure, an analysis that Pearse characterized as a "long and repetitive discourse against Tree Farm Licenses."<sup>368</sup> In reading Pearse's "pedestrian" description of Morgan's submission we can venture two general interpretations, both of which have utility in their own way.

First, while Pearse's comments on Morgan's submission are brief, it is clear that he meant the word "pedestrian" in its derogatory sense. As a forest economist, it is possible that Pearse found the report dull, dry, or even unimaginative. All of these words are perfectly reasonable synonyms for "pedestrian." To flip this description into another context, however, we can use pedestrian to signify something else. For, in addition to its negative connotations, the word can also evoke meanings of straightforwardness or the representation of ordinary occurrences. While it is impossible to reconstruct the tone and delivery of Morgan's oral submission, its contents were, with a few exceptions, quite ordinary in a particular sense. Although it highlighted the contemporary "crisis" in the forest industry, the submission's major prognosis and recommendations looked remarkably ordinary, not only because of its similarity to Morgan's 1955 submission, but also because it retained some significant aspects of Pritchett's proposals as articulated by the IWA in 1945. In fact, Morgan went out of his way to press this continuing line of argument: "[t]he Communist Party is fully in favor of forest management aimed at ensuring a perpetual yield. But we are opposed to any Tree Farm Licenses which hands over effective control of these forests to private companies for private profit. We have

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<sup>368</sup> These comments were recorded as a combination of typed and hand written notes that were included in the same file as the written submission made by the Communist Party. They can accurately be attributed to Pearse due to the fact that they were placed next to questions that Pearse formally asked Morgan during the question and answer period of the hearing.

been opposed to this scheme from its inception, and we reiterate our stand again.”<sup>369</sup> This was the utterly ordinary, consistent, and determined response of the communist left to the TFL system and corporate-state understandings of sustained yield. It reflected their particular Marxist understanding of timber capitalism and their genuine belief that British Columbians would be better served through a thoroughly public industrial forest system.

Since the forest sector remained wedded to an economic climate defined by monopoly capitalism, the CPC’s critique of the TFL system remains a vital and relevant form of analysis. Nevertheless, it is also possible to put forward a second interpretation which sees this “consistency” as symptomatic of a form of intellectual stagnation within the CPC. This understanding arises not from the fact that a critique of monopoly capitalism needed to be replaced, but emerges instead from the CPC’s inability to connect a Marxist understanding of capitalism to other relevant forms of critique, particularly its failure to adopt the arguments of ecology. In this reading, the increasingly “crowded” nature of the Canadian left is surely a relevant factor.<sup>370</sup> As the peace movement illustrated, B.C.’s political left was never the uncontested territory of any one group. In addition to the continued perseverance of the Trotskyist movement in urban centers such as Vancouver, the 1960s saw the expansion of Maoist and leftist inspired student movements.<sup>371</sup> Responding to a host of different influences such as the peace movement, decolonization struggles, the counter-culture and “youth politics”, reinterpretations of a rejuvenated and “younger” Marx, and the promotion of anti-hierarchical politics, this “New Left” added immeasurably to a diverse radical experience.<sup>372</sup> While the peace

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<sup>369</sup> “Submission by Communist Party of Canada,” 21.

<sup>370</sup> Isitt, “Tug-of-War,” 275.

<sup>371</sup> Isitt, “Tug-of-War,” 267-290.

<sup>372</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 183-192; Isitt, “Tug-of-War,” 276-298.

movement was an important setting for New Left activism, so too was the emerging environmental movement. As Gottlieb has illustrated, young American New Leftists were radicalized by a great array of environmental concerns including nuclear testing and the effects of pollution in urban and industrial settings.<sup>373</sup> As the work of Zelko, Hak, Isitt, and Keeling illustrate the emergence of early forms of environmental protest and activism in B.C. also drew in elements of the New Left.<sup>374</sup> While the CPC was also involved in these areas of environmental activism, the development of the New Left signaled the CPC's growing distance and alienation from a new generation of radicalized youth for whom questions of environmental politics were vitally important areas of struggle. Just as Pritchett's 1945 submission to Sloan could be evaluated in light of the turn towards the CPC's Liberal-Labour Coalition, so too could we speculate that Morgan's "pedestrian" report to Pearse reflected a form of intellectual stagnation that came with an aging Party cadre unable to attract new bodies and new ideas.<sup>375</sup>

Both interpretations are valid and need to be considered for their ability to draw attention to the continuing influence of monopoly capitalism as well as the limitations and challenges that faced the Communist Party in its attempts to articulate political positions that would draw in a new generation of young radicals. At the same time, the CPC's commitment to the promotion of forest policy based on "perpetual yield" also

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<sup>373</sup> Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 136-137.

<sup>374</sup> Isitt, "Tug-of-War," 299-300; Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 184-185; Zelko, "Making Greenpeace," 213-216.

<sup>375</sup> An important factor that has been stressed in challenges facing the CPC in its relationship with the New Left revolved around question of age and generational gaps. As Isitt notes, RCMP investigations conducted in 1963 revealed that the average age of provincial Party members was forty-three, most of whom had been aligned with the Party for fifteen years. This produced, in ex-LPPER Bill White's opinion, an "old men's club" and a "dead end." See, Isitt, "Tug-of-War," 145. For a brief discussion on the declining fate of the CPC's Young Communist League during the 1960s and the problems that Party officials associated with attracting the youthful potential of the New Left, see Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada*, 268-269.

signified the enduring belief in the modernist understanding of industrial forest practice. This belief encompassed a host of contradictions when placed next to concurrent calls made by communists for environmental action or solidarity with environmental organizations whose roots in ecology questioned many of the dominant values upon which a “sustained” program of resource exploitation was based. This contradiction begs an important question: to what degree were communists willing or able to integrate their ideas and forms of activism as had been practised within the communist left, with the ideas and forms of activism rooted in a conservationist or ecological perspective? Despite the renewed interest in environmental exploitation in this period, communists had not yet answered this fundamental question.

## Chapter Seven

### Settings for Regulation and Resistance: The Tsitika-Schoen Controversy, 1972-1978

Knott's comments on the need to protect park land from industrial use foreshadowed a series of preservationist conflicts that took place during 1970s in the face of expanding industrial production. The controversy and conflict over the Tsitika-Schoen region of Vancouver Island was an important precursor to the more militant preservationist campaigns of the 1980s and 1990s. Debates over the Tsitika-Schoen saw many familiar boundaries challenged and broken down. Communist, trade union, and the environmental and conservationist movements did not take on clearly defined roles and positions on the issues at hand. Instead they contributed to the debate in ways that saw individuals flow fluidly across class, political, and institutional boundaries. In addition to exploring the views of communists, environmentalists, conservationists, and woodworkers, this chapter will also focus on how government agencies and forest operators attempted to implement their utilitarian vision of land use for the Tsitika-Schoen. Against the development agenda of the state and industry, a loose coalition of interests joined together to advocate a more equitable, balanced conception of the area's future. As the former interests shaped the planning process to suit the needs of industrial forestry, the Tsitika's defenders ultimately failed to make permanent a development moratorium Williams had imposed in 1973. The Tsitika, then, represents both the promise and the limitations of early environmental activism in B.C.

Three days before Nigel Morgan presented the Communist Party's views to Peter Pearse, the Royal Commission heard the opinion of Jack Munro, president and

representative for Region 1 of the IWA. In contrast to Morgan, Munro advised that the TFLs provided “stability and permanence” for working-class communities by enabling companies to draw in investment capital that would translate to high wages and safer working environments. With this in mind, Munro pointed out that the IWA was generally in favour of supporting larger corporations. “Stability for corporations,” he argued, “helps to ensure stability for the labour movement.” These opinions and proposals, he argued, had to be seen in the context of an industry where job layoffs and production shut downs were common occurrences.<sup>376</sup> Munro’s defence of the TFL system and support for large forest operators illustrates the divergent views between the industry’s main union and the Communist Party. And yet a thematic thread existed linking these two positions. In a very general sense, the IWA and CPC submissions expressed a shared concern over who was to control and manage forest land in the province, and what values should form the basis of that management. While the IWA and the CPC’s conflicting interpretations of the role of large forest corporations formed a central aspect of this debate, public involvement in decisions governing and managing land use was also a factor. As shown in previous chapters, communist submissions to the second Sloan Commission and the Pearse Commission advocated that power and authority over forest management be invested in both government hierarchies as well as in council structures that sought spaces for public involvement in various aspects of forest policy. This was also true of the IWA submission to the first Sloan commission; the union’s communist leadership put forward

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<sup>376</sup> BCA, GR0347, Box 4, File 80, Royal Commission on Forest Resources (Pearse Commission), “A Brief Respecting the Forests and Forest Industries of British Columbia Submitted by Regional Council No. 1 International Woodworkers of America,” 6-8.

a vision of forest administration that would increase the clout of both labour and the public in the management of forest policy.

There was a notable shift, however, between these past IWA policies and those Munro put forward to Pearse. Because the forest “belongs to all people” and produces a collection of “social and economic” benefits, Munro argued that its administration should not be “controlled and used by any one corporation or special interest group.” Instead, Munro declared, the IWA advocated a forest policy based on understandings of “multiple use.” People held diverse sets of values in relation to how forest land was to be used, and the labour movement was no exception. Many IWA members were “concerned” about issues of “outdoor recreation” and the challenges in “maintaining a high quality environment”. Nevertheless, Munro stated that in any equation where multiple approaches to the use of forest land overlapped, issues of “jobs and wages” must be given a “very high priority.” He elaborated on how high a priority these particular economic values should be given in his comments on public intervention and the influence of “special interest groups” in forest policy and land use decisions.<sup>377</sup> While proposals for resource boards made up of local community groups and representatives could be beneficial to illuminate the specific concerns and needs of specific local areas, Munro argued that such structures could be problematic. “Our fear,” he maintained, “is that control of these boards may fall into the hands of special interest groups and resulting decisions could act to the detriment of the larger community” through resulting job losses for woodworkers.<sup>378</sup> Thus, Munro argued that any public participation in resource decisions should be framed in terms of advice rather than direct influence. And it was this

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<sup>377</sup> “Commission on Forest Resources, Submission by the International Woodworkers of America,” 2.

<sup>378</sup> “Commission on Forest Resources, Submission by the International Woodworkers of America,” 10.

principle that helped differentiate Munro's versions of "multiple use" from Pritchett's calls for advisory structures based on the desire for "multiple use values." Certainly, Pritchett saw job creation as a central pillar of forest use. And yet, where Pritchett advocated for increasing popular intervention in the running of the industry through his conception of multiple use, Munro advocated something entirely different. The differences between these two understandings of public intervention were clearly spelled out in the following exchange between Pearse and Munro:

Pearse: I infer that your fear is that the management might fall into the hands of people who are not interested in timber production, in fact, may be antagonistic to logging, and might in effect end up withdrawing the forest land from timber production...[I] gather from what you say that local advisory groups should be strictly advisory or consultive and should have no decision making power.

Munro: Right. Input by the people is really what we are talking about.<sup>379</sup>

Munro's fear was that, "if every group would have had its own way, we would have had a fantastically big park about exactly the same size as the province of B.C. and absolutely no employment in the woods". It was therefore, more appropriate to create a forum where "we could sit down with you know, industry, union, government and local people, sit down in a community and talk about what is bothering the community or what would they like to see but we don't think that the decision on how to manage the forest should be left with the community of people, it should still be a management decision, and as I say, have some input."<sup>380</sup> By arguing for an approach to land use primarily focused on the economic value of the forest and where intervention in the industry by public groups

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<sup>379</sup> BCA, Royal Commission on Forest Resources (Pearse Commission), GR0347, Proceedings, Box 28, File 2, "Submission by IWA (Jack Munroe) to the Royal Commission on Forest Resources," 9052.

<sup>380</sup> Proceedings, "Submission by the International Woodworkers of America," 9075.

was to be institutionally regulated to subvert the potential for competing versions of land use, Munro betrayed a particularly “hierarchical” conception of “multiple use.”<sup>381</sup>

Originating in the 1930s, the term “multiple use” has been described as a contested term by scholars such as Rajala, with a meaning that is never fully consistent.<sup>382</sup> As Harold Pritchett’s submission to Sloan in 1945 illustrates, the IWA of that time was keen to promote “multiple use values” as a means to advance the roles that the public and labour played in the administration and management of forest resources. Like concepts of sustained yield, however, perceptions and understandings of multiple use are best understood as fluid concepts with meanings contingent upon the individuals and organizations who employ them. As Rajala has argued, forestry professionals and operators developed a “hierarchical” understanding of multiple use firmly situated in their faith in sustained yield and based on the assumption that the rights to harvest timber “ranked above all other uses in priority.” In contrast to these definitions, conservationists contesting the inherent dominance afforded to the forest industry put forward a competing formulation of multiple use, upholding equality among users.<sup>383</sup>

Munro, it is clear, supported a definition that leaned toward a hierarchical understanding of the term, consistent with industry/Forest Service constructions of multiple use. In supporting land use policies that stressed the primacy of industrial forestry, Munro’s arguments reflect how the IWA fit into what Wilson describes as the “exploitation axis” of B.C. forestry, involving the three principal groups concerned in the exploitation of the resource: capital, labour, and the state. While there is never complete

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<sup>381</sup> See Rajala, “Clearcutting, Multiple Use, and the Politics of Salmon Habitat in British Columbia, 1945-1970.” 10.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

harmony among these three groups, they maintain a basic consensus in support of the chief concerns of each participant, agreeing “on what priority should be given to the conservation problem, on what broad assumptions should guide the response to it, and on what perspective should be excluded from serious consideration.”<sup>384</sup> This argument has much in common with broader descriptions of post-war industrial relations where, in exchange for “industrial legality” and higher standards of living, unions such as the IWA narrowed the scope of their activism.<sup>385</sup> This narrowing, Simon observes, was accomplished by the purging of the communist radicals and the entrenchment of a more conservative union hierarchy, signaling a “new era of cooperation” between the union and industry. The IWA thus, “accepted the existing social relations of production and supported the concentration of cutting rights into the hands of a few large corporations as they were thought to provide both greater job security and better working conditions than smaller logging and milling operations,” Simon explains, cementing its position within the axis of exploitation.<sup>386</sup> In its attempts to retain and promote employment, the union would support industry in its attempts to gain further timber resources, while at the same time joining in on company-led attacks against the environmental movement.<sup>387</sup> As his comments to Pease suggest, Munro did indeed support the existing social relations of production for exactly the reasons Simon gives, and is quite blunt in his antipathy towards the environmental movement.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Wilson, “Forest Conservation in British Columbia, 1935-1985,” 6-7.

<sup>385</sup> Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 155.

<sup>386</sup> Simon, “A Comparative Historical Explanation of the Environmental Policies of Two Woodworkers’ Unions in Canada,” 295.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>388</sup> Jack Munroe and Jane O’Hara, *Union Jack: Labour Leader Jack Munroe* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988), 206-209. The cozy relationship to industry is perhaps best summarized in Munro’s own biography. Apparently without any sense of irony, his co-author wrote that Munro was listed in a January edition of *B.C. Business* magazine as “one of the province’s 10 top business leaders alongside notables

These perceptions were all the more important in light of the NDP government's decision to impose a moratorium on logging and road building in the Tsitika-Schoen in 1973.<sup>389</sup> Stretching from its inland sources, the Tsitika River meanders twenty four miles through its valley before forming an estuary at the edge of Johnston Strait where large populations of killer whales (orca) congregate in order to rub their bodies along underwater gravel beaches. The Tsitika is a rugged, 125,000 acre watershed, with the river running in between steep mountain sides that reach up to over five thousand feet above sea level. Comprised of a diverse group of ecological areas, the watershed ranges from treeless alpine peaks and tundra and forested mountain sides, to lush valley bottoms and river beds with a collection of various types of salt marches, fens, swamps and bogs. Rare groupings of elk, wolverine, wolf and marmot, as well as populations of black bear, cougar, deer, various bird species, and all of the major Pacific salmon species add to the great diversity of the watershed. Ten major tree species are also found in different places within the watershed, nurtured by up to one hundred inches of annual rainfall in the lower sections of the valley.<sup>390</sup>

Another way to describe the general area would be to draw on the writings of Sierra Club activist Ric Careless. In 1972, freshly invigorated from his work advocating for protection of the Nitinat Triangle on south-west Vancouver Island, Careless flew in a small twin engine plane over the neighboring Schoen valley:

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such as Premier Bill Bennett [and] Cal Knudsen, president of MacMillan Bloedel". See Munroe and O'Hara, *Union Jack*, 118.

<sup>389</sup> Commission on Forest Resources, "Submission by the International Woodworkers of America," 3.

<sup>390</sup> B.C. Fish and Wildlife Branch, "Wildlife and Fisheries in the Tsitika Watershed," 1-7; 14-15; D. Romer "Botanical Description of the Tsitika River Watershed," (no page numbers provided, see Appendix B). Both reports were compiled in North Island Study Group eds., *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Vol. II, Appendices Prepared for Environmental and Land-Use Secretariat* (Victoria: Environment and Land Use Committee, 1975). See also North Island Study Group eds., *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Vol. I, Technical Report* (Victoria: Environment and Land Use Committee, 1975); *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report* (Victoria: Environment and Land Use Committee, 1975).

Shortly after we entered Schoen country, we crossed a long, deep lake edged by fine trees. An untouched beach defined the far end, while above the grand, snow-crested peak of Mount Schoen looked on. Below, a chain of golden meadows came into view. A small stream wandered through them and into Nisnac lake, a shimmering jewel.

All around the meadows the firs stood tall, straight, and broad. They marched across the valley floor and without hesitation climbed the steep, surrounding cliffs. Here and there showy waterfalls danced down the long rock walls. My airborne entrance into the Schoen was love at first sight. The drama of this inland island sanctuary was enthralling.<sup>391</sup>

It was a combination of this ecological diversity and the beauty of the “untouched” area that helped to stimulate the interest by environmentalists and conservationists. According to Careless, very soon after his 1972 flight, the Sierra Club joined a growing group of allies who wanted to see the area protected, including the Federation of B.C. Naturalists and the Steelhead Society. Careless maintains that it was the Vancouver Island Wildlife Federation and its president Ed Mankelow that filled the most important function in this growing coalition. Mankelow had crafted an increased conservationist ethic within the Wildlife Federation, and the organization had been a strong supporter for the protection of the Nitinat Triangle. Mankelow, a sawfiler in a MacMillan Bloedel lumber mill, was not the only woodworker in those early years attracted to the idea of protecting the Tsitika.<sup>392</sup> Several fallers from MacMillan-Bloedel’s Kelsey Bay Division assigned to work in the area became “covert allies” in the campaign, offering important information regarding company logging plans.<sup>393</sup>

Parallel to the investigations being undertaken by Careless and his colleagues, Ian Smith, a regional wildlife biologist, submitted a proposal to place a moratorium on

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<sup>391</sup> Ric Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth: Field Notes from the Environmental Front Line* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1997), 37.

<sup>392</sup> Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth*, 41; Sawfiler: a worker who maintains the saws in a sawmill.

<sup>393</sup> Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth*, 41-42.

development in this, the last major undeveloped watershed on the east coast of the Island. Smith proposed designating the area an ecological reserve in accordance with the Social Credit government's 1971 Ecological Reserves Act, allowing preservation of samples of different "biogeoclimatic" areas in the province.<sup>394</sup> Careless and Mankelow quickly embraced Smith's idea, and in February of 1973, the Tsitika-Schoen Committee, made up of the B.C. Wildlife Federation, the Sierra Club, the Steelhead Society, the Federation of B.C. Naturalists and the Comox chapter of SPEC, asked NDP Resources Minister Bob Williams to impose a 250,000 acre moratorium until the area could be studied thoroughly.<sup>395</sup> Later in the month, the government responded by granting a two-year moratorium on logging and road building on the Tsitika watershed, the area around Schoen Lake, and a large section of surrounding territory that plunged south-east into the interior of the Island butting up against the border of Strathcona Park.<sup>396</sup> This area, comprising 310,000 acres, transgressed three Tree Farm Licenses: TFL 37 held by Canadian Forest Products, TFL 39 held by MacMillan Bloedel, and a small area of TFL 25 held by ITT Rayonier. In addition to the moratorium the Environment and Land Use Committee initiated a North Island Study Group, which submitted a 1975 proposal to the ELUC's Secretariat under the coordination of ex-B.C. Wildlife Federation board member Howard Paish.<sup>397</sup>

Although the moratorium signified the expanding influence of a diverse group of social actors who questioned and resisted what they saw as the unrestrained industrial

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<sup>394</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 131; 105.

<sup>395</sup> Nate Smith, "'Save Tsitika'—ecologists plea," *Vancouver Province*, 12 February 1973.

<sup>396</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 138; "Tsitika-Schoen Moratorium-Area" (Map) in North Island Study Group, *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*. No page number provided, the map is located at the end of the volume.

<sup>397</sup> See North Island Study Group, *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*, 1; *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Technical Report*, 2.

development of B.C.'s forests, it also represented changes taking place within NDP. As Wilson has noted, with Williams' appointment to the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, a number of new approaches to land use development began to form, reflecting the Minister's desire to foster cross-departmentalization and innovation. Although eventually squashed by industry opposition, the Forest Service developed a series of planning guidelines aimed at creating a standardized approach to clearcuts and road construction. It also created a "Resource Folio Planning System" that consisted of evaluating possible conflicts in a given area by overlapping a series of maps, with each one representing a different collection of resource values. There were also movements towards creating "'environmental protection forests'" in areas where the government was concerned about conflict between industrial forestry projects and ecological and recreational values.<sup>398</sup> The move towards creating more multi-faceted approaches to land use planning was also pushed by the NDP's Secretariat, staffed with personnel that were exuberant, forward-thinking, and willing to challenge orthodox conventions.<sup>399</sup> The decision to place a moratorium on the Tsitika-Schoen and to set up specific planning structures reflected these changing conceptions and approaches undertaken by the NDP, Williams, and his cadre of bureaucrats and civil servants.

Paish's North Island Study Group report also represented an opportunity to create systems of land use that challenged the traditional, forestry-centered policies of multiple use. Policies that set out the normal goal of monopolizing land for industrial use formed the basis of Option A, whereas the complete preservation of the 310,000 acres was set out

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<sup>398</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 120. For a discussion on the NDP's cutting guidelines, see Richard Rajala, "Forests and Fish: The 1972 Coast Logging Guidelines and British Columbia's First NDP Government," (Forthcoming) *B.C. Studies*.

<sup>399</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 118-119.

as Option B. Paish recommended discarding both of these “extreme” opinions. This left Option C and Option D which had two shared principles, involving a 24,500 acre park around Schoen Lake and release of the remaining 160,000 acres in the “Schoen area” to industrial forestry purposes.<sup>400</sup> The differences in the two options were as follows. Option C, which was described in the report as “Preservation with Purpose,” was to be based on the total preservation of the 120,000 acre Tsitika watershed in its natural condition for research as a “benchmark” against which forest practices in other areas could be measured. In fulfilling this important research role, the Tsitika would exist as a “museum specimen and reference library of natural processes.”<sup>401</sup> Option D was also designed to produce knowledge, but as a “Living Research Laboratory,” it would be organized using more active approaches. Whereas Option C preserved the entire watershed, Option D advocated a “major baseline inventory” of the flora and fauna in the area in order to create a number of smaller benchmark areas. Industrial forestry would then be undertaken in the remaining sections of the watershed “under strict control” as part of an “applied” and “alternative” research area. In pointing out the benefits of this option, the report argued that the watershed offered an

excellent opportunity to explore means whereby resource management tradeoffs and compromises can be made consciously, rather than as a series of patch-up solutions forced by confrontation. It presents an opportunity to research and pioneer resource management methods, starting from scratch in an undisturbed ecosystem, and perhaps the most important product of such an operation would be the training of a generation of resource managers concerned with the management of the total timberland resource, rather than management of isolated facets of it.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*, 2; 29-31.

<sup>401</sup> *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*, 29-31.

<sup>402</sup> *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*, 35.

Paish argued that it was critical that there be an extension of the moratorium for a *minimum* of five years in order to identify key benchmark areas and to allow for a complete cycle of salmon populations to be studied.<sup>403</sup>

These options were released to the public in February of 1975. During the following month, the Secretariat held four public meetings in Port McNeil, Sayward, Campbell River and Nanaimo prior to a final analysis of both the report and the public's participation. In addition to reflecting a particular shift towards what Wilson has called "issue specific advisory structures" based on the stated goals of the Williams and the ELUC Secretariat, the public meetings offer an important setting for the expression of a popular and diverse set of opinions on resource use. This was particularly true in the case of those who prepared presentations based on their direct experiences working in the forest industry, a sample of which has been drawn from the Campbell River meetings.

Reflecting Munro's antipathy towards the moratorium, Lorne Scott, president of Courtenay's IWA local 1-363, criticized the report's lack of attention to working people. He was blunt in his criticisms of preservationists, polemically labeling them "emotional" and child-like. Yet he also deplored what he saw as the "rape" of the forest and called for "economy and ecology" to work together.<sup>404</sup> Fellow IWA member R. Hopten was also concerned about making further connections between woodworkers and ecological protection. Dismayed by the popular perception of loggers as being concerned only with falling trees, Hopten maintained that in spending their "working lives in the forest," they were "extremely sensitive to their natural surroundings." This position led Hopten to the idealized notion that "their practical experience rejects any misuse or damage to forest or

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<sup>403</sup> *Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Summary Report*, 36.

<sup>404</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study, Vol. 3* (Victoria: Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, 1975) 128-29.

stream.” He used the example of the Pollution Control Committee at his camp (Eve River), which provided information to the government leading to a \$2,500 dollar fine against MacMillan Bloedel for environmental damages, presumably under the Federal Fisheries Act. A successful plan, Hopten went on to argue, would need to include workers in “all stages of planning, decision making and action.”<sup>405</sup>

These expressions of a rural working-class relationship with the environment reflect an important contradiction. Many people experience a deep emotional or cultural connection to perceptions of nature. At the same time, however, the lives of these individuals are sustained only by an appropriation of nature that challenges the very notions and idealized representations they have come to cherish. This conflicting position creates what Thomas Dunk calls “living in and against nature,” a condition that resource workers experience at a profoundly personal level, since they, more than many other members of their societies, are involved on a day-to-day basis in the appropriation and transformation of nature.<sup>406</sup> Dunk’s findings, drawn from a study of Ontario woodworkers during the early 1990s, illustrate the complicated and complex relationship that many of these workers held in relation to the forest. Many of Dunk’s subjects were highly critical of the environmental consequences of herbicide use and clearcutting.<sup>407</sup> At the same time, many of these same individuals had “no use” for environmentalists, seeing them as outsiders whose urban upbringing made them ignorant of life in the areas they were often concerned about.<sup>408</sup> Similar themes are reflected in both Hopten’s call for recognition of the power and significance of a working-class-centered view of

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<sup>405</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study*, 34-36.

<sup>406</sup> Thomas Dunk, “Talking about trees: Environment and society in forest workers’ culture,” *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 31, no. 1 (February 1994), 22.

<sup>407</sup> Dunk, “Talking about trees,” 21.

<sup>408</sup> Dunk, “Talking about trees,” 24-25.

environmental protection, as well as in Scott's condemnation of the "childlike" character of the preservationists. Complexity, rather than uniformity, characterized these workers' contributions to the Tsitika debate. They were also not the only woodworkers to have something to add to this varied understanding of environmental change.

Despite the high levels of interest evoked in various communities by the Tsitika debate the Communist Party made no formal submission at any of the public hearings. Likewise, the *Pacific Tribune* produced no articles on Tsitika-Schoen between 1972 and 1977, and there is, so far, no evidence of Erni Knott's participation in the debate during its early phase from 1972-1976. Communists, however, were not totally absent from the hearings. As a logger of thirty years, an IWA member, and a local organizer for the Communist Party, Nick Chernoff made an in-depth and passionate submission at the Campbell River meeting, not as a CPC member, but rather as a representative of the Environmental Committee of the Campbell River and Courtenay Labour Council. Chernoff organized his presentation around his own personal experiences as a logger in order to address specific logging techniques. Arguing in favor of Option C or D, Chernoff stressed that any meaningful plan to balance jobs with ecology in the Tsitika needed to focus on the methods of logging. Of particular concern to Chernoff was the practice of slash burning. "Do you know what the effects of that burning of the slash means?" he asked his fellow attendees.

It means that you destroy the moss that is up there on the rocks; it means that you destroy the fibre, and as a result of this the water comes down and it runs away very quickly and there is nothing to hold it up on the sidehill (Applause). Now, I can't tell you how much water it holds or it doesn't hold, but I don't need very much of a study to say that this is the rape of mother nature with a vengeance.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study*, 155-157.

In highlighting the importance of local forms of on-the-job knowledge, Chernoff argued, as had Hopten, that workers were an essential resource in land use decisions. But Chernoff also took his analysis further than his fellow IWAer, observing that, while the companies weren't "necessarily bad people," any decision made by a foreman or manager was likely to be made on economic, rather than ecological, grounds. The "policing" of land use plans could not be left up to the companies. Instead, it was necessary to go to those "outside" these elites and invest this power within the "workers who work there."<sup>410</sup>

In addition to these considerations, Chernoff also argued that there should be a discussion of the TFL system and a recognition that the current levels of job loss were a market issue, rather than something that could be attributed to the moratorium. Flipping around Scott's arguments, Chernoff urged that the issue of job losses not create an "emotional pitch" where "we forget about everything else." Having been unemployed at that time for three months, he was well qualified to speak on the matter, and later used the opportunity to question the long term viability of the industry. Responding to another logger's submission that painted a rosier employment picture, he argued that "at the rate that we are logging today, at our age him and I may be logging but I doubt whether our kids and our grandkids will be. I doubt it."<sup>411</sup> It was an ominous prediction of the years to come, one that Ed Mankelow shared in his submission to the committee on behalf of the B.C. Wildlife Federation.

Starting off his presentation with a quip that drew loud applause, Mankelow stated that, in addition to death and taxes, there were two things that were assured in life:

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<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study*, 162.

“one is that logging companies always seem to be going broke just before contract negotiations, and the other is that they always seem to be concerned about their employees when we come up against an issue like this.” Mankelow too, was idle due to the “massive” layoffs currently affecting the industry. “They didn’t care about my job there,” he proclaimed accusingly. “So don’t let’s make any bones about it. If they could get those trees out in a wheelbarrow without using you, they would.”<sup>412</sup> Given the rate of harvesting, Mankelow doubted that the remaining timber would last even fifty years. Emphasizing his sixteen years as an IWAer and his decade as a conservationist, Mankelow argued for the full protection of the watershed in Option C, or, if Option D was necessary, that the moratorium be extended and the issue reviewed at a later date.<sup>413</sup> In various ways, Scott, Hopten, Chernoff, and Mankelow all called for an approach to forestry aimed at creating a balance between their jobs and the environment. Most radical of all were arguments made by Hopten and Chernoff, who used their connection to the land to illustrate their suitability to help “police” the forest.

In his report to the Secretariat on the Paish report and the public meetings, O.R. Travers clearly expressed his preference for the comments and the opinions made by loggers during the public meetings. For it was loggers who, in his opinion, “seemed to have the best overall grasp of the total issues...They knew the problems best, both from the impact of past timber allocations, had personal knowledge of the effects of existing logging practices, and had a feel for the benefits of the forest environment—from logging to wilderness recreation. They, from a personal viewpoint, had the most to gain or lose

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<sup>412</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study*, 107.

<sup>413</sup> North Island Study Group, *Public Meeting into the Tsitika-Schoen Resources Study*, 112.

and were in the author's opinion, the most objective."<sup>414</sup> To emphasize his point, Travers reproduced part of a presentation given at the Campbell River meeting by R. McIvor, a local woodworker:

I have been connected with the forestry industry in B.C. for the last thirty years. I grew up in a logging community that had a life of about fifty years and it reached the end of its usefulness....this business of the pulp and paper Industry....of having to be able to guarantee so many jobs. It hasn't been doing too well lately....so don't really count on them. I am really amazed that in 1975 they are using this big stick threat type method, you know, getting up here and saying how many jobs are going to be destroyed. Talk about gloom and doom, eh....So I would say, look fellows, instead of keeping this sad picture why not say, look, here we are, there is a need for development like this park area, there is also need of an Ecological Reserve, and let's figure out how we can do something about that. Let's use our ingenuity to figure that out. Let's say to the guys that are working 'look, don't worry about your job fellows, we are going to take care of this, and we will see to it that there is something for you to do.<sup>415</sup>

With Wilson's comments on the function and role of the ELUC Secretariat in mind, it is no wonder that Travers was fond of McIvor's summary of the issue. For in stressing the need for "ingenuity," problem solving, and a fresh approach to land use, he encapsulated many of the perceived goals and values that Williams had hoped to install into the Secretariat.<sup>416</sup>

After reviewing the Paish report and the submissions at the public meetings, Travers concluded that some form of Option C or D was most desirable and he suggested that the Tsitika watershed, Schoen Lake, and some smaller additional areas, be set aside. The remaining area of the moratorium could be "conditionally" released pending Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Branch approval. He also suggested that a local biologist

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<sup>414</sup> O.R. Travers, *Tsitika-Schoen Evaluation: A Review of the Issue, and a Clarification of an Optimal Course of Action* (Victoria: Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat, 1975), 40.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>416</sup> See Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 117-119.

and forester be appointed to assist in the process of monitoring the area.<sup>417</sup> Central to the viability of these plans was Travers' suggestion that the moratorium be extended. This would have two main purposes. First, it would enable a further study of the area, something that he felt had been done in a "somewhat ad hoc and superficial" manner.<sup>418</sup> Second, while legal opinions would be needed, Travers speculated that extension of the moratorium beyond the TFL renewal dates of 1979 and 1983 would eliminate any need for compensation to the companies for losses in their license areas. For Travers, the fact that the "Allowable Annual Cuts in T.F.L.'s had increased three times since the date of signing" prompted an important question: "Is compensation really necessary?"<sup>419</sup> Any answer to this question, and indeed other basic questions regarding the Tsitika-Schoen, had to be placed into a broader context which Travers engaged by stating unequivocally that past TFL management policies had shown that the "prime beneficiary" was the license holder; resource supply had taken precedence over the creation of a fair and competitive market and other "public benefits." Moreover, any costs incurred by industry had been covered by reductions in stumpage fees under TFL regulations that compensated license holders for road and forestry expenses. In this context, the question of whether land had been properly managed was a redundant one. "If it had," Travers asked rhetorically, "would there be a Tsitika-Schoen issue?"<sup>420</sup>

In response to Paish's report, the public's interventions, and Travers' analyses, the ELUC released 75,000 acres from the moratorium while reserving the remaining area for further study. While these proposals do not appear to conform exactly to Travers'

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<sup>417</sup> Travers, *Tsitika-Schoen Evaluation*, 57-59.

<sup>418</sup> Travers, *Tsitika-Schoen Evaluation*, 51.

<sup>419</sup> Travers, *Tsitika-Schoen Evaluation*, 59.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

recommendations, they nevertheless illustrate, in Wilson's estimation, a "loose endorsement" of the Secretariat's proposal.<sup>421</sup> Concrete policy decisions aside, this period of the Tsitika-Schoen controversy represented an important setting for an expanding debate over the nature, meaning, and form of land use in areas traditionally monopolized by hierarchical notions of multiple-use, sustained yield, and the economic values of industrial forestry. At the same time, it also provided important opportunities to articulate a diverse set of understandings between the role of woodworkers and their relationship to the politics of environmental change. But the potential for these forms of debate to translate into actual policy frameworks that might have challenged a forestry-centered approach to multiple use, were dashed on the rocks of the NDP's defeat in December of 1975.

As Wilson has noted, Bill Bennett's new Social Credit government responded to these conditions in a number of ways. Central to these responses was the goal of containing the environmental challenge. Resisting "single use" ideas of preservationism was of particular importance, and a major pillar in this project was reinvesting power and authority into the Ministry of Forests (MOF) in order to create and legitimate "narrow, MOF-dominated systems of integrated resource management and land use planning."<sup>422</sup> To facilitate this, the MOF tried to subvert the influence of other departments. Closely related to this tactic of "narrowing" was the creation of "symbolic measures" aimed at restoring public confidence in government-defined notions of sustained yield, involving public displays of "integrated resource management" and "public participation."<sup>423</sup> Since land use issues in the Tsitika-Schoen remained unresolved when the Socreds returned to

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<sup>421</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 138-139.

<sup>422</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 150.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

power in 1975, the area was subjected to this approach to resource use and containment politics.

Beginning in January 1976, under the leadership of newly-appointed Minister of Forests Tom Waterland, along with industry representatives, the MOF reconfigured and manipulated the terms of reference and planning principles surrounding land use in the Tsitika. Through planning processes and particular conceptions of public “participation,” they attempted to block or forestall any opposition to the goals of a refurbished MOF-industry compact where the values of free enterprise and industrial forestry dominated policy decisions. Wilson notes that the challenges faced by the Fish and Wildlife Branch and the Secretariat reflect this shift towards greater MOF authority. After a series of government and public inquiries into the Fish and Wildlife Branch’s alleged mismanagement and incompetence, funding to the organization was cut back. In 1978, the Branch was transferred into the Ministry of Environment, producing cries of disappointment from the B.C. Wildlife Federation. Given the Secretariat’s close association to the NDP regime and policies that emphasized interagency-planning, it too was eventually targeted by the Social Credit government. The final nail in the Secretariat’s coffin was not hammered in until 1980, when its advisory functions were transferred to a group of deputy ministers. Nevertheless, changes were felt soon after the Social Credit return to power, as the government shifted bureaucratic authority away from the Secretariat and reinvested it into the MOF and the Ministry for Economic Development.<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 155-156. For a broader illustration of how and where government ministries were reorganized, see Dorsey, “The Management of Super, Natural British Columbia,” 19-25.

Throughout 1977 and 1978, the Tsitika-Schoen controversy reflected this shift towards a more hierarchical approach to land use and the growing power of the MOF. In a January 1977 memo, the Secretariat's new acting director Denis O'Gorman summarized to Tom Waterland a series of decisions that the ELUC had made in reference to the Tsitika-Schoen area. The ELUC favoured creating a park at Schoen Lake as well as adding Gold Lake to Strathcona Park, and advised that the MOF ought to be included in the Parks department's plans. While O'Gorman reiterated that Option D of the Paish report was a feasible option, he made clear that any future plans to implement some form of that option would be "the prime responsibility of the Forest Service, but with the Fish and Wildlife Branch executing much of the research."<sup>425</sup> Whatever decisions were made, O'Gorman stated that any Tsitika-Schoen decision would have profound effects for land use management across Vancouver Island. As such, he reiterated the Secretariat's opinion for an extended moratorium in order to better understand the area, after which "plans for multiple use could then be fully considered and, where appropriate, implemented."<sup>426</sup>

Despite the Secretariat's continued desire to have an extended moratorium for research purposes, the Social Credit government was actively working to subvert the recommendations of the Paish report. In a belated response to Denis O'Gorman's promotion to head the Secretariat, Howard Paish sent the new director a cryptic letter emphasizing his "increasing cynicism." No doubt bemoaning the inter-agency power struggles that were taking place in the wake of Social Credit's return, Paish stated that he was unsure "whether to congratulate anyone who is elevated in any bureaucracy-

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<sup>425</sup> BCA, Environment and Land Use Committee Files (Hereafter ELUC), GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1977), Denis K. O'Gorman to the Honorable T. Waterland, 6 January 1977. As of April 2008 these files had not been thoroughly cataloged and therefore had not been assigned file numbers.]

<sup>426</sup> Denis K. O'Gorman to Honorable T. Waterland, 6 January 1977.

governmental or otherwise.” Alluding to the Tsitika, he confided in O’Gorman that “one can fight red tape just so long before deciding not to get completely strangled by it. It’s rather pointless to try to continue when something you have loved has gone completely sour.”<sup>427</sup> A much more frank expression of this disappointment was evident in a letter sent the following month to D.J. Robinson, the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Branch, from J. Pojar of the Ecological Reserves Unit. Pojar wrote:

As you know, it has recently become evident that the Tsitika River ecological reserve proposal (No.111) is unacceptable in its original form to the Environment and Land Use Committee. The original intention, which was to preserve a major untouched watershed with opportunities to study Roosevelt elk, deer, wolf, cougar, the fishery, and vegetation inter alia, has been (unofficially) thwarted. We are left with the option of trying to salvage smaller key areas, largely forgoing the productive, alienated, valley-bottom forests.<sup>428</sup>

Clearly, then, it was quickly evident to those within various areas of the new Social Credit government that the hope of an effective “Living Laboratory,” let alone the more extensive preservationist approach of Option C, was on its way out. This position was reiterated quite clearly in a memo from O’Gorman to the ELUC in May, in which he summarized a set of directives the ELUC had given to the Secretariat on 2 February, 1977. While these directives committed, in principle, to the creation of parks at Gold Lake and Schoen Lake, the ELUC was “not in favor” of the research aspect of Option D. Instead, it stated that the ELUC would “consider smaller ecological reserve and/or wildlife reserve proposals within the context of an integrated resources management

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<sup>427</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1977), Howard Paish to Denis K. O’Gorman, 24 January 1977.

<sup>428</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1977), J. Pojar to D.J. Robinson, 21 February 1977.

plan.”<sup>429</sup> Not only were the long term studies that Paish and Travers argued in favor of nullified, but the ELUC also carefully stated that any new plans were to be contextualized by “integrated” forms of resource management.

As noted above, the push for “integrated use” was a growing part of the “narrowing” of Social Credit resource policy since their return to power in 1975.<sup>430</sup> As Gordon Hak argues, the discursive shift to “integrated use” was rooted in the effort to discourage any misconceptions embodied in the equality-related assumptions of multiple use. In this context, “integrated use” symbolized that an area may have many potential values and uses, but that there would be a clearly “dominant” position and use.<sup>431</sup> As Rajala has shown, this shift gathered momentum after 1969 when, in response to perceived threats from environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club and SPEC, “government and industry elites...respond with the ‘old-time religion,’ stepping up the multiple use campaign, at times opting for a new term – “integrated use” – that re-emphasized the forest industry’s place atop the hierarchy of allocation and planning.”<sup>432</sup> This was certainly the case in the context of the Tsitika-Schoen process, where the development of an integrated resource management proposal legitimated, rather than challenged, the forest industry’s dominant position within the planning process.

The push for an industry-driven integrated resource management plan continued throughout the summer of 1977. In July, a series of meetings between high-ranking government officials and company representatives resulted in a further set of guiding

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<sup>429</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Memos (1977), Denis K. O’Gorman to ELUC, 20 May 1977.

<sup>430</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 150.

<sup>431</sup> Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 179-180.

<sup>432</sup> Rajala, “Clearcutting, Multiple Use, and the Politics of Salmon Habitat in British Columbia, 1945-1970,” 56-57.

principles to contextualize and help set the terms of reference for the planning process. These participants agreed, foremost, that there would be no public announcement of their activities until the companies and the various government agencies and departments had resolved the details of the planning process. Ecological Reserves would be evaluated within the context of the total plan, requiring input by the Fish and Wildlife Branch, but it was clearly articulated who was to have the upper-hand in the planning process.<sup>433</sup> As the memo stated “the basic concept is that the Companies concerned are charged with the responsibility of preparing the plan, and managing the forest to that plan.” It was also emphasized that while “government agencies will develop guidelines and will have input...the plan must be approved by the Forest Service.”<sup>434</sup> Finally, it was argued that the public would need to be involved in some way. O’Gorman had argued back in May that, given the “history” of the area and the “high probability that public attention will continue to focus on the Tsitika,” it was advisable to incorporate “public input through a Forest Advisory Committee.”<sup>435</sup> Industry and government representatives agreed, with one important change in wording. Any public releases ought to “refer to a public involvement process for the integrated plan, rather than a public advisory committee, feeling that this provides more options for involvement.”<sup>436</sup>

In August 1977, industry and government representatives hammered these basic principles in to a concrete, eight-point proposal and projected time line for what became known as the Tsitika Watershed Integrated Resource Plan (TWIRP). TWIRP would be

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<sup>433</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Memos (1977), “Tsitika-Schoen Proposal: Resume of Meeting in the Offices of the Honorable T. Waterland,” 22 July 1977.

<sup>434</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1977), “Re: Tsitika/Schoen Moratorium,” 22 July 1977.

<sup>435</sup> Denis K. O’Gorman to ELUC, 20 May 1977.

<sup>436</sup> “Tsitika-Schoen Proposal: Resume of Meeting in the Offices of the Honorable T. Waterland, Friday July 22, 1977”.

the product of deliberations by a Planning Steering Committee (Planning Committee) made up of the companies involved (MacMillan Bloedel, Canadian Forest Products, Rayonier), along with a member from the Fish and Wildlife Branch, the Federal Department of Fisheries (DOF), and chaired by Ray Ostby of the Forest Service. While a press release would call for public input, the Planning Committee would also seek submissions by specific groups or individuals. “Companies and Agencies” would define the issues and terms of reference along with the “pertinent management principles” and “objectives” for the area. The plan would then be made available to the public “in advance of an ‘Information Day’ at which company and agency staff will be in attendance to discuss and interpret [the] plan being forwarded for approval.” Finally, the memo stated that given the “sensitive” nature of the Tsitika, the planning process must be made “visible.”<sup>437</sup> Therefore, while the plan called for the input of various government agencies and the public, these forms of “involvement” were to be managed by MOF-defined forms of integrated use consistent with the goals and values of the Forest Service and the companies. “Visibility”, in the final analysis, was little more than a public relations ploy that sought to grant legitimacy to the planning process rather than aid it in its investigations. After all, the terms of reference, planning processes, Planning Committee, as well as the general goals and values that were to form the basis of the plan had already been set. With these pressures building, along with calls by the IWA for the

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<sup>437</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1977), W. Young to Dennis K. O’Gorman, 23 July 1977.

moratorium to be lifted, it was no longer a question of if the Tsitika watershed would be logged, it was a question of when and how much.<sup>438</sup>

After the summer planning sessions, an October public release outlined the intention for a 20,242 acre park at Schoen Lake (over three thousand acres smaller than suggested by the Parks Department), and the inclusion of 8,745 acres around Gold Lake to Strathcona Park. It also called for the removal from the moratorium on 9,334 acres around Schoen Creek, and the creation of a formal TWIRP coordinated by the B.C. Forest Service to investigate how best to engage in harvesting in the Tsitika watershed.<sup>439</sup> It was at this point in February 1978 that Erni Knott, representing the Environmental Committee of the Victoria Labour Council, Elgin (Scotty) Neish, a communist from Victoria and member of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union and Rick Orton, from the Federation of B.C. Naturalists joined members of the Sierra Club of Western Canada, the Outdoor Club of Victoria, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C., and students from Mount Douglas High School in forming the Committee to Extend the Moratorium on Logging of the Tsitika Watershed (CEM).<sup>440</sup> In the CEM, the two communists held executive positions, Neish as the organization's Chairman, and Knott as its secretary.

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<sup>438</sup> UBC-RBSC, International Woodworkers of America—Western Canadian Regional Council No. 1, HD8039.W62 C382, *Proceedings of the Annual Convention* (1976), "Tsitika-Schoen Moratorium," 485; Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 186.

<sup>439</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Resource Management Plan: Public Involvement Opportunity, Phase II* (Victoria: 1978), 1.

<sup>440</sup> British Columbia Legislative Library (Hereafter BCLL), Pamphlet, 333.75 C734, Committee to Extend the Moratorium, "Extend The Moratorium on Logging Of The Tsitika Watershed: Statement of Position by the Committee to Extend the Moratorium," 19 March 1978, 1. This three page pamphlet is attached to an additional, undated CEM pamphlet titled "Save the Tsitika Fact Sheet." It is under this latter title that the two pamphlets appear in the library's catalogue. Because both pamphlets have multiple pages which are numbered sequentially, I refer to them as separate documents even though they are physically attached and located under the same call number.

For the CEM, the Tsitika was an ecological wonderland, its ancient trees, wildlife species, and rugged landscape providing both important recreational values and a “bufferzone” against the onslaught of industrial development. All these aspects of the watershed were under attack, the CEM argued, from companies who wanted the old growth timber. This threat was made all the more real because of what the CEM called the “overcutting crisis in the forest industry.”<sup>441</sup> Advocating that the “fully mature forest...be left for future generations to come,” the CEM rejected industry’s characterization of these trees as “decadent” and “overmature.” Instead, they repeated Paish’s proposal that the Tsitika be preserved as a “point of comparison” for educational purposes.<sup>442</sup>

If logging had to take place, then the CEM was quick to point out that it would have to be “justified.” This justification would have to fulfill two requirements. First, cutting plans had to be “of an entirely new type, i.e. pro people, pro wildlife and pro environment [original emphasis].” For the CEM, “begging” for “concessions” from the logging operators did not qualify as a new type of logging. Second, any plan for the Tsitika had to take into consideration the crisis developing in the B.C. forest industry from “overcutting, improper utilization, and inadequate reforestation.”<sup>443</sup> Any program for the Tsitika that did not deal with these fundamental problems was bound to fail in the long run:

After we cut the Tsitika wood, what then? The basic problem remains. For this reason, the Committee believes that an extension of the moratorium on cutting in the Tsitika watershed could allow a reappraisal of the

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<sup>441</sup> BCLL, Pamphlet, 333.75 C734, Committee to Extend the Moratorium, “Save the Tsitika Fact Sheet,” n.d., 1.

<sup>442</sup> Committee to Extend the Moratorium, “Extend The Moratorium on Logging Of The Tsitika Watershed,” 1.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

existing situation in the woods and, perhaps, the development of a realistic long-term rate of harvest on what is left. Rushing to log the Tsitika might suit the immediate plans of the forest companies involved, but does it suit the long term interests of the people of B.C.? Does it suit the long term interests of the loggers in the woods?<sup>444</sup>

Weaving together interests based on ecology, recreation, and jobs the CEM argued that the Tsitika, distinct in its rarity, deserved preservation. At the same time, the fact that it was rare only because of wider processes of land alienation placed it into a context of environmental degradation, corporate profits, and negative long term effects for woodworkers. In its calls for cutting policies that were “pro people, pro wildlife and pro environment,” the CEM argued for planning structures based in more equitable interpretations of land use, an analysis undoubtedly influenced by Knott, who wrote a full page critique of forest policy for the *Pacific Tribune* one month after the CEM report.<sup>445</sup>

Citing high levels of overcutting, inefficient use, inadequate levels of reforestation and high levels of waste, Knott argued that the province’s forest industry was in for a “very deep” and “long term” crisis. The general economic downturn only compounded the effects of these improper logging methods. In fact, Knott speculated that the rate of cut for old growth timber might have been slowed and the moratorium on the Tsitika Watershed maintained were it not for the need to maintain falling profits. As in his other writings, Knott used an outline of the history of cutting technologies to help him make his point. Harvesting methods had become more and more sophisticated over the years, he argued, resulting in higher levels of production. Only in the post-war years did some form of reforestation measures develop, and even these were “still inadequate.” This historical process gave rise to current problems over “environmental control” in areas such as the

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ernie Knott, “Forest Conservation need ‘critical’,” *Pacific Tribune*, 15 April 1978, 3.

Tsitika, generating the primary force behind company pressure to lift the moratorium. Thus Knott maintained that lifting the moratorium would still fail to address any of the structural problems that created the initial crisis.<sup>446</sup> By placing the Tsitika in a broad historical and contemporary context highlighting the changing methods of production, Knott reflected his own personal experiences in the woods, as well as a tactical trend within the communist left to link local concerns to wider political issues.

Rather than focusing on the technical aspects of the forest industry, Scotty Neish focused much of his energy as Chairman of the CEM on criticizing the Planning Committee and TWIRP.<sup>447</sup> Neish was fortuitously situated for this task. When government officials decided, in February and March, to have representatives from labour and the public join the Planning Committee, the UFAWU selected Neish as their delegate. Labour was also represented by W. Trainer from the IWA. Just prior to Neish and Trainer's appointment, the Tsitika Conservation Committee's Ed Mankelow joined the Planning Committee in order to represent the "public."<sup>448</sup> Whatever forms of legitimacy that the Planning Committee had hoped to get out of having the UFAWU representative on board, quickly unraveled.

Not long after Neish's arrival on the Planning Committee, some embarrassing information was leaked to the public in the form of a letter written by Planning Committee chairman Ray Ostby to Denis O'Gorman, outlining approaches to the "public involvement opportunity" scheduled for June of 1978. Ostby stated that, since the basic aspects of the plan had already been approved by the various government agencies, no

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<sup>446</sup> Knott, "Forest Conservation Need 'Critical'," 3.

<sup>447</sup> "Islanders Oppose Tsitika Cut Plan," *Pacific Tribune*, 10 March 1978, 3.

<sup>448</sup> UBC-RBSC, United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union Fonds, Box 399, File 29, E. Neish, "United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union Representative's Report on the Tsitika River Integrated Resource Planning Committee," 9 June 1978, 2.

internal conflicts were anticipated. Likewise, conflicts with the public could be mitigated because the scheduled presentation would be a draft, and therefore, the Planning Committee should only look for feedback rather than “defend” a final plan in public. Ostby, then, believed there would be little “hassle” from the public process. Furthermore, the format of the meeting would be regulated to avoid any additional problems. Specifically, Ostby stated that the meeting would not be “an open forum type of discussion.” Instead, the meeting would begin with a short introduction providing a history of the issues and outline the “terms of reference” for the Planning Committee. This would then be followed by a slideshow, and, after that, “the public will have the opportunity to wander among five tables representing the various resource sectors and ask whatever questions they wish on an informal basis.” In this way, Ostby hoped to “escape a reiteration of the various opinions offered during the public hearings” of 1975. Because the possibility of awkward questions still existed, the chairman had to be able to “steer the programme back on track” in order to avoid any lingering “crunch”.<sup>449</sup>

As chairman of the CEM, Neish stated in the *Pacific Tribune* that it was “our job to see that there is a good ‘crunch’ before this plan goes ahead.”<sup>450</sup> In this capacity, the CEM did what it could to try and undermine the credibility of TWIRP. Excerpts of the leaked Ostby memo were used to justify the need for a “full exchange of views” in an open forum. In addition to promoting the contents of the Ostby letter, the CEM attempted to marginalize the effectiveness of TWIRP by revealing additional aspects of the planning process. For example, the CEM stated that the first “official” meeting of the

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<sup>449</sup> Various lengths and selections from Ostby’s letter to O’Gorman were reproduced in the Press. One of the most thorough can be found in the *Sea Otter*, see “‘Public Involvement’—B.C. Style,” *The Sea Otter*, March 1978, 19.

<sup>450</sup> “Islanders Oppose Tsitika Cut Plan,” 3.

Planning Committee was held in a Canadian Forest Products boardroom, symbolizing “the orientation and frame of reference of the Planning Committee.” The CEM also reported that while company representatives were being reimbursed for their cutting plans with public funds, public representatives such as Neish were denied expense allowances. Continuing the attack, the CEM stated that all areas set aside for wildlife habitat were limited by the stipulation that no more than one percent of the total productive land area with industrial potential would be devoted to this purpose. DOF and Fish and Wildlife Branch calls for an independent monitoring group were said to have been subverted by the Planning Committee. With members of the public not added to the Planning Committee until February and March of 1978, they were “too late to have any fundamental input into the resource plan.” Instead, their function was “to give some respectability to the proposed cutting plan for the Tsitika watershed.”<sup>451</sup> Claiming to be in possession of documentation to prove all of the above allegations, the CEM argued, as had Travers, against proceeding with development in the area given the general lack of information on key wildlife and environmental issues.<sup>452</sup> Wildlife issues alone justified an extension of the moratorium, a management task at which logging companies were utterly incompetent given their preoccupation with “cutting as much wood as possible to maximize their profits.”<sup>453</sup>

In addition to the CEM critiques, Neish outlined a general condemnation of the forestry-centered aspects of TWIRP in a report to the UFAWU. Right from the beginning of his time on the Planning Committee, Neish observed, it was clear to him that nothing

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<sup>451</sup> Committee to Extend the Moratorium, “Extend The Moratorium on Logging Of The Tsitika Watershed,” 2-3.

<sup>452</sup> Committee to Extend the Moratorium, “Extend The Moratorium on Logging Of The Tsitika Watershed,” 3.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

other than the usual “clear cut” methods would be used and that no other approaches were considered “‘economically viable.’” When Neish remarked that cost was a relative concept and then proceeded to list off the extensive commercial holdings of MacMillan Bloedel, he was “promptly told that the Committee was not prepared to go into that aspect of the question.”<sup>454</sup> As with Erni Knott, Neish’s concerns over the environmental impact of TWIRP were based on his experiences as a worker. In this case, as longtime participant in the fishing industry, he was particularly concerned with the effects of development on the Tsitika River’s salmon habitat. For example, he relayed to the union his concern over fishery implications of a proposed log dump slated for estuary. He was also concerned by the fact that the combination of clearcuts, very steep topography, and heavy annual precipitation, increased the possibility for damage to the river and salmon stocks through erosion. With this concern in mind, Neish was dismayed to see that no geological study on the extreme potential for land-slides in the Tsitika was included in the working papers of the Planning Committee. In addition, none of the maps that the Planning Committee used in their working papers had contour lines to indicate the steepness of the terrain and the potential for harmful levels of erosion. These omissions further signaled to Neish the disingenuous “integrated” use claims.<sup>455</sup>

It was these criticisms over the state and meaning of “integrated use” that the CEM members took to the public meetings that the Planning Committee had hoped would not be a “hassle” in “Phase II” of its public involvement process. “Phase I” had seen a total of six hundred brochures sent to interested individuals and groups, outlining the planning process and calling for any additional comments by the public. Copies could

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<sup>454</sup> Neish, “Representatives Report,” 3.

<sup>455</sup> Neish, “Representatives Report,” 5-6.

also be obtained at the Fish and Wildlife Branch offices or Ranger Stations in the region. Phase II of the public involvement plan included the public meetings, various visual displays of the plan in the four northern communities, as well as in Victoria and Vancouver, and a second brochure.<sup>456</sup>

This second brochure set out, among other things, the management objectives for each resource and functioned as a draft blueprint for the Planning Commission's conception of integrated use. In effect, it was the precursor to the final TWIRP report. Reflecting its "draft" status, the pamphlet was couched in ambiguous language and had little in the way of concrete targets and firm commitments. Nevertheless, it clearly emphasized the dominant role that forestry was to play in the management of the watershed. For example, after noting that clearcuts were a large factor in destroying winter habitat for deer and elk, the plan noted that future openings would be "smaller", without providing specific dimensions. Neither were some plans to conserve some winter habitat areas for "a number of years" detailed.<sup>457</sup> Likewise, plans to manage the fisheries in the Tsitika highlighted "minimizing" the impact of forestry development, although they made no mention of what that meant or how it would be done. Perhaps the most telling example of the integrated use approach was the Phase II brochure's description of the proposed ecological reserves. They included bog land, a few lakes, one alpine mountain top, a narrow corridor stretching between the Tsitika River and an adjacent lake, and one example of a "highly productive forest ecosystem."<sup>458</sup> In addition, there

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<sup>456</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Watershed Integrated Resource Plan, Vol. II* (Victoria: October 1978), 16.

<sup>457</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Resource Management Plan: Public Involvement Opportunity, Phase II*, 5.

<sup>458</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Resource Management Plan: Public Involvement Opportunity, Phase II*, 6-7.

was the matter of the estuary which had been designated as a possible ecological reserve. However, the viability of this proposal was complicated by the fact that the same spot was also being proposed for MacMillan Bloedel's log dump.<sup>459</sup> Thus with few exceptions, all of the ecological reserves were set up in areas that had limited productive forestry value. Armed with these accusations, CEM members attended the public meetings held at the end of June.

In a sense, however, the legacy of the Social Credit government's desire to limit the participatory process continues to this day because any ability to try and probe the experience of those meetings is dramatically hindered because no transcripts appear to have been made. As Ostby's leaked comments to O'Gorman stated, the meetings were not intended to encourage meaningful public input. The public's comments were to be made on an "informal" basis, and as such, one can suppose that the lack of formal documentary procedures reflected the more informal approach to the public's participation with TWIRP. Fortunately, Eric Karlsen of the ELUC Secretariat and the appointed Chairman for the meetings kept notes, which have been preserved. While Karlsen's comments do not reflect the presence of Erni Knott, they do show that Bob Nixon of the Sierra Club, Scotty Neish, and Rick Orton, all members of the CEM, were present at various meetings. From Karlsen's interpretation we are robbed of the stirring and nuanced speeches that came during the 1975 public meetings. Nevertheless, the notes do illustrate a continued attempt by the CEM to criticize the Planning Committee and TWIRP from a variety of perspectives. For example, the Sierra Club's Bob Nixon re-emphasized that the moratorium should be extended, supporting the creation of policies

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<sup>459</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Resource Management Plan: Public Involvement Opportunity, Phase II*, 9.

based on people, wildlife, and the environment in order to shift logging away from methods relying on clearcutting.<sup>460</sup> Orton argued that the area should remain un-logged, but that if logging had to proceed, that it should be done in a different manner with development conforming to the needs of animals and the environment, rather than the other way around.<sup>461</sup> For his part, Neish questioned the lack of information that was available on wildlife issues as well as the proposal made by MacMillan Bloedel to place a log dump in the Tsitika River estuary. He also voiced further concerns about the geological conditions in the Tsitika, arguing that the rugged terrain would mean high risk of landslides when the timber was removed.<sup>462</sup> The meeting also drew past participants from the 1975 public hearings, including IWA-communist Nick Chernoff who expressed disappointment in his union for supporting the plan. In relation to the arguments that he had made in 1975, Chernoff argued that as long as traditional clearcutting took place, it would be impossible to protect the Tsitika.<sup>463</sup> Not all IWAers, however, were as critical. Lorne Scott, another participant from the 1975 meetings, argued that as long as the end result took workers into consideration he would support TWIRP.<sup>464</sup>

A few accounts of the tone of meetings were also preserved in the press. For example, a *Daily Colonist* article described the situation as relatively bleak for Neish and Ed Mankelow, the only two vocal opponents who opposed TWIRP at the Port McNeil

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<sup>460</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1978), Nanaimo Meeting, 19 June 1978.

<sup>461</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1978), Campbell River Meeting, 20 June 1978.

<sup>462</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 46, Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1978), Sayward Meeting, June 20 1978.

<sup>463</sup> Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1978), Campbell River Meeting.

<sup>464</sup> Tsitika-Schoen: Correspondence (1978), Nanaimo Meeting. In their history of the IWA, Parnaby and Neufeld argue that local 1-363 was an “important player” in “several government-sponsored bodies charged with investigating and managing” the Tsitika. However, the domineering role that the MOF played in organizing TWIRP and the tokenism through which it approached the public participation aspect, provides some evidence to counter these claims. See Parnaby and Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada*, 93.

meeting.<sup>465</sup> A profound sense of disappointment was also evident among Tsitika supporters at the Campbell River Meeting. The Campbell River Environmental Council had hoped that the meeting might be able to “reconcile” the differences between competing land use issues, but were instead faced with “the same old destructive methods of logging that we have suffered for too long in B.C.”<sup>466</sup> The attendees at the Campbell River forum also expressed concerns voiced over the log dump planned for the estuary, siltation due to clearcutting, and the lack of any guarantees over the creation of the *proposed* ecological reserves and winter habitat ranges. Reiterating his criticism of the entire planning process, Neish argued that TWIRP was not an “integrated plan, but a forestry plan.” To further emphasize his disgust and to illustrate his disassociation with TWIRP, Neish refused to sit with his fellow Planning Committee members during the meeting.<sup>467</sup> Even through the pages of the *Courier*, the bitterness was palpable.

Knott’s voice remains silent during the public meetings, either because his comments were not recorded, or because he was absent. Nevertheless, he continued to be active through his role in the CEM and in his work with the Environmental Committee of the Victoria Labour Council (VLC). In March, Knott gave a report to the VLC on the pressing issues in the forest industry, which he said “needed public discussion” rather than being left to “so-called experts.” The Tsitika controversy figured prominently in his remarks and his desire to provoke public discussions of forestry issues was also reflected in his efforts to use his position on the VLC’s Environmental Committee to lobby the

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<sup>465</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 47, Press Clippings, “Where were all the defenders of the Tsitika?”, *Victoria Daily Colonist*, July 1978.

<sup>466</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 47, Press Clippings, “Environmental Council Urges Action,” *Campbell River Mirror*, 5 July 1978, 2C.

<sup>467</sup> BCA, ELUC files, GR1002, Box 47, Press Clippings, “Rough Reception,” *Campbell River Courier*, 23 June 1978.

Secretariat unsuccessfully for public meetings on the Tsitika in Victoria, in addition to the four north-island communities.<sup>468</sup>

In addition his work with the VLC, the CEM, and his use of the communist press, Knott also revealed his thoughts on the connections between land use, environmental destruction, and the role of companies and the state in an interview at the end June of 1978. Taking place just days after the last public meeting in Nanaimo, the interview provides a revealing glimpse into how Knott applied Marxist concepts to analyze processes of integrated use. Drawing on his personal experiences in the woods as well as his love for history, much of the interview involves a historical description of technological change in gyppo logging operations. In its conclusion, however, the unknown interviewer asks Knott if “environmental considerations” were part of the reason for granting Tree Farm Licenses. Knott replied strongly that this was not so, arguing that

[t]here is no bigger violater[sic] of environmental pollution and conservation standards than the big companies. Of course, they are now trying to appeal to the public on environmental grounds, developing the folio system, general resource planning, etc., but this is generally tokenism or else windowdressing. The main t[h]rust is still clear-cut, cut out and get out; replant at public expense, if at all.

The forest service is at the service of the big companies. It was designed that way. And over the years it has developed a well-entrenched hierarchical system, a very large bureaucracy which allowed very little scope for the local ranger. The granting of timber has great economic implications and is very often based on political considerations. The local ranger has very little independence.<sup>469</sup>

Knott knew all too well that forms of management like TWIRP were used by government-industry interests to marginalize dissenting voices over resource use, and he

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<sup>468</sup> Victoria Labour Council (Hereafter VLC), Minutes, 13 March 1978, 2; VLC, Minutes, 7 June 1978, 3.

<sup>469</sup> Freda Knott’s personal papers, “Interview with Ernie Knott on Gyppo Logging,” 29 June 1978, 4.

understood how the well entrenched and “hierarchical” systems of management affected not only the public, but also those working in the forest sector. Patterns of logging that had no regard for environmental factors, and which were based on a short-sighted belief that forest resources could not be depleted, had filtered down to many loggers. This created, in his opinion

a certain psychology in the average logger, which is still reflected in the union now. Lets go gung ho, and not think about the future; somehow we’ll muddle through and [there] will always be wood here. That situation, plus a general lack of attention to legislative matters, led to a situation where the average logger doesn’t know what the hell is going on. All he thinks about is his job. He’s worked into a re[r]outing system of cut out and get out, in the most profitable way, as fast as possible.<sup>470</sup>

Capitalism is thus not only something that physically destroys the environment, but it also influences the social attitudes of those it exploits to make profits. Workers, just as civil servants, are placed into complex and dominating structures which can dramatically affect both their physical and mental ability to resist, as in the case of loggers and Forest Service employees. But the effects of the “cut out and get out” approach have more than just mental consequences for woodworkers. Unemployment and industrial decline are inevitable if resources are subjected to improper use, and Knott drew on the contemporary crisis in the industry to highlight this fact. He also argued, as had Mankelov and Chernoff, that more unemployment was on the horizon.<sup>471</sup> There were, however, ways out of this quagmire. The same economic functions that produced a “centralization of production and concentration of capital” in the hands of the monopolies, also created the centralized conditions from which state ownership could be

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<sup>470</sup> “Interview with Ernie Knott on Gyppo Logging,” 29 June 1978, 5.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

formed.<sup>472</sup> In this way, Knott once again situated the developments over the Tsitika into a larger analysis of the forest industry, one based on a Marxist understanding of timber capitalism which reflected long-standing criticisms over tenure agreements and the need for more strenuous governmental intervention. At the same time, his opinions on the lack of environmental consciousness on the part of many IWAers hints at the conflicting position of woodworkers during the various stages of the Tsitika-Schoen debate.

With the public meetings over by the last week of June 1978, the TWIRP plan went back to the Planning Committee for a final round of revisions. Continuing its resistance, the CEM once again adopted a series of resolutions linking the fate of the Tsitika to larger developments within the industry. Arguing that a continued reliance on clearcutting methods made it obvious that the plan only supported the values of industrial forestry, the CEM expressly rejected the legitimacy of TWIRP. Furthermore, it expanded this analysis by rejecting the legitimacy of any “integrated resource plan,” since this meant in the end that “fisheries, wildlife, environmental and recreational interest are reduced to pleading for concessions from the logging companies in order to defend their respective rights.” The CEM also expanded its critique of logging in the Tsitika to argue against the use of clearcutting more generally, calling into question the arguments made in favor of the technique by industry and the Forest Service, and called for a public debate over logging methods. Finally, it placed the Tsitika into the context of the TFL system, arguing that it was illegitimate to assume that companies ought to receive compensation for lands removed from their TFLs for wildlife and park projects.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> “Provincial Notes: Environmentalists oppose logging of Tsitika area,” *Pacific Tribune*, 13 October 1978, 3.

The UFAWU joined the CEM in rejecting the legitimacy of TWIRP. Instead, Neish submitted his own report to the UFAWU in November charging that TWIRP failed to adequately address the rights of resource values other than timber. For Neish, this was illustrated by the conflict over MacMillan Bloedel's proposed log dump in the Tsitika estuary. Neish suggested that the dump be placed a few thousand yards to the west of the estuary, in an area that offered shelter but posed much less threat to the river. MacMillan Bloedel responded that this would not be "economically viable" because rock blasting would be needed. When Neish asked for the production of estimates on what it would cost, he received no answer. Instead, the Planning Committee passed along the issue as a "consideration" to be handled by a follow-up committee.<sup>474</sup> For his part, Neish made it clear that he was in no way going to be associated with the follow-up committee. Despite highlighting the important practical experience that he brought to the Planning Committee based on his position as long time fishery worker, Neish wrote that

[o]ur organization is of the opinion that our representative had no apparent effect on changing the direction or making any noteworthy change to the Integrated Resource Plan and it should also be stated that our representative is a fairly capable speaker and although the proceedings of the Committee's minutes may not show it he was not hesitant in speaking out and stating our organization's policy. So our organization feels that as we did not have any in-put in developing the Plan in the Planning Committee we would have any less in the Follow-up Committee.<sup>475</sup>

Neish's resignation from the Committee and his alternative report, while important to illustrate the continued resistance to the Planning Committee's approach land use development, did not stop TWIRP from being implemented later that month. In its

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<sup>474</sup> UBC-RBSC, United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union Fonds, Box 399, File 31, Scotty Neish, "United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union Final Report on the Tsitika Watershed Integrated Resource Plan," November 1978, 4.

<sup>475</sup> Neish, "United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union Final Report on the Tsitika Watershed Integrated Resource Plan," 7.

recommendations, TWIRP reflected the contradictions that came from hierarchical models of land use that aimed to keep industrial forestry practices unscathed while simultaneously paying lip service to other resource values. The result was a plan that tied together promises for wildlife ranges, hiking trails, and ecological reserves with six hundred acre clearcuts and management structures that were to follow the “normal Forest Service review and approval procedures.”<sup>476</sup>

As Jeremy Wilson concludes in his assessment of the Tsitika, the outcome of TWIRP was a “disappointment to those who had hoped this would be more than a business-as-usual planning process premised on logging as the dominant use.” As he notes, however, the government eventually imposed a 1980 ban on log sorting in the Tsitika estuary setting aside a 1,200 hectare section of shoreline after the fact that it was a large collecting place for orca was popularized.<sup>477</sup> In 1995, Erni Knott reflected on the legacy of the Tsitika as he saw it: “We conducted a spirited campaign that was successful in many ways, to the extent that although we didn’t succeed immediately, later on some of the area was preserved, particularly that area fronting the rubbing beach,” he observed. He also noted that following the Tsitika campaign, the concept of multiple use was “encoded” into the forest legislation. “The employers violated it and never lived up to it,” he argued “but the fact is that it was legislated into the new Forest Act.”<sup>478</sup> The new Forest Act of 1978 emerged two years after the recommendations from the Pearse Royal Commission were released, and as Knott’s comments reflect, its calls for multiple use did not produce significant forest practice reforms. Pearse called for a fuller treatment of multiple use in his recommendations, although as Wilson notes, he rejected many of the

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<sup>476</sup> Tsitika Planning Committee, *Tsitika Integrated Watershed Resource Plan*, 10.

<sup>477</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 187.

<sup>478</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 18.

core concerns held by environmentalists. Pearse dismissed the more extreme warnings forecasting a crisis in resource supply and argued that declining harvesting rates would be offset by improvements in technology. He also justified the continuation of clearcutting regimes, arguing that it was, in most cases, the most appropriate course to follow.<sup>479</sup> Therefore the constraints on trying to implement new approaches to land use in the Tsitika were extensive, and represented the continuing dominance of the Forest Service and private enterprise.<sup>480</sup>

But the Tsitika is also important for more than just the amount of land that was or was not subjected to industrial forestry. From the establishment of the original moratorium in 1973 to the conclusion of TWIRP in 1978, the Tsitika was the setting for a significant political battle. It was not, however, a battle drawn neatly across distinct lines such as loggers versus environmentalists. Instead, the debate was more complex, encompassing conflicting notions over the definitions of land use. The Tsitika was a battle that was fought between Forest Service, industry, and union elites, who attempted to maintain a monopoly on the ability to define, manage, and exploit the forest in ways that maintained a traditional and hierarchical model of industrial forestry, and those groups advocating alternative approaches to land use and forestry practice. As a collection of environmentalists, conservationists, students, and trade unionists, the CEM reflected the complexity that could exist among those who aimed to resist the “single use” vision of industrial forestry. In its campaign to save the Tsitika and counter the claims of TWIRP, the CEM tied together calls for ecology, wildlife protection, and what it saw as more responsible forms of forestry. While its overall effectiveness as an agent of

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<sup>479</sup> Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 252-254. For more on the findings of the Pearse Commission, see Hak, *Capital and Labour*, 40-41; Marchak, *Green Gold*, 29-30.

<sup>480</sup> For further discussion on the 1978 *Forest Act*, see Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 158-160.

progressive change was limited, it nevertheless represents an important example of resistance based on more equitable approaches to land use, arguments that its members made in contexts that reached beyond the borders of the Tsitika watershed.

However, given the leading roles of Erni Knott and Scotty Neish within the CEM, the Tsitika debate is also a story about how aspects of the communist left interacted and fused into a context of environmental protest. In one sense, it appears that the Tsitika-Schoen controversy was a fairly marginal event for the Communist Party. Unlike past environmental campaigns such as the debate over pulp mill pollution in Port Alberni, the CPC was not formally involved in the Tsitika debate, a gap reflected in the relative dearth of coverage in the communist press. Because of its silence on the Tsitika controversy, interpreting the Party's lack of action must remain speculative. On the one hand, it is possible that the conflicting opinions of the IWA and the UFAWU dissuaded the CPC from taking a formal position on the issue. On the other hand, it is possible to link this silence to an interpretation of the CPC as a political party marred by aspects of stagnation and hindered in its ability to adapt to new forms of environmental protest. And yet, two communists, Erni Knott and Scotty Neish, took leading roles in one of the debate's most persistent and radicalizing group of resisters. For Knott in particular, we are presented with an important example of how arguments and tactics that were well developed within the mainstream of the Communist Party were then transferred and applied to an outside organization. Therefore, if elements within the Party were somewhat fossilized, Knott remained ideally situated to bridge the gap between the communist left and emerging forms of environmental activism. In developing a Marxist understanding of capitalism, Knott continually reiterated a reading of B.C. forest policy that was linked to positions set

out by the CPC. At the same time, his arguments for the expansion of park land and the protection of old growth forests at Wells Gray and the Tsitika illustrated that Knott was able to move into areas of activism where the CPC itself was not present. His experiences, therefore, represent both the positive connections and the limitations through which the communist left was able to integrate into struggles over environmental change. While Knott's analysis of timber capitalism provides the best example of how communist approaches to political economy were linked to broader environmental and ecological concerns, he was not the only communist that was able to integrate into the emerging environmental debates of the 1970s. As the experiences of Neish and Chernoff illustrate, other members of the communist left were also involved. While these three individuals took on different roles and interacted within the Tsitika controversy in different ways, they all constructed perceptions of environmental change that were drawn from an intimate relationship between worker and environment.

## Conclusion

In an undated manuscript titled “Vanishing Forests—Vanishing Jobs,” Erni Knott constructed a brief historical sketch of the forest sector, using southern Vancouver Island as his example:

1849—Captain Grant, Sooke’s first Settler opens B.C.’s first sawmill.

1929—“Pick Handle” Sager, the push at Point-no-Point near Sooke, watches a log train load of 30 cars, each one hauling a single log, not one of them under nine feet in diameter, head for the beach.

1979—The Victoria I.W.A. local has 2300 members.

1989—Thirty trucks a day of the last stands of Sooke second growth and even third growth “fibre” (the new buzz word) all of it averaging twelve inches in diameter, head for the water.<sup>481</sup>

For Knott, the consequences of this “cut chronology” were unemployment and environmental destruction. In 1989, Lamford Forest Products, Victoria’s last sawmill closed “for lack of affordable timber.” The 2,300 member I.W.A. local was also gone. Merging with local 1-80 in Duncan, there were less than fifty members left. As Knott’s cut chronology outlines, changes in the physical environment mirrored changes in employment. The shrinking physical stature of Sooke’s timber illustrated the exhaustion of old growth stocks, a process symbolized in the technological shift from “a train load of 30 cars” to “thirty trucks a day”. This story was not unique to Sooke. “We are witnessing the end of an era,” Knott estimated. “The great forest between Duncan and Port Renfrew, all of southern Vancouver Island, is gone. Ripped off, half of it wasted and despoiled in

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<sup>481</sup> Freda Knott’s personal papers, Erni Knott, “Vanishing Forests—Vanishing Jobs,” (undated manuscript), 1.

the process, accompanied by incalculable environmental and ecological damage, not renewed in good time—sort of a microcosm of what is happening all over B.C.”<sup>482</sup>

The cure for this was nothing other than a total reorientation of provincial forest policy that combined significant aspects of past communist policies with enhanced environmental restrictions. For Knott, the areas of tenure, manufacturing, and forest management required major changes. Raw and semi-processed products had to be replaced with “value added” manufacturing and more “labour intensive” forms of processing. The TFL system had to be replaced with councils representing unions, industry, local districts, environmentalists, recreationalists, and the Forest Service. These changes in management and industrial processing had to be accompanied by new harvesting methods and regulations promoting environmental protection. Toward this end, Knott asserted that “there has to be an end to waste and clear cut, supplemented by selective harvest, adequate silviculture and replanting practices and legislative controls.” Moreover, the creation of council-structures for forest management ought to be organized on a community-to-community basis to grant local autonomy over resource use. One of the most “immediate” issues that these councils ought to undertake was the creation of legislative regulations that would control cutting practices in “sensitive and important areas” such as watersheds, private lands located within municipal boundaries, and on the Gulf Islands. These policies were needed, in Knott’s opinion, “before the monopolies in their hunger rapidly rip off and despoil those last pitiful remnants of our once great forests.” With these policies in place, Knott argued that employment could be maintained and even expanded, while at the same time “preserving for posterity and other uses,

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<sup>482</sup> Knott, “Vanishing Forests—Vanishing Jobs,” 1.

precious old growth areas like the Carmanah, the Walbran, the Tsitika, Stein, and Kuzmiken [sic]. We can do both!”<sup>483</sup>

Encompassing only two pages, “Vanishing Forests—Vanishing Jobs” is nevertheless an appropriate summary of how communists like Knott linked the environmental changes taking place in the forest sector to the changes taking place for woodworkers. The fate of the working-classes who laboured in the forest was intimately linked to the fate of the physical environment. In Knott’s reading, the exhaustion of both old growth forests and employment opportunities was related. This reflected a long-standing communist preoccupation with using environmental changes to illustrate how capitalist development negatively affected the mass majority of residents in the province. As in past decades, concerns over the fate of the forest were intrinsically linked to providing a “modern” and stable forest economy. At the same time, Knott’s personal experiences in the woods and his role in environmental and conservation movements such as the Tsitika enabled him to engage with the environmental costs resulting from monopoly control of the forests.

While “Vanishing Forests-Vanishing Jobs” ends its historical timeline in 1989, Knott continued his environmental activism, participating in the 1993 Clayoquot Sound demonstrations. The following year, Knott attended a ceremony in Sooke to celebrate the creation of Jaun de Fuca Provincial Park established as Mike Harcourt’s new NDP government embarked on its ambitious plan to double protected wilderness areas in the province from six to twelve percent.<sup>484</sup> The new government also initiated a series of

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<sup>483</sup> Knott, “Vanishing Forests—Vanishing Jobs,” 1-2.

<sup>484</sup> George Hoberg, “Policy Changes and Policy Regimes: A Framework for Studying Policy Change,” in Benjamin Cashore, et al., eds. *In Search of Sustainability: British Columbia Forest Policy in the 1990s*

planning initiatives aimed at protecting forest industry jobs while simultaneously committing to enhance environmental protection. The Committee on Resources and the Environment (CORE), one of the most well-known examples of this new NDP planning regime, utilized regional planning “tables” to bring together diverse local actors to discuss land use issues. As Wilson argues, however, experiments like CORE were kept on a “leash”, with tight control held in the hands of Premier Harcourt and his advisors.<sup>485</sup> During the dedication ceremony for Jaun de Fuca Park, Minister of the Environment Moe Sihota drew Knott aside and asked the old communist what he thought of the NDP’s reforms. Knott replied:

I told him I thought they were doing some good things, but that in my opinion, no really meaningful reform of the forest system could take place without doing away with the tenure and tree farm licence systems, which gives the employers complete control of big tracts of timber on a 25 year renewal basis, virtually in perpetuity. He agreed with me, but I guess he felt he was doing all that he could do within the constraints of the political climate, cabinet politics and the employers’ influence in the province.<sup>486</sup>

Knott supported the CORE process and the NDP’s call for enhanced protection of wilderness areas, but his comments to Sihota underlined the continuing importance of evaluating any land use decision by its ability to challenge the fundamental structures of forest capitalism.<sup>487</sup>

Knott’s experiences in the woods produced, to borrow the title from Jack Scott’s memoir, “a communist life,” characterized by trade union and political activism undertaken in a multitude of settings.<sup>488</sup> Out of these experiences, Knott produced a

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(Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), 26; Jeremy Wilson, “Experimentation on a Leash: Forest Land Use Planning in the 1990s,” in *In Search of Sustainability*, 31.

<sup>485</sup> Wilson, “Experimentation on a Leash,” 32; 40.

<sup>486</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 19.

<sup>487</sup> Knott, “Development of the Coastal Wood Industry in B.C.,” 18-19.

<sup>488</sup> Jack Scott, *A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers Movement, 1927-1985*, Bryan Palmer eds. (St. Johns: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1988).

particular form of working-class environmentalism, where a Marxist critique of capitalism and a belief in the empowerment of labour intertwined with a broader ecological and environmental understanding. While Knott's life had its own unique aspects, the experiences of other communists such as Nick Chernoff, Scotty Neish and others illustrate that the interaction between the communist left and perceptions of environmental change has produced a complex and revealing group of connections and contradictions. To what degree scholars of the left will follow these connections remains to be seen, but whatever course they choose, the product will fill an important gap in our understandings of the communist left and the changing conditions of our physical and mental environments.

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