Chapter Ten

The 1960s

Throughout his life, work would always take first place for Bill Walsh. It was what nourished him, gave him an outlet for his creativity, and met his need to perform and to excel. That he would never allow any other obligation get in the way of his work was clear to Esther from the beginning. He was rarely at home and very commonly late for meals. Esther knew that she would have to take full responsibility for running the house and raising the children. It was her fate with Dick Steele and it was her fate with Bill Walsh. She may have resented it — if she did so it was a silent resentment — but she knew what she was getting into when she married Walsh. Once Sheri was in school Esther took up a career in childcare. But her life still revolved around Bill's needs, as it always would.

In many respects the 1960s augured the coming of a new age. The Cold War was beginning to subside. The birth control pill was developed. The Soviets landed a rocket on the moon. Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile. Allen Ginsberg wrote "Howl" and in Canada George Grant wrote *Lament for a Nation*.

But for Bill Walsh the 1960s was a painful decade. In 1965 his 20 year relationship with the UE came to an end. Two years later he resigned from the Communist Party. The two events were inexorably related. In his final years of employment with UE relations became so strained that Walsh was in and out of the hospital with a severely ulcerated stomach. Walsh's condition was worsened by accusations from C.S. Jackson that he was egotistical for questioning Party trade union policy. Jackson dropped this charge on him repeatedly when Walsh persisted in questioning his strategy around the issue of organizing new plants. And later, after Walsh had left the UE, Jackson smeared him publicly at mass UE membership meetings in the midst of a bitter dispute between the UE and the Draughtsmen, a union of white collar employees at Westinghouse that had hired Walsh to lead their negotiations. It was the events surrounding this dispute that caused Hamilton's Communist Party to accuse Walsh of "conduct detrimental to the
working class." Totally fed up, Walsh tendered his resignation before this accusation was laid. But he found out that you weren’t permitted to quietly resign from the Communist Party.

Just prior to the unfolding of these events, Walsh had become increasingly involved in the struggle to save another left-wing union, Mine-Mill. The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Union had been under continuous attack from the Steelworkers. In the early 1960s, it found itself in a battle for its survival. As it turned out Walsh, in his new career as union consultant, would have a close working relationship with Mine Mill over the succeeding few decades.

Mine-Mill

From the 1940s the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers was by far the dominant union in Canada’s mining industry. Mine-Mill had a splendid heritage, its roots going back to 1893 and the Western Federation of Miners (WFM). The WFM pioneered unionism in mining towns across western Canada and the US. It fought some of the most vicious employers on the continent and developed a well earned reputation as a militant union of radicals and socialists. Big Bill Haywood was the secretary-treasurer of the WFM and brought it with him to the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). As a founding member of the IWW, the WFM advocated class struggle, direct action, and the general strike which would leave workers in control of production, an essential element in the social transformation of society. Haywood had no truck with collective agreements which he saw as leading to social peace and “put[ting] workers to sleep.” He opposed mediation, arbitration, compromise, and anything else that would weaken the revolutionary force of workers, including restrictions on strikes and lockouts.

The credo of the miners and smeltermen is spelled out at the front of Mine-Mill’s handbook, a near replica of the preamble to the IWW’s 1905 constitution:

We hold that there is a class struggle in Society, and that this struggle is caused by economic conditions.

We affirm the economic condition of the producer to be that he is exploited of the wealth which he produces, being allowed to retain barely sufficient for his elementary necessities.

We hold that the class struggle will continue until the producer is recognized as the sole master of his product.
We assert that the working class, and it alone, can and must achieve its own emancipation.
We hold that an industrial union and the concerted political action of all wage earners is the only way of achieving this end. An injury to one is an injury to all.

By 1916 the WFM was in decline, like much of the IWW. It changed its name to the International Union of Mine and Smelter Workers but the change did little to revive the union. Mine-Mill was one of the founding unions of the CIO, but in Canada it was World War II that created the conditions for its renewal. By war's end, Mine-Mill held contracts with over 500 companies and had 125,000 members, mainly in northern Ontario and British Columbia. Local 598 in Sudbury which included employees of both the Inco and Falconbridge mines, was the single largest trade union local in Canada, and by far the largest Mine-Mill local in either Canada or the US.

Following the WFM tradition, Mine-Mill built union halls in every city and town where it had a presence. The union halls became centres of community life and in Sudbury in particular the union organized all manner of recreation including dances, picnics, the “Saturday Morning Club” featuring cartoons and films for children, softball, bowling, a boxing club, hockey league, and a children's day camp. In the early 1950s, Local 598 hired a full-time recreation director, Weir Reid, who produced and directed plays, organized the “Haywood Players” (named for “Big Bill” Haywood), established a ballet school, brought in films like Salt of the Earth and folk singers like Pete Seeger, and designed and ran the Mine-Mill residential camp on Richard Lake that was attended by 1500 youngsters in two week intervals.

While Communists held a comfortable majority on the national executive of Mine-Mill and a bare majority on the international executive, contrary to widespread opinion, hardly any of its locals were Communist dominated. That was certainly true of Local 598. Between 1948 and 1959 only five of the 37 men that served on its executive board were Party members and none of these held the top executive positions of president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, or recording secretary. In most years Communists held only one or two seats on the executive board and in some years, none. Most executive board members were, in fact, active CCFers. These facts are important in view of the wrenching battles that raged around the issue of Communist domination.

Unlike many other international unions, including UE, Mine-Mill's structure was highly decentralized, a heritage from the WFM days when communication between locals and international headquarters was problematic, at best. Locals were largely autonomous. They held the purse strings, doling out funds to the national and international office, the reverse of the normal
situations. Certification was with the local. It did its own collective bargain-
ing. So when Local 598 decided to strike Inco in 1958, the first since Mine-Mill had organized the company, it ignored the national executive which was dead set against it. The national executive feared the strike would be a disaster. It was.

The failure of the 1958 strike raised serious questions about the compe-
tency of the local leadership, just the opening its opposition had been looking for. Like the UE nearly a decade earlier, Mine-Mill had been pushed out of the Labour Congress on rather flimsy charges. The opposition was led once again by the ubiquitous Charlie Millard, Canadian Director of the Steelworkers, and not surprisingly the Congress gave the Steelworkers jurisdiction over mining, effectively sanctioning a policy of raids. Members in Mine-Mill turned out to be more loyal to their union than the Congress had anticipated and Steel was badly humiliated in its first attempts to win over the huge Mine-Mill locals in Sudbury and Trail. Even the smaller locals where Communist influence was non-existent rallied to Mine-Mill. Raids were moth-balled and initially it appeared as if the CCF and Steel had all but given up.

While delegates to Mine-Mill conventions regularly supported resolu-
tions that followed Communist Party positions on NATO, the Marshall Plan and the like, the Communist issue was a smokescreen. What we had here was much more a turf war. Charlie Millard and Steel had ambitions to represent all organized miners in the country. Mine-Mill stood in the way. The CCF had ambitions to be the sole party of organized labour. The Communist Party was in the way. The solution seemed to be to get rid of the Communists in Mine-Mill and other left-wing unions or, if that were not possible, get rid of the unions themselves.

Still smarting over the electoral losses incurred at least in part because of the LPP’s support of the Liberals in 1945, the CCF was now relentless in pursuit of its own strategy. In 1948 the CCF provincial executive refused to accept the nomination of Bob Carlin as CCF candidate for the Sudbury area. Carlin, already the sitting member and enjoying the largest majority in the Ontario Legislature, had been one of the early organizers of Mine-Mill and sat as the Canadian representative on Mine-Mill’s international executive board. No one accused Carlin of being a Communist. He was not and never had been. His sin was that he would not take a firm stand against Communists within the union and that he would not recant policies supported by his union that ran counter to those of the CCF. When he ran anyway he was expelled from the party. For the CCF it was a costly intervention. It once again underestimated the independent mind of miners. Outraged by the party’s rejection of their candidate, miners and their families deserted the CCF/NDP in the Sudbury basin for the next 20 years.
Things began to unravel for Mine-Mill after the disastrous 1958 strike. With the North American economy mired in a deep recession, and the end of the US government's stockpiling minerals, Inco had huge inventories and manoeuvred the union into a long and futile strike. After the strike, Local 598's officers were defeated by a reform slate headed by Don Gillis, who pledged to bring Mine-Mill back into the Canadian Labour Congress. Gillis and a majority of the others in the new regime were graduates of a leadership training course led by one Alexander Boudreau. Boudreau had been brought into Sudbury in 1958 to head up a newly created Northern Workers' Adult Education Association. It was part of the University of Sudbury, a Catholic college within Laurentian University whose chairman, not surprisingly, was a vice-president and operations manager of Inco. As texts, Boudreau used pamphlets from The Christian Anti-Communist Crusade and material provided by the CLC and the Steelworkers. His course included lessons on techniques for destabilizing organizations. His message was crude: "The philosophy of Communism is based on hate.... The Communist Party is an active, Soviet-dominated secret army, part of the hard trained troops of the Communist Conspiracy." With the support of the local clergy and the Catholic bishop, Boudreau threw himself into Local 598 elections appearing on every platform available, in churches, schools, and service clubs throughout the area as well as in regular television appearances. He characterized the election as a "last ditch fight between Christianity and Communism." A fund-raising letter sent out by his assistant readily admitted that "ever since the campaign started, the University of Sudbury through its extension department and particularly Director Alexander Boudreau, has been emphatically denouncing these Communist forces and attempting to educate the Sudbury population on the true nature of Communism."1 The press also chimed in. Its campaign against Mine-Mill was vitriolic. "Ontario Reds Recruit 7-Year Olds," blared one headline in the Toronto Telegram in December 1959.

After ousting the old executive, Boudreau worked with the CLC to develop strategies for keeping the new executive in power. "Mine Mill must be destroyed and disappear from the map of Canada," he wrote to CLC President Claude Jodoin. "This can be achieved only by depriving the Communists of their milk-cow, Local 598 of Sudbury."2

The Left contested Mine-Mill elections in 1959 and again in 1960 and 1961, losing each time. A story in the Sudbury Star finally prompted the national president of Mine-Mill to oust the Gillis administration and appoint an administrator of Local 598. According to the Star, on 25 August 1961, the executive board of the local had met with Claude Jodoin, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, along with Larry Sefton and Bill Mahoney of the Steelworkers to discuss secession from Mine-Mill and
affiliation with Steel. On the night the administrator, William Kennedy, took possession of the union hall, the crowd gathered outside the building soon turned into a mob of rioters, and only disbursed when the authorities read the Riot Act. Within short order the Ontario Supreme Court restored control of Local 598 to the Gillis group.

By this time Steel's raid on Mine-Mill was in the open and Gillis brought the heavyweights in to speak in the Sudbury arena: Mahoney, Sefton, and Jodoin. Four thousand Mine-Mill loyalists marched to the arena. When they jammed the doorway, fighting broke out and police lobbed a tear-gas bomb into the crowd. The three guest speakers were drowned out when they tried to speak and Gillis was forced to adjourn the meeting. On 15 September 1961 at a meeting in the Mine-Mill hall, Sefton and Mahoney announced their intention to start a sign-up campaign and urged Mine-Mill members to join the Steelworkers. In December, the Ontario Labour Relations Board accepted a Steelworkers' application to be certified as the bargaining agent for Sudbury's Inco and Falconbridge workers. The vote was set for 27 February to 2 March 1962.

Sudbury; City At War

Bill Walsh and Arthur Laverty took a bus load of Hamilton workers to Sudbury for a giant rally a few days prior to the vote. Trade unionists from all over Canada converged on Sudbury to lend support to Mine-Mill — rubber workers from Kitchener and Hamilton, autoworkers from Oshawa and Windsor, electrical workers from Hamilton and Toronto, and miners from Nova Scotia. Walsh had contacted Laverty, then vice-president of the Hamilton area Steel Council and an executive member of the Hamilton District Labour Council to set up the Hamilton Unity Committee to support Mine-Mill. Leafletting Stelco, Algoma and other plants, the Committee carried the attack against Steel into its own union locals. The impact was immediate. Meetings of Steelworker locals called to endorse the raids ended up repudiating the Steel leadership. They directed their leaders to devote their time and the union's money to improving the wages and working conditions of their own members and to organizing the unorganized rather than raiding existing unions.

Sudbury was a city at war. Families split. Friends became enemies. Some pubs were Mine-Mill, others Steel. Workers took their lives in their hands by wandering onto the wrong street in a Mine-Mill jacket. Brawls erupted. Steelworkers were no safer on streets patrolled by Mine-Mill men. The city bristled with signs of the union war. Every major street corner seemed to have a billboard advertising the contesting unions. One said "STEEL CAN
RED-BAIT, BUT CAN THEY NEGOTIATE?" The other said "ONLY INCO WANTS MINE-MILL; NICKEL WORKERS WANT STEEL." Downtown crowds appeared to divide evenly between men, women, and children wearing yellow and black Steel buttons or red, white, and blue Mine-Mill buttons. The Sudbury Star carried full-page ads from both sides and both made nightly pitches on radio and television.

The Mine-Mill campaign called upon the great tradition of the union and its service to Sudbury miners going back to 1944. Steelworkers talked mainly economics, reminding the men of the disastrous 1958 strike. Others, like Alexander Boudreau talked Communism. Mimeographed hate sheets appeared at meetings in Church basements and service clubs. Everything appeared to go Steel's way. Don Gillis was endorsed by the federal Justice Minister, Davie Fulton, and by George McClelland, the Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP. The Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker, appointed him labour representative to NATO and just days before the vote the provincial government appointed him to the Ontario Economic Council. US Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, visiting Ottawa in early October, declared that he hoped the Steelworkers would win over Mine-Mill; as did US Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, who denounced the activities of US Communists in Mine-Mill. In December the Subversive Activities Control Board declared Mine-Mill to be a "Communist-infiltrated organization." To a seasoned observer like Bill Walsh, this did not appear to be a Steel-run operation at all. He suspected that Sudbury would never actually see the people behind the Steel campaign.

Voting was quiet, orderly, and heavy. All but a handful of the 14,333 eligible Inco voters cast a ballot. Steelworkers won with a mere 15 vote margin. Mine-mill challenged 36 ballots on the grounds of "irregularities" but a request for a recount was denied. However, a simultaneous vote at Falconbridge was invalidated when several dozen Steel memberships brought before the Labour Board were found to be forgeries and the Steelworkers withdrew from the contest. As a consequence, Local 598 survived to represent the much smaller work force at Falconbridge, while the Steelworkers' Local 6500 was certified as the bargaining agent for Inco workers. According to Cameron Smith's biography of the Lewis family, the Steel victory in 1962 was the culmination of 17 years of relentless effort by the Steel/CCF nexus following the fateful 1945 election. During that time Local 598 was a pressure cooker with Steel constantly trying to divide the membership. Loyalties became divided. Feuds developed that were never forgotten. Meetings became shouting matches. And the Local never matured, never seemed to get its affairs on a stable, workman-like plane. Instead of having the opportunity to grow confident and outgoing, it turned inward and paranoid.
In Walsh’s view the red-baiting alone had not been sufficient to destroy Mine-Mill. "It gave them yards, but ultimately what did Mine-Mill in was that they were short on militancy. In the ’58 strike the leadership made a last ditch effort to prove its militancy but the timing was all off. Throughout the fifties Mine-Mill felt the only way to survive was to cooperate with the company and the mining companies actually began to prefer them. This was their greatest vulnerability and Steel took advantage of it. In the UE we avoided striking Westinghouse and General Electric, but we did everything short of striking. We survived by being militant.”

After the loss in Sudbury, Mine-Mill’s remaining large local was at the new Inco site in Thompson, Manitoba. In the late winter of 1962 Walsh accompanied Arthur Laverty who had been invited to speak at a mass rally a month or so prior to a vote to decide whether Mine-Mill or Steel would represent the Thompson miners. “It was 40 below the day we arrived,” Walsh recalled. “We were met at the airport and taken to the Mine-Mill office. The local leaders were playing cards and barely looked up. I assumed the game would be over soon and that we would then discuss strategy for the meeting. But it went on and on and Laverty ended up playing. It was a new game for him and the stakes were high. They cleaned him out. He also got totally pissed. In the meantime I looked at the material lying around the office. While Steel was lambasting the living conditions with newly arriving single men still being housed in tents, Mine-Mill literature seemed to be defending the living conditions. When we got to the meeting, it was only half filled. There obviously had been very little preparation. Laverty, who was a very powerful speaker and as Vice Chairman of the Hamilton Area Steel Council could likely have influenced a few votes, was too pissed to speak. I had to deliver his speech. I had the feeling that the leadership had resigned itself to defeat. In any case that’s what happened. When the ballots were collected, Mine-Mill was slaughtered.”

In 1965 Mine-Mill launched a campaign to win back Sudbury workers and it signed up enough workers to force a vote. At the same time, Steel launched a counter-campaign to take Falconbridge from Mine-Mill. The Steel campaign fizzled, but Steel managed to beat back the Mine-Mill challenge at Inco with a comfortable majority. In 1967 a merger agreement was on the agenda and in a special convention in Winnipeg all surviving locals of Mine-Mill voted to merge into Steel. All, that is, except Local 598 whose members regarded the agreement as nothing more than the terms of surrender. It was the end of an era. There would be no more summer camp, no theatre group, ballet classes, sports teams, or union halls, except for the one in Sudbury. In time, the wounds inflicted over the period would heal. Inco workers were now a permanent part of the Steelworker organi-
The 1960s

In the 1960s, as for Local 598, along with the UE, it would eventually merge with the Canadian Automobile Workers.

By the end of the decade Bill Walsh, having resigned from UE, would return to Sudbury to head up Local 598’s contract negotiations, a role he would repeat many more times into the 1980s.

End Of The Road At UE

The work of the Hamilton Unity Committee was a welcome diversion for Walsh, for it was around that time that C.S. Jackson and George Harris switched responsibilities. Harris moved from Westinghouse to General Electric and Jackson moved from GE to Westinghouse. Walsh had had a very successful partnership with George Harris. He knew it would not work out with Jackson. UE staffers in Hamilton saw the switch as a barely concealed move to oust Walsh from Hamilton, as it was around this time that rumours began to be circulated about him. The stories, emanating from the UE national office, circulated within the UE staff, but were also carried into the Hamilton Party branch. “I am sickened with the whispering, the conniving and intrigues by people who are on the same side as me in the same good fight, but who are so ready to believe the worst and carry on the gossip,” Walsh wrote George Harris in the spring of 1963. “As you know I have often been attacked and slandered, and we all have” Walsh stated. “These things bring hurt but in the life we have chosen, we come to expect it. It’s quite another thing when attacks are from my own side. I want to protect my family and myself as well as my friends from the hurt this causes. I want to preserve, if possible, the respect of quite a few people in the labour movement as well as some people outside the labour movement. But frankly I don’t know how to proceed.”

Walsh participated in one negotiation with Jackson. It was in 1963. “After it was over, I told him ‘never again’,” he recalled. Their negotiating styles contrasted sharply. “Jackson would call for a strike vote when workers were most riled up about a company offer, thinking that with a strong strike vote, we could get the best deal from the company. I would get the company to put forward its best offer and take that to the membership. They then had the choice of accepting that offer or striking. That’s the way George Harris and I did it. It was a better way.” In this instance the settlement offer the company brought forward had a clause in it that made no sense. Jackson wanted to take this offer to a membership meeting and expose this clause, certain to get a strong strike mandate. I wanted to bring it to the attention of the company and get it clarified so that what we brought to the membership was clear and the company’s best offer. We argued this before the negotiating
committee. When it went along with me, Jackson was furious at me for challenging him in front of the committee."

"After the settlement, Jackson called Jake Henley, Westinghouse's chief negotiator and asked him to send over a case of scotch. I grabbed the phone and when Henley asked 'is he joking' I said 'yes' and hung up the phone. 'How can you do this? It's not right to take gifts' I said. 'What would the membership say if they knew?' That episode sealed his fate. A few weeks later Ross Russell dropped into to see him with an offer. "You've always said it was our responsibility to organize the last of the big three, Northern Electric. They've just opened up a new plant in Bramalea. We think you should take a crack at it. Tommy Davidson will mind the shop at Westinghouse."

Walsh readily agreed to take on the job. Bramalea was a new community half-way between Toronto and Hamilton, less than an hour's drive for him. This was like old times, setting up an office with secretary, typewriter, mimeograph machine, a few UE staff on loan to him, and heading up an organizing drive. When he arrived on the scene less than a hundred workers were on the job and the company had already recognized a company union, the Northern Electric Employees Association, which already existed in its Montréal and Belleville operations. With the help of a car load of rank-and-filers from Hamilton and Toronto, each and every worker was approached to sign a union card. Leaflets poured off the mimeograph machine. By the time of the vote Northern's employment roll had risen to over 300. They went overwhelmingly UE.

The new environment suited Walsh very well. Ross Russell was there with him, but in negotiations with Northern, Walsh acted as the main spokesperson. Urged on by Walsh, the young people who comprised the membership were eager to take up the challenge of using Bramalea as a springboard to help organize the Belleville plant and a new plant going up in London. But the national officers turned down his proposal for full-scale organizing drives. "The time is not ripe. They're not ready yet. Too risky. We can't afford a major defeat. We have to consider the good of the union as a whole. What if some of the larger unions make a bid too?"

"You know what Stalin said on the delay in opening the Second Front," Walsh responded, "'if you wait until every button on every last coat of every last soldier is in place, then you will get nowhere'. Besides, if we don't take Belleville and London, we'll lose Bramalea too. They'll go elsewhere."

Behind his fury, frustration, and wounded pride, Walsh was convinced that, having forced him out of Westinghouse and now questioning his judgment at Northern Electric, Jackson was deliberately marginalizing him to push him to resign from the union. When the national officers turned down a request by the Bramalea local for an interest-free loan to build a
union centre, he did in fact come close to resigning. The frustration and suppressed anger put him in hospital with an aggravated ulcer.

Early in the new year, he again urged that cards be distributed at the Belleville plant, and once again he was turned down. But in February, this call came in from Russell: “Sheet Metal workers are moving into Belleville. You better get down there and distribute our cards.” Walsh knew the score. It was far too late to win. What was wanted was to deny victory to the Sheet Metal Workers and keep the door open for another day. When it was all over, the Bramalea executive demanded an accounting from Jackson. Why did the UE wait so late? Why did they pull out of the organizing drive in London? “We traveled down to London on our own for no pay and we went up to Belleville. The rug was pulled out from under our feet. Why weren’t we consulted? We have a stake. We need these places to give us bargaining power in Bramalea.” Jackson did his best to shake off the attack, but after the meeting it was Walsh who got the real blast: He put these young people up to this. It was the kind of leadership he was giving them that caused them to attack the national president.

For Walsh this really was the last straw, the first time he had ever gone into a campaign to defeat another union so that in the end the company union could stay in. “I did it,” he shouted at Russell, “I did this god-damn dirty work. You know why, Ross? It was our god-damn sloppiness, our overly cautious policy that puts us in a position where it had to be done. But I quit, Ross, I quit. I won’t do this dirty work anymore.”

**Resignation**

Just before entering the hospital for treatment of his ulcer, Walsh read out a 36 page presentation to the National officers. He began by reviewing the situation at Northern.

You see, our big advantage of being in Bramalea does not necessarily increase as time goes on. The idea that we can somehow become a model union, wrestling all kinds of gains out of the company way ahead of its other plants is completely unrealistic. The company is not stupid. Our hold at Northern is also threatened from other sources. This is probably the largest group of industrial workers in any one company that is not represented by a union. Congress unions are not going to sit back and allow us to become the union of Northern workers. They’re bound to move in. We have one advantage. We represent Bramalea and we have good enthusiastic Northern forces at our disposal, willing and anxious to help us organize the other plants.
Goodness knows I tried to say these things on several occasions, and I know I fussed and fumed. I know my impatience and perhaps my exaggeration of the problem and all my bitterness associated with previous differences and all of the gossip would colour the situation, and make it harder to get these points across — as somebody was always trying to psychoanalyze me instead of examining the viewpoints I was trying to express.

As you know, I'm convinced that I had a job done on me during the past few years in Hamilton, both from the top people inside UE and from people outside the union. A job has been done on me that tramples on, besmirches and spits on almost 20 years of hard work to build this union, to make a contribution to the left and to years of working to win friends for us and fighting for unity.

I came to realize that my lingering illusions about everything coming out in the open and the truth winning out, were just pipe dreams and there was nothing I could do about it that was worthwhile and meaningful. I received many reminders that the detractors are vicious and never tire of seeking new proofs of my sins and seeking new recruits for their cause. They will not be satisfied unless I am driven out of the union, out of Hamilton and am silenced forever. This is not an exaggeration.

The presentation took a full two hours. The national officers sat through it without comment. After the presentation nothing changed. A letter from Ross Russell advised Bill to contact the UE national office as soon as his health permitted. When Jackson told him that they were prepared to accept his resignation immediately, he offered no resistance. While in the hospital he had given some thought to what work he might do and this evidently was of some concern to the national officers. They became noticeably uncomfortable when he told them he'd decided to go into union arbitration and consulting work. He recalls the scene vividly. Jackson asked him "is that what you're planning? Why do that? Why not go into business?" The final dig. Bill took the bait and got in his own dig: "What do you mean business? I've never been in business, I've always been a labour guy. You're the one who started in business, Jack. You were a boss before coming to labour." He knew this was a sore point with Jackson, but Jackson let it pass, only to say, "get out of the labour field, Bill. There's no place in it for you now."

George Harris took a different tack. "The arbitration field is feast or famine. I've got a better idea. You could get into labour research. Research Associates in Montréal is talking about going out of business. You could take it over. Or if that doesn't appeal to you the Party is thinking of putting out a theoretical journal and they need somebody in Prague if you're interested in that." "I said these didn't interest me and that I'd like to try at working with unions in grievances and arbitration and negotiations." "Who's going
to give you work?” Ross asked. “First of all the UE. After all, I’ve done arbitration at Westinghouse for years and more recently at Northern Electric. Other parts of the union have always come to me for advice about arbitration cases. I have some expertise in this field.”

“Bill, there is nobody in the country who could do a better job for our people than you could. But you will never get work from the UE.”

“Why is that Ross?”

“You're making it hard. It’s because we can’t get along with you. You make everybody feel like a schlemiel by always having to be right. That’s why we accepted your resignation. You make it impossible for us to work with you. It’s not just Jack. It’s me and it’s George. We just want to terminate the relationship.”

On 14 June 1965, UE locals received a brief note announcing Walsh’s resignation. A few days later, Bill got this note from Mike Fenwick, veteran cold warrior and editor of the Miners’ Voice, a Steelworker paper: “I heard rumours that you had left the UE. Do you care to make a statement about your disagreement with the UE?” He took only five words: “No thank you ... no statement.”

Late in the fall 1965, Walsh found himself back in Sudbury when Mine-Mill asked him to help with its publicity campaign against the Steelworkers. For the second time in three years, Mine-Mill successfully beat back a Steel raid on what was left of Local 598, its Falconbridge local. But it failed in its own efforts to win back the much larger Inco local.

Walsh had anticipated defeat. Even before the results were in, he asked Mine-Mill leaders what they would tell Inco workers who had voted to go back to Mine-Mill. He reiterated his own long held view to Harvey Murphy, Nels Thibeault, Ray Stevenson, and Bill Longbridge that the right wing of Steel could be beaten from within. That’s where they should be exerting their efforts. “In any case, what do you say to the 6,000 guys who voted Mine-Mill? Do you tell them that the other 8,000 who voted Steel are scabs? Or do you tell them to join in with them, give them leadership? Ultimately, they’ll do it anyway and you will find the left base dividing. Tell them now. Tell them to join Steel, challenge for control, not to bring them back to Mine-Mill. That’s over. But to make Steel a fighting union.”

To the old Mine-Mill leadership such talk was treason. “Those bastards. We’ll never tell our people to go over.”
Ross Russell was right. There were no appointments from UE. At first it seemed that George Harris was right too. It was feast or famine. Within a few months, though, the work picked up and once it did, it would never flag. The role of union consultant proved to be a very good choice for Walsh. He had unique talents as a negotiator and he was a pioneer in the arbitration field, having in 1947 argued the first arbitration case ever recorded in Canada. While the role of staff representative had given him a fair amount of autonomy relative to the locals he worked with, the position never fully utilized his talent for leadership. He resented being in a position where his judgment would be questioned and his ideas arbitrarily rejected by the national officers. By contrast, as a paid consultant his expertise was sought after and his judgment respected. And it gave full reign to the free-wheeling nature of his personality. He found the diversity refreshing and he enjoyed working with new people from one contract to another. As a novice in the consulting business, Walsh had no idea what to charge for his services. He picked an hourly figure equivalent to the wage of a skilled plant worker, $5.00 an hour plus expenses and until he discovered the standard practice in the industry, this is what he charged.

The Draftsmen's Association in Hamilton was among his first contracts. The draftsmen were white collar semi-professional workers and some of the officers would not even refer to the organization, The American Federation of Technical Engineers (AFTE), as a union. In 40 years as the certified representatives of draftsmen in three large Hamilton companies — Dominion Glass, Otis Elevator and Westinghouse — they had never been on strike. Officers of the three locals hired Walsh to help in their preparations for bargaining and to lead the negotiations. All three were new officers with little respect for either their Canadian director or their international headquarters. They said they were fed up with the treatment they had been getting from the companies and that they were ready for a fight. This boldness was part of the new times in the Canadian labour movement: teachers had organized into unions; postal workers had engaged in a nation-wide illegal walk-out; 16,000 Inco employees participated in a three week wildcat; 12,000 production workers and 3,000 office workers went on a wildcat strike against Stelco in Hamilton, and longshoremen went on strike on Montréal's waterfront.

Before this round of bargaining the three companies had treated the draftsmen locals with contempt, merely going through the motions of negotiations. The agreements were entirely company-dictated and had none of the standard provisions on seniority, union dues check-off and the like. Less than half the draftsmen were in the union. At Dominion Glass,
which came up first, Walsh brought the draftsmen to a strike vote almost immediately. Settlement arrived at the zero hour. But a notoriously anti-union Otis Elevator would not settle without a strike. In the past it had never conceded a salary increase to AFTE as part of a settlement. "You're being paid enough as it is," they said over the bargaining table. "If we give the plant workers a raise, you can come to us and we'll consider it then." When a membership campaign brought nearly all of the employees into the union and brought a strong strike mandate, the company launched an all out campaign to discredit Walsh. It approached a number of the employees with information about his background, the Party membership, the change of name, the full-time Party positions, and the jailing and internship. And it contacted the head office of the union promising to settle if he were removed.

The Otis strike lasted three months. While the settlement was modest by the standards of the day, it nevertheless broke through on most fronts, and being Hamilton's first ever white collar strike it drew a lot of attention in the media and from academics at McMaster University. The Teamsters, railroad unions, and building trades honoured the picket line throughout the strike, but since the plant workers were crossing it was still a constant struggle for the draftsmen to maintain the integrity of their line. Steel had just been certified to represent the plant workers and had informed the Draftsmen that they would not take illegal action while seeking to negotiate a first agreement with Otis. They were heavily criticized by every section of Hamilton's labour movement, by the Communist Party, and by many individuals outside of organized labour who were angered by a big steel union crossing the picket line of a small white collar local that was taking on this giant multinational company.

The Otis strike was settled in mid-December 1966, just as Westinghouse's 200 draftsmen were in the final conciliation stage with the company. Six months before this set of negotiations had begun, Walsh had approached C.S. Jackson about cooperation between then two unions since both were about to begin their respective negotiations. He received no response. An official letter also got no response. When negotiations indicated the possibility of a draftsmen strike at Westinghouse, he raised the question with Harry Hunter, leader of the Hamilton Party organization. What if AFTE, with a Party member as its counsel and spokesman, was manning a picket line while the UE, led by Party members, crossed the line? Hunter insisted that this could never happen, but he promised to set up a Party meeting to deal with it. That meeting was set up but it was called off and no other scheduled.

The draftsmen twice postponed strike deadlines to get themselves in line with the UE deadline. Having had no success in getting the local branch of
the Party to look into the matter, Walsh contacted his brother Sam, leader of the Québec Party to set up a meeting with the national Party leadership. He was told to keep himself in readiness for a meeting, but never got any call. “I concluded,” he said, “that in the eyes of some Party leaders the top leaders of the UE could do no wrong. The Party leadership seemed determined to acquiesce in whatever the UE leadership might do regardless of any other consideration.”

When both unions struck, members of the two unions developed a high degree of camaraderie, picketing, drinking coffee, painting picket signs and taking up collections together, but at another level the tension was mounting. At a meeting of the Hamilton Labour Council in mid-June, Percy Brown, Chairman of the Draftsmen Association speculated that the company was going to manoeuver the negotiations so that UE would settle first and would be expected to cross the draftsmen’s picket line.

Beneath the surface of cooperation and mutual support, the old conflict between Jackson and Walsh came to the fore as the moment of truth approached. The UE insisted that Walsh not participate in joint meetings set up to coordinate picket lines. And an open letter to the Draftsmen read out on the platform of a large UE meeting was clearly designed to give the impression that while UE had consistently sought to extend full cooperation and coordination of efforts, the Draftsmen and particularly its counsel, Bill Walsh, refused such cooperation. While this back-handed attack was going on, word on the picket line was that Walsh was becoming the butt of open jibes by leaders at various UE strike meetings. When UE resumed negotiations during the strike, this campaign was stepped up, increasingly taking the form of personal slander. A number of UE activists were saying that the draftsmen were creating problems for UE because of a personal feud between Walsh and Jackson. And that Walsh wanted revenge against Jackson even if it meant hurting those he had worked with for many years.

Walsh finally got a meeting among Party officials but matters were left unresolved. The meeting tackled neither the concern that UE Party leaders were consciously setting their course to cross the AFTE picket line, nor the slanderous campaign which he was certain was designed to set the backdrop for violating the picket line.

The UE was set to vote on 21 June, on a contract the leadership was calling “outstanding.” According to the Hamilton Spectator, there was some fear that Westinghouse plant workers might reject the settlement “rather than face the decision of crossing the picket line of a second union of Westinghouse employees.” In a letter sent to the draftsmen’s union, the UE requested that the draftsmen adopt an informational picket line if the plant workers accepted the agreement and returned to work. Making it clear that UE workers would cross the picket line, the letter concluded “It is our
obligation to make certain that what the draftsmen choose to do does not endanger our opportunity for an outstanding settlement." Jackson used the platform of a giant rally to get out the YES vote to blast Bill Walsh. He accused Walsh of using the draftsmen to get revenge on himself and the UE and of deliberately delaying the Draftsmen strike to embarrass the UE. "No Westinghouse worker is going to suffer because of this megalomaniac," he thundered. He called Walsh a bitter enemy of the UE and an enemy of working people who should have been fired from UE long before.

Most members of the audience had known and worked with Bill Walsh for years. They sat in stunned silence. Only one person, Alvar Carlstrom, a non-party member, dared to challenge the speaker. "Mr Jackson," she said, "Bill Walsh has worked for this union for over 20 years and throughout those years we always thought he did a good job for us. Now you people tell us things we know nothing about. You shouldn't be saying these things without Mr. Walsh being here to defend himself."

The news traveled fast. A horrified Esther asked "Where were all your friends, Bill? Where was Murray Thompson who we've known for so many years. I can't understand how he could listen to these lies and just sit there."

She reached Thompson on the phone. "Murray, I heard what Jackson said about Bill last night. You were there. What did you say?"

"I didn't say anything. If what Jackson said is true, I don't want to have anything more to do with Bill,"

Esther responded. "Murray, if what Jackson said about Bill is true, I wouldn't want to have anything to do with him. But both you and I know that none of it is true."

"But I don't know that it isn't true," Murray answered.

"Well, if that's what you think, Murray, after all these years, there's nothing more to say."

Bill Walsh seethed with anger. But for now there was still a strike to be settled. By early Wednesday evening the word was out. UE members voted to accept the settlement and Tommy Davidson announced that they would report for work the next day. Rumours circulated that the Teamsters would follow the UE across the Draftsmen's picket line. A number of UE members contacted the Draftsmen to say that they wanted a separate vote, vote yes for the contract but no to crossing the line, but that the UE leadership refused. Some said they would not cross the line in any event. Those few who contacted Walsh told him they didn't buy what was being said about him, but "who can argue with Jackson?"

Pressed by the Draftsmen, the UE and others, the government conciliator brought the company and union together in the hope that a last minute settlement could be achieved. Westinghouse, fearing that many UE members would refuse to violate the picket line, improved its offer conditional
on the draftsmen removing their picket line by the next morning. Late Wednesday night the draftsmen were summoned by their leaders to consider the offer. "The terms of settlement were less than they had a right to expect from their efforts, their first real show of militant struggle against a huge company," Walsh said. It was after midnight by the time they took their vote and reluctantly agreed to the settlement.

When Westinghouse plant workers returned to work over the next few days they were handed a leaflet addressed to them as an open letter from the draftsmen. The leaflet was vetted by a committee but there can be little doubt who the author was. "This open letter," it read, "is written in hopes of helping to build the labour solidarity which was threatened during much of the strike, and badly mauled during the final days. Unless there are genuine efforts to heal wounds, and unless there are lasting lessons learned, all working people will lose and only labour's enemies stand to gain."

The four page statement was biting, acerbic, and sarcastic. It punctured holes in UE pronouncements. "Blatant UE propaganda" it called "the numerous efforts to create the impression that UE leaders fervently sought cooperation, but that Draftsmen leaders didn't want to cooperate." It lambasted the leadership for being "unprincipled" trade unionists in "launching an all-out campaign to persuade Local 504 members to cross the Draftsmen's picket line," and for "misleading" its own members.

For Bill Walsh and the draftsmen the open letter no doubt "cleared the air" which was one of its stated objectives. It likely gave Walsh some personal satisfaction. It certainly provided him with an outlet to vent his anger. But it was hardly successful in helping to build labour solidarity and to heal wounds. Quite the opposite.

The Last Straw

The Party response was predictably swift. On 20 July Harry Hunter invited Walsh to a meeting of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Committee "to discuss your work as a member of the committee." Walsh promised to attend. The following day, a Saturday, a registered letter arrived at his doorstep confirming the meeting. "A registered letter for a meeting to review my relationship with the committee? 'That's it,' I said to myself. I knew what was coming down. 'This is the last straw.' I ran downstairs to my basement office and typed out a letter of resignation with a copy to Sam."
22 July 1967
Dear Sammy:
Think you are entitled to only extra carbon copy I have made. It's not much of a valedictory after more than 35 years of membership, including the joy and anger, the love and hatreds of work in the Soviet Union during the first five year plan, underground and open work, jail, war, strikes, demonstrations, comradeship — but also the enervating periods of acquiescence, compromise, etc. But it will have to do under the circumstances.

Anyway, why should anyone be interested in valedictions. The struggles continue and life goes on.

21 July 1967
Harry Hunter
Hamilton, Ontario
Your registered letter received today is the last straw. There is lacking an atmosphere for real expression, and an inadequacy of genuine concern for people.

My own acquiescence during some of the 35 years of my membership has undoubtedly contributed.

I have sometimes been sustained by recalling the warm atmosphere and concern for people when idealists like Dick Steele and Muni Erlich were alive. But that was a different era. Although I resign, I retain respect for many and continuing affection for some who remain.

Letters were exchanged almost daily between the brothers, the first intensive contact they had had in many years.

28 July 1967
Dear Bill:
I received your letter together with the copy of the letter of resignation. It is of course very difficult for me to reconcile myself to the idea that you have actually resigned from the Party after all you have put into it, as the only effective vehicle for uniting and orienting the working people to the abolition of exploitation of man by man. Which is not, of course to try to conceal what are obvious imperfections which are very, very difficult to overcome.

4 August 1967
Dear Sam:
You refer to the Party as the only effective vehicle for uniting and orienting the working people and the imperfection in the Party and the members. In spite of all the problems I have had because of the latter, I could likely abide, did I not have growing doubts about the former. In fact, I'm beginning to wonder if many of the subjective problems are not reflections of inadequacies of "the only effective
vehicle." Not that I know of any other effective vehicle in spite of my son John's efforts...

On 9 August, a second registered letter arrived from Hunter.

Dear Comrade Walsh:
Your letter of July 21 was received and is being forwarded to the club membership meeting for consideration. The committee is laying a formal charge against you. You are accused of conduct detrimental to the Party and the best interests of the working class, as provided for in the Communist Party constitution.

The matter will be presented to the club membership on Wednesday, August 16th at the Cannon Hall, 8 p.m. We sincerely hope you will attend and answer on your behalf to the above charges.

Two days later Walsh informed his brother that he has no intention to submit to these charges.

There have been actions detrimental to the working class (and the Party) I'm sure. But the charges are being laid at the victim, not the perpetrator, although I'm not pretending to be lily white.

As I've indicated once before, one of the holy cows in the Party is the UE establishment. Since I've had the audacity not to lie down and die to suit that establishment, and since they have not succeeded in slaughtering me with personal vilification, the Party is to be used as a channel to help accomplish same...

Oh well, as you know, I wanted to drop out quietly, but apparently this will not be permitted, and I'm to be labelled as some kind of enemy! (To the working class, yet!!) Outside of the establishment previously referred to I don't know who will benefit from this monstrous lie.

The Charges

As the date of meeting approached, Walsh was torn up inside. Could he just walk away from these charges however farcical they may be? A telegram from Sam urged him to attend and defend his record:

DESPITE EVERYTHING ATTENDANCE AND DEFENSE BEFORE YOUR COMRADES ESSENTIAL STOP REFUSAL TO STATE YOUR CASE UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WILL NOT BE UNDERSTOOD OR ACCEPTED.

Similar pleading from Esther prodded him into action. He spent all day Wednesday writing out some notes.
The five page statement of charges read out to the 30-odd Party members in attendance started out by saying that while Bill Walsh's severance from the UE was strictly the business of the union, the Party understood it would have repercussions in the Party. "In spite of a history of antagonism between Committee members and Comrade Walsh," the Party did everything it could to encourage his active participation. "No one was under the illusion that the struggle for collectivity and for the elimination of competitive behaviour would come easy for all concerned. All were aware that for Bill it would be most difficult. Nevertheless it was believed that a strong fight for his participation was demanded in the interests of the working class."

But his attendance at Party meetings fell off and "was limited to purely industrial discussions which smacks strongly of using Party contacts for his own advantage as a labour consultant." He refused to participate in the last municipal election; neglected to inform the Party of his involvement in a CBC documentary "Steel Town" featuring that notorious anti-Communist Arthur Laverty; falsely claimed he could not get a Hamilton Party meeting to deal with the attacks made on him by some Party members and asked the Central Committee to intervene; and he refused to disassociate himself from the draftsmen's anti-unity open letter and condemn its generally disruptive activity in the labour movement. "The Hamilton Committee has given much consideration to these matters and is forced to conclude that Comrade Bill Walsh be charged with conduct detrimental to the Communist Party and the best interests of the working class."

His attendance at meetings "limited to purely industrial discussions!" The words exploded in Bill's head. Using the Party to make money for himself! Head pounding, stomach so tight the muscles seem ready to burst, he barely heard the rest of the statement. But now he was invited to respond. Doubtful that in his present state of mind he would find the words to say what he had been waiting so long to say, he read straight from his notes, thankful now that he took the time to prepare them. (reproduced in Appendix A)

In all he read for two and a half hours, but being unaware of the exact nature of the charges his notes did not cover the specific events of the previous year. A second meeting a week later allowed him to deal with the issues around the draftsmen's strike.

The day of the last meeting I sat down to try to put into writing some of the reservations and disagreements I had during past years, and some of the efforts I had made to clear them up. I was unable to finish my notes, and of course, when I prepared them I had not seen the specifics of the charges against me — something that every accused person is entitled to before he is called upon to reply or defend himself. I have since then received the statement of charges and of course the
main thing seems to be leaflet of the Draftsmen and the injury to the party that is said to have flowed from it, and the charge that this action is "disruptive activity in the labour movement".

I refute this charge. I deny it. And I hurl it back at those who are responsible for the actions complained of.

The statement says that as of the fall of 1965 — less than two years after I left the UE, it became clear to the Hamilton Committee of the Party that it needed to initiate and promote an atmosphere in the Party whereby proper party relationships could develop. The statement says in brackets that my severance from the Union was not a Party matter, but the business of the Union — and it's dismissed that way.

Well, I think that's one of the problems. While it is true that my separation was the business of the Union — it must be borne in mind that the top officers of the Union were all in the Party and that this was a matter between Party people. As I said, it seemed to me that when a person has been on the Union staff and in its top fraction for so many years, that the Party should have some interest in knowing what brought about his resignation and final separation. It isn't as though I was the first one. There were a number more who had been in the Party and on the staff of the Union and who had resigned or been fired from the staff and most of whom were also lost to the Party. That fact alone, it seemed to me, ought to have caused some concern about Party comrades and what happens to them.

That's part of the problem you see. The relationships in the top circles of the Union were relationships between Party members, as were the relationships with the full time staff people of the union in the Hamilton area largely relationships between Party people in the Union. These relationships had become strained to the breaking point, and nobody was interested in looking into the matter and yet we are told the committee here calmly decided to promote an atmosphere in the party organization whereby proper party relations could develop.

I had misgivings about accepting nomination for the city committee because of this background, and also because it could result in some of the same UE staff people or those closely associated with them being on the committee. In addition, I was just then starting out in a new field of work which would take me out of town most of my time, particularly during the work week.

The committee statement says that my attendance at city committee and membership meetings was poor and makes a point that I had only attended three city committee meetings this year and that these were on industrial work, and that I was using Party contacts to advance my business. It also says that in the last municipal election I didn't participate because it was not important to me, and still later it is implied that I am somehow responsible for what Art Laverty said on a TV program.
I want to deal with these three at the same time. In the first place
industrial work is on the agenda in one way or another at almost every
meeting. But more importantly, this shameful insinuation is completely
without any foundation in fact and no effort is made to substantiate it.

Or take the thing about the last municipal election.

When Harry asked me to do something in the last municipal
election, I told him frankly I had little interest. There are some
comrades that are more interested and are drawn more to one kind of
work than another — and can do better in one field than another. I
happen to be drawn to the labour movement, to international develop­
ments including the question of war and peace and the Vietnam war,
to the developments particularly in South America, and Cuba, and so
on. I try to keep up with these fields and wherever possible to partici­
pate. But when offered a specific assignment in city elections or some
other field and I can possibly do it, I do. So what’s the big deal.

And now the bit about Laverty. Let me say right out that I had no
more to do with Laverty being on the program or with what he said
than any of you. My name was given to the CBC people by someone in
Montréal, and so was Laverty’s and some others. I don’t know what is
the purpose of bringing his name into such a document when he has
no way of defending himself. And what is more to the point — it seems
to me that this reference to Laverty, like the other references in the
document about me only attending city committee meetings to make
business contacts — all this is in my view the kind of malicious smearing
that is not based on one bit of supportable evidence and that can only
have been put in to colour the document and lay the groundwork for
the main charge.

And now I think I should get back to the main matter, the question
of the picket line developments and the aftermath. First, let’s go back
to the Otis strike. When the Steelworkers crossed their lines, the
Draftsmen criticized them in the press, in the labour council, in leaflets
to the Steelworkers with copies to other unions, in speeches to other
unions, including to the Building Trades Council, in letters to other
unions both here in Canada and in the USA. A press story carried in
the Hamilton Spectator quoting the chairman of the Otis draftsmen as
being critical of the steel union, was also carried in the Tribune. A
number of representatives of other unions expressed to the Draftsmen
at Otis their sympathy and their criticism of Steel for not honouring
the draftsmen picket line at Otis. After the strike the Draftsmen at Otis
received a warm letter of congratulations from John Ball, the President
of the Westinghouse Local of UE, in which Comrade Ball said:

“As the first white collar group to successfully challenge anti-unionism
in this city, the tremendous struggle of your members marks a stepping
stone in labour’s forward march towards 20th century conditions. The
future struggles of other white collar groups for organization and
improved standards, indeed, the future struggles of all of us, have been made less difficult by the courageous example of you and your members."

I am not aware of anybody criticising the Otis Draftsmen, or me, who was their consultant during much of their pre-strike negotiations and during much of their strike. I am not aware of anyone being critical of the position of the Otis draftsmen — their criticism of the Steel Union, which was made publicly and in leaflets to other unions. But why is it that when the Westinghouse draftsmen did much like the Otis Draftsmen they are attacked by the Party for putting out their leaflet and of course, I am attacked as their consultant. Remember, it would have been illegal for the Steelworkers to have honoured the draftsmen picket line at Otis — this was not the case at Westinghouse.

I must conclude by completely denying the charges. In fact, having read the statement, I consider it unworthy of the committee — certainly not based on all the facts. However, we all have a lot to learn, all of us.

Personally it has been a very bitter experience. Although I have taken a lot of time, I have still had to leave out more than I could put in because of the time and circumstances. I hope to be able to settle down and eventually get over it. As I said, I hope this experience will enable us to remain friends, and that it will perhaps contribute something of value to the struggles ahead, and to a greater sensitivity by the Party to its members and the things that weigh heavily on them.

The atmosphere in this meeting was less charged than the one held two weeks earlier. Although his statement then was eloquent and moving, Walsh had been shaken by the charges and he was seething with anger. Now he was on the offensive as the emotional tone of his refutation clearly indicates: "I refute this charge. I deny it. And I hurl it back at those who are really responsible for the actions complained of." The discussion that followed his presentation was perfunctory. When the vote was announced it was 27 to five with one abstention and two spoiled ballots to reject his resignation and expel him from the Party. Having gone this far, it didn't take much persuasion, mainly from his brother Sam, to get Walsh to appeal the expulsion before the Central Committee of the Party.

Most people who quit the Communist Party did not formally resign, they simply dropped out. Expulsion was a very serious business for this Party, and doubly so when the expulsion was appealed. A special committee was struck; there were oral presentations and written statements; and a detailed committee evaluation and recommendation which was finally submitted to the Central Committee for its ultimate determination. In this case the process took over a year to complete. This was the time of the Prague Spring which generated a hot debate in the Party. The Soviet invasion of Czecho-
slovakia in the summer of 1968 resulted in another spate of resignations including such Party veterans as Stanley Ryerson. Very likely, these events contributed to the delay of completing the Walsh appeal process. In the end the Committee ruled that his initial resignation was valid, but that even if there had been no resignation, censure rather than expulsion would have been the more appropriate penalty for his refusal to renounce the Open Letter which the committee agreed was injurious to the Party and to the working class.

This marked the end of Bill Walsh's relationship with the Communist Party. While he retained some bitterness towards certain individuals in the leadership of the Hamilton Party, he never expressed the same contempt towards the Communist Party as he obviously felt towards the UE. On the contrary, he honoured its history and principles, and regarded his personal experiences in the Party as mainly positive. Quite likely, had it not been for his break up with UE, he would have remained a Party member for many more years. At least there was no indication that he could not continue to swallow his disagreements over policy issues and tolerate the on-going hostility he felt from some Hamilton comrades.

Post-script

Walsh's view that the UE's survival as a union would be in doubt if it did not assume a more aggressive organizing policy turned out to be correct. But its failure to organize the entire electrical industry was less crucial, it turned out, than the industry trend to relocate most of its production out of Canada, both with regard to appliances and heavy electrical equipment. By the late 1960s and even more so in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a massive loss of employment in the industry. By then UE was a mere shadow of its former self. Eventually, it would merge into the rapidly expanding and diversified Canadian Automobile Workers.

Notes

1Cameron Smith, *Unfinished Journey, the Lewis Family* (Toronto 1989), 517.
2Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 518.