

# **COLD WARRIOR**

C.S. Jackson and the  
United Electrical Workers



by Doug Smith



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Doug Smith

Canadian Committee on Labour History  
St. John's

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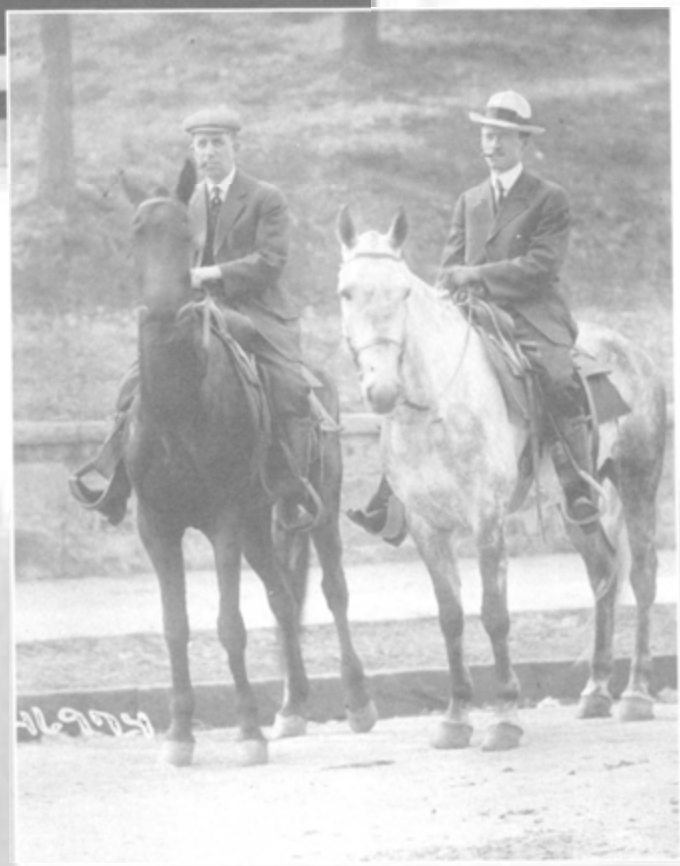
Readers of this book may feel I have not spent enough time in front of my word processor, however, I owe a great deal to Sandra Hardy and Erica Smith, who indulge the time that I have spent in front of the infernal screen.

Doug Smith



Bertha Jackson  
in the 1920s  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)

C.H. Jackson ►  
(on the right) on a  
winter holiday in  
Hot Springs, Arkansas  
in the 1920s.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)





▲ Clarence Jackson at  
Loon Lake.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)

▼ Kathleen Grant McLeod,  
in the middle, circa 1927.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)

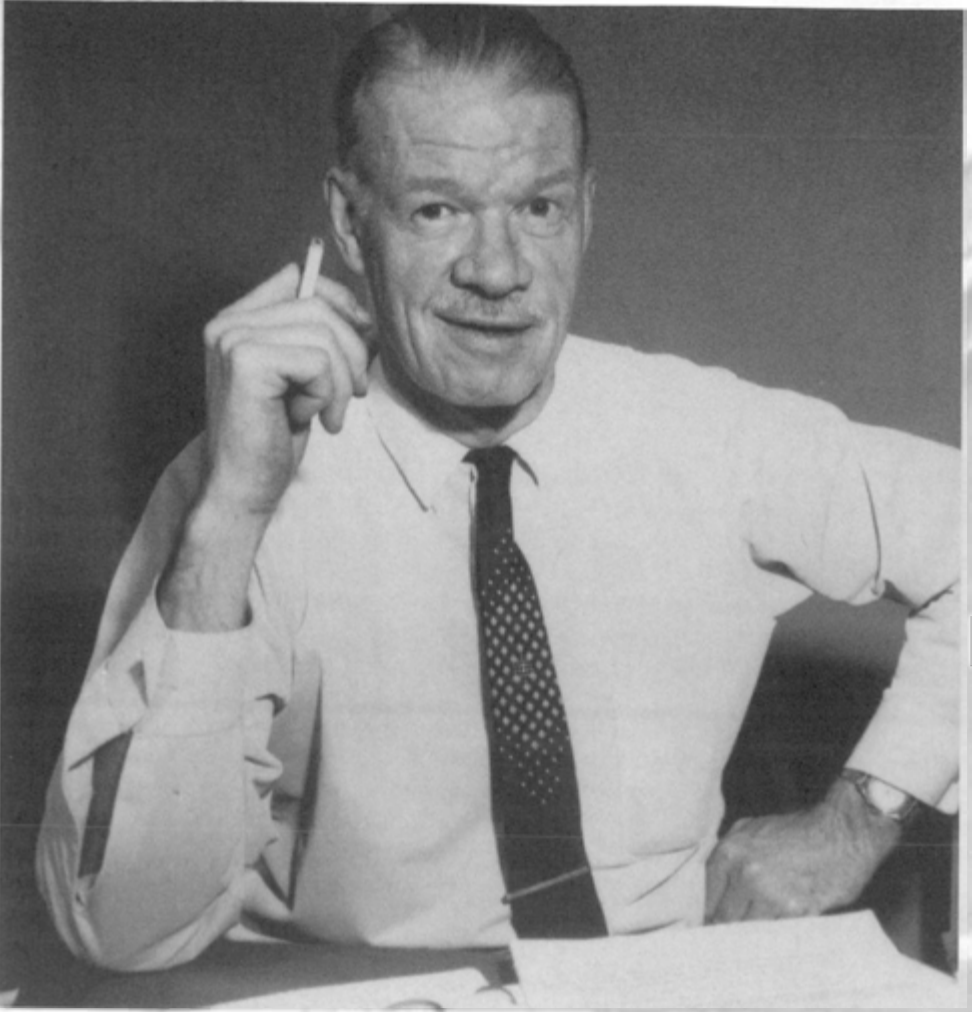




▲ Bob and Betty Jackson in 1949.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)



▲ C.S. Jackson and Mary Switzer  
in 1978.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)



▲ C.S. Jackson as UE President.  
(Courtesy Betty Dyck)





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## Introduction

I first met C.S. Jackson in the summer of 1990. His daughter, Betty Dyck, had read excerpts of my biography of Winnipeg Communist politician Joe Zugen. She wanted to know if I was interested in writing a book about her father. She was more than a bit surprised to discover that I knew who C.S. Jackson was; I was even more surprised to discover that he was alive and living in Winnipeg. Jackson, a Canadian founder of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers Union, was a key figure in the history of the Canadian left and the Canadian labour movement. The UE was one of the few Communist unions which survived the stiff blasts of the Cold War and won readmission to the House of Labour.

A few days after she called me, I drove over to Betty's suburban house to meet my potential employer. C.S. sat in wait in a corner of the living room. After I introduced myself, he said, "So, you're a writer, eh? I'm a doer."

He went on to explain that I was merely the latest in a long line of writers he had engaged and dismissed since his retirement as UE president in 1980. This one was a complete phony, that one just took his money and never accomplished anything, while this other one — the most heinous of all — he wanted to put a social-democratic spin on his life. Jackson was able to hire and fire biographers in rapid succession because after spending four decades as one of the country's lowest-paid union leaders, he won a lottery and became one of its few Marxist millionaires.

I said I could see he was a hard marker. And he was. Nor was he shy about his own historical importance. To demonstrate my bona fides I mentioned that I was doing some work for the Canadian Union of Public Employees; he told me that Grace Hartman, the union's former president, had once worked for the UE as a secretary. When I revealed that I was a former member of the Wire Service Guild, he let me know that the Guild had started out in the UE office, until it had been taken over by a bunch of right-wingers. At times it appeared that the room we were sitting in was the only part of Canada which had not been taken over by right-wingers, and he was not completely certain about that.

## 2 Cold Warrior: C.S. Jackson and the UE

Over the next two-and-a-half years I read miles of poorly microfilmed UE records and poured over hours of transcripts conducted with C.S. by Jim Turk. I interviewed Jackson and many of his co-workers, reviewed academic papers and newspapers dealing with the UE's history and the Canadian Cold War in general, and worked my way through many, but certainly not all, of the countless briefs the UE produced during the 43 years that Jackson led the union. At one point Jackson fired me. Betty intervened and I was kept on the case.

I regret to say that after turning out two separate drafts, I did not do much to improve C.S.'s opinion of writers. At one of our last meetings he pulled out a sheet on which he listed every time his name appeared in the manuscript and every time the Communist Party was mentioned; they were both considerable figures. He thought this proved that I was nothing but an anti-Communist bent on proving that *he* was a Communist. He also wanted to know why the book quoted his arch enemy, Canadian Congress of Labor President Aaron Mosher. After all, he was nothing but a son-of-a-bitch. Jackson then made sure that his long-time associate Eric Adams refused my attempts to initiate an interview with him.

Some of the problems with the manuscript arose from the fact that C.S. was no angel. He appears to have been emotionally estranged from his parents while his marriages were often disasters which pale only in comparison to the job he did as a father. By his own admission he lost one job for bending the rules and another one for making overtures to his supervisor's wife. To his credit, he was willing to speak of all these issues, and he never suggested that they be eliminated from his biography. However, in reviewing his personal life he always felt that other people were to blame, while he was excused by his need to explore new possibilities and, later, by his commitment to the class struggle.

The Canadian state's regular attempts to persecute the Communist Party further muddled Jackson's story. At a time when labour boards were not above decertifying unions for having Communist leadership, Jackson often found himself lying to protect the UE. His testimony before the panel of inquiry held when he was interned during World War II is almost completely false when it is not simply belligerent. (Not that such a kangaroo court deserved much better.) He was forced to write the Communist Party out of his history and the history of the UE. The fact that he had stormy relations with the leaders of the Canadian Communist Party ("Bill Kashtan, a phoney if there ever was one") rendered the story even more complex. It would appear that he spent much of his career as a union leader trying to increase the Communist Party's influence in the broader labour movement, while limiting it within the UE.

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The fact that the UE leadership operated in a collective fashion makes a biographer's task even harder. Executive decisions were joint decisions, often reached only after lengthy battles between Jackson and the two open Communists on the UE executive, George Harris and Ross Russell. After 30 years it was difficult to tell whose fingerprints were on these decisions. Finally, Jackson, as leader, became submerged in the history of the UE, which is much the same as what happened to Jackson the human being. As his daughter told me on our first meeting, it was impossible to separate her father's life from that of the union.

Jackson had a tremendous taste for battle. As I researched his life I was struck — and exhausted — by the way he continually sought out conflicts. He had an enemies list that would have made Richard Nixon envious — he fought with his parents, his bosses, his fellow unionists, his wives, his children, his comrades (especially with his comrades), the UE staff, the Canadian state, and social democrats in the labour movement ("playboys of the political world") — particularly David Lewis, Charlie Millard, and Eugene Forsey. He was regularly expelled from the CCL executive, at one point refusing to leave a meeting until President Mosher threatened to call the cops.

This text represents a final reworking of the manuscript I prepared for Jackson, who died in the summer of 1993. It would not satisfy Jackson, whose later years were lived in frustration because he had concluded that only he was capable of telling his story correctly — but he recognized he had lost the powers of concentration necessary to produce such a work. I realize that this is union history from the top down: work process, ethnicity, gender — these important issues are not addressed in this book. This is not because I believe them to be peripheral to Canadian labour history, indeed writers such as Julie Guard are doing much to make them central issues. However, Jackson was a political animal whose life, in my opinion, can be best recounted as a political story.

I realize the Jackson that emerges in these pages is often less than admirable. For this reason I wish to emphasize that in the course of researching the manuscript I spoke with many UE veterans who had nothing but the greatest admiration for Jackson. While Jackson was not constant in love or trustworthy as an employee, he was incorruptable as a union leader. He won the respect and trust of countless CGE and Westinghouse employees through his hard work and his fearlessness. And he was remembered with genuine affection by many of the union's rank-and-file leaders who vividly recalled weekends spent at Jackson's cottage discussing the state of the world. The Jackson who propounded the class analysis in the afternoon was also the Jackson who, in the words of Neil Young (the UE shop steward and

NDP politician, not the rock star) “would belt down a few scotches and act like a 25 year old on the dance floor.”

As I worked my way through Jackson’s life I was struck at how far seeing he and the Communist Party were when it came to questions of Canadian nationalism. From 1948 onwards Jackson was sounding warnings about the dangers of a branch-plant economy. He told Walter Gordon’s 1955 Royal Commission:

Up [until 1947], Canada had been moving towards greater industrial maturity and nationhood, firmly based on increasing industrialization. The new policy [adopted by the King government in 1947] placed the emphasis on seeking to open wider United States markets for the raw and semi-finished products of our mines, forests and farms, exports that drain our country of vital natural resources that can never be replaced and that do not make full use of our equally valuable human resources. We are most strongly of the opinion that this new line of policy must be reversed without delay. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would result in the de-industrialization of our country, the control of its economy by the United States in United States interests, and the loss of Canadian nationhood.

Unlike Gordon, Jackson was not a gentle patriot. During the 1950s and 1960s, he wrote and spoke extensively on dozens of issues which were at best remotely connected to the UE. He campaigned for an all-Canadian seaway route, an all-Canadian gas pipeline, a national computer network, special status for Québec, and for aboriginal rights. He also opposed the Columbia River Treaty, the Vietnam War, and the dismantling of the Canadian electrical industry.

That list is far from complete. And I suppose it could be argued that he turned the UE away from being a militant industrial union into a brief-presenting union, except for the fact that the union continued to organize, strike, and fight throughout this period. But it should be noted that most of the causes in that list were lost causes. Jackson took little satisfaction in seeing so many of his predictions come true: foreign-ownership has led to deindustrialization. It has spelled the end of both the Canadian electronics industry and the UE, which merged with the Canadian Auto Workers in 1992. Uncritical support of the CCF-NDP landed the labour movement in a pickle in Ontario. And when I was on holiday in 1991 I noticed that resort owners in the interior of British Columbia were suffering financial losses because, under the Columbia River Treaty, Americans control the water level on Canadian lakes.

It may be that because these causes have been lost it will become increasingly difficult for us to imagine such a thing as an independent socialist Canada, that the battle for a sovereign Canadian community has

## 5 Introduction

gone beyond the point of being a rearguard action and is well and truly a futile gesture.

Certainly, if we fail to take any notice of the lives of people like C.S. Jackson, brilliant, tyrannical, vindictive, class-conscious, patriotic old bugger that he was, I think we are moving another step closer to fulfilling his darker predictions.

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# 1 Growing Up in the Lakehead 1906-1929

In the spring of 1906, a bitter labour dispute in the Northwestern Ontario towns of Fort William and Port Arthur climaxed with a gun fight between striking workers and railway police escorting a trainload of strikebreakers. The strike was led by Eastern European immigrants who worked in the railway freight yards. Driven to desperation by low wages, poor housing, and difficult working conditions, they rebelled. There was no union representing these labouring men; in the early years of the century the union movement was made up almost exclusively of skilled workers.

The railways tried to crush the strike by importing strikebreakers from Winnipeg. This precipitated the gun battle, which miraculously left only three men wounded. Fort William mayor E.S. Rutledge chose to support the local workers rather than the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and refused to call out the militia. By holding firm, the strikers won themselves a five cent an hour pay increase.<sup>1</sup>

In the coming years the railway, with the backing of other, more sympathetic politicians, would win back what they had conceded to the freight handlers. This was the pattern for labour relations at the head of the lakes, where thousands of immigrants shuttled between a variety of seasonal jobs. They were lumberjacks in the winter, dockers in the spring, rail workers in the summer, and harvesters in the fall. These boomers, as they were called, had much to protest in terms of pay and working conditions, but since there were plenty of others waiting to take their jobs, they rarely won or even staged a strike. It would be another 30 years before a revitalized trade union successfully organized "unskilled" labourers. That breakthrough came when the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) spread to Canada.

One of the men at the centre of that struggle, Clarence Shirley Jackson, was born in Fort William in the riotous summer of 1906. While he was a founder of Canada's industrial union movement, so-named because it

<sup>1</sup>Jean Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Lakehead Freight Handlers Before World War I," in Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian, eds., *Essays in Canadian Working Class History* (Toronto 1976), 151-2.

## 7 Growing Up in the Lakehead

sought to organize all the workers in a given industry instead of restricting itself to skilled craftsmen, he was also one of that movement's harshest critics. For over 40 years he would play a significant and controversial role in the Canadian labour movement and the life of the Canadian left. He started life in a comfortable middle-class family headed by a Fort William politician and his socially ambitious wife.

In 1882, Hugh T. Jackson moved his wife and three young children from Emerson, Manitoba, where he had been a yard superintendent with the CPR, to Port Arthur. It was the last stop in an exodus which had taken him from Northern Ireland through Nova Scotia to the Canadian West. Years later, his son Clarence Hugh Jackson (the father of Clarence Shirley Jackson) recalled that when the family arrived at the Lakehead, "Port Arthur was a village of about 1,500 inhabitants. The CPR was then under construction."<sup>2</sup>

The CPR was the harbinger of a wave of industrialization and immigration that transformed the Lakehead. Local businessmen dreamed of turning Port Arthur and Fort William into the "Chicago of the North." Fort William, on the banks of the Kaministiquia River, had once been the inland headquarters for the North West Company. Port Arthur came into being in 1870 when S.J. Dawson chose it as the starting point for the overland road to Red River. The Lakehead cities were to become an important link in Canada's East-West transportation network. Immigrants were funnelled through the Lakehead, while the thousands of bushels of grain they grew were freighted back and loaded onto cargo ships. The Lakehead aspired to become the supply centre for Western Canada: by 1903 the CPR's coal handling operations at Fort William were the largest in North America.<sup>3</sup>

As a railway man Hugh Jackson rose to a level of respectability he would have never achieved had he stayed in the old world. When he came to Canada in his early twenties he settled in Truro, Nova Scotia. He worked on the Intercolonial Railway which ran throughout the Maritimes and Eastern Canada. Three years after his move to Port Arthur, Jackson was promoted to the position of railway conductor<sup>4</sup> and served on the first passenger train travelling from Fort William to Ignace.<sup>5</sup> Conductors, like locomotive engineers and firemen, were amongst the aristocracy of the North American working class. They were well paid, highly respected, and unionized. The Order of Railway Conductors formed its first Canadian local

<sup>2</sup>*Fort William Daily Times Journal* (FWD TJ), 29 March 1941.

<sup>3</sup>Jean Morrison, "Community and Conflict: A study of the working class and its relationships at the Canadian Lakehead, 1903-1913," MA thesis, Lakehead University, 1974, 4-8.

<sup>4</sup>FWD TJ, 5 August 1944.

<sup>5</sup>FWD TJ, 20 September 1910.

in 1880. In 1892, the conductors working in Western Canada, which included those based at the Lakehead, successfully conducted a week long strike against the CPR, winning the first union contract signed by the railway.<sup>6</sup> Union men, particularly skilled craftsmen, enjoyed considerable public respect at the Lakehead. In commenting on the candidates in the 1910 municipal election the *Daily News* wrote "as a rule the officers of a labor organization are among the best read people in the community." A long-time member of the Order of Railway Conductors, L.L. Peltier, served two terms as mayor of Fort William and eventually retired from the railway a wealthy property owner.<sup>7</sup> Hugh Jackson retired in 1907 to work as a federal fisheries inspector, "a position entirely to his liking [as] he was always keen on the sport of angling."<sup>8</sup>

When Hugh died of a heart attack in 1910 at the age of 64, the local papers reported the loss in detail, noting that "his popularity was general among his many acquaintances and in Rossport [a fishing village on Lake Superior largely inhabited by railway men and their families] every resident was his personal friend. The people of that city keenly felt the loss and many of them waited by the remains at the station until they were placed on the CPR train to be brought to Port Arthur at an early hour."<sup>9</sup>

Like his father, Clarence Hugh Jackson was a sportsman. In his youth he and his friends spent their Sunday's fishing on the Current River. During the summer he played lacrosse: "Every game was a battle to the death. ... We passed the hat among the crowd for expenses. During that period there was quite [a] lot of shipping into Fort William, and we occasionally would grab a player off the boats."<sup>10</sup> His obituary noted that "he enjoyed hunting and fishing and was known as an expert shot. He was one of the first fishermen to catch record speckled trout in the Nipigon River." As an adult he played a leading role in raising funds for the construction of the Fort William arena, and served as its president for a number of years.<sup>11</sup>

In his early teens Clarence Hugh Jackson left school to work as an office boy for G.T. Ware, a local lawyer. One of Ware's partners was Port Arthur mayor, T.A. Gorham. While at the firm Jackson witnessed a fabled event in Lakehead history. He was in the office when Mayor Gorham ordered municipal officials to seize a CPR freight train for non-payment of taxes. CPR President Sir William Van Horne was outraged. Vowing to make grass grow

<sup>6</sup>Hugh Tuck, "W.C. Van Horne and the 'Foreign Emissaries': The CPR Trainmen's and Conductors' Strike of 1892," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 6 (Autumn 1980), 73-5.

<sup>7</sup>Morrison, "Community and Conflict," 9-11.

<sup>8</sup>FWD TJ, 20 September 1910.

<sup>9</sup>FWD TJ, 20 September 1910.

<sup>10</sup>*Fort William Times Journal* (FWTJ), 29 March 1941.

<sup>11</sup>FWD TJ, 5 August 1944.



in the streets of Port Arthur,<sup>12</sup> he had all the CPR shops moved from Port Arthur to Fort William.<sup>13</sup>

Jackson left the law firm to work as a bookkeeper for M. Isbister and Company, a position he held until the firm went out of business four years later. In 1893, after running his own accountancy firm for two years he bought the stock of a bankrupt boot and shoe firm and went into the retail trade.<sup>14</sup> Three years later he merged with the clothing store run by future Mayor A.E. Rutledge, to create Rutledge & Jackson. Over the years Jackson took responsibility for the business's financial side while Rutledge "was looking after the clothing trade and making every buyer who came into the store wish he had twice as much money to spend."<sup>15</sup> In 1910 Rutledge sold his share in the business to Jackson.<sup>16</sup>

By then the firm had established its reputation as the city's leading clothing store. The men's clothing department of Rutledge & Jackson was referred to as "the oldest and most exclusive in Western Canada" and could "number among [its] regular customers many of the Twin Cities' best dressed men. ... R & J make a specialty of fur-lined and fur-trimmed overcoats and have a widespread reputation in this respect, making garments for many prominent Canadian and American citizens who visit our shores during the early fall months."<sup>17</sup>

In 1900, Jackson felt secure enough in his business career to declare himself an aldermanic candidate in the coming year's municipal election. He topped the polls and won re-election in 1902 and 1903.<sup>18</sup> At the end of his third term Jackson contested the mayoralty. In his "Address to the Electors" he outlined his philosophy of "enterprise, energy and economy in the town's affairs," promising to "support all our municipal franchises such as water, light, and telephone and do my best to have them carried on in the most business-like manner."<sup>19</sup>

Lakehead residents were proud of their municipally-owned utilities. According to C.H. Jackson, "[a]ny candidate had to put himself on record that he favored municipal ownership of utilities before he had a chance of being elected."<sup>20</sup> In 1904 he received the "most popular endorsement ever given a candidate for any office in the town." He was touted as the youngest mayor in Canada and as a man who "has always been identified with every

<sup>12</sup>FWTJ, 29 March 1941.

<sup>13</sup>Morrison, "Community and Conflict," 4-6.

<sup>14</sup>*The Fort William Herald* (FWH), 15 June 1907.

<sup>15</sup>FWDJTJ, 7 May 1911.

<sup>16</sup>FWDJTJ, 8 October 1910.

<sup>17</sup>FWDJTJ, 7 September 1910.

<sup>18</sup>FWDJTJ, 5 August 1944.

<sup>19</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

<sup>20</sup>FWTJ, 29 March 1941.

movement in which the town was interested and has taken front rank among the progressive citizens.”<sup>21</sup>

The Lakehead’s enthusiastic support for municipal ownership had little to do with socialism and everything to do with the anti-trust, anti-monopoly brand of populism which spread across Canada in the early years of the century.<sup>22</sup> Poor service, high rates, and the bribery of public officials were among the hallmarks of the private corporations which succeeded in winning the franchises to supply utilities in many Canadian cities in the late 19th century. The Union of Canadian Municipalities came to view public ownership as an antidote to the abuses that accompanied privately-owned monopolies. Indeed, one of the Union’s founders called for a crusade to “clean our streets of speculators and grafters.”<sup>23</sup>

Port Arthur and Fort William pioneered this movement, establishing municipally-owned electrical, streetcar, and water systems. An effort in the 1880s to create a municipal telephone system had been crushed by the Bell Telephone Company, but in 1901 poor service and high rates encouraged the cities to challenge this corporate Goliath once more. As chairman of the committee responsible for establishing the phone system, Jackson directed the battle against Bell. In response, the telephone giant managed to recruit the CPR to its side — the railway refused to allow civic telephones on its property and pressured its employees to use the Bell system exclusively. Bell contacted one of the city’s prominent unionists in hopes of getting him to launch a petition campaign against the civic administration. He did so, only to later expose the company’s involvement in the plan.

In 1904, Jackson responded to an attack in the *Ottawa Free Press* which spoke of the “disastrous experience” of municipal ownership in Fort William. Jackson said the Ottawa article had been written with help from Bell as part of its campaign against civic ownership in Ottawa. Bell was alarmed, he wrote, at the “growing inclination” for public ownership and its attacks on the Fort William telephone system exposed “to what extent an unscrupulous corporation will go to gain its ends.”<sup>24</sup>

Despite this, Jackson was no opponent of large corporations —one of the key events of his administration was the visit to Fort William of financier Herbert Holt, industrialist C.R. Hosmer, and Ogilvie Flour Mills president F.W. Thompson. Jackson won their support for a hydro-electric power development. In another coup, this one at the expense of Port Arthur, Jackson convinced the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to make Fort William

<sup>21</sup> FWDTJ, 5 January 1904.

<sup>22</sup> Morrison, “Community and Conflict,” 8.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Armstrong and H.V. Nelles, *Monopoly’s Moment: The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1839* (Toronto 1988), 145.

<sup>24</sup> Morrison, “Community and Conflict,” 39-46.

its inland headquarters. This agreement did not come cheaply; the railway received a \$250,000 bonus and a land grant of 1,600 acres which was taken from a nearby Indian reserve.<sup>25</sup>

In December 1904, the papers reported that the pressures of business had kept Jackson away from the last council meeting of the year.<sup>26</sup> It was to keep him away from the council chambers permanently as he decided not to seek re-election. After leaving office he was praised for having "attended to municipal matters the same as he attended to his own, and during his administration there was more systematizing than had ever been accomplished before."<sup>27</sup> In 1919, he came under pressure to run for mayor, but after briefly considering the idea he declined the nomination.<sup>28</sup> He made a bid for the mayor's office in 1929, but finished in third place.<sup>29</sup>

Civic politics at the turn of the century was supposed to be non-partisan, but civic politicians were involved in party politics. According to one article, evidently written by a Liberal, Jackson

professes to be a Conservative, but this is largely by reason of his training and environment; he is not prepared to give a very weighty reason for the faith that is within him. His inclinations are all turned in the direction of municipal and industrial work and he has never taken an active part in political propaganda; possibly from the fact that he has never yet fully made up his mind whether the fold in which he finds himself encompasses the sheep or the goats.<sup>30</sup>

His decision not to seek re-election did not mark a retirement from public life. Over his lifetime he belonged to all the right clubs and was very active in the Masonic Lodge. He served as a member of Royal Lodge No. 453, former past master of Fort William Lodge No. 415, and member of Superior Lodge of Perfection, Rose Croix, Scottish Rite.<sup>31</sup> In 1906, he chaired the city's industrial committee and the following year became the president of the board of trade, a position he would hold almost continually until 1914.<sup>32</sup> In June 1907, the Fort William *Daily Herald* reported that "whatever may have been the short-comings of the Fort William board of trade in the past, it is more than making good this year, and under the capable and business-like presidency of Mr. Clarence H. Jackson is ex-

<sup>25</sup>FWTJ, 29 March 1941.

<sup>26</sup>FWDTJ, 24 December 1904.

<sup>27</sup>C.S. Jackson (CSJ), personal files, untitled newspaper clipping, 11 May 1911.

<sup>28</sup>FWDTJ, 29 December 1919.

<sup>29</sup>FWDTJ, 7 January 1929.

<sup>30</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

<sup>31</sup>FWDTJ, 5 August 1944.

<sup>32</sup>FWDTJ, 5 August 1944.

pected by its friends to occupy a leading role in securing the great undertakings which are commencing to look this way."

Administratively Jackson was "able to lay his finger unerringly on the points at issue" and was "impatient of squandering time and wasting eloquence in matters of secondary importance, or which are beside the mark." This impatience was coupled with "the happy faculty of keeping the business of the meeting constantly in view and instead of allowing the time to be taken up by garrulous members in discussion any subject under heaven save the one on the motion paper, Mr. Jackson's quick to remark, 'Gentlemen, the motion now before the board, etc.'"<sup>33</sup> It was a trait that was to resurface in his son.

But there was another, perhaps more important, reason for Jackson's decision not to seek re-election; he had started a family. On 14 March 1904, he married Bertha Morris, the sister of the town solicitor, Fred Morris, and the daughter of J.K. Morris of Blenheim, Ontario. Their first child, Muriel, was born in 1905. Bertha's parents were born in Ireland in the 1830s. Her father became the Blenheim postmaster in 1856 and, by 1870, was authorized to issue marriage licences. Like many who received government appointments in those days, Morris was a "staunch Conservative," of whom it was said "his support of the Conservative candidate" led to "the production of many votes." He had his own political career and served as the reeve of Blenheim. During the 1860s, he enrolled in the local militia and rose to the position of captain. He saw action during the Fenian Raids of 1866 and, on his retirement, was granted 160 acres of land. This allowed him to operate an orchard and carry on a small lumber business, although he twice lost his mills to fires. Bertha was one of the eleven children of his second marriage to Sarah Green.<sup>34</sup> When he visited Fort William in 1915, the papers celebrated him as being "possibly the oldest postmaster in Ontario, if not in the Dominion, having held the office of postmaster for almost sixty years."<sup>35</sup>

The picture that emerges from most of the profiles written of Clarence H. Jackson is that of a hard-working, yet reticent man, who reserved his passions for the outdoors. One article took a protective tone towards its subject, noting that

he is really a good natured man, although he does not show it in his face as you meet him in every day walks of life. He is serious and that is what gives some people the impression that he is cross and not easily approachable. He has been coming

<sup>33</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

<sup>34</sup>CSJ, personal files, published by J.H. Beers & Co. of Toronto, 1904.

<sup>35</sup>FWD TJ, 12 July 1915.

### 13 Growing Up in the Lakehead

into contact with all classes of people all his life and no person can ever say he gave them a cold rebuff.<sup>36</sup>

Those in need might expect, and at times received, his warmth and generosity. In the 1980s, one Lakehead woman remembered the consideration Clarence Jackson had shown her father, when Jackson agreed to pay off the man's debts upon the death of his wife.<sup>37</sup>

From this history it is possible to see the influences that might shape a young political radical. There is the grandfather's trade unionism, the anti-corporate views of the populist father, the Lakehead's support for public ownership, and the inescapable presence of large-scale corporations in a resource-based community. It is tempting to stress these continuities — just like his father, C.S. Jackson took on Bell and like his grandfather he was a unionist. In the 20th century, it might be argued that Jackson developed and deepened these family commitments. This, however, is certainly not how C.S. Jackson viewed his life.

It does not appear he was terribly aware of his family history; indeed, he grew up with the impression that his grandfather had been a fisherman — a belief based on his later career and the fact that he had spent his early years in Nova Scotia.<sup>38</sup> He rarely spoke of his father with anything other than scorn, usually referring to him as his "old man," and never attempted to make the links between his concerns and those of his family. In Jackson's opinion, at least in his old age, his life had largely been lived out in rebellion against his family's class and social aspirations. He did not see himself as a member of a working-class family, but as a member of the upper middle class who had betrayed that class to serve the workers. As in all such accounts there is a great deal that is after-the-fact about Jackson's interpretation of his Lakehead childhood, but it certainly was the optic through which Jackson viewed and reconstructed his past. For Jackson, the family legacies were personal, not political; negative, not progressive.

Clarence Shirley Jackson was born on 12 June 1906. He was Clarence and Bertha's second child. Throughout his childhood he was known as Shirley. Clarence was followed by Florence in 1908, Morris in 1911, and Edna in 1914. Clarence H. Jackson may have been a community leader, but he delegated — or surrendered — authority at home to his wife. According to C.S. Jackson, his mother decided on the politics of the household — who was to be invited to each social occasion and who was to be snubbed. She wanted to scale the Lakehead social ladder. According to the papers, "it may be

<sup>36</sup>CSJ, personal files, untitled profile of C.H. Jackson by A. Spade, 11 May 1911.

<sup>37</sup>CSJ, personal files, personal correspondence, Nellie (Fisher) Wright to Betty Dyck, 7 December 1986.

<sup>38</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

doubted whether any home in the city dispenses a more gracious hospitality or occupies a more important position in the social life of the community than the Jackson establishment on the corner of John and Donald streets.”<sup>39</sup> To his mother, Jackson concluded, children were simply a means of making the correct impression. They were to be cultured, costumed, and displayed.

I remember when I was six or seven taking dance class — the chatisse, the sword dance, the highland fling; I had red curls down to my shoulders and wore Little Lord Fauntleroy suits. This was her life.<sup>40</sup>

→ A trade union leader of Jackson’s era was expected to be naturally gregarious, capable of conducting most of his business with his male companions in the bar. But while Jackson was certainly no teetotaler, he never had the easy style of the stereotypical organizer. With two sisters approximately his age and a family of six female cousins living nearby, young Shirley grew up largely in the company of women. “I felt very comfortable with the girls; all my life I could make friends very well with women but seldom with men.”<sup>41</sup> A 1910 newspaper social notice captures both the Jackson family’s social aspirations and the predominantly female nature of Jackson’s early social circle.

Mrs. J.H. Perry of John Street gave a delightful sleighing party this afternoon in honour of her little daughters: the Misses Myra and Jean. The sleigh filled, with happy boys and girls, drove through the streets of the two cities and returned to Mrs. Perry’s home where a dainty tea was served. The guests were Florence and Helen Dawson, Francis Robinson, Maggie and Martha Hogarth, Agnes Depew, Florence and Helen Burke, Muriel and Shirley Jackson, Margaret and Kathleen Bennett.<sup>42</sup>

While not wealthy, as a successful and popular politician, Clarence H. Jackson had joined the city’s social elite. The family entertained regularly, both in town and at their summer cottage. Jackson recalled late-night gambling parties where thousands of dollars changed hands across the table.<sup>43</sup> Aside from summering at nearby Loon Lake, the Jacksons took a regular winter holiday, without the children and travelled to Indiana Hot Springs or, on occasion, to Florida and Atlantic City. In the spring of 1913 the local newspapers noted C.H. Jackson had just returned from “New York

<sup>39</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

<sup>40</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 July 1990.

<sup>41</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>42</sup>FWDTJ, 12 February 1910.

<sup>43</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

and Atlantic City where he had spent six weeks on business and pleasure."<sup>44</sup> While on these trips the Jacksons left their children in the care of a retired school teacher.

The emotional reserve that Clarence H. Jackson exhibited in public life was not abandoned at home. According to C.S. Jackson,

our family wasn't a close family, not in an emotional sense. It was considered indecent to show emotion of any kind, so you buried it. This had a negative influence on my sisters and me. We became essentially loners in our relations with other people and found it embarrassing to show our feelings. It was very strange because the family next door were cousins of ours and they were very different. They were ordinary people and emotional. I used to find refuge there frequently.<sup>45</sup>

Although he could recall no specific falling out with his father, by the time he was fourteen "somehow our relationship had congealed .... We sort of drifted away from each other."<sup>46</sup>

Jackson was involved in the usual activities that might engage a young boy; he was a King Scout with "a sleeve full of badges," a choir boy, for which his parents paid him a nickel for each practice he attended and ten cents on Sundays, although he used to "raise hell during the sermons."<sup>47</sup> A 1907 newspaper article described Clarence H. Jackson as "a devoted son of the kirk; whenever the cause of local Presbyterianism needs a helping hand, none is readier to assist them than the subject of this sketch."<sup>48</sup> How devoted is open to question — in deference to his new wife, Clarence became an Anglican. Shirley remembered his parents as indifferent church-goers. While Bertha was involved in the Women's Auxiliary, her son felt she simply viewed church activities as another way to demonstrate her social standing. At church he also learned to play the chimes — an octave-and-a-half set with pump handles. His first performance on these came on 11 November 1918 and the assignment was simply to make as much noise as possible.

Clarence H. Jackson was said to possess "a fine library and [was] able to discuss intelligently the production of most of our standard and present writers."<sup>49</sup> Shirley and Muriel were encouraged by their father to make use of the library. It was here that the young autodidact took shape. Shirley claims to have read his way through the *Book of Knowledge*, Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, and Mark Twain, barely slowing down for a 20 volume history of Canada. From there he moved on to the public library. "I was

<sup>44</sup>FWDTJ, 7 March, 11 March 1913.

<sup>45</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>46</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 July 1990.

<sup>47</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>48</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

<sup>49</sup>FWH, 15 June 1907.

about 13 or 14 and I think I read everything in the public library that was worth reading on any question, including religion. I read the Bible from cover to cover. I said 'Well, that's not the only religious document,' so I read the Koran from cover to cover. Just kept reading anything that I could get my hands on that would begin to explain some of the damn things in life that you were up against."<sup>50</sup>

His readings led him to conclude that while most religious philosophies could be reduced to a belief in a brotherhood of man, organized religions were "a power structure, part of the establishment."<sup>51</sup> One is tempted to see this as an adult reinterpreting the adolescent's mental world. However, it was clear that by the time Jackson was in his teens he acted as if guided by two strong beliefs: that authority was there for the challenging and that he was smarter than just about everybody else. The boy was clearly very intelligent, regularly winning an honours standing at school. But he was also very stubborn and very demanding. "Probably my most distinguishing characteristic as a youngster was that I had a keen desire to acquire knowledge, and this was accompanied by a passion to experience something new all the time."<sup>52</sup> The subjects that engaged him in high school were mathematics and Latin. "I took to mathematics like a duck to water, it was challenging. I found Latin extremely interesting. It opened up a new appreciation of ancient history and the development of romance languages." His ability to get through his work quickly left Jackson with time on his hands, time which he devoted to trouble making.<sup>53</sup>

In 1980, a childhood schoolmate of Jackson's recalled that he "was constantly in trouble with his teachers over his political views and his activism, and it never surprised anyone that he would end up a union leader."<sup>54</sup> The discipline problem was compounded by a slight physical deformity. Jackson's mouth had a slight twitch, one which made the simplest smile suggestive of a sneer. "I would be smiling at something that had nothing to do with what was going on in the classroom and more than one teacher would say 'Wipe that smirk off your face, Jackson.' But I had not been smirking."<sup>55</sup>

There was a place where the Jackson family could enjoy a semblance of closeness. In the 1890s, Hugh Jackson and his railroad cronies built a log cabin at Loon Lake, 30 miles east of the Lakehead. They used it as a headquarters for their hunting and fishing trips. In subsequent years the

<sup>50</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>51</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>52</sup> CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>54</sup> *Thunder Bay Chronicle Herald*, April 1980.

<sup>55</sup> Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 July 1990.



lake's clear water, sandy beaches, and plentiful supply of trout, perch, and bass attracted a small cottage community. Clarence Jackson built a family cottage next to his father's hunting cabin, and the family regularly spent four or five months of the year at the lake, living what Shirley described as "a very comfortable, very pleasant life."<sup>56</sup>

Deer, moose, and bear were common sights at Loon Lake and a walk of a few hundred yards would plunge anyone deep into the bush. The cottagers were quick to import the trappings of Lakehead society to the wilderness by making sure their celebrations were properly recorded. On 29 July 1913 the Fort William *Daily Times Journal* reported that Shirley Jackson "with a spool of thread for fishing line and bended pin for hook caught an eight-inch trout with his primitive tackle."<sup>57</sup> Shirley had many vivid memories of his family's life at Loon Lake and of his father's close relationship with the men who ran the rail cars. "Our cottage was close to the railway tracks and at the top of a long, steep grade. During World War I, heavy trains going west had to be broken in two, six miles to the east, with the engine bringing up half of the train at a time and then going back for the second half. This gave us the chance to ride back with the engineer and return in the caboose."<sup>58</sup>

Neil Young, a former union co-worker of Jackson's, once described him as a country boy, happiest when he was out in the woods chopping down a tree. Clearly C.S. Jackson came into his own at Loon Lake: "I was quite athletic. As a result of our upbringing at the lake I could swim, boat, sail, canoe, row from very early in life. We spent a lot of time just out in the bush with little axes, building little tree houses and building lean-to's out of boughs. As kids we spent about half the day away from the family."<sup>59</sup> The Jackson family regularly won the aggregate trophy at the Loon Lake Regatta, while Shirley often took individual honours at swimming and boating. Despite his athletic prowess he was shy and embarrassed about his accomplishments, finding it excruciating to come out of the water at the end of a race if the shore was lined with spectators.<sup>60</sup>

World War I only lightly touched life at Loon Lake. Aside from providing the youngsters with free and exciting train rides, the war provided an excuse for a variety of fund-raising social events. C.H. Jackson was a leading member of the local Liberty Bond campaign in Fort William and his family followed suit. At Loon Lake in 1918, "a most successful open air concert was given ... by the children of Mr. and Mrs. C.H. Jackson on the spacious

<sup>56</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>57</sup>FWDTJ, 29 July 1913.

<sup>58</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 13.

<sup>59</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>60</sup>FWDTJ, 8 August 1914.

verandah of their cottage, the proceeds amounted to \$20, which will be equally divided between the Fort William Canadian prisoners' aid fund and the Port Arthur Red Cross. The program was promoted and carried out by Florence Jackson, who had Muriel Jackson for director and Shirley Jackson for chairman and stage manager." The show included a production of Cinderella, fortune telling, a recitation of the Irish Washerwoman, and the singing of "Blighty."<sup>61</sup>

It was at Loon Lake that Jackson got his first job. Across the lake from the Jackson cottage lived an English remittance man, known to all as "The Captain." A slightly mysterious character, he lived in a log cabin of squared timbers with dove-tailed joints and wooden pegs. He kept a large collection of army and hunting guns and a baby grand piano. The young people would often drift in their canoes at night listening to him play the classics on that piano. The Captain was a mining engineer with a number of mining claims in the area. Jackson's job was to go on day-trips with him, cutting down trees, clearing bush, and uncovering rock in preparation for drilling. His work there won the twelve-year-old boy a reputation as a hard-worker.

This reputation landed him summer work as the camp boy for a survey team. In recounting these years, Jackson usually focussed on his ability to master complex and dangerous tasks, and often to outsmart adults. Only one recollection of his early working life reflected poorly on him. That was when, while he was supposed to be setting up camp for a survey crew, he was spooked by a skunk. Even that story contained an element of boast, since the frightened youth climbed out on a railway bridge and waited for hours for the crew to return. As the sun went down, the bridge began to contract in the cool air, creaking and squealing in manner that left the youth terrified.

The next year the president of the Provincial Paper Company, who was a friend of the family, hired Jackson to work as a house boy at his cabin on a lake by Black Bay Peninsula near Port Arthur. Logs, which had been cut the previous winter, were being flushed down a nearby river to Lake Superior. Jackson soon learned how to handle an outboard motor, traveling up and down the lake with messages from the president to the crew which was operating an "alligator," a large steam-powered skow that was being used to push a boom of logs to the dam at the river's mouth.<sup>62</sup>

That summer was the first of many that Jackson would spend working in Northwestern Ontario's pulp and lumber industry. In the late 1890s, investors in central Canada and the United States recognized Northwestern Ontario, or "New Ontario" as it was called then, as a treasure chest of minerals, wood, and hydro-electric power. The Canadian newsprint indus-

<sup>61</sup>FWD TJ, 26 August 1918.

<sup>62</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980, and 2 December 1980.

try grew in response to the demands of American newspaper publishers who, by the 1890s, were running short of American-produced paper. Many of the early paper companies in the Northwest were founded by men like J.A. Mathieu and E.W. Backus who were simply following the disappearing stands of timber north into Canada.

After the turn of the century the construction of new paper and saw mills began to mushroom in Northern Ontario. In Dryden, for example, construction on a mill started in 1911; in Iroquois Falls in 1912; and in Smooth Rock in 1918. It was an industry of boom and bust; in 1921, many of the mills closed for several months but business soon picked up and by 1926 there were new mills in Fort William, Port Arthur, Kapuskasing, and Kenora. In that year, four-fifths of the newsprint produced in Canada was shipped to the United States.<sup>63</sup>

When he was only fourteen, Jackson was hired by Provincial Paper to run the commissariat at a drive camp. A contemporary described the river drive as the cheapest and most efficient way to ship the logs from the remote camps to the mills where they would be processed into pulp. At the camp where Jackson worked, the crew left at seven in the morning after eating a hearty breakfast. Since they stayed out on the river until after dark, Jackson had little to do during the days. Thus, he successfully lobbied to go out on the drive. Armed with his peavey, a six foot pole with a point and hook at one end, Jackson said he came to master the most dangerous job on the river, breaking up log jams.

In the summer of 1921, Provincial Paper hired him to check on the condition of the logging camps which had been shut down since the end of winter. The remote camps were spread out over a 200 mile area that stretched east from the Lakehead to Capreol.

I would travel by train to the take-off point, and then hike along logging roads for fifteen or twenty miles into the bush, carrying my pack and the heavy metal fire signs. Often I had to camp overnight in the bush. A chipmunk rustling through dry leaves would sound like an elephant. I carried a Smith & Wesson revolver with me for protection but never had to use it. Other times I spent nights alone in the closed up logging camps.<sup>64</sup>

On other occasions he would spend the night with small contractors, referred to as "homesteaders," who did individual cutting for the paper

<sup>63</sup>Tom Traves, *The State Enterprise: Canadian Manufacturers and the Federal Government, 1917-1931* (Toronto 1979), 29; Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto 1987), 11, 14, and 18; P.N. Oliver, "Howard Ferguson, the Timber Scandal and the Leadership of the Ontario Conservative Party," *Ontario History*, 62, 3 (September 1970), 166.

<sup>64</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

company. If he arrived on a Saturday night, he would be asked to stay for a "hoe-down":

Every homesteader had his own still and this bootleg liquor helped to liven up the dances. During the prohibition period we called these homesteaders the 'Forty Thieves' and they were the source of much of the bootleg whiskey sold in the Twin Cities.<sup>65</sup>

The following summer he went timber cruising with the Provincial Paper Company. Timber cruisers were the advance scouts of the lumber industry. They travelled the woodlands and made estimates of the amount of each type of trees in a cutting area. Based on these calculations the logging companies developed their winter cutting plans. The timber cruisers were highly valued because their skills were the fruit of years of work in the woods. They were well rewarded, often times making a daily salary ten times higher than that of a logger.<sup>66</sup> Jackson made \$90 a month for his work. It was a dream job for Jackson. The teams would be travelling for six or seven weeks at a time in twelve-foot cedar canoes, and living off the land as much as possible.

It also introduced him to the type of banditry that the timber barons of Northwestern Ontario, men who had often graced his family's dinner parties, were all too happy to engage in.

We were not inside the Crown land very long before we found that some company had been in there and illegally taken two years worth of wood. The owner had stumping rights just outside the Crown land. There was a creek that ran from the Crown land through his land. He just went in and cleaned her out and brought the wood down the creek.<sup>67</sup>

This was far from an isolated incident. In the words of one historian of Ontario's industrial development, the "forest reserves, as it turned out, were little more than private preserves for the lumber industry, which could be raided and plundered by anyone with political influence."<sup>68</sup> Provincial Conservative forestry minister Howard Ferguson, who was later to become Ontario's premier, engaged in what a subsequent Royal Commission was to describe as "very objectionable, as well as illegal, practice" in granting timber rights by private agreement, rather than public tender. The commission found that in one case the minister had sold a timber limit in the

<sup>65</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>66</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 47-8.

<sup>67</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>68</sup> H.V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario 1849-1941* (Toronto 1974), 211.

rich Quetico forest reserve to the Shevlin, Clarke Company for less than half its two million dollar value.<sup>69</sup>

Jackson's portrayal of himself as a shy and awkward young man does not square with the stories he told of his growing taste for wild-living, a taste that was easily satisfied in a port city like Fort William. Prohibition was in effect, and under any circumstances it would have been illegal to sell liquor to a fourteen-year-old boy. Jackson and a group of five or six friends had little problem surmounting these obstacles: they bought liquor permits for "medicinal purposes" from corrupt doctors. When that failed Jackson simply watered his father's Scotch, which he preferred to his mother's rye, both of which were displayed on the family sideboard.

It wasn't unusual for us to get a forty ounce bottle of booze, down it in about an hour at a Chinese restaurant and then head off for a dance in neighbouring Port Arthur. The Port Arthur gangs would do the same thing in reverse — new fields to conquer was the idea.<sup>70</sup>

Jackson's public school career ended in the fall of 1922. He was in grade thirteen and would have graduated with honours had his lack of respect for his teachers not led to his being suspended. To be allowed back he would have had to make a formal apology to the assembled teachers. Along with his parents, church and scout leaders all pressured him to come to terms with the teachers. Throughout Jackson's life this sort of pressure was always counter-productive. He claimed his parents only wanted him to graduate to spare themselves the social humiliation of having their son expelled. For his part Jackson was more than happy to embarrass his parents, it reinforced his self-image as a loner and a rebel.

Embarrassed or not, his parents offered to send him to any private school in Eastern Canada to which he wanted to go. However, he said, "I had already acquired an antipathy to the upper classes of our community and the social milieu in which my parents moved so I turned down that proposition. Instead I chose to stay at home and take a commercial course in typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping."<sup>71</sup> Accounting may seem to be one of the milder forms of social rebellion against the upper classes, but it was a skill that was to serve Jackson well.

Upon graduating from the commercial college, Jackson took a job with the Continental Wood Products, a subsidiary of the International Paper Company, at its operations in Elsas, Ontario. A small lumbering community, Elsas was situated between Hornepayne and Folyet on the Canadian

<sup>69</sup>Nelles, *The Politics of Development*, 385.

<sup>70</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>71</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 19.

National Railway. Jackson was hired as secretary to a young man who was the son of the town reeve. As was often the case, Jackson came to the conclusion that the man he was working for was a fool. "It was evident to me that the lad's job was strictly token. He didn't know what he was supposed to be doing and certainly didn't need a secretary."<sup>72</sup> Bored with his duties Jackson became initiated into the various jobs of a lumber camp, starting on the night fire patrol, a job which involved running a three-wheeled velocipede up and down the twelve miles of track in the camp lumberyard. From there he graduated to running the wood burning saddle-back steam engine when the engineer needed a break. "I became a scaler, sorting different grades of the white pine lumber for stacking and shipping."<sup>73</sup>

He was never one of the boys and took no pleasure from the dormitory which housed several hundred men. "It was on the rough side, although the food was good. There were logging people from all over the country — all over the world for that matter. There were big card games every night in the basement. Most of the money the company paid out in wages came back to the company because it was collected by a lot of gangs, syndicates that operated in the bunkhouse — the checks were never even cashed."<sup>74</sup> In his eyes, the world was studded with rackets, and smart people did not get caught. As soon as he could he moved in with a local family. There, he taught himself to play the mandolin by ear and was soon performing in a small mandolin orchestra.

He had one other form of recreation. "The fire warden at the main CNR station several miles south had a lovely daughter and I beat out the rest of the competition. I used to spend quite a few weekends and the odd evening down there. We'd go the rounds on the velocipede on the track and at other times we'd go out in the canoe. It made life a little bit easier to take." Jackson may well have been more comfortable with women than men, but there was more than a hint of misogyny in his attitudes towards them. Beating out the competition was as important as winning anyone's affections.<sup>75</sup>

After a year in Elsas, Jackson was back at the Lakehead working as a cost clerk with the Fort William Paper Company, a subsidiary of the Abitibi Power and Paper Company. His job involved costing out the various mill operations by department and on an overall basis. To do this he said he was given the run of the departments and was in frequent consultation with the various department heads. "On occasion, I even participated in the meetings of the collective department managers — quite a responsibility for a

<sup>72</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 20.

<sup>73</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 21.

<sup>74</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 July 1990.

<sup>75</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

young man still not twenty." From there it was but a short jump to a standard Jackson assertion about his centrality in any activity that he was involved in: "In fact, I was virtually running the mill; the manager didn't spend too much time at the mill and I could talk rings around the cost accountant in terms of what the real costs were."<sup>76</sup>

The job gave him an opportunity to study the monthly breakdown of every newsprint operation in North America. Included in the statistics were the overall figures on industry output, consumption, and construction data on new paper mills. "I'm interested in figures, that's my curiosity. It seemed plain to me that over-production was just around the corner. The government continued to issue new cutting permits and allow new mills to be built. This was at a time when the production from Canadian mills was already within one or two per cent of the total consumption demand of North America."<sup>77</sup>

The 1920s were a period of phenomenal growth for the pulp and paper industry. Between 1919 and 1928 investment in the Canadian pulpwood industry grew by 375 per cent and production rose by 220 per cent. New companies were being formed by investors and old ones were revived. The Ontario government was more than willing to expand timber rights, which were the collateral used to get the companies off the ground. By 1926, production began to outstrip demand; this spelled disaster for the mills because the expansion was based on 100 per cent production.<sup>78</sup> "Sure enough, I go to work one day and there's a telegram 'Shut 'er down'. And Abitibi shut down ten mills that day, right across Ontario and Quebec."<sup>79</sup> There were widespread lay-offs and shut-downs. In its attempt to save the industry, the Ontario government reduced its stumpage fees and eased up on safety and conservation regulations.

Jackson was not immediately affected by the Abitibi shut-down. He was kept on salary for a couple of months to help close the mill down. He and other men worked round the clock shifts to bring several thousand logs out of the mill pond and into the wood yard. From there he went on to a number of jobs in the heart of the Lakehead economy such as the rail yards and grain elevators that were used to ship hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain every year. His first job was in the "hump yard," as the CPR's marshalling yard was called, riding and breaking freight cars. The cars were pushed up an incline, called a hump, cut off and then rolled down onto one of the many collecting lines. It paid well, but according to Jackson the hard work and uncertain hours led him to seek out a job in the giant Wheat Pool

<sup>76</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>77</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>78</sup>Nelles, *The Politics of Development*, 444.

<sup>79</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

elevators emptying box cars full of grain. This, he quickly discovered, was hard work indeed.

Inside the doors on the grain cars was a wooden barrier that had to be chopped through with an axe before the car could be emptied. "It took an exceptionally strong man to do it," Jackson said. Emptying the car was even harder. Armed with a three-and-a-half foot by four-and-a-half foot board that had a length of cable attached to it, Jackson climbed through the grain to the back of the car. He held the board at the proper angle while it was pulled forward through the grain by engine.

The difficulty was the terrific strain on your leg muscles as you repeatedly climbed back up the steep and yielding grain to get back to the end of the car. Just to clear out one car took twenty trips. Newcomers to the job seldom made it to the second car of grain. When you finished emptying a car and jumped down to the platform, your legs gave way painfully.

Jackson said that he was left with a choice between "the physical pain of the job or the emotional pain of failure." In keeping with the themes he identified for his life he decided, "rather grimly," to continue.<sup>80</sup>

But having proven he could take it, Jackson asked to be transferred to another job. His new job was in the annex located at the top of the big round bins that make port elevators so distinctive. He supervised the conveyor belts which hauled the grain to the top of the elevator and made sure the belts emptied their load into the appropriate grade bins. The grain dust was so thick that Jackson decided to quit and go to work for his father.<sup>81</sup>

Clarence Jackson had been hoping his son would take over the business, but it soon became clear that Shirley's future did not lie in sales.

Society women, often friends of the family, would come in. I would pull everything off the shelves to show them what we had. Then they would say, 'I think I can get it cheaper down the street.' My reply would be, 'Go down the street and get it.' That neither sold goods nor endeared me to my father's customers.<sup>82</sup>

When his father left the store to spend the afternoon at his club, Jackson took the opportunity to leave as well. "Finally my father fired me. I was greatly relieved." While his father may have been disappointed by this lack of interest in the family business, he was losing interest in it as well and would sell it in 1928.

This brought to an end Jackson's working life at the Lakehead. In his family background there were plenty of experiences that could have turned

<sup>80</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 26-7.

<sup>81</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated draft memoir, 27.

<sup>82</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.



a young man towards left-wing politics. Jackson had first-hand exposure to the chicanery and rapacity of the giants of the resource industry, observed their labour policies first hand, and lived and sweated among members of the working class. Yet closeness to the workers apparently bred few bonds of solidarity. In his recollections of this period he never spoke or wrote of friendships that he struck with co-workers. He never made contact with any of the frustrated union radicals working in the lumber industry. And he never spoke of involving himself in any form of collective resistance to the rough working conditions he faced. Indeed, he framed all these problems in terms of personal challenges: it was a mark of his ability that he could do hard, dangerous, difficult work. It is not hard to imagine that older workers might have seen young show-offs like Jackson as a hindrance to improving working conditions. Jackson harboured hostility towards management, but this flowed from the fact that he resented their authority over him, not his fellow workers. In either case, it is safe to say that in 1928 class struggle was not uppermost in Jackson's mind.

On 17 December 1928, Clarence S. Jackson married Kathleen Emma Grant McLeod in Fort William. It was not a very happy affair. The bride was pregnant and the groom reluctant. Despite his shyness Jackson had never wanted for a social life. Because of his many sisters and female cousins there were always plenty of young women around the Jackson household. Kathleen was one of them. Two years younger than Jackson, she was the daughter of E.H. McLeod, a former factor with Revillon Frères, the Montréal-based competitor to the Hudson's Bay Company and now manager of J.H. Beamish's Fairway Store in Hurkett, Ontario. Her parents had travelled with her to Ombabika Bay on Lake Nipigon by canoe when she was six weeks old. After graduating from a commercial college in Port Arthur she found office work at the Lakehead.

Jackson started to see her socially, although in later years he never spoke of any real affection for her. On one occasion she invited Jackson down to the family cottage at Lake Nipigon. Jackson's description of what happened next speaks volumes: "We were frolicking and she got pregnant and would not do a damn thing about it. I was stuck."<sup>83</sup> He argued against marriage because he had not settled into a career. It would be disastrous, he said, if he were forced to take a job while he was still trying to understand the world.

I felt I would suffocate mentally under the restrictions and duties of marriage. I already knew that without some dedication to a job I would refuse the discipline entailed and the dictates of bosses whose careers, or jobs, depended on how well they exploited people who were under them.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 July 1990.

<sup>84</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

It was his father who eventually prevailed upon him to marry.

He was not making a demand but an appeal to my sense of responsibility and, I suspect, family pride and social status which were the warp and woof of my mother's life. I was then, and have been all my life, an easy mark for an appeal to responsibility, principle, and logic.<sup>85</sup>

Jackson did not give in easily, at the time of the marriage Kathleen was almost nine months pregnant. And there were limits to the claims that responsibility could place on him; he left town a week after the wedding to seek accounting work in Montréal.

On 1 January 1929, Thomas Robert Jackson was born. As the New Year's baby his birth was greeted with the customary page one publicity.<sup>86</sup> His brief life was rounded with tragedy — he died of impetigo on the afternoon of 23 January of that year. His father was not present to either celebrate his birth or mourn his death, but he always blamed the attending doctors for the death of his first son.

<sup>85</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>86</sup>FWD TJ, 2 January 1929.

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## 2 The Montréal Years 1929-1934

The Montréal C.S. Jackson moved to in 1929 was the nation's financial capital. Canada's two largest banks, the Royal and the Bank of Montréal, and two smaller banks had their headquarters there. The assets of all the Québec-based banks totalled more than two billion dollars. The banks, brokerage houses, and trust firms all had towering office buildings along St. James Street. The city was at the tail end of a population explosion. In 1901 there were 345,000 people living in Montréal, but by 1929 there were just under a million Montréalers. Most of them derived little benefit from the tremendous wealth concentrated in their city because the Montréal-based financial institutions were largely controlled by English-Canadians who had little interest in addressing the needs of French Canadians.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most representative of the English financial institutions was the one Jackson went to work for — the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada. The company was founded in 1871 by Matthew Gault. An Irish-born manager of two foreign-owned insurance agencies, Gault wanted to create a firm that would wrest some of the insurance business out of foreign hands. The company's most adroit move was to introduce one of the world's first unconditional life insurance policies.<sup>2</sup> But while Sun Life may have been an expression of Gault's nationalism, it also was one of the first Canadian companies to expand internationally. By 1899 the company was selling policies in Africa, the West Indies, Asia, and South America. By 1927, Sun Life had 24 branch offices in Canada, 32 in the United States, 21 in the British Isles, and 32 others world-wide. With assets of \$400 million and an annual growth rate of 23 per cent, company president Thomas B. Macaulay could boast "we set our own pace."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, and Jean-Claude Robert, *Quebec: A History 1867-1929* (Toronto 1983), 352, 360-1.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Schull, *The Century of the Sun: The First Hundred Years of the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada* (Toronto 1971), 24-5.

<sup>3</sup>Schull, *The Century of the Sun*, 59-60.

Sun Life dominated the Montréal scene physically, as well as economically. In May 1914, the cornerstone of the imposing Sun Life Building on Montréal's Dominion Square was laid. The building, with its fluted Corinthian columns, was a spectacular white-collar factory designed to house 750 clerks. In 1926, the building was expanded in an effort to "make the whole structure an effective workshop"<sup>4</sup> — one that employed nearly 1,500 people.<sup>5</sup>

Jackson came to Sun Life largely by chance. He had planned on finding work in Montréal through a cousin in the brokerage business, but on his arrival he decided to see what he could drum up on his own. Winning a job with Sun Life would turn out to be an accomplishment in and of itself. During the 1920s Sun Life placed a heavy emphasis on its pre-employment screening program and employee training. The testing was supervised by Edward E. Duckworth, a former school master, whose goal was to "introduce scientific methods for the selection of the staff, and to promote the competence of its members."<sup>6</sup> Macaulay laid down the dictum that "we must not knowingly engage any man on our clerical force who does not have sufficient education and ability to make him likely to rise to the position of a chief clerk."<sup>7</sup> After applying for a position with Sun Life, Jackson was treated to a battery of tests.

First you have an interview — you fill out a form with your whole life's history. 'What are your interests?' So I put down that I was interested in economics, philosophy, etc. On the basis of your application, they decide which examination they would give you. One was just to see how well you've done scholastically, the second was similar, but on a higher level. I was given the third one. It was a sort of skill and flexibility test with mathematical questions like 'take this progression four steps further' and so on.

They wanted you to give them similes, that was easy enough. Then they had a question where they gave you two figures. They want you to subtract them, divide them all in base five. Now that's a stickler. I breezed through it.<sup>8</sup>

Three weeks later he went to work in the actuarial department of the "fortress," as employees called the Sun Life Building. Jackson had never seen such a place in his life.

<sup>4</sup>Graham S. Lowe, *Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminization of Clerical Work* (Toronto 1987), 107-8.

<sup>5</sup>Schull, *The Century of the Sun*, 49 and 60.

<sup>6</sup>Lowe, *Women in the Administrative Revolution*, 107.

<sup>7</sup>Schull, *The Century of the Sun*, 52

<sup>8</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

It was a fortress, run like a military barracks. Work hours were from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You had to punch in on a time clock. You weren't permitted to smoke except in the lounge area, and you needed a permit even for that. You could not leave your section, even to go to the toilet, without a pass from your section chief. Guards patrolled the corridors to enforce the pass system and violations were treated with disciplinary measures.

The noon hour break had to be taken in the lounge and restaurant on the top floor. We were allowed 52 minutes for lunch; the extra 8 minutes was to make up for the time lost in July and August when work ended at 4:30 p.m. instead of 5:00 p.m. You could not leave the building without the consent of the department head.<sup>9</sup>

Jackson felt he was excelling in his actuarial work. However, he had no interest in taking the six years of university night courses that were required of actuaries. Nor did he relish a job in sales, which he concluded was the essence of the insurance industry. After three months on the job Jackson resigned. The chief actuary tried to talk him out of his decision, pointing out that he was due for a raise and possibly a transfer to the company's Chilean office. When Jackson refused to reconsider, the company secretary attempted to change his mind, a bit of flattery that even Jackson found amazing. Since no one would tell him how much of a raise he would receive, the ever-suspicious Jackson left.<sup>10</sup>

#### CANADIAN INDUSTRIES

Before leaving Sun Life, Jackson had secured himself a position in the treasury department of Canadian Industries Limited (CIL). CIL was created in 1927, the product of a partnership between two international chemical giants — the American-based Du Pont and the British Imperial Chemical Industries. Between them, these two giants owned 92 per cent of CIL, and as a US court was to later rule, they used their control of the company to suppress competition. Originally little more than a holding company for Canadian Explosives Limited (which was involved in the production of paint, plastics, and an artificial leather known as Fabrikoid as well as explosives), CIL was soon operating a variety of subsidiaries including Grasselli Chemical Company, National Ammonia, and the Canadian Salt Company. Its potential for growth was severely hampered by the fact that its parent companies refused to allow the company to export.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>C.S. Jackson, personal files, undated draft memoir, 31.

<sup>10</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>11</sup>Graham D. Taylor, "Management Relations in a Multinational Enterprise: The Case of Canadian Industries Limited, 1928-1948," in Tom Traves, ed., *Essays in Canadian Business History* (Toronto 1984), 152-3.

Jackson started at the relatively high wage of \$150 a month, but after comparing his salary to a number of co-workers, he concluded he was being underpaid. His first job was doing cost accounting for three CIL plants — the Grasselli Chemical Company plant in Hamilton, the Fabrikoid Division, and the Pyralin Division. He quickly came into conflict with his supervisor. Jackson felt that he was being penalized because he was a faster worker than the others in his department. His supervisor strove to get three free nights of overtime out of treasury department workers and simply piled up the work to make sure he got it. "I'm not behind in my work until you shove more work at me and that puts me behind," Jackson argued.<sup>12</sup> The story is another example of Jackson's sense of being individually ill-used. And it is worth noting that in recounting it Jackson did not suggest that the other slower working department members should not have to work unpaid overtime.

After two years with the company Jackson was handling CIL's consolidated balance sheet. Again, he felt he was demonstrating near superhuman skills. "I had to break down the overall balance sheet into fourteen separate companies, distribute assets, liabilities, and everything else — it required considerable judgement. When I first started that was about a three day job; after about six months on the job I could do it in about a day." His job began to haunt his dreams. One nightmare, where the numbers in the columns turned to words, stayed with him all his life.<sup>13</sup>

CIL recruited its senior managers from the families of the Montréal élite — the residents of Westmount. After getting their Masters of Business Administration from places such as Harvard, these children of the Montréal upper class would be turned over to people like Jackson who were expected to show them the corporate ropes. "They were not bad fellows. They would try and be sociable and take me out for a drink at their clubs. In Montréal there are about five levels of clubs, and I got up as high as the third from bottom."<sup>14</sup>

Jackson came close a number of times to taking a few steps up the corporate ladder himself. He said he twice came close to winning promotions to the position of plant manager. He felt that his apparent lack of discipline stood in his way. Once he failed to turn up to work because a pair of Lakehead friends who played for the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team had looked him up while in town and they had spent the night drinking. Jackson concluded, "I could never have handled a job like that without violating all the managerial rules. I would have taken the promotion, but I would have probably got fired within six months."

<sup>12</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>13</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>14</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

At CIL, Jackson was learning more than cost accounting. He could see the company was using a variety of bookkeeping techniques to shift costs from one division to another in an effort to reduce corporate taxes.

In handling the balance sheets at CIL you were privy to some of these deals. Not that they were necessarily open, but you smell the bloody things. Everything had to be covered up, but I was not in the covering up department, I was in the totalizing department. It was evident to me that the job of the auditing company — in this case Price Waterhouse — was to avoid tax by whatever means available. The various devices they employ are legal or semi-legal. A balance sheet can be written any way you want to write it.

During that period I read quite a lot on auditing; accounting principles and so on. I didn't take a course, but used to follow anything in the press and anything that came into the office — advice to business or how to get around this, that, and the other thing. It was openly admitted many times in the auditing journals that there were three balance sheets. If you wanted to sell stock, you wrote it up one way. If you wanted to fool the public, you wrote it up another way. Then there was the real one that the board of directors may or may not get. It all depended on how you handled contingency funds and things that of that kind; what goes into reserve, what goes into depreciation, all of those things. They're all profit, but they are hidden profit.

All this enabled me in later years to meet the companies on their own ground. Many times I was able to take them on regarding the accuracy of their own balance sheets. It was the legacy of all that work which stood me in good stead. By the time I got into negotiations with General Electric, Westinghouse, and these companies I could take their balance sheet apart pretty well.<sup>15</sup>

#### "WORSE THAN BEING MARRIED"

It is apparent that with the death of their first son, Jackson considered his brief marriage to Kathleen to be over. After he started working at Sun Life, Jackson received letters from Kathleen, who wanted to join him in Montréal. He resisted at first, but in the end agreed to give the marriage a second chance. Jackson had been sharing an apartment with two friends, but in the summer of 1930 he and Kathleen moved into another apartment. It was an unhappy reunion and on a number of occasions he spoke of his wife's unwillingness to make sacrifices. His statement that six months after her arrival in Montréal she was pregnant again carries the implication that she reached that condition singlehandedly. He recalled telling her, "My dear lady I am not settled down here yet, your family is in a better position to take care of this than I am.' So I sent her home."

<sup>15</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, undated.

After the birth of their son Robert, Kathleen wrote to Jackson, asking that she be allowed to join him in Montréal. "Stupid me, I am a sucker for a plea. I brought her down again. In about a year she was pregnant again — much my fault as anyone else's. This time I said that is it. She went back home and a daughter was born."<sup>16</sup> The daughter, Betty, was born in 1932. All of Jackson's children were born in Port Arthur. In 1932, Kathleen moved to the Northwest Ontario town of Ignace. She went to work as a bookkeeper in the Fairway Store that her father owned. In 1937, she asked for a divorce, which was not finalized until 1945. Jackson never laid eyes on his daughter until she was a grown woman. His relationship with his children raises many difficult questions, for which there are no clear answers. He never expressed any regrets about abandoning them, nor did he offer explanations for his lack of interest in them. Indeed, in his life's narrative, they were examples of the mistakes into which his first wife had forced him.

After Kathleen left, Jackson roomed with a variety of people, including William Powell Jr., the son of the film actor, who also worked in the treasury department of CIL. "We shared an apartment, it was worse than being married" he said later, an observation that speaks volumes about his attitudes towards marriage. "He wouldn't go anywhere without me, and I couldn't go anywhere without him." After a winter with Powell, Jackson was glad to move to a cottage at the island's west end. "I would get out there about five o'clock, get in my little canoe, paddle away out in the lake. If there was good wind it would take half an hour to get out there and I'd come back in five minutes."<sup>17</sup>

While Kathleen was in Port Arthur, Jackson took up with a young woman who worked in the brokerage business as a secretary. Brokerage wages were low, but there could be lavish presents if the market was hot. For her year-end bonus she was given a new Ford convertible. Since she could not drive, and had no interest in learning how, Jackson had use of the car. In his version of the story he cut a jaunty figure. Wearing a rakish beret he would pick her up every day after work and then drive her all through the Québec countryside, dropping her off at eleven in the evening before returning to his island retreat. On occasion he would take the car for trips to Toronto — a journey he claimed to make in an impossible seven hours.<sup>18</sup>

#### GREAT DEPRESSIONS

Jackson made the jump to CIL just before the great stock market crash of 1929. On 29 October the Toronto and Montréal Stock Markets collapsed.

<sup>16</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>17</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 2 December 1980.

<sup>18</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, undated.



Sixty-two stocks plunged to their lowest values ever and corporate giants like the International Nickel Company and Brazilian Light and Traction had their values reduced by hundreds of millions of dollars.<sup>19</sup> The crash, which wiped out many middle-class investors, was only the prelude to the Great Depression, the decade-long economic crisis that would bring untold suffering to countless Canadians. During that period, the gross national product fell by 42 per cent, unemployment hit 30 per cent of the labour force, and 1 out of 5 Canadians became dependent on public relief. Montréalers were particularly hard hit. The city did not have its own social welfare system. Instead, municipal funding was channelled through four religious charities. In 1932, Montréal led other Canadian cities in terms of the per cent of its population on relief (30 per cent) and in terms of the meagreness of the relief offered on a per capita basis (84¢).<sup>20</sup> For many Montréalers, the abandoned CNR station/hotel complex, little more than a crater dubbed "Sir Henry's hole" after the railway's president Sir Henry Thornton, was a daily reminder of the decade's broken dreams and failed ambitions.<sup>21</sup>

The Depression, which for many young people of Jackson's generation was the trigger which sent them on a leftward path, had no immediate impact on him. His father, who had sold the family business and invested his money in department store stock, was wiped out in the crash. Jackson borrowed several hundred dollars from CIL to help tide his father over, but beyond that, the Depression did not affect his life in Montréal.

I had good jobs, I was working in the treasury department of CIL, in a building where you had Bell Telephone, Northern Electric, and CIL. So I was rubbing shoulders with people of that calibre. I led a middle-class life in Montréal. My associates weren't in any way affected by the unemployment, even though there were signs of it all around Montréal, but not in the areas in which I lived so I was not rubbing shoulders with it. I recall that when you went to a restaurant you could eat a full meal for 65 cents.<sup>22</sup>

Looking back from a distance of 60 years Jackson admitted it was peculiar that the Depression had not had a greater impact on his life in Montréal.

<sup>19</sup>Douglas Fetherling, *Gold Diggers of 1929: Canada and the Great Stock Market Crash* (Toronto 1979), 129.

<sup>20</sup>James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State 1914-1941* (Toronto 1983), 49.

<sup>21</sup>John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939, Decades of Discord* (Toronto 1985), 196.

<sup>22</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

I remember going to lunch at Phillips Square where the unemployed would hold their demonstrations. I knew a few people who were being hit, but that didn't have any direct effect on me. Although by then I was a critic of the way society was set up, boss and worker and so on. I knew the difference between the capitalist and the workers. My reading was all taking a look at society and deciding that a bloody few run the goddamn world and they are ruthless. They are only concerned about themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Another of Jackson's recollections raises questions about just how pointed his political analysis was at this time. For while he was at CIL he was spending time with a group of people who met in the cafés on Montréal's Main. The cafés were gathering places for the English-speaking left. "I met a lot of people who, when I went back as a trade unionist, I remembered as being left-wingers. They were not leaders but they were active in the Communist Party. I had been in those cafés with some of those people without realizing that they were political people, because their politics did not have a special meaning for me."<sup>24</sup>

Jackson may have escaped the ravages of the Depression but his years in Montréal were far from happy. Aside from his troubled, on again, off again marriage, he was at sea socially and professionally. He knew he had abilities and talents and on one level was possessed with considerable self-confidence.

I had the capability of quickly sizing up a situation and mastering it. I had a very retentive memory so I was able to assimilate everything around me very quickly. I was always very involved in whatever work I was doing; it was a challenge so I had to do it. So, I knew I was capable of doing almost anything that was put in front of me.

Yet he was plagued by self-doubt. Socially he was a self-described "lost sheep." He was invited by some friends of his mother's to join their bridge group in Montréal. He found he could not fit into their upper-middle-class milieu.

I reached a point after about three years after where I began to question myself. 'Where the Hell am I going?' I had all these abilities that I could add up and take pride in, but they did not seem to be taking me anywhere that I felt comfortable or relaxed. I was very disgusted with myself and actually was writing myself off. At one point I took a whole bloody bottle of aspirin and swallowed them, but I had a good constitution and they did not knock me off like they were supposed to.

<sup>23</sup> Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

It is difficult to determine just how serious this suicide attempt was, but it certainly supported Jackson's belief that death was among the many forces he had power over.<sup>25</sup>

Jackson's stay in Montréal, if not his life, was coming to an end. In 1934 he was working on a budget of estimated raw material needs for the next five years when he received a summons from the department manager. "With no explanation beyond a few words about my attitude they gave me my final pay cheque." In some interviews Jackson said he never understood why he had been let go, other than to suggest it was due to his rebellious nature. But at other times he suggested it was due to the fact that he was becoming romantically involved with the wife of one of his supervisors.<sup>26</sup>

Given Jackson's self-doubts it is interesting to discover that he was not particularly disturbed by losing his job with CIL. "I felt that I could find my way and I could find jobs — there would be jobs for me, I just knew that." Being laid off did catch Jackson short. He still owed CIL money which he had borrowed to help out his father and did not have any savings of his own. He decided to quit Montréal for Toronto where his sister Muriel had a senior position with a shipping company. He was certain that she, a graduate of the Bishop Strachan school, could get him a job.

I had a lot of clothes and relics and so on in this apartment [that] I was living in [in] Montréal. I packed them up in a steamer trunk and two big packing cases and left them in the basement of the apartment and headed for Toronto. It was about a year before I went back to Montréal to get this stuff only to find out they had had a flood and that my stuff had been under water. When I tried to open the packing case it was just one mass. There was just one thing in it, a cup I had won for swimming. All of my souvenirs of the first 20 years of my life were gone down the tubes.<sup>27</sup>

Jackson had spent five years in Montréal. His marriage had gone from tragedy to disaster. While he claims to have enjoyed professional success, his career had not advanced, and he seemed to have little sense of what he would like to do to advance that career. His years in Montréal had left him with no close friendships and no history of political or work-place radicalism. Yet within five years of leaving he would come to be seen by the country's most powerful cabinet ministers as one of the most dangerous men in Canada. No one ever leaves their past behind, but it almost appears as if in moving from Montréal to Toronto, C.S. Jackson put one life behind him as he suddenly launched himself into a wider political world.

<sup>25</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>26</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>27</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

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### 3 Toronto 1934-1937

In moving from Montréal to Toronto, Jackson was following a shift in the Canadian economy; Toronto was supplanting Montréal as the country's financial capital. With his sister's help he soon found himself in the heart of the newly emerging national head office of the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE). Jackson's first Bay Street job was as bookkeeper for Barrett and Seguin, a Toronto brokerage company managed by George McCullagh. In later years a publisher of the *Globe & Mail*, McCullagh was one of the country's most outspoken opponents of industrial unionism and C.S. Jackson. In the fall of 1934, Jackson was just another of the dozen or so office workers McCullagh had under this thumb. Not that the conditions were uncongenial. There was a badminton court in an adjoining building and when the market was slack workers could play there. However, when the market was heavy, Jackson and his co-workers put in eighteen hour days and often slept at their desks.

The country may have been entering its fifth year of economic depression but Jackson seemed to have landed right side up once more. Farmers lost their farms and factories closed their doors, but no member firm of the TSE went bankrupt in the years immediately following the crash of 1929. Housed in a Greek-pillared building on Bay Street which had been originally built for the owner of Casa Loma, Sir Henry Pellat, the TSE was buoyed by the mini-booms and busts that the mining industry of Northern Ontario was enjoying. George McCullagh, the son of a London, Ontario carpenter, was riding that boom to the top.

A gifted entrepreneur, McCullagh entered the stock market in 1928. Speculating heavily in gold, he watched as its price rose from \$20.67 an ounce in 1930 to \$34.51 in 1934. In 1934, he formed a partnership with Richard Barrett and by the following year he was a millionaire. His rise to the top was not hindered by his close friendship with William Wright, the president of Lake Shore Gold Mines. At McCullagh's urging Wright bought the *Globe* and the *Mail & Empire* and merged them to create the Toronto

*Globe & Mail*.<sup>1</sup> To watch over his investment he made McCullagh the paper's publisher. Upon McCullagh's death a long-time associate wrote "we never met a man with such a personality. In his presence one felt he was being bombed with invisible rays, compelling one to listen to him, to agree with him, perhaps to fear him."<sup>2</sup> Jackson may have listened to McCullagh, but it appears that he neither feared him nor agreed with him. In later years he described McCullagh as "quite the fancy-pants boy. He was around the office a lot, throwing his weight around all the time, drinking and shouting and everything."<sup>3</sup>

According to Jackson, the Wright family used McCullagh's company to make "wash sales." Wash trading was the name given to the illegal back-and-forth sales made between companies which either shared the same owners or were under the influence of the same investors. These sales did not change the control of the stocks, but gave the appearance of a high volume of sales when there was little or no real trading going on.<sup>4</sup> Witnessing these activities encouraged Jackson and some of his co-workers to play fast and loose with the company rules. The brokerage staff was not supposed to play the market, but with wages running at fifteen dollars a week the temptation of easy money was too strong. Jackson was the centre of a group of company workers who started to play the market. When their adventures were discovered Jackson and his associates were all fired. Not for the last time Jackson argued that this was another example of his having to work for people less capable than himself whose unscrupulous behaviour justified his bending the rules on his own behalf.<sup>5</sup>

It was at this point that Jackson finally got a taste of the Depression. In January 1933, 30 per cent of Toronto's population was unemployed. Construction was at a standstill; after 1932, when Maple Leaf Gardens, the Royal York Hotel, and the College Street Eaton's were completed, the Toronto skyline would not change for a decade. In 1933, only three quarters of the workers employed in manufacturing in 1929 were still on the job, while their wages were 40 per cent less than what they had been in 1929.<sup>6</sup>

Jackson's sister found him another job, but it was not the mentally stimulating work of accounting that he found so challenging. Nor was it a labourer's job that would test his physical endurance. It was a dreaded sales job — not in his father's store or selling life insurance in Chile, but a

<sup>1</sup>Bryan Young, "C. George McCullagh and the Leadership League," in Ramsay Cook, Craig Brown, and Carl Berger, eds., *Politics of Discontent* (Toronto 1967), 78-9.

<sup>2</sup>Young, "C. George McCullagh," 79.

<sup>3</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>4</sup>Fetherling, *Gold Diggers of 1929*, 36.

<sup>5</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>6</sup>James Lemmon, *Toronto Since 1918: An Illustrated History* (Toronto 1985), 59-60.

door-to-door salesman for the Thor Washing Machine Company. If there was ever a job that Jackson did not throw himself into, this was it.

I would say 'You want to buy this,' but my voice and attitude was saying, 'You don't want to buy this.' I was on it for about four months and I sold one washing machine and that was an old one, a hand wringer. But I did the washing for about half a dozen families. You'd take the machine in and demonstrate it on the premises. They'd save up their washing for a week and you'd go in and do their washing to show what it would do.<sup>7</sup>

When sales failed to materialize his career as a salesman was over. He continued living with his sister Muriel and her husband who was a Toronto *Star* reporter. At a party at their house he ran into the Thor sales manager who had helped Jackson get his short-lived selling job. Never one to keep his opinions to himself, Jackson treated this man, who doubled as the company's general manager, to a critique of the Thor factory lay-out and organization. "I mentioned to this fellow 'I don't know how you make any money on production.' I told him just walking through the plant, it seemed to me it's just a junk shop. 'You've got stuff stowed all over hell, you must be handling every piece about ten times.'"<sup>8</sup> Jackson's penchant for pointing out others' faults appeared to have served him well in this case. The Crosse and Blackwell building on Fleet and Bathurst had just come vacant. Thor was taking over the lease and moving its operation into these newer quarters. Jackson was asked to work with the production manager to set up the new plant.

Jackson claimed that the plant manager felt threatened by him. When Jackson asked for factory blueprints all he was given was a promotional brochure with a small drawing of the building. His request for a hundred foot tape measure was answered with a six foot tape measure. Thor's most recent inventory was more than a year old and, in Jackson's opinion, sloppily done. He was forced to do his own inventory and to hope that the drawings were indeed to scale.

Despite the fact that he had never worked in a factory, Jackson was convinced he knew how to lay out an assembly line, which he described as being "relatively simple." Once the task was completed, Jackson was taken down a peg. The plant manager, yet another jealous supervisor, did not want to see Jackson in a position of responsibility so he gave him work crating washing machines for seventeen dollars a week.

Jackson had finally "made it" into the working class; the first thing he set about doing was to institute a self-imposed speed-up. In the name of

<sup>7</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>8</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

making the job more interesting, Jackson designed ways to pre-assemble the crates, all the while trying to anticipate what sort of machines would be shipped on a given day. He was soon subjecting his job to the same time-and-motion studies that the proponents of scientific management had used in the early years of the 20th century. Where Frederick Winslow Taylor brought the mind of the engineer to the factory, Jackson brought the world view of the cost accountant.

Almost sub-consciously I started mentally costing each job motion. I changed the routine to develop a better flow, which helped to increase productivity. I waited a couple of months and then asked the plant manager for a raise. His reply was that the cost of crating was still too high and if I could reduce it further I would get the raise. His target was eleven cents a crate. Having done cost accounting I knew that my rates were already at or below eleven cents, but he insisted they had to be lower.<sup>9</sup>

Jackson decided to best his own rate. Within a few days he claimed to be building crates for nine cents each, but was denied his raise. Jackson then went on a slow-down, raising the cost back to fifteen cents a crate. This was the closest that he, personally, ever came to going out on strike. He also discovered why long-time workers tended to look at speed demons like Jackson with a mixture of dismay and contempt. The strain of working as hard and fast as he was working had left him with a sore shoulder. This injury forced him to leave the job, but not before he had a brush with collective bargaining.

We usually gathered during the noon hour on the loading dock. Bitching about wages was more often than not the main subject of the discussion. I suggested we send a committee to see the boss about a raise, but there were no takers. Instead they insisted that I be a one-man committee because I had a better relationship with the plant manager. I agreed. This was my first case of collective bargaining, except that I had no collective behind me. Needless to say, we did not get a raise.<sup>10</sup>

More than complaints about their pay filled the air on the loading docks at the noon hour. New and radical political philosophies were in the air. Jackson had his eye out for anyone with anything new or different to offer. One of the Thor employees, Bill Arthur, was looking for people like Jackson. Arthur was a member of the Communist Party; he was not one to hide his opinions. Jackson had never met a Communist before, but he certainly was not frightened by their fearsome reputation. In fact, he was intrigued by their arguments.

<sup>9</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>10</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

Arthur brought Jackson to the Communist Party book shop and he soon became one of its best customers, working his way through introductions to Marxism and then the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. At this point he found socialism to be an interesting philosophy, but "I didn't see myself as being anywhere in the picture as a participant or anything."<sup>11</sup>

The base of the Communist Party was the club. In Toronto there was a club for each municipal ward. The basic purpose of the clubs was to "bring about the closest relationship between the Party and the working people in the local area in which it works."<sup>12</sup> The clubs, which were supposed to meet once a month, played a crucial role in the political education of party members. Arthurs invited Jackson to give talks on Hegel, who Jackson had read during his spare time in Montréal, at such meetings. The other major responsibility of the clubs was, of course, to recruit new members to the party.<sup>13</sup>

Even though he was not a member of the Party, Jackson was asked to sit in on the Ward Six club's executive meetings. The clubs usually had a paper membership of a dozen or so, although attendance would usually run around six or seven. It was at a club meeting that Jackson met Dena Pike-Rabinowitch who was to become his second wife. In early 1937, she left her husband and took an apartment on Dupont and Bathurst. Jackson moved in with her shortly after that. After Jackson's divorce from Kathleen was finalized, they married in 1945.

Through the Party he became involved with a municipal rate-payers association. This was one of the Party-created front groups upon which anti-communists tended to focus much of their fire. Critics tend to ignore the fact that the limited success such groups enjoyed was in direct proportion to their championing concerns that were not being addressed by other political parties or organizations. Nor, as C.S. Jackson was soon to find out, were they the diabolical centres of ingeniously planned subversion that their foes made them out to be.

Jackson agreed to chair one of their public meetings. "Up to this time in my life I had never spoken to groups of strangers. I have always suffered from a heavy dose of self-consciousness. I didn't know how to say no, so I just went along with the pressure from the group." The association had rented a public school auditorium with a seating capacity of 500. When Jackson surveyed the scene from the podium he could see that only about 40 people had turned up. Among the absentees was the keynote speaker.

<sup>11</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

<sup>12</sup>Constitution of the Communist Party, Article 5, Section 3, 15, cited in Douglas Rowland, "Canadian Communism: The 'Post-Stalinist Phase,'" MA thesis, University of Manitoba, 1964, 61.

<sup>13</sup>Rowland, "Canadian Communism," 63-8.



Not liking the idea of canceling the meeting, I made the main, and only, speech. I don't remember much of what it was about —something about the Municipal Act. All the members of my rate-payers association started to give me the business you know. Heckling, just to liven up the meeting. I had to take these people on. It was a good opener. My knees were shaking all the way through it. I was standing up there all by myself on the stage, batting these people down. That was all I needed, and as a result I apparently turned it into a good public meeting.

This is the quintessential Jackson anecdote. Someone let him and the party down, but after an initial bout of self-doubt he rose to the occasion, possibly doing a better job than could have been done by the original speaker.

Jackson was transferred from the Ward Six Club to the Ward Five Club. The Ward organizer was pleased enough to have a new club member, but he noticed something irregular about Jackson's affiliation. He asked the question that no-one had ever asked Jackson before. "Are you a member?" So it was then that I signed a card, and was put on the executive committee." He had joined the Communist Party.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE PARTY AND THE UNIONS

In 1932, Canadian Prime Minister R.B. Bennett called on every Canadian to help him crush Communism under the "the iron heel of ruthlessness." That was no idle threat. The year before, the Ontario government had arrested eight prominent party members, including Communist Party of Canada (CPC) leader Tim Buck, and charged them with being members of an illegal organization. One was given a two year sentence at the end of the which he was to be deported. In sentencing the other seven men to five years in prison, Mr. Justice W.H. Wright said that the Communists were guilty of "one of the most heinous and detestable offences of which any person can be found guilty."<sup>15</sup>

This was a harsh judgement on a political party which was barely ten years old. Founded in 1921, the party underwent a number of internal crises through the 1920s as key party leaders were purged for deviations from what was emerging as the correct, and increasingly Stalinized party line. Tim Buck, a British-born machinist, served as the party's general secretary from 1929 to 1961. During that period he guided the party through a series of abrupt policy changes. The first big switch came in 1929 when the Communist International, or Comintern, which had fallen under the control of the Soviet Communist Party secretary Joseph Stalin, made a

<sup>14</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 26 September 1990.

<sup>15</sup>Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto 1988), 119.

sharp move to the left. According to Stalin's analysis, the world was on the verge of a period of intensified class struggle and only a "purified" party could lead the revolutionary charge. Thus, social democrats like J.S. Woodsworth were no longer allies but were "social fascists."

It was at the end of this period that Jackson met Bill Arthur. Party leaders, once more following a Comintern decision, had decided that fascism was a greater danger than social democracy. The party was interested in reaching out, not only to social democrats, but to Liberals and even liberal-minded Conservatives to build a "United Front" to fight fascism in Canada and abroad. Many social democrats, still smarting from the attacks the Communists had levelled at them, were reluctant to join forces with the Communists. The tension between Communists and social democrats in the labour movement and the determination not to be cut off from the labour movement's mainstream were constant themes in Jackson's political career.

Keen to put himself at the party's service, Jackson went down to the Toronto headquarters on Adelaide Street. There he presented himself to Stewart Smith, one of the party's leading theoreticians. "I said 'I am thoroughly convinced that the road ahead is Communism. I want to use my abilities, what have you got?'" All Smith had for him that day was a cold shoulder. In 1936, when the Communist Party was organizing volunteers to go and fight on behalf of Spanish democracy in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, Jackson offered his services once more. J.B. Salsberg, the head of the party's labour activities, told him to stay put. He held out a promise, however, saying, "we've got something coming up for you."

That something was organizing unions. Not long after his meeting with Salsberg, the Ward Five executive was parceling out responsibilities for the upcoming year. Because Jackson paid attention to developments in the labour movement he was given the title of labour organizer: "I said 'What do you mean, I'm in charge of labour. What do I do? Get a pair of overalls? Stand in front of a factory?' Nobody knew what the hell I was supposed to do."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps nobody on the Ward Five executive knew, but the Communist Party was never short of ideas on what should be happening on the labour front. Since the Party's founding it had toyed with different approaches, at times stressing the importance of working within the existing craft union movement, at other times building, what it called, autonomous revolutionary industrial unions.

Most unions in Canada were craft unions, affiliates of the Trades and Labor Congress (TLC) and its US-based counterpart the American Federation of Labor (AFL). From 1919 onwards there had been a growing dissatisfaction with craft unionism. It was not uncommon for there to be a dozen

<sup>16</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

different unions representing the workers in a single factory. These unions drew most of their strength from their skills; therefore, rather than organizing the unorganized, they sought to exclude unskilled labourers from unionization. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) opened its arms to all skilled electricians, but they had little use for the people who worked for General Electrical or Westinghouse that made electrical appliances. The giant corporations that dominated the North American economy were creating a new type of semi-skilled industrial worker that could be best organized on the basis of the industry he or she worked in, rather than their skill.

Jackson spent most of 1936 learning the ropes of labour organizing from Salsberg. A leading member of the Jewish left in Toronto, Salsberg had nearly been expelled from the family home for joining a socialist organization in 1918. Six years later he joined the Communist Party and was soon actively organizing unions in Toronto's needle trade industries. He rose quickly in the Cap and Hatters Union, and was a union vice-president when he was expelled in 1928 for being a Communist Party member. Following the power struggle that brought Tim Buck to the party's leadership, he was expelled in 1929. He rejoined the party in 1932 and quickly regained his position as the director of the party's trade union activities. During the 1930s he was elected to represent the Communist Party on the Toronto City Council and later, in 1943, he was elected to the Ontario Provincial Legislature where he served for a dozen years. Charismatic, energetic, and talented, he was often at loggerheads with the party leadership.<sup>17</sup>

During these years Jackson served as Salsberg's unofficial chauffeur, spending his spare time picking his brain as he drove him around the city. Salsberg brought Jackson into contact with the AFL-affiliated Office and Store Employees. They had a small local in Toronto that was comprised largely of the secretarial staff in union offices. Jackson was made the union's volunteer organizer. He spent his evenings and weekends following up contacts trying to establish locals in clothing stores (after all, he had once worked in a clothing store) and Dominion Stores. He learned a great deal during that year, but enjoyed very little success. There were no labour laws of any consequence in Ontario; if an employer found out someone had joined a union they could, and usually would, fire them. When he started to make some headway with Dominion Stores, the company established its own, tame, company union. The fact Salsberg's brother-in-law ran one of the clothing stores he was interested in organizing did not cut any ice. He also spent some time during this period trying to organize social services

<sup>17</sup> Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks* (Montréal 1981), 289-90; Erna Paris, *Jews: Their Experience in Canada* (Toronto 1980), 124-5, 157-69; Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 88, 90, 146, and 151.

workers employed by a variety of private charities. The Salsberg family provided another connection here as well, J.B.'s wife was a supervisor at one of the agencies and was more than willing to steer potential members Jackson's way. Despite this entrée, success continued to elude both Jackson and the Communist Party.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Party's new trade union policy, which on the face of it was completely contradictory, was about to pay off. The Workers Unity League, the centre for "revolutionary industrial unionism" the Party had established during the early years of the Depression, was dismantled in 1935. As a result, Communists were directed to work within mainstream unions and organize on an industrial basis. The problem with this policy was simple — many of the mainstream unions wanted nothing to do with the semi-skilled industrial workers the Communists wanted to organize, and they wanted even less to do with the Communists.

#### BACK TO BAY STREET

At the same time he was entering the world of international proletarian revolution, Jackson was also making his last foray onto Bay Street. After leaving Thor, he discovered that Colling and Colling, a local brokerage house, had an opening for a margin clerk on its grain board. From his early days in the Lakehead Jackson knew something of the real world of grain shipping, and at Barrett and Seguin he had become quite familiar, too familiar his employer had thought, with the way stock markets worked.

Jackson convinced the manager that his Lakehead experiences plus his accounting work made him the ideal candidate. Then came the matter of negotiating a salary. The man who had previously held the job had been paid fifteen dollars a week and had supplemented this by playing the market on the side with the company's money. Unfortunately for him he was not only using the company's money, he was losing it and when this was discovered he was fired. Jackson told his employer the best way to get a responsible, experienced person, and prevent him from breaking the company rules, was to pay him a decent wage. Using this approach Jackson talked himself up to \$20 a week. He soon undermined his own logic.

I was handling the books, the margin calls and so on. It was relatively easy job. We were on the job at 9:30 in the morning and had nothing to do until the market opened at 10:00. At 1:00 we went to the pub on Bay Street for an hour and a half. The market closed at three and you had to be there at closing to see what was what. Then you'd sit down and make up your book, your calls for margin and so on.

<sup>18</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

Commodity traders kept accounts with the brokerage firms. By operating on the margin system, customers could keep an account alive with as little as 5 per cent down. Jackson checked each account at the end of the day; if there had been a sag in the market he had to contact those clients whose accounts needed additional deposits to get them back up to the 5 per cent level. Clients would often wheedle and complain, hoping to be carried under margin for just another day. At times they even offered Jackson bribes. But the accounts were subject to spot audits which would go all the way back to the previous audit. Any irregularities would be uncovered, so he declined the bribes.

But he did not stay out of trouble. After a few months the \$20 a week seemed low. Using an assumed name and some money put up by his sister he opened an account. He became skilled at arbitrage, the dicey art of buying and selling the same commodity in different markets. The key markets were the Winnipeg Grain Exchange and the Chicago Commodity Market. A skilled player would watch for price differences between these two markets and exploit them. National holidays, when one market stayed open while the other one closed, provided opportunities for investors to offer to sell or buy in one market since prices in the market were static that day. Jackson said he enjoyed considerable success at this game.

Then one day, just before closing time, the market broke. Jackson could not come up with enough money to get back up to the 5 per cent margin so he did for himself that which he had declined to do for other investors, and carried the account under margin. The next day the market recovered and the account continued to be profitable. As Jackson realized, there was a surprise audit in his future. When it took place the auditors quickly discovered the discrepancy. "Colling [the owner] called me and he was very decent about it. He said 'We just can't allow that. We had to fire the previous guy. At least you're not in the hole.' They fired me and the company took over the account, which had several thousand dollars in it."

Either accountants were a rare commodity in the middle years of the Depression or employers never checked references, because Jackson quickly bounced back. In the winter of 1936 friends of his sister found him a position with the Gunn Roberts auditing firm. "You worked a hell of a lot of overtime and you didn't know when you were going to be on call. Once you started on an audit, you'd have to move in and do the auditing at nights, particularly in the Stock Exchange, because everything is too busy during the day." The long hours and low pay led Jackson to argue, unsuccessfully, for improvements in wages and benefits — including holidays.

Then one day in the spring of 1937 he went to his supervisor and told him that he was sorry but he was going to have to quit. His employer asked if he had another job. Jackson gave him an answer that he had probably

never heard before and likely never heard again. Jackson explained “I’m going to do some labour organizing.” The manager’s reaction was just as surprising. “Well,” he said, “you seem to have a flair for it, judging by the agitation you’ve been doing around here about overtime, wages, and vacations.” He wished Jackson luck, gave him two months’ pay and did not require him to work off his period of notice. Jackson’s days of drifting from job to job were over — he would hold his next job for 43 years.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

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## 4 Finding the UE 1937-1939

In the spring of 1937, C.S. Jackson boarded a train in Toronto and headed for the southern Ontario town of Brockville. He was acting on a tip that Communist Party member Harry Binder had passed on to Salsberg. Workers at the Brockville Phillips Electrical Works Limited plant were interested in joining a union. Sixty hour weeks with no overtime were common; men were making as little as 20¢ an hour; women were starting at 18¢ an hour. Paid vacations were only allotted to those workers who had been with the company for more than ten years. Favouritism, discrimination, and intimidation were common, and there was no means of securing adjustments of employee complaints except on the basis of friendship with a foreman or boss.

Jackson was supposed to meet a local worker at his house. When he got there the man's wife said he had gone to a meeting at City Hall. "I walked down the main drag of Brockville and I stopped at a tobacco store to buy myself a pipe to cover up my nervousness. I walk into the city hall and I guess there must have been about 30 or 40 people there."<sup>1</sup>

Four years later, after Jackson had been interned by the federal government for his labour activities, James Cunningham, who was for many years a leading member of the Brockville local, wrote an account of that initial meeting.

Around 8:10 PM, C. S. Jackson arrived in the Hall carrying a brief case and we knew that this must be our man. ... His first question was had we formed a Union yet, and he was told no, that we were just starting to try and form one and that was why he was sent for. He explained to us the nature of his organization and also the question of carrying on organizational work, and when during the discussion the question was raised about us becoming a Local of that Union, he, Mr. Jackson, pointed out that we would require 25 signatures to secure a charter and that he could get us a reduced fee to enable us to get started, the usual fee was \$2, but he would petition the International office for a reduction to \$1, needless for me to say that there was

<sup>1</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

a scramble of the employees to be among the first 25 signatures that night. He could have got 200 if they were needed. The meeting and the executive meeting of the newly formed executive with Mr. Jackson lasted until 11 PM and then a number of us went with Jackson to the restaurant for supper. ... [W]e were with him until a few minutes of train time and one of our members drove him to the station to get his train to get him back to Toronto.

It may have been the easiest organizing campaign in the union's history. As Cunningham noted:

I say positively at this point that at no time we were agitated into joining a union, we done this all ourselves and it was only due to the wages and conditions that we had to endure. I daresay that if any organizer of a union would have approached us prior to us sending for Jackson, he would have had an easy task.<sup>2</sup>

Jackson heard back from the workers a week later. They had signed up over 100 members. It was time for Jackson to give up what amounted to a double life. Before heading back for a second visit to Brockville, Jackson put in his notice with the auditing firm.

The speed and ease of the Brockville organizing campaign, which was conducted in a largely rural community which had experienced nearly a decade of high unemployment, can be attributed to a continent-wide explosion in industrial organizing. At the heart of that explosion were three letters — CIO.

#### CIO

In 1935 an unusual compromise was struck that paved the way for one of the most dramatic periods in North American labour history. United Mineworkers of America President John L. Lewis convened a meeting of those union leaders in favour of a nation-wide industrial organizing drive. It was the birth of the Committee for Industrial Organization; it promised to "Organize the Unorganized." Lewis sanctioned the hiring of seasoned Communist union activists for these campaigns. Over the next two years the number of workers willing go out on strike doubled and doubled again. The Committee left the craft-dominated American Federation of Labor, and renamed itself the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The new unionists developed a new weapon — the sit-down strike. In the past, companies fired striking workers, confident they could replace them from the ranks of the unemployed. In January 1936, workers at the Firestone plant in Akron, Ohio started the sit-down movement. Instead of abandon-

<sup>2</sup>National Archives of Canada (NAC), MG30, A94, Volume 26, File 28.



ing the factory for the picket line, they stayed in the factories around the clock and refused to work. The workers won the strike and in the process created a new union, the United Rubber Workers. By the fall of 1937 the CIO claimed to represent four million workers.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE OSHAWA STRIKE

Shortly after the CIO's formation, Salsberg travelled to the US to see if some organizers could be sent to Canada. However, the Congress did not have enough organizers to meet the demands of American workers. In the end, the CIO was not brought to Canada but was created here by industrial workers who were determined to share in the benefits they saw their brothers and sisters winning south of the border.

In early 1937, Jackson became a volunteer organizer for the CIO. He and another Communist Party member, Dick Steele, opened an office on Toronto's Dundas Street. Jackson had membership cards for all the major industrial unions. The workers who dropped by the office did not care whether they joined the United Auto Workers (UAW), or the United Electrical Workers (UE), or the United Rubber Workers (URW); the magnet was the CIO.

Because of Jackson's brief experience at Thor Canadian, he was given responsibility for those workers within UE's jurisdiction. With Bill Arthur's help he organized the workers at Thor into UE Local 505. As was typical of many early organizing drives, the local was never able to force management into negotiations and died an early death.

But events at the General Motors (GM) plant in Oshawa were about to change all that. In February 1937, General Motors introduced an assembly line speed-up. Frantic phone calls, some of them at the urging of J.B. Salsberg, were made to UAW headquarters in Detroit. The union dispatched Hugh Thompson, who worked quickly to end the initial strike and organize a local of the UAW. A month later there were over 4,000 members of Local 222, which was headed up by Charlie Millard, the president of the local Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) committee.

It first appeared that a quick agreement could be reached, but then Liberal Premier Mitchell Hepburn returned from vacation. The premier phoned the General Motors' negotiators and urged them not to sign an agreement with the UAW. Bolstered by this, GM announced that it would no longer negotiate with Millard as long as he was a representative of the CIO. This made a strike inevitable. On 8 April 1937, GM's 4,000 Oshawa employees walked off the job. Hepburn characterized the strike as "the first attempt

<sup>3</sup>James Green, *The World of the Worker* (New York 1980), 144-59.

on the part of Lewis and his CIO henchmen to assume the position of dominating and dictating to Canadian industry.”<sup>4</sup>

Hepburn came to power four years earlier on a platform of liberal reform. In one stirring speech he claimed that his sympathy lay “with those people who are victims of circumstances beyond their control and not with the manufacturers who are increasing prices and cutting wages at the same time.”<sup>5</sup> Once in office Hepburn made it clear that he had no sympathy for the CIO. This antipathy was fed by George McCullagh, Jackson’s old boss at Barrett Seguin. Writing to the president of the Steel Company of Canada, McCullagh explained “I alone fought the CIO in this province in 1937. Whatever Mr. Hepburn did as a government leader, was only as a result of information I placed before him in regard to government and trade unionism, a subject on which I have some knowledge.”<sup>6</sup> Hepburn and McCullagh were united in their belief that the CIO was a “a menace to be stopped.”<sup>7</sup>

When Ottawa refused to send any additional RCMP officers to Oshawa, a furious Hepburn announced he would create a special police force of his own. Quickly dubbed the “Sons of Mitches,” these special constables bunked down in the basement of Queen’s Park where they were apparently needed to “maintain law and order in this province.”<sup>8</sup> When word reached Hepburn that the CIO was organizing in mining camps, he declared total war: “Let me tell Lewis here and now that he and his gang will never get their greedy paws on the mines of Northern Ontario as long as I am prime minister.”<sup>9</sup>

Nor could the strikers count on the support of the Canadian labour movement. All-Canadian Congress of Labour (ACCL) President A.R. Mosher was pleased with Hepburn’s fight against “foreign domination.” In a letter to Hepburn Mosher made it clear that his main concern was fighting Communism.

Communists are determined to dominate the AFL unions in Canada as well as the CIO unions, and a great mistake will be made if AFL unions in Canada are excluded from any efforts designed to curb domination by foreign agitators and Communists.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup>*Toronto Daily Star* (TDS), 9 April 1937.

<sup>5</sup>TDS, 1 October 1933.

<sup>6</sup>Young, “C. George McCullagh,” 82.

<sup>7</sup>*Globe and Mail*, 9 April 1937.

<sup>8</sup>Neil McGenty, *Mitch Hepburn* (Toronto 1967), 110.

<sup>9</sup>McGenty, *Mitch Hepburn*, 112.

<sup>10</sup>McGenty, *Mitch Hepburn*, 116.

The union and the strike in Oshawa were on the verge of collapse, but General Motors was eager to start producing cars once more. A compromise was reached: General Motors would sign an agreement with Millard and he, in turn, would sign a statement indicating that he did not represent the CIO. It was the news of the UAW victory in Oshawa that led Phillips workers in Brockville to put out a call for an organizer.

#### FIRST CONTRACT

When Jackson returned to Brockville with the charter for Local 510 of the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America, over 300 of the 450 Phillips workers had joined the union. Committees were struck, shop stewards appointed, and contract proposals agreed upon. A packed membership meeting elected a negotiating committee.

It was at this point that the early CIO organizing drives in Canada usually ran aground. Canada had no labour laws which protected workers from discrimination if they were involved in union activities. There were no labour boards to convict companies of unfair labour practices — although there were plenty of those. Finally, companies were under no legal obligation to negotiate with their workers. The standard management tactics were to fire union activists and refuse to meet with union committees. The more sophisticated companies attempted to establish company unions which were not affiliated with the broader labour movement and could be dominated by local management. Another common company maneuver was to refuse to meet with any “outside organizers.”

Phillips management said it would meet with a committee of its employees, but would not tolerate any outsiders. Jackson’s luck was not about to desert him. The company president, T.W. Brackenreid, was from Port Arthur. He and one of Jackson’s uncles had both been senior managers with the Port Arthur power company.

I phoned [Brackenreid], told him who I was and who my father was. We had a brief chat about the Twin Cities. Then I told him I was the union representative whom he had refused to include in the committee. He was no stranger to bargaining with unions in Port Arthur, as his staff there were members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, a craft union affiliated to the AFL. I guess he thought he could handle the situation and agreed to my participation. That’s how we wrapped that one up. It only took about three meetings. These negotiations were the first I had ever been involved in, let alone been in charge of.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

The contract, which came into effect on 30 July 1937, contained a number of provisions the UAW had not been able to win in Oshawa, including explicit recognition of the union. Wages were increased by 15 per cent, the company agreed to give consideration to seniority in lay-offs and rehiring, a grievance procedure was established, and there would be no strikes or lockouts during the contract. Key advances included the 44 hour week with overtime after 8 hours on any given day (workers worked 5 and a half days a week), double time for Sundays and holidays, starting rates of 30¢ an hour for men and 25¢ an hour for women, and a week of paid vacation for all employees. With the Phillips contract, only the second CIO contract to be signed in Canada, under his belt, Jackson immediately set off for the international headquarters of the UE in New York City.

#### THE UE

In the spring of 1937, the UE was less than one year old, but it was one of the most dynamic and energetic of the new industrial unions. Of all the CIO unions, the UE was the one that was most congenial to Jackson's views towards organizing and political action. In the coming years, many of Jackson's early colleagues such as Dick Steele would be purged from unions they had struggled to create because they were Communists. Jackson would fight his own battles against red-baiters, but there were no such purges in the UE.

From the union's earliest days, Communists and their supporters held key leadership positions. As the union's full name — the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America — suggests, it was the product of a series of mergers. At its heart were the employees of the giant American electrical firms such as General Electric, Westinghouse, Delco, Philco, and RCA. Julius Emspak, the UE's long-time secretary-treasurer, was a radical university-educated toolmaker who helped to organize these workers. In the early 1930s, the Communist Party's Trade Union Unity League, the American equivalent of the Workers Unity League, under the leadership of James Matles organized machine shop workers. These workers were briefly members of the AFL's International Association of Machinists (IAM), but left to join the UE because the IAM would not commit itself to organizing on industrial lines. Radio workers were brought into the union by James Carey, the union's first president, who eventually evolved into a staunch anti-Communist. Emspak and Matles were at loggerheads with Carey for over a decade and their political differences eventually split the union in two. By most accounts, Carey left the day-to-day running of the union to Emspak and Matles, while he politicked with journalists, liberal politicians, and

other national labour leaders.<sup>12</sup> Emspak and Matles ended up running the union because of their abilities and commitment, not any Communist subterfuge.

The union fostered strong democratic and egalitarian traditions; officers were to be elected annually and their salaries could not exceed the highest weekly wage of any worker in the industry. This tradition was continued through Jackson's four decades as the union's Canadian leader. Another key to the union's effectiveness was a shop floor grievance system that gave workers the authority and means to settle most of their problems where and when they arose. The rank-and-file played a major role at every step of the negotiating process. In addition, the unions which joined together to create the UE had guarded their local autonomy. Power was decentralized and most districts paid the salaries of their own elected officials. By comparison, the Steelworkers union was organized from the top down and was originally dependent on the CIO's financial support. The Steelworker constitution made fewer acknowledgements to the claims of local autonomy and, as a result, staff members were much more beholden to head office than the membership.<sup>13</sup>

Emspak and Matles were pleased to see Jackson arrive in New York City with the Phillips contract. They were coming under pressure to appoint an active member of the CCF as the union's Canadian director, something they were loath to do for political reasons. They hired Jackson on the spot and agreed to pay him \$135 a month as the union's Canadian director. From this salary Jackson would have to cover many of the union's expenses. Jackson made it clear that the union's Canadian operations would need a significant degree of autonomy. It was agreed that at the upcoming UE convention, Canada would be established as District Five.

When the convention was held in September, Jackson was able to report that in Canada the union had chartered 5 locals and had dues paying members in 6 plants, representing a total of 4,000 workers. In total the UE had 267 locals, 71,000 dues paying members, and a staff of 35 full and part-time organizers.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Harvey Levenstein, *Communism, Anticommunism, and the CIO* (Westport, CN 1981), 62.

<sup>13</sup>James Matles and James Higgins, *Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank-and-File Union* (Boston 1974), 3-22; Frank Emspak, "UE; The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America," in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (New York 1990), 787-8; Levenstein, *Communism*, 62.

<sup>14</sup>Matles and Higgins, *Them and Us*, 74.

After a near calamitous motor trip back to Toronto, Jackson convened the UE's first Canadian district convention. One of the delegates at that founding meeting, Charlie Girvan, remembered it in these terms:

Something like ten delegates sat down in the back kitchen of a dingy empty house in Dundas Street West Toronto. Cigarette butts lay on the floor and each member wore his over-coat as the furnace was bare as the treasury. (No newspaper reporters or press photographers were present then.) Each delegate became a member of the executive and the secretary treasurer had a title but no funds.<sup>15</sup>

The convention confirmed Jackson in his position as the union's Canadian president, a position he would hold for the next 43 years.

#### THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY IN CANADA

Properly constituted, District Five of the UE was now ready to turn its full attention to organizing the Canadian electrical industry. In 1937 it was a branch-plant industry; UE organizers would be taking on the same corporations as their brothers and sisters south of the border — General Electric, Westinghouse, and RCA Victor. The word Canadian was usually tacked on somewhere, General Electric for example became Canadian General Electric (CGE), while Westinghouse was Canadian Westinghouse. The parent companies often owned up to 90 per cent of their Canadian subsidiaries: a fact that more than one union organizer would note with some irony when these American-owned companies complained that the CIO was controlled by foreigners — by which they meant Americans.<sup>16</sup>

According to a 1939 survey of the Canadian electrical industry conducted for the Coordinating Committee of CIO unions, Canadian General Electric had assets of \$27,833,482, Canadian Westinghouse of \$17,034,837, and Northern Electric of \$10,000,000. CGE and Canadian Westinghouse represented over 60 percent of total investment of the industry in Ontario. In Toronto, there were 84 plants, including CGE's 3 plants with 1800 employees, Canada Wire and Cable's plant with 500 employees, and 5 radio plants with 1500 employees. There were 7 plants in Hamilton, including the 2 Westinghouse plants which employed 3,300 people. In Peterborough, the CGE plant had 2,200 employees while in Montréal Northern Electric employed 4,000, Marconi 300, and Phillips Electrical 200. A partial list of the skills and trades employed in the industry include assemblers, toolmakers,

<sup>15</sup>NAC, UE Collection (UEC), M2338, Charlie Girvan to the UE, 28 October 1944.

<sup>16</sup>Douglas Neil Caldwell, "The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, in District Five, Canada, 1937-1956," MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1976, 3-13.

sheet metal workers, coil winders, buffers and polishers, machinists, platers, labourers, packers, casters, burners, and pasters.

The industry concentrated on the production of heavy electrical equipment and insulated wire and cable. The Canadian appliance industry did not take off until the post-war boom in consumer spending. There was little price competition between these companies and, in the 1950s, a government inquiry revealed that the representatives of nine companies, including CGE, Phillips Electric, and Northern Electric had been getting together since 1912 to discuss prices.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1937, Jackson and his associates mapped out a plan to organize the radio, battery washing machine, electrical equipment, and appliance plants in Ontario and Québec. While this involved literally dozens of plants, three corporations were key to the union's plans — Westinghouse, Canadian General Electric, and RCA Victor. In the coming year all three campaigns were to fail.

#### THE WESTINGHOUSE CAMPAIGN

Even before Jackson's initial success in Brockville, the UE had attempted to crack Westinghouse. In March 1937, Bert McClure, an unemployed Hamilton electrician and Communist Party activist, put out the first issue of *Union Light*. The gestetnered newsletter pointed out that "the company's net profits grow by leaps and bounds. ... Do your wages increase in the same proportions or are they just the same as a couple of years ago with the addition of back breaking speed-up?"<sup>18</sup> The paper's second issue of the paper took an ironic look at Westinghouse working conditions:

We wonder why the Westinghouse, after many years of high pressure salesmanship in selling exhaust fans, air washing equipment, etc., don't use more of these things in their own plant.

In A2 the fumes from welding are most nauseating at times and there is no ventilation of any kind in the long winter months and it's too cold to have the windows open. In the West End Plant, the men who spray the refrigerator cabinets are in a booth just large enough to accommodate one refrigerator and a man. The management may brag there is an exhaust fan in each booth, but let us examine things and see just what there is. Strange as it may seem there is an exhaust fan in each booth and it blows the injurious air right out of the booth INTO THE DEPARTMENT, where everybody can get their share of it before it is drawn back into

<sup>17</sup>Report of Carl H. Goldenberg, special commission of an investigation into alleged combine in the manufacture and distribution and sale of electrical wire and cable products, Combines Investigation Act, Department of Justice, Ottawa, November 1953, 8, 20, 32, 235, and 243.

<sup>18</sup>CSJ, personal files, *The Union Light*, 1: 1 (1937).

the same booths again. The men in and around the booths are made sick and often vomit green. The nurse tells the men they need an extra quart of milk a day to help combat the bad effects of this, and no doubt she is right, but the company doesn't think it is necessary to supply this, so it results in an indirect cut in pay for these men.

The company manufactures air conditioning but does not bother to use it in their own plant. Why? Because labour is too cheap and unless we get together, we will have to put up with such inhuman, injurious conditions.<sup>19</sup>

By April, McClure had started Local 504, the UE's first Canadian local. It shared office space with the Steelworkers Organizing Committee organizer Harry Hunter.

In 1937, Jackson spoke at numerous Hamilton plant-gate meetings and put McClure on staff. Early union demands were for bi-weekly pay days, a dining room, a week's holiday after a year of service, equal pay for the same class of work, and a benefit fund. But as summer turned to fall the organizing campaign lost momentum. In September, McClure was arrested for distributing union leaflets. Repression may not have killed the organizing drive, but the recession of late 1937 did the local in. By November, hundreds of Westinghouse employees had been laid off or had seen their hours cut. In February, the district executive noted that "*The Union Light* had not been issued for some time owing to lack of time and funds." McClure had been forced to take work in a box factory and had little spare time or money for union work.<sup>20</sup> The first Hamilton drive was over.

#### CANADIAN GENERAL ELECTRIC

With its plants in Toronto and Peterborough, Canadian General Electric was the giant of the Canadian electrical industry. It supplied the construction industry with wiring, fixtures, and sockets; the mining industry with hoisting equipment; the power generating industry with heavy equipment; and it built a wide variety of transformers and electric motors. CGE employed a staggering array of people: welders, fitters, winders, electricians, plumbers, steam fitters, and carpenters. According to Jackson, the skilled workers were not always open to the idea of an industrial union.

The Oshawa strike led many of these workers to re-evaluate the UE. By the middle of May 1937 over 100 Toronto CGE workers had joined the union and Local 507 was chartered. By the end of the year, 85 per cent of the workers at the Davenport Street Works and 90 per cent of the Ward Street Works had signed up. The Toronto workers were not short of reasons to

<sup>19</sup>CSJ, personal files, *The Union Light*, 1: 2 (1937).

<sup>20</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 5 February 1938.



unionize. A veteran of the Davenport works had these memories of working conditions in the union's early years.

The male starting rate at the Davenport plant in 1937 was 30¢ an hour, but no one knew what the actual rate was for any given job. Most workers were told their particular rate was the highest paid for that class of work and told not to tell the other workers how much they got. A piece worker didn't dare ask the price the piece work was based on; if he did he was told: 'If you don't like it here, you can leave.'

There was no fixed work hours per day or per week. You might arrive at the shop at 8 a.m. only to be sent home at 8:15, being told there isn't any work today. On the other hand you might work twelve or more hours, including Saturday and Sunday at regular rates.<sup>21</sup>

Much of the UE's recruitment in this period was done at house parties. Some of Bill Arthur's neighbours worked at the Ward Street works and Arthur would invite them over on a Friday night to meet with Jackson. Another Ward Street worker, Harry Pearce, used to host similar events. According to Jackson, "We would have a bit of beer, just a good time and talk about organization. That went on for two or three years — it was open house. We'd have 20 or 30 plant workers at some of these get-togethers."

The early organizing efforts at CGE brought an immediate response from management. In October 1937, Ward Street works manager Kirk Corkery posted a notice responding to some of the issues the union had been raising. Although he never mentioned the union, Corkery acknowledged that staff grievances about problems in getting their piece work properly timed, about the lack of rubber boots, the lack of snips, and drafts resulting from open doors had some legitimacy. The following year, even as the union was being decimated by lay-offs, Corkery and CGE felt pre-emptive measures were needed. He sent a letter to every worker's home expressing his desire to "make those for whom we are responsible feel that he or she is a definite part of our company and that in appreciation of the part that he or she plays, the Company is not only willing, but anxious to help wherever it is possible."<sup>22</sup>

In 1939, CGE established the Ward Street Works social and athletic club. Club activities included dances, card games, picnics, lawn bowling, tennis, softball, five pin bowling, and swimming. Paternalism and the creation of social clubs were effective ways of blunting the UE's appeal, but they failed to address the workers' underlying grievances. As a result, the UE retained a base of support in CGE's Toronto plants throughout the late 1930s. It was much more difficult for the union to sink roots into the corporation's giant Peterborough works.

<sup>21</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 25-29 October 1961.

<sup>22</sup>CSJ, personal files, Kirk Corkery to CGE employees, 1938.

During World War I Canadian General Electric was forced to recognize a number of craft unions at its Peterborough operation. These unions all signed contracts with differing expiry dates, while the vast majority of CGE labourers, as opposed to craft workers, did not belong to any union. In the summer of 1919, following the unsuccessful Winnipeg General Strike, Canada was rocked by a national strike wave. In Ontario, for example, there were 90 strikes involving 34,122 workers.<sup>23</sup> In Peterborough, CGE took on each of the craft unions in turn as their contracts expired, forced them out on strike, and then broke the strikes. The plant remained union-free for two decades and CGE grew to dominate community life in Peterborough.

When the UE came to Peterborough in 1937, CGE used all the influence available to the company in a company town.

We had decided to open a headquarters in the city. We would locate a good place, put down a deposit, only to be rejected the following day by the landlord handing back our deposit and denying us occupation. This happened repeatedly, before we were successful in securing a location. Our organizer's hotel room was burglarized and the signed union application cards and money were stolen.<sup>24</sup>

The Peterborough campaign also triggered the first, but far from the last, conflict between Jackson and the UAW's Charlie Millard, who was by then the autoworkers' Canadian director. When the UE organizer arrived in Peterborough in the fall of 1937, he found the UAW was also trying to organize CGE. Emspak raised this at a meeting of the CIO's executive board and the UAW campaign was quietly wrapped up. CGE's anti-union campaign was not so easily derailed.

Just as it had crushed the Westinghouse campaign, the recession of late 1937 all but destroyed the UE drive at CGE. At the Ward Street plant in Toronto over 40 per cent of the staff was laid off between November 1937 and June 1938. The company was not above using the tough economic times as a cover to strike out at union members. In the summer of 1938, a UE newsletter reported that the

work of carrying on the organization has fallen largely upon the shoulders of three or four people. These individuals have therefore been more exposed to attack by the company than they otherwise would have, with the result that in the washing machine department the two members who took up the question of wage rates with the management were discharged although the actual firing was presented by the company as a lay-off.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup>Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984), 23.

<sup>24</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 July 1980.

<sup>25</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 July-1 August 1938.

In that case one of the laid off workers was Phil Knibbs, a talented cartoonist who took to picketing the GE Ward Street works with a chalkboard picket sign. Every day he would update his fellow workers on the battle with CGE with a fresh cartoon on the chalkboard. While cartoons might raise a smile, there was little comfort that the union could draw from events in Toronto or Peterborough. The union campaign stalled and there were many UE members among the 100 people whom the company laid off in early 1938. The CGE local remained alive through 1938, but it would not be in a position to press for recognition until early 1941.

#### ORGANIZING IN MONTRÉAL

In trying to break into the Montréal electrical industry Jackson and the UE were moving into the territory of a premier even more zealously anti-union and anti-communist than Mitchell Hepburn. In 1937 Union nationale Premier Maurice Duplessis passed his infamous Padlock Law, which gave him the right to close any building being used to spread "communism or bolshevism." It also gave Duplessis the right to define just what constituted "bolshevism." In early 1938, Montréal police raided the homes of all the leading members of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee in Montréal.<sup>26</sup> While the Communist Party had established a base within the Jewish working class of Montreal, the union movement was separated from the larger working class by language, religion, and politics.

In 1938, Jackson and Dick Steele made their first trip to Montréal intent on signing up members for both UE and the Steelworkers Organizing Committee.

We were working on the Peck Rolling Mills and a fair number of people signed up. We used to meet in a pub in that area when the mills closed on Friday at 5 PM. The workers would come in droves, the big round tables would fill up with eight people each and the beer was piled high, glasses being replaced as soon as they were empty. Some of us would stay until closing and we signed up quite a few people. That pub was next door to RCA and so we started to sign up people from there. We signed up a number of the people in the cabinet shop at RCA. Most of them were foreign born, Scandinavian and Slav.<sup>27</sup>

In the summer of 1938, the union's activities in Montréal picked up steam. Given Northern Electric's long history of paternalism it was felt the UE would not be able to easily dislodge the company union there. At RCA the union recruited skilled cabinet makers and the women in the radio

<sup>26</sup> Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour* (Toronto 1973), 29.

<sup>27</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

department. By fall of 1938, one third of the employees were members of Local 513. Then RCA fired the local's leading activist, Irving Burman. Rather than see the union wiped out, Jackson hired Burman, paying him \$40 a month out of his own salary. In the summer of 1939, Jackson made several trips to Montréal to assist Burman. One of these trips landed both of them in jail.

While holding a noon hour plant gate meeting on a dead end street outside the RCA plant in Montréal West, Burman and I were arrested by the Red Squad of the Montréal police for blocking traffic. We were moved around from one jail to another in order to prevent our lawyer from contacting us. We raised hell at each jail, banging our belts on the bars to get attention and to get to a phone. We wound up in the big pen at the central jail late in the evening where our lawyers secured our release — no charges were ever laid.<sup>28</sup>

The message, however, was very clear. Workers would support this new union only at considerable risk — to both their jobs and their employment.

#### OTHER CAMPAIGNS

While the UE was focussing on CGE, Westinghouse, and RCA, efforts were also underway to organize a host of smaller electrical and machine shops. When one reads the UE's organizing leaflets one sees the letters CIO constantly dangled before the workers' eyes.

In a campaign at Canadian Wire and Cable, Jackson was assisted by Phil Knibbs, the cartoonist who had been fired by CGE. In the days leading up to a strike vote Knibbs picketed the plant with different cartoons for every shift change. The company would not allow the union to hold the vote on company premises and many workers were reluctant to come to a meeting. On the day of the vote, Jackson and Knibbs paraded in front of the building with the ballot boxes in their hands. "The company had all the foremen out there and the cops were there to make sure we kept moving. People had to come over and drop their ballots in the moving boxes. Needless to say, we didn't get a very high count."<sup>29</sup> These early campaigns were no more successful than the ones at Westinghouse and CGE, but they were to bear fruit during the early war years when UE membership in electrical manufacturing shops and machine shops across Southern Ontario simply exploded.

From the beginning it was also apparent that Jackson would be an unsparing task-master. He was going to hold the staff and the members to

<sup>28</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

<sup>29</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

high standards. In May 1938, he told a UE district council meeting that there was "too great a reliance on the full-time functionaries in our organization. The very evident lack of resolutions bearing directly on the problems of organization indicates that within our locals we have not yet completely understood our role as trade unionists."<sup>30</sup> The following year he delivered this critique to the District Five Council:

Certain looseness and lack of responsibility on part of the membership of the union has meant missed opportunities for stabilizing of gains made through the union. These, however, are in part due to the newness of organization to many of our members. ... A well-disciplined organization with constant check up on activities of officers and members will be necessary in 1939 if we are to make the necessary steps forward.<sup>31</sup>

From its inception the UE was meant to be a politically-conscious union, one which did more than simply use its collective muscle to improve its members' wages and working conditions. It presented hundreds of briefs to various government bodies over the years. Jackson's interest in economic issues made the union a leader in analyzing and critiquing government and industry policies. It began in earnest on 13 July 1938 when Jackson received a wire from Ottawa telling him that he was scheduled to appear before the Tariff Board Inquiry into Tariffs and the Radio Industry the following morning.

Radio tubes were subject to tariff protection. This strengthened the development of a Canadian radio industry, but the government worried that Canadian consumers were paying too high a price to protect this industry; radios in Canada cost as much as 42 per cent more than in the United States. Jackson thought the UE's views ought to be considered by the committee investigating the tariffs and requested the opportunity to speak to the committee. He had, however, thought he would get a bit more notice.

I had no staff. I had to sit down and write about a ten page brief and then I had to type it. After that I had to stencil the thing and make the eleven copies that had been asked for. I ran the last stencil off about one o'clock in the morning. I couldn't get the midnight train, which is what I had hoped I could do. So I jumped into the car at 1:30 or 2:00 in the morning and drove to Ottawa. I waited around for the 11:00 o'clock session. I went in and presented my brief.<sup>32</sup>

Jackson pointed out the protection afforded the radio industry was indeed a privilege, which obliged the industry to demonstrate its own "good

<sup>30</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 28 May 1938.

<sup>31</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 25 January 1939.

<sup>32</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

behaviour." Instead the industry placed an "additional burden on the public through the payment of wages considerably below the living standard of the country and the curtailment of the rights of citizenship of employees in the denial of the right to belong to unions of their own choice and to bargain collectively." Not only, he said, did Canadian radio firms intimidate and discriminate against workers who tried to join unions, they paid their workers approximately 35¢ an hour, at a time when the average wage in American plants was 65¢ an hour. He said the board should conduct a thorough investigation into the conditions of employment and the wages paid in the industry before continuing to grant them the privilege of tariff protection.<sup>33</sup> Jackson had commenced what was to be a lengthy tradition in which the UE would present detailed briefs and the federal government would pay no attention to what the union proposed.

#### DISILLUSION AND DEPRESSION

The 1937 recession wiped out many of the union's modest gains. By 1939, the UE had closed its office in Toronto. For Jackson it was a dispiriting experience.

It just seemed to be a hopeless bloody job because I was getting only \$95 a month. I was operating out of my own apartment. I had to do whatever travelling had to be done. I would go down to Brockville, and to Montréal, driving and stay in a dollar a night hotel room.

I was going out seven days a week organizing. I was getting nowhere. A group would get started and bingo — the leadership was fired or intimidated. We were running at a very slow pace. UE had an office out in the West End of Toronto but we had to close it. The task was beginning to appear hopeless. I still kept going out seven days a week, but I was losing my confidence.<sup>34</sup>

In 1939, with war on the horizon, there were signs that the economy was about the pick up. At a meeting of Communist union leaders, Harvey Murphy of the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers suggested to Jackson that he should re-open a UE office. "Open up a downtown office," he said, "be visible." When Jackson said the union was too broke to pay for it, Murphy pointed out that the CPC had plenty of members who were working in factories. Surely one of them could get a bank loan to float the union. "I got a hold of Joe Hartman and got him to borrow \$200 from the bank on the basis that he had a full-time job as a sheet metal worker." With that money Jackson opened up an office in Toronto's Manning Chambers building.

<sup>33</sup> CSJ, personal files, UE brief to the radio industry inquiry, 14 July 1938.

<sup>34</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

Once the union was on a secure financial footing he hired Hartman's wife, Grace, to work as a secretary. Years later Grace Hartman was to become the president of Canada's largest union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees.<sup>35</sup>

One week before the outbreak of the World War II, an optimistic sounding Jackson addressed the District Five Council meeting in Brockville. "The results which we have been striving for during the past years" were coming within reach, Jackson said. The single cautionary note he sounded was muted: "It would be folly for us to expect to win in every struggle in which we engage, but defeats if they come, will be few and of a temporary nature."<sup>36</sup>

The outbreak of the war led to an improvement in the union's fortunes. Swamped with work, Jackson turned to Salsberg who suggested hiring George Harris, a Communist who had led the Ontario Federation of Unemployed during the Depression. Originally from Wales, Harris was one of the most eloquent labour orators of his time. He also had a bit of a past to live down — before becoming involved in the Communist Party, Harris had enlisted for a stint in the RCMP and served with the Musical Ride. In 1939 Harris was trying to make a living from door-to-door sales. Where Jackson sold washing machines, Harris was a vacuum cleaner salesman. Jackson hunted Harris down on his sales route and offered him a job. Shortly thereafter, Harris became District Five secretary-treasurer, a position he was to hold until 1978. For much of this career he also served, quite publicly, as an executive member of the Communist Party, or Labor-Progressive Party as it was sometimes called.

Over a two year period Jackson had experienced exhilarating success and tremendous disappointment. He had succeeded in establishing the UE, although its existence was still quite precarious. In January 1940, the Brockville local went out on strike for five days and succeeded in winning a five cent an hour pay raise for male employees and a three cent an hour increase for women. With that strike over Jackson could claim that he had successfully organized a union, negotiated a contract, and fought a strike. While he may have thought of packing it in during the dark days of 1939, there was no question that Jackson had finally discovered his role: he was a left-wing union leader. His brashness, acerbic nature, head for numbers, suspicious nature, dislike for employers and authority, and love of conflict; all the things that had landed him in the soup in his previous careers, were to serve him well in his new calling. He would put all these characteristics to work in the decades to come, skirmishing with employers, politicians, and social-democratic and Liberal union leaders over the shape of the industrial union movement in Canada.

<sup>35</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>36</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 26 August 1939.

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## 5 Founding the CCL 1937-1941

The late 1930s marked the beginning of decade-long war between Communist and social-democratic unionists for the political leadership of the newly emerging industrial unions. Communists and social democrats fought each other within the unions affiliated with the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL), within the ranks of the CCL itself, and in the press. The conflict was punctuated by raids, jurisdictional squabbles, and, in the end, the expulsion of Communist leaders and Communist unions. Inflated rhetoric was common and both sides inflicted heavy damage on democratic procedure and due process. As one veteran of these wars recalled wearily, "it was politics in the worst sense of the word."<sup>1</sup> Harvey Murphy of Mine-Mill, Dick Steele of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, Harold Pritchett of the International Woodworkers of America, and J.B. Salsberg were the Communist Party's leading trade unionists. Each of these men played key roles in building the industrial union movement in Canada.

But their leadership was not unchallenged. Many other unionists such as Charlie Millard, the man who had led the autoworkers in Oshawa, were members of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. The CCF, a social-democratic political party, was created in 1932 under the leadership of J.S. Woodsworth. With his election to the House of Commons in 1921, Woodsworth was the country's leading labour politician. The party's political platform combined long-term visions of radical social transformation with a series of more immediate reforms.

David Lewis handled the CCF's daily operations. The son of a Montréal garment worker, Lewis had attended Oxford University in the early 1930s as a Rhodes Scholar. He played a leading role in the CCF, and its successor, the New Democratic Party, for 40 years. One of his most controversial accomplishments was the creation of an organizational link between the labour movement and the CCF. To bring this sort of affiliation about, Lewis fought conservative trade union leaders who believed unions should stay out of politics and concentrate solely on winning improved contracts and,

<sup>1</sup>Doug Smith interview with Joseph Levitt, 16 July 1995.



also, Communist unionists like Jackson, who argued that unions should be actively involved in political issues, but should not institutionalize their support within a political party. In this context, Lewis dedicated himself to driving Communists from the leading roles in the trade union movement, positions they had won for themselves through hard work and personal sacrifice.

While Communists and CCFers were committed to the principles of industrial unionism, the struggles to build a Canadian industrial union movement were scarred by the conflicts over who would provide political direction for that movement. The initial confrontations were sparked when the American Federation of Labor sought to have the industrial unions driven out of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

After the CIO unions were expelled from the AFL in 1936, Canada's TLC did not immediately follow suit. TLC leader Paddy Draper saw no reason to tear the Canadian labour movement apart simply to please the AFL. As a result, CIO unions such as Mine-Mill and the IWA were allowed to remain in the TLC. Communist-led unions applauded this policy and stressed the need for labour unity. In July 1938, Jackson warned the UE's District Five Executive Board that

reactionary elements within the Canadian labour movement are working night and day to bring about a split in the ranks of labour in this country. These minions of [AFL President] Wm. Green, interested solely in their own welfare and greedy for power and income at the expense of the trade unions are attempting to raise the issue of expulsion of CIO unions from the Councils and Congress of Labour in Canada.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1938, TLC convention delegates overwhelmingly rejected a resolution to expel the CIO affiliates. However, two months later the AFL convention ordered all of its affiliates to withdraw from the TLC if it did not expel the CIO unions. In January 1939, the Congress executive suspended its CIO members.

When the CIO unions were expelled from the AFL in 1935, they moved quickly to create the Congress of Industrial Organizations. In Canada it was a slower process; the first convention of the Canadian Congress of Labour did not take place until the fall of 1940. The delay was the result of a number of factors including the Communist union leaders' commitment to a policy of trade union unity. For their part, the social-democratic union leaders feared that any new industrial union organization would be controlled by Communist-led unions. Millard warned CCF leaders that the Communists would likely "make a strong attempt to control the CIO in Canada should a separate organization eventually be formed as a result of expulsion from

<sup>2</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, July 1938.

the Trades and Labour Congress."<sup>3</sup> For very different reasons then, both the Communist and CCF leaders of the CIO unions in Canada decided to hold off on any drastic action until after the TLC convention of September 1939 in hopes that delegates might reverse the expulsion.

By then Millard was smarting from a defeat suffered at the hands of Communists and socialists within the UAW. Millard had originally been appointed to the position of UAW Canadian director by the union president, Homer Martin, who saw him as an ally in his battles with the Communist Party for the union leadership. The left was very strong in the Canadian UAW; at the union's 1939 convention its candidate, George Burt, defeated Millard and became the UAW Canadian director.<sup>4</sup> Though Burt was not a Communist, he was no fan of Millard and could be quite critical of the CCF. In the inter-union battles to come, Burt's vote would be crucial and, at times, unpredictable. Millard was not unemployed for long. He convinced CIO leader John L. Lewis to hire him to run the Ontario division of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee. His unofficial mandate was to rid the organization of the Communists. Jackson was Millard's worst nightmare come true. A lay preacher in the United Church, a veteran of World War I, and a small businessman who was wiped out by the Depression, he was scornful of Communists and union leaders who drank or were unfaithful to their families. Indeed, by despising Jackson he could indulge all three prejudices at once. While Jackson was in lifelong-flight from the respectability his parents craved, Millard sought to make the union movement more respectable. And he thought it would be imminently more so without C.S. Jackson.<sup>5</sup>

After September 1939, when the delegates to the TLC convention confirmed the expulsion of the CIO unions, Jackson met with other CCL unionists, Communist Party officials, UE members and officers to determine whether or not they should establish a Canadian version of the CIO. "The party's position, as I recall, was that we shouldn't add to the number of labour centres in the country. We should move for reducing the number of centres and work towards greater unity. That was certainly my position and I don't think I was alone."<sup>6</sup> Jackson favoured a merging of the CIO unions with Aaron Mosher's All-Canadian Congress of Labour. As its name implied, the ACCL was an amalgam of nationalist unions, the most prominent

<sup>3</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 35.

<sup>4</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 30-3. Charlotte Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada* (Philadelphia 1993), 27-9.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Benedict, "Good-bye to Homer Martin," *Labour/Le Travail*, 29 (Spring 1992), 152-5; Laurel Sefton MacDowell, "The Career of a Canadian Trade Union Leader: C.H. Millard, 1937-1946," *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*, 3 (1988).

<sup>6</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

being Mosher's Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees. Mosher was both a strong supporter of the CCF, an early opponent of the CIO, and a vociferous anti-Communist. Jackson and the other Communist union leaders were creating a trap for themselves. They were succeeding in fulfilling the Communist policy objective of preventing the fracturing of the union movement, but they were giving birth to a union congress in which they would constitute a permanent minority.

The merger came as the result of a two step process. On 4 October 1939, Jackson and other CIO union leaders established a Canadian Committee for Industrial Organization (CCIO). At its founding convention a month later in Ottawa, 105 delegates from 9 unions representing 55,000 workers called for "a crusade to bring industrial democracy into every Canadian plant." Near unanimous endorsement was given to the policy proposals that Jackson and Steele had hammered out the night before, including one advocating for the nationalization of all basic industries.<sup>7</sup> Even though Canada entered World War II just two months earlier, there was remarkably little support demonstrated for the war effort, a reflection of the Communist Party's early opposition to the war.

The CCIO was a short-lived body. By 30 November 1939, its leaders met with the leaders of the ACCL and approved a merger proposal. The ACCL's Norman Dowd produced a dry and uninspired draft constitution, prompting the CIO unions to ask their brash, dynamic, and Communist-supporting lawyer, J.L. Cohen, to rewrite it. On Christmas Day 1939, Jackson and Steele were invited to Cohen's house to work on the constitution. Cohen was hosting a dinner to which neither Steele nor Jackson were invited, but between courses Cohen met with them in an adjoining room to discuss the latest revisions. By the end of the evening a more stirring document had been composed, but it did not sit well with the social-democratic union leaders and was subsequently redrafted yet again.<sup>8</sup>

The founding convention of the Canadian Congress of Labour was scheduled for September 1940. Before the opening gavel fell, the balance of political strength in the labour movement shifted drastically. Many of the country's leading Communist labour leaders would be unable to attend the CCL convention because they had been interned under the War Measures Act.

#### WAR AND WAR MEASURES

On 3 September 1939, C.S. Jackson and Irving Burman were travelling to Springfield, Massachusetts, to attend the UE convention. They were over-

<sup>7</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 42-3.

<sup>8</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1980.

taken by news that Great Britain had declared war on Germany and that within days Canada would enter the war. It was a struggle that would transform Canada and the UE; by 1944 the union would have 34,000 members. The early war years, however, were a period of retrenchment and repression. While Burman and Jackson were still at the convention they received a telephone call giving them a taste of what was to come. RCA management had told foreign-born cabinet workers it would have them deported as "enemy aliens" if they did not quit the union. It was a threat the company would have some difficulty in acting upon, but the cabinet makers were not interested in testing the firm's resolve. Another local had fallen by the wayside.

At the start of the war Prime Minister Mackenzie King announced sweeping restrictions on Canadian civil liberties. Under the powers of the War Measures Act, King proclaimed the Defence of Canada Regulations. The 64 regulations gave the government the power to intern without trial, restrict freedom of speech, outlaw political and religious associations, censor the press, and confiscate property. The regulations allowed the justice minister to intern any person who could act in any manner "prejudicial to the public safety or might be prejudicial to the safety of the state." Over 1200 people were eventually interned under these provisions. Over two dozen political, cultural, and religious organizations were banned; these included not only the Canadian Nazi and Fascist Parties, but the Communist Party of Canada, the Canadian Labor Defence League, and even the Jehovah's Witnesses. Those charged under the regulations were not provided with a jury trial, and those whom the justice minister ordered interned, had no trial at all.

The Communists were vulnerable because of a policy change shortly before the start of the war. Since the mid-1930s Communists had raised concerns about the threat of European fascism. This came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1939 when Russia and Germany signed a non-aggression pact as a prelude to devouring Poland. Germany and fascism were no longer the prime enemy. Party leader Tim Buck denounced Canadian involvement in a war that was an imperialist adventure designed to bring "fabulous profits" to capitalists and "death, misery, exploitation, crisis and ruin" to Canadian farmers, workers, and the middle class.<sup>9</sup> As long as they opposed the war effort their was little public outcry over the internment of Communist labour leaders.

However, they were not the only labour leaders subject to harassment. On 6 December 1939, Charlie Millard was arrested for warning union members "that the manufacturers would take advantage of this war, just as

<sup>9</sup>Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, eds., *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series, 1939-1941* (St. John's 1989), 53-8.

they did the last," and suggesting that "there was not a great deal of sense in going to Europe to fight Hitlerism, while there was Hitlerism right here in Canada." The next day the RCMP raided the Manning Chambers, taking documents from the SWOC offices.<sup>10</sup> The charges against Millard were eventually dropped, and Jackson and other Communist union leaders often speculated that Millard had made some sort of deal to get himself out of jail. In later years, Jackson interpreted many of Millard's actions as being those of a police agent. This seems unlikely, but such sentiments reflect both Jackson's penchant for paranoia, and the depth of his political animosity toward Millard during this period.

In the spring of 1940 the Communist Party was outlawed. On 18 June 1940, just as he was preparing for conciliation proceedings, Canadian Seaman's Union President Pat Sullivan, a Communist Party member, was arrested by the police.<sup>11</sup> Dozens of party leaders and union activists from across the country were soon caught in the police raids. The interned men in Eastern Canada were sent to a hastily constructed camp near Petawawa, Ontario, while Western Canadians were sent to Kananaskis, Alberta. At both camps they were held with interned members of various fascist parties, Jehovah's Witnesses, and political and non-political members of German and Italian ethnic groups who had been caught up in a dragnet. Friction between the groups was not uncommon.

In speeches at union conferences and a civil liberties association meeting in Montréal, Jackson accused the government of using undemocratic regulations to undermine the trade union movement. These speeches were monitored by the RCMP. The police felt Jackson's speech in Montréal was filled with "bitter attacks upon the police, the War Measures Act, and expressed what may be described as radical views."<sup>12</sup> His days were being numbered.

#### THE FOUNDING OF THE CCL

When Aaron Mosher called the founding convention of the Canadian Congress of Labour to order on 9 September 1940, it was clear that despite the efforts of Jackson and other left-wing unionists, the CCF was going to capture political control of the Congress. Days before the convention opened Sol Spivak of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACWA) announced that he had overcome his initial doubts and would bring the ACWA

<sup>10</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 46-7.

<sup>11</sup>Reg Whitaker, "The Official Repression of Communism During World War II," *Labour/Le Travail*, 17 (Spring 1986), 146-7.

<sup>12</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, f2962, J.L. Cohen to the UERMWA, 29 October 1941.

into the CCL. Not only was Spivak an ardent CCFer, but his union had already purged Communist Party members from key union posts. Spivak's union sent 40 delegates to the convention and their votes were crucial in a number of close elections. In addition, the ACCL hired David Lewis for the week and he was on hand to see to it that the CCF's interests were protected.

From the time Mosher's supporters proposed a resolution condemning "Nazism, Fascism, and Communism," to the final election of officers when the Communist candidates were completely shut out, the left found itself fighting a rearguard action at the convention. Jackson led the floor fights on many of these issues. "I was a sort of self-appointed challenger of Mosher on every thing he was trying to slip across. I was the parliamentary procedure boy on the rules and so on, giving them hell all the way."<sup>13</sup> The RCMP security officers present that day concurred with Jackson's self-assessment, noting in their convention report that "C. S. Jackson (CIO) was particularly violent in his denunciation of the Defence of Canada Regulations, of the government's 'discrimination and intimidation' of union workers, and of 'this Imperialist War'."<sup>14</sup> Jackson had his own inadvertent meeting with the RCMP security service early on in the convention.

I was going up in the elevator one day and here's a RCMP officer in uniform in the elevator. He said, 'Hello, Clarence.' He had been the head of the RCM Police in Fort William. He was a friend of my old man's and used to spend quite a few weekends down at our cottage. So that did not enhance my reputation at that convention, associating with the RCMP. The man was Colonel Dan Mann.<sup>15</sup>

Other delegates were quick to spread the story which was used against Jackson by various factions, suggesting that he was an RCMP plant. During this period there were some in the Communist Party who still had their doubts about Jackson because of his class background.

Shut out of the executive, the left hoped to exert some influence through the CCL's executive council, on which each Congress affiliate had representation. Mosher and Millard moved quickly, and unconstitutionally, to have the council's powers transferred to the executive board. It was at this point that Jackson came into regular face-to-face conflict with the Congress leadership.

We were quite angry, there's no question about it, but the thing was set up and it wasn't too long before they started to give us the kiss of death by taking the powers

<sup>13</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>14</sup>Kealey and Whitaker, *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: War Series*, 294.

<sup>15</sup>Mann was actually a member of the Toronto Police Red Squad. See Larry Hannant, *The Infernal Machine: Investigating the Loyalty of Canada's Citizens* (Toronto 1995), 148. Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

away from the executive council which was much broader and representative. There was about a year in there where we were battling away at every meeting of the executive council.<sup>16</sup>

To keep a lid on these raucous debates a resolution was passed prohibiting unions from distributing council minutes to their members.

I violated that one by sending the minutes out after every executive council meeting. I sent them across the country to any left local or district or anything. They could not fault me on the basis of their being inaccurate. There may have been opinions expressed but they were accurate as far as what happened.<sup>17</sup>

These were not the only restrictions on freedom of debate within the Congress. Because a number of the smaller unions, such as the Newspaper Guild, were sending left-wing delegates to the executive council, it was decided to exclude smaller unions from the executive council. To prevent left-wing unions from appealing to Congress affiliates for financial support during strikes it was decided that the Congress executive had to first endorse the appeal. To prevent Communist activists from coming to leadership positions in local unions, the CCL insisted that no CIO affiliate charter a Canadian local without receiving CCL authorization. The intent was to direct the Congress's growth to politically reliable unions and leaders. Jackson and others set about creating alternate structures.

#### THE SHOP STEWARDS MOVEMENT

In June 1940, Millard fired Dick Steele from his position with the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, and three months later he dismissed Harry Hunter and Harry Hambergh, two Communists who had been active with the SWOC in Hamilton. Jackson worked with them to develop a Shop Stewards' Council in Toronto. The council brought together workers from organized and unorganized industries in an effort to continue unionizing and provide a political base for the left. In February 1941, Jackson addressed one of the Council's first meetings and explained that the UE was sponsoring the Councils because there was a need for

a medium of exchange of opinion, experiences, and organizational methods between workers in different departments in the same plant between workers in different plants. A council on which representation from the various departments of the many electrical, radio, and machine plant in Toronto could sit, regardless of

<sup>16</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>17</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

whether or not the workers represented were organized or regardless of what union they might belong to.

The Council is to be unrestricted by any union regulations, is to set its own laws and rules of procedure, is to determine its own policies in accord with the wishes of the workers it represents.<sup>18</sup>

The CCL viewed the Shop Stewards Council as a direct challenge to its authority. To Millard they were "an independent rank-and-file group [that intended] to take over representation and organization of labour in Canada" and, more disturbingly, a Communist Party creation.

Jackson said the stewards movement was patterned after the British Shop Stewards initiative, a radical rank-and-file movement. The Shop Stewards Council met frequently and its minutes provide a fascinating overview of numerous organizing drives throughout the Toronto area. They list the small victories that union committees won for workers in unorganized shops and chronicle major events such as a failed UE strike at Electrolier. Although sponsored by the UE, it attempted to organize workers in the Steelworkers' jurisdiction. And that led to a showdown with the CCL.

The Congress, with Millard in the lead, told affiliates not to have anything to do with the Council. At the Shop Stewards' council meeting of 15 April 1941 Jackson

charged Millard with slandering a group of workers who were trying to achieve better wages and conditions through a Shop Stewards' Council, which he claimed was in no way dual to the Toronto Council.

Considerable discussion developed in the Shop Stewards' Council around this question, there being an unanimous opinion expressed that such attacks by Millard and others indicated a fear by the leadership of the Canadian Congress of Labour that the workers, the rank and file, might learn to run their own affairs and be able to do without the dictation of Millard and Co. It was further charged in the Stewards' Council that statements such as were made by Millard and the Congress Executive, could be classed only as stoolpigeoning and attempts at framing up workers who were legitimately and earnestly running their own Council in the interest of greater organization of the shops.<sup>19</sup>

In the eyes of the CCL executive Jackson's sins were mounting. Not only was he circulating summaries of executive council minutes, he was running what many of them considered a dual union organization. Nor was his language diplomatic. In a speech at Kirkland Lake he ridiculed Mosher, Millard, and Dowd for their "anti-Communist tendencies." A confrontation was inevitable.

<sup>18</sup>CSJ, personal files, Toronto and District Shop Stewards Council, 4 February 1941.

<sup>19</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the Toronto and District Shop Stewards Council, 15 April 1941.



On 12 May 1941, the CCL executive council debated a resolution calling for Jackson's suspension. Jackson said that the Stewards' Councils were not dual unions, that he had only sent summaries of the council meetings to locals of the UE, and that his statements at Kirkland Lake were none of the Congress's concern. It was to no avail and he was suspended. According to the minutes of the meeting "Jackson then challenged the right of the Council to suspend him, and broke out in a tirade of abuse against the Council. ... Jackson was asked to leave the meeting, and refused to do so." Mosher then adjourned the meeting and threatened to call the police.<sup>20</sup>

In the coming weeks and months Jackson would find himself up against far more powerful opponents as he confronted CGE and the Defence of Canada Regulations head on.

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## 6 Internment 1941

At four o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, 23 June 1941, C.S. Jackson boarded a private plane at the Buffalo, New York, airfield and set out for the Malton airport near Toronto. The tiny Aeronica plane did not fly directly across Lake Ontario. Instead it followed the shoreline all the way round the lake. Jackson was attempting to sneak back into Canada, where the police were preparing to intern him under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

The United Electrical Workers had arranged for a large number of men and women from the CGE works in Toronto to greet him at the airport. Jackson planned to disappear into this crowd. He would then be spirited away to the home of a union supporter's sister. As the plane approached the airport, Jackson began to worry. "We came out over Malton and I saw all kinds of cars streaming away from the airport. It was a dirt road and all kinds of dust was coming up — 50, 60, 70 cars streaming away."

There was nothing to do but press on. Jackson went through customs, where he was questioned about an open bottle of Lord Calvert whiskey, and walked out onto the airport. His wife and several hundred union members met him. The cars that he had seen belonged to dignitaries welcoming the first regular Buffalo-to-Malton run.

When Jackson, Dena, and George Harris got to Jackson's car, the engine would not start. While they fiddled with it, the union welcoming committee, oblivious to the car trouble, left. Jackson and Harris hooked the car to a union member's Ford touring car. They were alone and distinctly conspicuous.

We're driving down this gravel road, towing my car. All of a sudden we see a cloud of dust coming. The car pulls up in front of us. Out comes the RCMP with sidearms. 'Are you Jackson?' 'Yes, I'm Jackson.' 'Come with us.' So they take me. I find out on the way down that they'd simply removed the points from my car. That's why I couldn't start my car.

They took me down to my apartment. I'm in the apartment and I'm sitting on the chesterfield and Sergeant Mann, who was the head of the Red Squad in Toronto, he says, 'Get yourself some clothing. You're going into the internment camp.' Meanwhile they are going through every cupboard in the place.

Mann is going through my library and he's picking out every book that's got a red cover on it. Picking up my copies of Hansard because it has got some underlining in it. He takes out two cartons full of books. I sat there ribbing him, 'Hey, there's one there, there's a red cover on it, don't miss that one.' They take me down to College Street police station. Mugged, fingerprinted, and this bottle, they make a production of this bloody bottle. They wrap it around with tape and they put a seal on it and have me sign it and everything. They said 'You'll get this back later.'<sup>1</sup>

Jackson was taken to Union Station and placed under RCMP supervision. When he and two Mounted Police officers caught the midnight train to Ottawa it was the beginning of six months of internment.

The government eventually presented Jackson with a hodge-podge of reasons for his internment, many of which alluded to his involvement with members of the Communist Party of Canada. There is very good reason to believe that Jackson was interned not so much for his political beliefs but to halt the UE's drive to organize CGE and Westinghouse. Weeks before his internment, when Jackson was directing a wild-cat strike at CGE, Munitions and Supply Minister C.D. Howe called Jackson "one of the most active trouble makers and labour racketeers in Canada today," and was demanding his arrest. The internment was essentially a political act, designed to weaken the labour movement in general, and its militant left-wing in particular. There is evidence that the CCL supported and encouraged the government in its persecution of Jackson.

The CGE strike, which precipitated Jackson's internment, can also be seen as a early battle in the war-time struggle to reshape Canada's labour relations system. That struggle peaked in the strike wave of 1943 (in which the UE did not participate for political reasons) and was brought to an end when the government introduced PC 1003 in 1944, an order-in-council that granted workers, among other things, the right to organize and bargain collectively. Before looking at the CGE strike it is useful to look at Canadian labour relations policy during the war.

#### WARTIME LABOUR RELATIONS

One of the major reasons the CIO failed to replicate its early successes in Canada lay in the fact that the Canadian government refused to bring in

<sup>1</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

the type of labour legislation that typified President Roosevelt's New Deal in the US. The National Recovery Act of 1933 guaranteed American workers the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing.<sup>2</sup> Back in Canada, however, it was not until the spring of 1939 that the federal government made it illegal for an employer to dismiss anyone "for the sole reason that the person is a member of a legal union." The UE issued leaflets telling CGE workers that "THE LAW OF OUR DOMINION SUPPORTS YOUR RIGHT TO ORGANIZE." However, the law's impact was illusory. Employers could still fire union activists, they simply had to give other reasons for so doing. There were no convictions under this act, and, even when an employer was convicted of such discrimination, he was under no obligation to rehire fired trade unionists.

The cornerstone of Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King's approach to labour relations was the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA). This act made it illegal for unions to strike until the government appointed a board to investigate the dispute. While unions were compelled to go through this process, employers did not have to accept the conciliation board's recommendations.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, the King government's first wartime initiatives were focussed on preventing strikes, rather than removing their underlying causes. An order-in-council passed in November 1939 extended the IDIA's jurisdiction to 85 per cent of Canadian industry. The order also made it illegal for unions to take strike action without first holding a strike vote. In 1941, Jackson painted this picture of the way the King government's labour legislation, with its emphasis on delay and investigation, crippled union activity.

The workers apply for a board of conciliation. After applying for a board of conciliation they wait two, three, five, and six and sometimes more weeks before the board is even set up. When the board is set up, they had to wait another series of weeks and sometimes months before the board of conciliation made any report on which the workers could judge what they were getting out of the conciliation and when the reports were made they often found they had little or nothing out of the report. At the same time, while this conciliation process was going on, employees, before they could even secure a conciliation board, had to take a strike vote under conditions of intimidation and discrimination in the plant, under very difficult conditions with no government supervision of the taking of such a vote and therefore with no protection of the employees against the company's attempt to take the vote in a manner which would give the company a means of influencing the vote. ...

<sup>2</sup>Matles and Higgins, *Them and Us*, 31-3.

<sup>3</sup>Jeremy Webber, "The Malaise of Compulsory Conciliation: Strike Prevention in Canada during World War II," in Bryan D. Palmer, ed., *The Character of Class Struggle: Essays in Canadian Working-Class History* (Toronto 1986), 139-42.

The only way the workers can go is to have a secret meeting and take a secret ballot, but workers going to meetings, workers seen going to meetings have been fired from a job — things that are very difficult to prove but evidently they have taken place. ... Immediately, if there is a movement towards conciliation and a strike vote taken, we find a company union being sponsored in that plant, that is to say, various officers and members of the staff of the company, in various ways and means by using people who are, shall we say, stooges in the plant, start to propagate the idea in the plant of an independent company union which is simply an attempt to weaken the union the employees have already established.<sup>4</sup>

In June 1940, the government proclaimed PC 2685, stating its support for “union recognition, collective bargaining, freedom of employees to organize into independent unions, and grievance arbitration.” These were fine words, but that was all they were. Labour Minister Norman McLarty made it clear he was willing to encourage employers to live by these guidelines, but he certainly was not going to force them to — that would be compulsion, something he said the government wished to avoid. Six months later the government brought in compulsory wage controls that limited wage increases to what they had been from 1926 to 1929. The National Selective Services introduced policies that allowed the government to prevent a worker from quitting a job with a war-related industry and to order his transfer to a military training program.

After one year of war Canada had compulsory wage controls, compulsory strike votes, compulsory conciliation, and voluntary union recognition.<sup>5</sup> It also had full employment and industrial unions whose ranks were swollen with new members who joined because they no longer feared dismissal for union activity. In such a situation illegal strikes were all but inevitable. That is what happened at CGE in the spring of 1941.

#### THE CGE STRIKE

While the recession of 1937 had put an end to the UE’s immediate hopes of cracking Canadian General Electric, the union kept a small organization alive in the Ward and Lansdowne plants. In 1937, the Lansdowne plant employed 150 people, that dropped to 30, and never went above 60 for the next 3 years. During that period CGE doubled its dividends while freezing wages and refusing to meet with any group of unionized employees.

<sup>4</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, File 28.

<sup>5</sup>Jack L. Granatstein, *Canada’s War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945* (Toronto 1975), 182; Laura Sefton McDowell, “The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System During World War Two,” *Labour/Le travailleur*, 3 (1978).

By 1941, the 2 plants employed over 650 hands. In January of 1941, the foundry workers at the CGE plant downed their tools to protest the lack of heat in the building. According to the shop steward, "since that time the heating has been fixed and we no longer have to freeze at our work. This is the first group action in the foundry for some time, and it proves the value of acting collectively on grievances. Some eighteen workers took part in this demand."<sup>6</sup> That spring the UE signed up 70 per cent of the employees.

In May, Jackson addressed a series of mass meetings outside the CGE plants. At the Ward Street Plant he was met by three car loads of police officers. The Shop Stewards newsletter gave this report of the meeting.

About fifty workers were gathered opposite the plant, the police were very evident, and some one hundred other workers were gathered on the steps of the plant. After Jackson had been speaking for six or seven minutes, the Police Inspector and the plain clothes officer came over and told him there could be no meeting held there. After listening to the police and stating that he saw no reason why the employees should not be allowed to listen, Jackson then spoke for another five minutes. Because of the division of the crowd, one group on each side of the street, the meeting was then adjourned because of the police interference.<sup>7</sup>

On 2 June 1941, Jackson requested that CGE commence negotiations with the UE. When no answer had been received by the following day, the membership held an open-air meeting and authorized the shop stewards committee to approach management. On 4 June, the stewards brought bad news back to the rank and file: the management had refused to negotiate. Rather than return to work the workers rented a hall where they could continue their discussion. Without formally declaring it, the CGE workers were on strike. Jackson sent a telegram to federal Minister of Labour Norman McLarty, accusing the company of violating PC 2685 by not negotiating with the union. A war of words ensued that centred on whether or not the CGE plant was doing war work and whether the UE members were legally on strike. Jackson claimed that he spent much of his time trying to organize a return to work. When the *Globe and Mail* published reports that unnamed labour department officials were promising a board of conciliation if the strike was ended, Jackson clutched at what turned out to be a straw. He recommended that the strikers return to work. The membership approved the recommendation and on 13 June the strikers returned to work. However, a board of conciliation was not appointed; instead, Jackson and fourteen stewards were charged with inciting workers to participate in

<sup>6</sup>CSJ, personal files, Toronto and District Shop Stewards' Council Minutes, 18 February 1941.

<sup>7</sup>CSJ, personal files, Toronto and District Shop Stewards' Council Minutes, 13 May 1941.

an illegal strike. It was with these charges hanging over his head that Jackson left Toronto for the UE General Executive Board meeting in New York City.

21 JUNE 1941

Jackson was just checking out of his New York City hotel on 21 June 1941 and preparing to return to Canada when he got a phone call from James Matles. The union had received word that the police were waiting for Jackson at the Toronto airport. It was decided that Jackson should fly to Buffalo, New York. He was supposed to speak with a UE official named Willard Bliss there, but the two never made contact. He spent the night in the Hotel Buffalo.

Halfway around the world events of far greater importance were unfolding. In the early hours of 22 June 1941, news of the German invasion of the Soviet Union had reached North America.

There I was, trapped in the hotel. What's the news? Invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's forces. Here I am sitting in Buffalo, reading these newspapers. What's going to happen now? Is this going to be good for me or can they react that fast. Before the day was out Churchill made his statement about allying with the USSR.<sup>8</sup>

While Jackson digested the news, the union finally got back to him with word that he was supposed to charter a private plane to take him to Malton airport on the following afternoon. Jackson made the arrangements by phone and spent the next 24 hours in his hotel room. He decided to grant himself the equivalent of a prisoner's last meal and ordered a steak dinner and three zombies from room service, along with a bottle of Lord Calvert (which he detested). Twenty-four hours later he boarded the plane for his return trip to Canada and internment.

His arrest sparked immediate protest. On the night of 23 June a Westinghouse worker wrote a nine stanza poem that ended:

So sign your card and turn it in,  
Because the union has to win,  
So show those boys in tank and plane,  
That now their fight is not in vain;  
From Air Brake shop to the plating mill,  
We are all determined and of one will.  
They may pick up Jackson and few more too,  
But they'll wish they hadn't before we're through.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>9</sup>CSJ, personal files.

Westinghouse workers protested with a one day walk-out. The case against the CGE shop stewards went to trial. The charge of inciting others to take part in an illegal strike were dropped, but the stewards were convicted of participating in an illegal strike and fined \$20 a day for every day they were off work.<sup>10</sup> The union immediately appealed the convictions.

#### C.D. HOWE VERSUS C.S. JACKSON

Clarence Decatur Howe, Mackenzie King's minister of munitions and supply, played a key role in having Jackson interned. Howe was the member of parliament from Port Arthur and was well known by Jackson's father. He thought every CIO organizer was a Communist and was particularly anxious to use the Defence of Canada Regulations to attack the CCL and the CIO. In the summer of 1941, he fought a losing battle with his cabinet colleagues to have American CIO representatives barred from the country. The proposal was rejected because "it would be difficult to defend and would have a negative impact on public opinion."<sup>11</sup> On 11 June 1941, in the midst of the CGE strike, he sent a remarkable letter to federal Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe.

Please permit me to call your attention to the activities of one C. S. Jackson, who is undoubtedly one of the most active trouble makers and labour racketeers in Canada today. Jackson has been expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour as a Communist. He has been responsible for strikes at the R.C.A. Victor plant, the Canadian General Electric plant and he is now boring in to the Canadian Westinghouse plant at Hamilton. The Westinghouse plant is the most important war manufacturer in Canada, having contracts for anti-air craft guns, naval equipment, and a wide variety of electrical work important to our production. A strike at Westinghouse would directly stop many branches of our munitions programme.

I cannot think [of] why Canada spends large sums for protection against sabotage and permits Jackson to carry on his subversive activities. No group of saboteurs could possibly effect the damage that this man is causing.

I feel sure that this is a matter for prompt police action. I suggest that responsible labour leaders can supply any information that you may require on which to base police action.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>*Globe and Mail*, 20 December 1941.

<sup>11</sup>NAC, William Lyon Mackenzie King Papers (WLMKP), Memoranda and Notes, 1940-1950, MG26, J 4, Volume 361, "A memorandum for the Prime Minister from NAR re Labour policy. 13.8.41."

<sup>12</sup>NAC, RG2, Series 18, Volume 2, Privy Council Office, File D-15.



Howe was of course technically inaccurate in saying that Jackson had been expelled from the CCL for being a Communist —although that was certainly the underlying reason why Mosher and Millard were in conflict with him. This is underlined by a letter Norman McLarty wrote to Lapointe on 12 June. In it he said:

Jackson was a member of the Canadian Congress of Labour until about a month ago. He was ejected, however, on account of what Mr. Mosher, the President of the Congress, stated 'for his Communistic activities.' Mr. Dowd, the Secretary, advised me that if he is not a Communist he certainly acts and talks like one. ... The President of the Congress stated that if the Police had been at their convention they would have picked him up right there on account of the statements made of a Communist nature at that time.<sup>13</sup>

A letter in the J.L. Cohen papers provides an interesting clue as to the identity of the "responsible" labour leaders to whom Howe was referring. On 18 September 1941, Cohen wrote to Norman Dowd, the executive secretary of the CCL, saying he had been at a meeting of the Toronto Civil Liberties Association on the previous evening where he had heard some rather astounding gossip. During a discussion of Jackson's internment, a Mr. Corbett of the Canadian Association for Adult Education stated that at that summer's Couchiching conference, Dowd had "strongly expressed the opinion that Jackson should have been interned long ago and expressing strong convictions implying that he should still be interned." Dowd quickly fired off a response to Cohen disavowing the comments.<sup>14</sup> The role of CCL officials in limiting criticism of the internments, their suspected support of them, and the easy treatment that Millard apparently received following his arrest at the start of the war fed Jackson's belief that the social democrats in the CCL were not to be trusted.

#### PETAWAWA AND HULL

Jackson arrived at the Petawawa Camp as relations between the socialist and right-wing internees reached a crisis point. The invasion of the Soviet Union had led the Communist internees to reverse their position on the war. They were now demanding that they be released so they could either enlist or help organize wartime production.

On Dominion Day, the Communist internees sent a letter to the Director of Internment operations complaining that they "have long been subjected

<sup>13</sup>NAC, RG2, Series 18, Volume 2, Privy Council Office, File D-15.

<sup>14</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, J. L. Cohen to Norman Dowd, executive secretary of the CCL, 18 September 1941.

to insults and provocations at the hands of Nazis and Fascist internees. Within the last week or so these have come close to precipitating incidents or clashes." They said that while they had not provoked controversies with those who held differing political views they would no longer submit to further insults. They added that the camp commandant had lost control of many of the internees, to the point where the left-wing internees had been asked not to hold a hut concert on Dominion Day because "it was admitted that the singing of 'Oh, Canada' and other Canadian and anti-fascist songs might provoke the other internees." The left-wing internees asked to be housed outside the current compound and exempted from working with Nazi and Fascists internees. "The latter step is essential because we are always a small minority on the work parties where axes, saws, shovels et cetera, are employed, and can well become dangerous weapons in the hands of uncontrollable elements," they wrote.<sup>15</sup>

According to Jackson's recollections there were often 85 people in huts which had been designed for no more than 60. The men slept in two-tiered bunks on straw filled palisades. Jackson's hut mates included most of the executive of the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association, Seaman's Union leader Pat Sullivan, textile union leader Kent Rowley, mine union leader Harvey Murphy, Dr. Howard Lowrie, lumber workers union leader Bruce Magnusson, Doug Betts, and Bill Walsh. Betts and Walsh would end up working for the UE after their release. Jackson was put to work at a nearby gravel pit:

Shovelling gravel all day is no picnic, particularly if you're shovelling gravel in the hot blazing sun. Plus the fact that the Italians were getting pretty nasty, if you were out on a gang, our people would be in a minority. Italians were in the majority (or the French fascists on the outside work crews). It was dangerous in the sense that we were outnumbered in the pit and of course they had shovels and everything. We started raising hell with the commandant that we were political prisoners and entitled to certain other privileges that were not accorded to prisoners of war. But we were not getting any where on it.

We were limited in knowing what was happening on the war front. The press we would get would be all cut to hell. Anything to do with the war was clipped out. We were restricted to the number of letters we could get and send that were all heavily censored. A lot of the letters you'd get would be 'Dear Jack, Love' — all else was blacked out.

While I was in there, the union decided to send parcels, so I would get a big parcel every week and different locals would take it on at different times. As far as I was concerned that went to the hut. I handed it to our group leader to distribute. I started getting the odd jar of fruit coming there where they'd poured all the juice

<sup>15</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, Memorandum from the Director of Internment Operations in Ottawa, unsigned, 1 July 1941.

off and pour liquor in it. The fruit would be beautiful, loaded with alcohol. Those I kept.<sup>16</sup>

In his letters to Dena, Jackson complained about the way they had been “literally cut to pieces.” He said that he would not try and interpret the writing regulations because “I cannot make head or tail of them.”<sup>17</sup> He also told her that “Your fears re surroundings & company here are more than justified. You & union must work hard & fast for our release. We count on you.”<sup>18</sup>

The internees eventually hit upon an effective protest. Led by Harry Binder’s brother Louis, they all went through the food line one day and then threw their food on the ground. From there they marched to the camp gate. “As we were marching down the compound we could see activity in the watchtowers all around. Bringing out their guns. We saw them rush out and mount a machine gun between the two gates.” The protest march turned into a strike, which eventually won the left-wing internees a transfer out of Petawawa.

When the day arrived to move us, we noticed a lorry came in followed by a machine gun mounted on a trailer of a motorcycle and then another lorry comes in and then another machine gun on the sidecar of another motorcycle. There were at least two people with submachine guns in each lorry and they put fourteen or fifteen of us in each of the lorries.

We were taken down to the station and put in old Colonist railway cars. They had board seats and bunks that pulled down. When we boarded the train we found that the windows were nailed closed. There were soldiers with submachine guns posted at each end of the railroad car.<sup>19</sup>

The train was headed for Hull, Québec. The Communists were going to be housed directly across the Ottawa River from the Parliament in the Hull Jail.

The regime at Hull was relaxed; the men were not locked in their cells, had access to number of recreational facilities, and mounted their own educational program. Kent Rowley taught French and trade union history, Dr. Howard Lowrie lectured on medical issues, while Norman Freed lectured on *Das Kapital* — a book which the internees were allowed to read and study, even though owning it in the outside world was enough to qualify a person for internment. The International YMCA also provided them with instruments for a small orchestra. They played volleyball and managed to

<sup>16</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>17</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.S. Jackson to Dena Rabinowich, 18 July 1941.

<sup>18</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.S. Jackson to Dena Rabinowich, 28 July 1941.

<sup>19</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

sneak in the parts necessary to construct a small radio that helped them overcome the censorship of the news.

The internees also did their own cooking; the Ukrainians handled meals three days a week, the non-Ukrainians three days a week, and everybody collaborated on Sundays. Pat Sullivan was the chief cook for the non-Ukrainians, while Jackson cooked with the Slavic group. Because they were allowed to do their own cooking the internees were also able to get other projects brewing:

We had these great big garbage pails and a considerable range of fruits and vegetables from the Ukrainian community in Ottawa. We'd mix all the fruit in the garbage cans and put it in a broom closet where there was fair bit of heat coming up from the pipes. With the first batch, nobody could wait until it was really matured — as a result people were sick all over the place.

But finally it all got organized. The Ukrainians decided they were going to make a real brew. In the kitchen there was a great big stock-pot, it's always on the back of the stove for throwing in left over vegetables and so on. The Ukrainians built a little three legged wooden stool that sat inside the stock-pot. We poured what wine that we made in there. A hand basin was just the right size to fit inside and the army mixing pan for mixing bread was just the right size to fit on top. We had a bit walk-in ice refrigerator with lots of ice and we'd chip off the ice, put the ice in the top pan, put a little dough around, seal the thing and put the lid on it and place it at the back of the big cooking range. After about three days you got 50 per cent alcohol.<sup>20</sup>

Jail was an improvement over camp life, but between it and freedom lay a hearing process that amounted to little more than a kangaroo court.

#### THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Just before Jackson's arrest the cabinet passed an order-in-council prohibiting internments without trial. Jackson wrote to J.L. Cohen to see if that provision could be used to overturn his internment. Because the new regulations had not yet come into effect, however, the only hope of ending Jackson's internment lay in a hearing by the review committees established under the Defence of Canada Regulations.

Cohen, who represented dozens of internees during this period, gave a vivid description of the review process in a letter he wrote to James Matles at the end of Jackson's hearing.

The hearings of this committee are not conducted in open court nor do they proceed at all along any established court procedure. The Committee sits, not to try the charges or allegations against the interned person, but to hear the objections

<sup>20</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

of the interned person to the order which has been made. The result is that the onus, which ordinarily rests upon the prosecution, finds itself in these proceedings resting on the accused person. The proceeding thus becomes an attempt to disprove the allegations made against the internee instead of a proceeding to substantiate the allegations on which the internment has taken place.

... The secret files of the Department [of Justice] or of the RCMP, are at the disposal of the Committee and the only knowledge which the interned person or his counsel has of the nature of the material in the departmental dossier which the Advisory Committee has before it is from the questions addressed to the internee by the Advisory Committee or from any other information which they care voluntarily to disclose.<sup>21</sup>

The committee Jackson was brought before on 5 September 1941 was chaired by Justice Daniel O'Connell and included Justice Robert Taschereau, who would subsequently head up the Royal Commission investigating the espionage allegations made by Igor Gouzenko, and Justice William Dixon. The hearing lasted for two-and-a-half days, with O'Connell doing most of the questioning.

It was clear that O'Connell was far more interested in Jackson's activities as a labour organizer than as a potential subversive. For his part, Jackson made it clear he was not going to be pushed around, even if his personal liberty was at stake. The hearing transcript is a remarkable document, providing numerous insights into both the anti-Communist fantasies of the judges and Jackson's personality. It should be stated at the outset that Jackson lied repeatedly under oath, particularly when asked questions about the Communist Party. Since the Communist Party was an outlaw organization, he had no hope of winning his freedom if he had done otherwise. But while he was prepared to lie for his freedom — and to protect the UE from further persecution — he was not prepared to beg for it. Stubbornness, self-confidence, and a deep hostility towards authority, the characteristics that got him expelled from school and led him to break the rules at job after job, are reflected in every line of his testimony. Indeed, even his lies constitute a dare to the judges to prove him wrong; this was a high-water mark in his career.

Moments after the hearing started Jackson and O'Connell were sparring over the CGE strike. When asked if he was primarily responsible for the strike Jackson said: "I am not clear in the first place as to what is meant by 'primarily responsible for a strike.' I think this is a generality which I feel requires considerable substantiation and definition." When O'Connell asked, "Did you participate in bringing about a strike?" Jackson responded with "I do not know what you mean by participate." O'Connell then asked, "Did you participate in any discussions that led to the prolongation of the

<sup>21</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, Cohen to Matles, 29 October 1941.

strike?" To which Jackson replied, "This is a question that is like, 'Are you still beating your wife?' It requires a little substantiation in order to clear up the point."

When O'Connell alleged that Jackson "associated with members of the Communist Party of Canada" Jackson responded, "I do not know who the members of the Communist Party of Canada are with whom I am supposed to have associated. The question itself has no meaning to me that I can answer." O'Connell then discovered that getting a straight answer out of Jackson could be problematic, even when he was simply asking what he did for a living.

O'Connell: What is your occupation?

Jackson: Well, what do you mean by occupation in that sense?

O'Connell: You just apply your common sense to the meaning of words?

Jackson: I have had a number of occupations.

O'Connell: There is a tendency on the part of some of you to get the technical meaning of words.

Jackson: I asked the questions because I have had a number of occupations.

O'Connell was well-informed as to the UE's early history. He asked Jackson if it was not the case that Communists had played a role in helping to establish the Brockville local and also gave the union support during the 1940 strike. Jackson was quick to deny this:

You are speaking of Brockville from 1938 to 1941, the last time I was down in Brockville. The management has frequently made allusions to a man by the name of Binder who they say is a member of the Communist Party and whom they claim I worked with in setting up a local in that plant but their information as I stated to them was simply an attempt to red paint, to smear, to put some label on me in order to discredit the organization because I never at any time as they have charged had any conferences with Binder or any persons other than the workers in the plant relative to the setting up of that local.

Harry Binder was a member of the Communist Party and had been the person who had phoned the CCL office in 1937 with the news that there were workers at the Phillips plant in Brockville interested in forming a union. O'Connell wondered whether or not Jackson's duties as union vice-president kept him so busy that he had no time for any other organization, a proposition with which Jackson concurred. O'Connell then named the organization he had in mind:

O'Connell: Are you a Communist?

Jackson: No, sir.

O'Connell: You are not a Communist?

Jackson: No sir.

The commissioners examined Jackson's speeches criticizing the Defence of Canada Regulations. He repeated these criticisms to the judges, insisting that union leaders were being interned "on the basis that they were trade unionists rather than on the basis of any act exercised against the state or the Defence of Canada Regulations." To prove his point he referred directly to the case of Pat Sullivan. During the course of the exchange, which was laced with irony, Jackson got off a number of telling shots.

O'Connell: Did you see anything in the War Measures Act, for instance, that you thought was rather unfair trespass upon the rights of the people?

Jackson: In the Defence of Canada Regulations.

O'Connell: In the War Measures Act and the Defence of Canada Regulations?

Jackson: Yes, I did. And I believe I spoke on it to the effect that Section 21 in particular was so vague and general that it opened the way for numerous abuses and the exercising of personal prerogatives against the liberties of individuals, the fact that it placed in the hands of individuals —

O'Connell: Who?

Jackson: The Minister of Justice in particular. He has arbitrary powers to decide matters that are of extreme importance to the people of this country as individuals and collectively, namely their freedom, their right to live without fear of being placed in internment camps.

O'Connell: You believe arbitrary powers have been placed in the hands of the Minister of Justice?

Jackson: I do. And I believe the history of social development of society shows that whenever such power is placed in the hands of an individual or group of individuals, it invariably results in injustices. That was the tenor of some remarks I made indicating that in my opinion the same protection of the state could be achieved without placing such wide, sweeping, arbitrary power in the hands of one individual or small groups of individuals and I therefore subscribed to some of the resolutions passed at that convention in which it was asked that certain sections of the Defence of Canada Regulations be deleted or repealed.

O'Connell: Apparently you are of the opinion that the same regulations and the same laws that are observed in peace time should be still followed in time of war?

Jackson: I am not making any such sweeping statements there. The statements I am making now are held by hundreds of thousands of Canadians and if that is the reason for my detention there should be hundreds of thousands of Canadians detained.

O'Connell: So you think the legislature has gone too far in establishing what you have described as arbitrary powers in the hands of certain individuals.

Jackson: I believe so.

O'Connell: And you think those arbitrary powers should be removed?

Jackson: I believe changes should be made in the act to bring them more into conformity with the democratic principles that we are fighting to hold. ... The action of detention, the act of seizing upon the individual and placing him in custody is done without any notice, without any charge being laid, and on the strength of the decision of one person.

O'Connell : And that person?

Jackson: That person is the Minister of Justice, and that individual once seized, once placed in custody, is almost without any means of fighting his case because even if this board were to decide in my favour that I should be released, the recommendation of the board is limited in its weight. If the Minister of Justice still so decided to continue my detention, anything this board might say has no value and I claim that thereby the whole principle of the rights of man in society, the right to a fair trial, where his crime or whatever you want to call it, or misdemeanor, is being tried in the open and where the results will be based on the evidence and the findings in that trial and not be judged by the actions of some other individual.

When the judges tried to lure Jackson into advocating violent measures he pointed out that the conference he attended had done nothing more than petition parliament. O'Connell wondered what Jackson would do if the petition were rejected.

Jackson: I would say it was my right and duty as a Canadian citizen to try to secure further support from the Canadian people for the revision of that section.

O'Connell: If you found as time went on, parliament was not responsive?

Jackson: Who can say at what point the effort will exhaust itself.

O'Connell: There might come a time when your patience became exhausted.

Jackson: Or I might be convinced.

O'Connell: What would you do when your patience was exhausted?

Jackson: I cannot say at this time?

O'Connell: Would you resort to violence?

Jackson: No.

O'Connell: Would you advocate a revolution?

Jackson: No. I would say things can be achieved in a democratic manner; by giving the people the facts and organizing opinion all these things can be achieved.

The interrogation turned again to the CGE strike. There was little Jackson and the judges could agree on, starting with whether or not the CGE workers had gone out on strike. An exasperated O'Connell at one point asserted that the workers had done "all that they would have done had they gone on strike."

Jackson: No. If they had gone out on strike they would have issued a strike ultimatum to the company and put pickets on the plant.

O'Connell: They did all they would have done under a strike except call it a different name?



Jackson: There were no pickets and they did not issue any ultimatum.

O'Connell: You are capable of making very fine distinctions between strikes and what are not strikes.

Jackson said the events at CGE could only be understood if he was first allowed to explain why workers go out on strike in the first place. O'Connell said he would be pleased to have Jackson's explanation, but halfway through it he interrupted with a request for brevity. Jackson continued by explaining that:

Workers do not want to go on strike. They therefore only go on strike when they realize the situation they are confronted with has two alternatives; one to go on strike; the other, they continue under what they have already considered as bad conditions or to accept worse conditions as a result of their not being able to completely or successfully better their conditions. They come to the conclusion of having practised everything which to their way of thinking is an attempt to settle it short of a strike. That is always done by workers. No worker wants a strike. Workers therefore do not go on strike because some individual among their group happens to be possessed of a high degree of oratorical ability.

O'Connell: Are you adopting your usual frankness when you say that?

Jackson: I am adopting certain failings.

O'Connell: Do you think men are never influenced by labour agitators?

Jackson: The question of labour agitators does not take men out on strike. Men go out on strike only when conditions are such that workmen are so suffering and their need for protection.

At the end of the first day Cohen pointed out that he had been informed that the particulars against Jackson had been three in number — the CGE strike, his association with members of the Communist Party, and his nomination of Tim Buck in the 1938 municipal election. He pointed out that the judges had introduced a number of new issues such as Jackson's speeches to various labour and civil liberties organizations, the alleged Communist involvement with the UE in Brockville, and Jackson's acquaintance with Irving Burman. O'Connell then pointed out that the government was also examining a number of leaflets published by the UE following Jackson's internment. In summarizing these, O'Connell said "one might easily draw the conclusion from those documents they were intended and well-calculated to stir up a certain amount of industrial trouble and a spirit of antagonism between the different classes of the community."<sup>22</sup> At another point in the hearing O'Connell said he believed that the telegrams which Jackson claimed to have been written by the shop stewards were in

<sup>22</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, File 28.

all likelihood Jackson's handiwork because they were replete with phrases like "democratic rights."<sup>23</sup>

When the hearing recessed, Cohen went directly to the CCL convention in Hamilton. According to the RCMP, it was a convention marked by "turmoil and disunity." George Harris presented the convention with a report Cohen had prepared on Jackson's hearing. A UE delegate said

it was no accident that the RCMP picked [Jackson] up when he was fighting for justice. These are the same tactics as employed by Herr Hitler. It's the incipient working of Fascism. We appeal to those who have had their leaders taken away and are going to have them taken away, to combine to take action to secure the release of all the trade union leaders of Canada — unqualified unity in this one matter, release.

The CCL leadership opposed the UE's call for release of the interned unionists, focusing instead on the repeal of the most outrageous of the Defence of Canada Regulations. M.M. Maclean of the CCL executive said the resolutions calling for the release of Jackson, Pat Sullivan, and Bruce Magnusson "carried the brand of the Communist Party." He said that the CCL should simply demand that the interned individuals should have the right to due process of the law. Maclean ended his speech by saying that the time had come "for a showdown between honest labour and subversive elements." According to RCMP reports the cheers that followed Maclean's address "drowned out the boos, and the resolution (amended by the Resolutions Committee of its objectionable features) was carried by a probably two-thirds majority."<sup>24</sup>

When they got a hold of Cohen's report the editors of the *Toronto Star* were moved to ask "can this have happened in Canada?" In an accompanying editorial they opined that if Jackson led an illegal strike he should be tried for so doing. If he was being interned for nominating Tim Buck in 1938, it was worth remembering that in that election "more than 45,000 people voted for him against the advice of all three newspapers. It would be somewhat of a contract to intern all 45,000." The editors concluded that if Cohen's account of the case was accurate, it constituted "a blot upon its record and upon the administration of Mr. Lapointe's department."<sup>25</sup>

Jackson was brought before the committee for a third time on 16 October 1941. This time the judges concentrated their questions on his attitudes about the war effort. Jackson told them that he had "always been opposed to fascism and in favour of every effort to smash fascism." He suggested wartime production would be greatly increased if government and industry

<sup>23</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 25, File 28.

<sup>24</sup>Kealey and Whitaker, *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series*, 397-9.

<sup>25</sup>*Toronto Star*, 13 September 1945.

took a more enlightened attitude to trade union relations. He also suggested that he was uniquely qualified as a union leader to help improve wartime production. The judges were not overly impressed with Jackson's offers; instead, they wanted to hear more about the role of Communists in organizing the UE local in Brockville. And they returned to an old question.

O'Connell: Are you a member of the Communist Party?

Jackson: No.

O'Connell: Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

A: No.

O'Connell: Have you ever been identified with their activities which would amount in a factual sense, if not in a technical sense, to your being a member of the Communist Party.

A: No.

Then why, they asked, had the Communist Party issued a leaflet protesting Jackson's internment, referring to him as "Comrade Jackson." O'Connell wanted to know, "What is meant by 'Comrade Jackson' if he were not in fact a member of the Communist Party?" To which Cohen responded that it is a standard form of address within the labour movement and that he himself has been referred to as Brother Cohen and even Comrade Cohen.

Jackson's feisty and courageous performance could hardly have been designed to win him an early release. And he was not yet finished with the commissioners. Claiming that he had been provided with no real opportunity to defend himself, he wrote the commissioners a lengthy letter and demanded that it be entered into the minutes of the hearing as evidence.

I assumed that, in view of the assurances from the Department of Justice, I would be given an opportunity to present my objection to what I considered an unwarranted act of seizure and incarceration. To my surprise I found that I was literally bombarded with a series of questions concerning actions, and activities, of mine, over a period of years. ... The manner of questioning was such as to permit no explanation but rather in themselves took the answers as granted. Throughout the questioning, or should we say inquisition, it seemed to me, the questioned person, that there was a definite bias on the part of committee members against trade unionism, and against the concept of civil liberties.

Jackson went on to say that he thought he was being brought before the committee so he could express his objections to his internment. "Instead a 'fishing expedition' was conducted, obviously with the purpose in mind of having myself placed in a position of supplying 'evidence' which would 'justify' the original act of internment and the continuation of such internment." He chided the commissioners for suggesting that he had associated with "known Communists."

All items of 'evidence' etc., which were designed to at the very least cast a doubt as to my honesty and sincerity as a trade unionist, stand branded false. By stating that certain other trade union people, with whom I associated, were Communists, and thus attributing Communist leanings, or sympathies thereby, to me, this tribunal stands accused of either presenting false evidence or of failing to do its duty to the state by arresting, or interning these 'known' Communists with whom I am known to have associated.

In conclusion, he wrote,

my detention in this concentration camp was brought about through the demands of employer groups in the Government, and that it was the hope of such employers that through my detention in this manner, the Canadian workers would be fearful of loss of their liberties if they persisted in their demands for industrial democracy. If such is the hope of the Canadian employers, they are woefully ignorant of the characteristics of the Canadian workers and people.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the judges' hostile attitudes, and Jackson's defiant performance, Cohen predicted that Jackson was going to be released. In a letter to the UE he said that the CGE strike was the pivotal issue and he believed that "we clearly established that there was no culpability on Jackson's part with respect to the strike, that it was a spontaneous and determined action on the part of the men themselves, provoked by the adamant attitude of the company on the question of collective bargaining."<sup>27</sup>

#### SIDESHOW IN WASHINGTON

Jackson's internment created diplomatic complications for the Canadian government. American labour leaders were preparing public opinion for America's eventual entry into the war. Their job was made harder when American trade unionists looked north and saw union leaders being thrown into jail. In September 1941, UE president James Carey, who led an anti-Communist faction within the union, paid a visit to Hume Wrong, the head of the Canadian Legation in Washington. Wrong's report on the meeting is interesting both for the light that it sheds on internal UE politics and the pressures that were mounting for Jackson's release.

[Carey] tells me that the Jackson case has been causing considerable trouble within the organization for some time and that Jackson's internment is tending to make a hero of a person for whom he quite evidently has a poor regard.

<sup>26</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, Jackson to the Advisory Committee, undated.

<sup>27</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 26, Cohen to UE in the United States, 12 November 1941.

... He said that he had no doubt that Mr. Jackson had been a member of the Communist Party, but he did not consider him a dangerous individual. He left me with the impression that Jackson had been rather a nuisance to the international officers of the Union, who regarded him as an ineffective spokesman.

At the union's convention earlier that month, where Carey had been defeated in his bid for re-election as the union president, there was a motion calling for a one hour strike in protest of Jackson's internment. Carey claimed he had succeeded in getting the resolution defeated, but stressed that Jackson should be released. Carey said he could guarantee that no sympathetic strikes would be taken before 1 November 1941, when his term of office ended. "He seemed apprehensive that his successor in office, and particularly the Secretary of the Union, Mr. Emspak, would not be so restrained." Wrong appeared to agree that Jackson should be released and suggested that the "release could be based merely on the Communist about-turn since the attack on Russia."<sup>28</sup>

Norman Robertson, a senior external affairs official, briefed King on the interview with Carey, and the case he presented to the Canadian Legation. Robertson concluded that "a good deal of weight should be given to [Carey's] submission that Jackson interned is much more of a nuisance and liability to the general war effort than Jackson at liberty could possibly be."<sup>29</sup>

Jackson's case came up for discussion at no less than two cabinet meetings. On 2 October 1941, Mackenzie King told his cabinet about Carey's visit to the Canadian Legation in Washington. The prime minister repeated Robertson's argument, but both Lapointe and Howe were adamant that Jackson not be released. According to the meeting's minutes, Howe "expressed the view that Jackson's activities had been deliberately obstructive of war production. Responsible labour leaders were disposed to agree with the necessity of drastic action."<sup>30</sup>

Three weeks later the cabinet was informed that the U.S. State Department was being lobbied by the UE to pressure the Canadian government to release Jackson. "While the U.S. government had not taken the course suggested, they thought the Canadian government should be informed of the representations they had received." The Americans argued that Jackson's release "would help to allay the uneasiness in the United States trade union movement that formal American participation in the war might mean

<sup>28</sup>NAC, MG26, J 4, Volume 361, Hume Wrong to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, 13 September 1941; NAC, WLMKP, Memoranda and Notes, 1940-1950, MG26, J 4, Volume 361, 15 September 1941.

<sup>29</sup>NAC, WLMKP, MG26, J 4, Volume 361, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, 19 September 1941.

<sup>30</sup>NAC, MG26, J 4, Volume 424, File — WWII PCO War Cabinet Minutes, July 1941 — December 1941, 2 October 1941.

suspension of fundamental civil liberties.”<sup>31</sup> King noted that he had received numerous communications “indicating that there was widespread concern at the extent to which arbitrary powers of imprisonment were being exercised and normal procedure by trial dispensed with under the Defence of Canada Regulations.”<sup>32</sup>

#### RELEASE

In December 1941, the review committee recommended that Jackson be released. That same month Mr. Justice Gillanders quashed the conviction of the CGE strikers. In a complete repudiation of the position taken by the minister of labour, Gillanders said the strike was not illegal.<sup>33</sup>

But CGE had been working diligently since June to wear down the UE organization. The company had delayed the appointment of a conciliation board until late August. By October, the company had agreed to a five per cent wage increase, but was refusing to recognize the union. CGE proposed to deal with, what it called “a neutral organization.”

On 19 December 1941, CGE met with a hand-picked committee of CGE workers. Company officials said they had learned that Jackson was going to be released the next day. If the workers wanted an increase, they would do well to sign an agreement immediately, since the company would not be willing to deal with Jackson. The employee committee, which had not consulted with any union officers or members, signed a contract that provided themselves and a few others with pay increases, but did not recognize the union. In this way, CGE succeeded in not only having Jackson interned, but in signing a sweetheart deal with a group of anti-UE workers hours before his release.

Jackson was given no advance notice of his release. On the morning of 20 December 1941 he was put on a train to Toronto and was in town in time to make the late editions of the *Toronto Star*. Jackson told reporters that being home for Christmas was “just too wonderful for words. ... My wife met me at the station. I don't think we'll have time to set up any Christmas trees, since we've been swamped with invitations from members of my own and other unions and we are going to be busy.” Turning to the matter of his internment, he said, “the position I have taken all along is that we must develop a complete war organization for the smashing of Hitler and all he

<sup>31</sup>NAC, MG26, J 4, Volume 425, File — PCO Cabinet Committee September-November 41, Internment of CS Jackson, 28 November 1941.

<sup>32</sup>NAC, MG26, J 4, Volume 242, File — WWII PCO War Cabinet Minutes, July 1941-December 1941, 29 October 1941.

<sup>33</sup>*Globe and Mail*, 20 December 1941.

stands for. I've felt, just like other fellows who were interned, that while we were locked up it just meant the draining of energies and funds. It hurt other unions by reason of the bonds which existed. It seemed a contradiction in policy which showed up in apathy in many plants. We wanted our release to do our jobs."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup>*Toronto Star*, 20 December 1941.

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## 7 Cold Warrior

Once I got to know him he was the greatest. But anyone that did not get to know him well, they would think he was tough and mean. Your first reaction would be 'This guy has got to be really cold, really mean. He is a person who has no heart' — which was far from it.<sup>1</sup>

Frank Piserchia

When C.S. Jackson strode to the microphone at a UE meeting he made a powerful impression. His craggy features, the permanent smirk, the bright red hair through which he was constantly running his hands, omnipresent cigarette, and deep voice marked him out as a commanding personality. To the members and associates he was never "Red," there were too many connections to red-baiting, nor Shirley, not masculine enough, nor Clarence, a name that belonged to the world of accounting. He was known simply as Jack. He may have felt himself to be a shy man, but it was a shyness that he had overcome. He had discovered his role and defined his personality when he became a Communist union leader. As one union member recalled him, Jackson "projected the image of someone not easily persuaded that he was wrong. Jackson believed he knew what the workers needed and never hesitated to tell them so."<sup>2</sup>

For the next 40 years C.S. Jackson's life revolved around the United Electrical Workers. He was the central figure in the union and played the role of leader of the left opposition within the Canadian labour movement. He was a successful trade unionist, and the UE was the most successful of the Communist-led unions, although it could hardly be said that the union achieved many of its political goals. The remainder of this book is the recounting of a union life, the story of a left-wing Cold Warrior during the Cold War's most heated battles. Before turning to that narrative it is worthwhile to take some measure of Jackson's character and the key relationships in his life. These include his relationship with UE members, staff, and leadership, as well as the Communist Party, and his family. While it would be foolish to suggest that Jackson did not change over the four

<sup>1</sup>Doug Smith interview with Frank Piserchia, 17 July 1992.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Levitt letter to *This Magazine*, 10 January 1994.



decades that he led the UE, it would be fair to say the continuities overrode the changes. The story of the UE is not the story of one man; C.S. Jackson did not single-handedly build the union nor was he the deciding factor in whether or not the union withstood the blasts of the Cold War. However, for better or worse, he helped create, shape, and direct the union. He was a living embodiment of the potential and the limits of the Communist approach to trade unionism for much of this century.

#### JACKSON AND THE MEMBERSHIP

During the late 1940s the CCF held numerous meetings with UE members to encourage them to work for Jackson's ouster as union leader. At one of these meetings a young UE member who believed the "CCF is the answer to the needs of the people," said he did not "think C.S. is a sell-out artist because he's heard Jackson speak and he thinks C.S. is alright."<sup>3</sup> That sense of respect and trust, rather than affection, was what Jackson traded upon in his dealings with UE members.

Jackson was by many accounts a cold and aloof man. He suspected all of his colleagues: if they were not simply opportunists trying to get ahead in life, they might be Communists trying to use the union to further the Party's position, or they might be police agents. Joseph Levitt, a young party member who worked at CGE, recalled trying to get close to Jackson only to be rebuffed. Bill Renwick was the president of the UE's Westinghouse local and later a staff representative. He was wounded when Jackson once said to him that he did not know where the hell he was coming from — which was Jackson's way of suggesting he was only involved in the union because it provided him a measure of upward mobility. "I said 'That's fine Jack, you are not going to find out. We'll damn well keep it that way.' I found out later Jack had faith in me, but he made you work for it."<sup>4</sup>

Neil Young, a UE business agent at CGE and later New Democratic Party Member of Parliament, said the old timers at CGE were tremendously loyal to Jackson. "The old hands in Davenport thought Jackson walked on water."<sup>5</sup> Phil Cunningham, a coppersmith at CGE's Royce Works was one of those loyalists. Elected as local president on five different occasions, Cunningham saw Jackson as the country's greatest labour leader. Having grown up in a union family where his father had taught him that "red-baiting was the source of the company's profit," Cunningham was never bothered by charges of communism in the UE.

<sup>3</sup>NAC, UEC, Bob Ward to Ross Russell, 15 December 1947.

<sup>4</sup>Doug Smith interview with Bill Renwick, 15 July 1992.

<sup>5</sup>Doug Smith interview with Neil Young, 19 August 1992.

Cunningham also appreciated Jackson's accessibility. "He always had time to talk to you. If you wanted him to come and talk to your committee or your membership meeting, he was there," Cunningham recalled later. "The rank and file were the people he wanted to talk to. If you had a social event, he would not be talking to the top guys in the local, he associated with the members. They all had questions for him. He was the type of person that people just loved."<sup>6</sup> Many did not in fact love him. But as Levitt noted: "He may not have been a charismatic figure but he exuded integrity and courage. The old timers rightly believed that he would never sell them out to make life comfortable for himself."<sup>7</sup> For all its talk about being a union where the members make the crucial decisions, the UE leaders were determined to be leaders, particularly on political questions. So the union newspaper did not have a letter-to-the-editor column. Jackson made sure that the UE's relatively large staff worked around the clock to service members needs.<sup>8</sup>

Leah Roback, a social worker turned union activist, played a leading role organizing the UE's RCA local in pre-war Montréal. Like many other young, politically-active Montréal Jews, Roback joined the Communist Party during the Depression. When she started work at RCA it was represented by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. "That was one of those unions which was for the birds, they were just men who sat on their backsides." Trading on her Communist Party connections she brought in the UE.

According to Roback, Jackson did not interfere in the local's operations, but when the local was in a tight situation Jackson would come down from Toronto. He could be quite intimidating with management:

People said you do not pussy-foot around Jackson and he does not pussy-foot around. He would come in, he would speak in a low voice, and the management did not know how to handle this. They were people who had always had 'yes-sir, yes-sir,' workers. With Jackson it was 'This is it, it is our position and we are not changing. There is no sense in having meetings and sitting around and palavering.' Jackson had stuffing in him and people could see how he used it. The workers realized that if stuffing is good for him and he gets results, we are going to get some for ourselves.

Roback remembered how Jackson insisted that UE officials address complaints as soon as they arose. "In nine cases out of ten we always won our arbitrations or grievances. We did not let things drag and that was one thing Jackson was very fussy about."

<sup>6</sup>Doug Smith interview with Phil Cunningham, 15 July 1992.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Levitt letter to *This Magazine*, 10 January 1994.

<sup>8</sup>Doug Smith interview with Joseph Levitt, 16 July 1995.

Although Roback had considerable respect for Jackson, she did not feel that she knew him well. "Jackson was a *grand manitou* — a big chief, you do not get near him. I think he was fundamentally very shy." Roback said she and other RCA workers were always impressed at Jackson's approach to negotiations: "He knew the questions and answers of the bosses." Before returning to Toronto Jackson would go over the contract demands, carefully enumerating the clauses he knew the company would accept, pointing not only to which provisions the union could sacrifice, but at what point in the negotiations they should make the sacrifice. "Jackson would say you will have to give on this, but that is nothing, you can win that on grievances. Which was true. If you have a strong grievance committee you can build a matter up and win it in your next contract."<sup>9</sup>

Jackson recalled that Roback did not suffer from any shortage of stuffing.

Leah was a powerful gal. I've seen her in negotiations with the company, just cursing and swearing like a trooper. And at a certain point some management official might make a crack at the union. She'd get up and reach across the table and grab the fellow and say 'You son of a bitch.'<sup>10</sup>

This was Jackson's kind of member.

Though Jackson was involved in many of the UE's key organizing drives, and participated in organizing campaigns into the 1970s, he was not a natural organizer. In the mid-1960s he worked with UE staff representative Ralph Currie organizing Westinghouse salaried employees. Jackson hated every minute of it.

But he would never ask you to do anything he would not do. It was tough for him. One of his biggest fears was knocking on a door and not knowing what was on the other side. He would sit in the car, and he would have to get up his courage to go knock on the door. I always said, 'you are just loud and boisterous on the outside, but in reality you're a softy.'

Despite this, Currie thought Jackson was an effective salesman. He never made unrealistic promises, and always stressed that the benefits union members would receive would come from their own strength, and not from Jackson.<sup>11</sup>

The UE's political life revolved around the quarterly District Council meetings that were held throughout the province. These meetings provided the leaders with an opportunity to enunciate and reiterate the union's political and economic analysis. It was also a forum for debate and resistance

<sup>9</sup>Doug Smith interview with Leah Roback, 6 July 1992.

<sup>10</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>11</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

and Jackson thrived on the controversies they generated. At Council meetings he sought to goad his opponents into debate, challenging them to speak in public rather than behind his back. While the UE did not stifle debate, many of the leadership's social democratic critics saw Jackson as a hectoring bully rather than a promoter of grassroots democracy.<sup>12</sup> Despite this, the council meetings, coupled with the District's annual convention, helped the UE leaders forge a bond with many of the UE's active members.

One of the set pieces of a UE convention or quarterly meeting was Jackson's reports. These speeches, drafted meticulously, could run dozens of pages in length and were provided to each delegate. As deadly as it sounds, UE veterans claimed these were often convention highlights. UE activist Sheelagh MacDonald attended her first convention in 1973.

I remember thinking that the wording was so good, it was so intelligent. That was the word that occurred to me. This man used to stand up and read that whole paper and people did not leave the hall. You would never see that at an OFL convention or a CLC convention. You would never see people sit and listen to a document as long as 60 pages being read to them. If he came to a part he did not think the members understood he would stop and explain why it was in there. It was his way of telling you 'I built this union up to protect you — the workers, — and dammit I am going to make sure you protect this union.' He was a great educator.<sup>13</sup>

At these meetings Jackson drove home the message that those who attacked the UE leaders for their political beliefs intended to dismember the union. His success in convincing union militants that he, rather than his CCF opponents, placed union concerns above partisan interest was crucial in determining how the union would respond to the Cold War.

#### JACKSON AS BOSS

By the middle of World War II the UE was no longer a two person operation. In the fall of 1943 there were sixteen UE organizers. The union published a regular newspaper, *The UE News*, and before the war was over it set up its own research department. In both of these areas the union was ahead of most of the Canadian labour movement. The union also had six offices established throughout the province.<sup>14</sup> Growth was essential to the union's survival because the District was still dependent on a grant from the International for three quarters of its income.

<sup>12</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

<sup>13</sup>Doug Smith interview with Sheelagh MacDonald, 15 July 1992.

<sup>14</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 October 1943.

During the war years Ross Russell was elected director of organization, a position he held until his retirement in 1976. Russell, whose original name was Russell Greenberg, had been a Montréal department store manager during the Depression — which meant that none of the three UE leaders rose from the rank and file. After joining the Communist Party, Russell changed his name and enlisted in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. Russell was an energetic and personable dynamo. With his hiring, the triumvirate which would run the UE for nearly three decades was in place. While Jackson, Russell, and Harris were never personally close, their skills and abilities meshed effectively.

Many of union's first employees came from the ranks of the Communist Party. William Repka, Val Bjarnason, Harry Hunter, Peter Hunter, Bill Walsh, Mike Bosnich, Art Jenkyn, and John Trufal are only some of the Communists who served on the UE staff. This was always a point of contention, and Jackson's social democratic opponents questioned whether or not they were doing union business. William Miller, the leader of the anti-Jackson faction in Brockville, recalled that his first impression of the UE staff was how eloquent and knowledgeable they all were at district conferences. He wished his local had members who were as well-spoken. When he shared his views with members from the Peterborough local he was told that these people were all staff, not members, and were all Communists. This soured Miller on the leaders, but many other UE members around the province were probably pleased to have capable and articulate representatives and were willing to forgive them their politics.<sup>15</sup> They were also aware that Jackson did not suffer incompetents gladly, even — or perhaps especially — if they sported a Party card. Party affiliation did not guarantee anyone a job with the union. Currie was one of a number of young non-CPers who was hired during the 1960s. He recalled with a chuckle that, "political affiliation could not have been a factor with my being hired — I knew so little about politics. There was another fellow who came on staff the year after me, in 1963. I know neither of us was put on staff because of political reasons, but because we were young and full of piss and vinegar."<sup>16</sup>

The hiring of more and more staff scattered across a wide geographic area created new problems for Jackson. The new staff faced tremendous problems because they were armed with few resources and, as a result, they had to constantly improvise. Since there were no set rules or strategies for organizing, Jackson paid close attention to staff performance. He often complained that the routine of factory work had robbed even union activists of their initiative and they were lost in jobs where there was no one to tell

<sup>15</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

<sup>16</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

them what to do every minute of the day. One of Jackson's geniuses was for establishing and directing a bureaucracy. A UE staff representative was expected to report regularly and in a systematic fashion.

Much of Jackson's life was spent behind a desk, reading and strategizing. He was a voracious reader; his speeches were punctuated with endless citations of newspaper articles and government reports. He was continuously asking his staff members for more frequent and more detailed reports. Currie was amazed at Jackson's ability to interpret the mass of paper that flowed through his office. Jackson once concluded from the weekly reports that there was a back-to-work movement brewing at a Toronto metal shop. According to Currie, who was on the strike committee:

We did not even know there was a problem developing, but he smelled it from the reports he was reading. All of a sudden we discovered there were people sneaking around behind our backs with a petition to dump the negotiating committee and return to work. He pinned it down and we were able to head it off and catch the people who were doing this.<sup>17</sup>

UE organizers must have dreaded the arrival of Jackson's letters. While Russell's notes were often chipper and social, Jackson's were relentless, pointing out flaws in previous reports, and making countless new requests. Jackson wrote a Peterborough organizer a curt note pointing out that the editorial position in the last local newspaper was incorrect, that the organizer was spending too much money, that not enough organizing was being done, and — a constant complaint — he was behind in his reporting.

Although Jackson thought that Ralph Sullivan, a former textile worker from the Maritimes whom the UE stationed in Welland during the war, was one of the union's better representatives, he still peppered him with reproachful letters. In 1944, he wrote, "you should break these things more gently," referring to the fact that there had been a significant drop in membership.<sup>18</sup> The following year, Jackson wrote, "I would like you to elucidate for me the mysteries of the operations of a Business Agent in that great city of Welland. Having successfully hidden the breakdown of your dues for the past eight months and only revealed its secrets at this late date I don't doubt that you are well prepared to supply the necessary rationalizations that will meet the questions which I must now put to you." He concluded: "We find that someone conveniently forgot that there was a month of March in the 1945 calendar and no dues were collected for that month."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

<sup>18</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Ralph Sullivan, 23 May 1944.

<sup>19</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Ralph Sullivan, 27 November 1945.

Jackson read and commented on nearly every piece of UE communication that came into the office. A 1944 organizing leaflet being used in Hamilton drew these sharp words:

With reference to your leaflet, Volume 1, Number 1, issued on May 29 by local 520, I refer you to the paragraph on cooperation and suggest to you that your formulation is not precise enough and may carry with it a misinterpretation as to the meaning of cooperation as we in the UE use the term.<sup>20</sup>

When 1945 drew to an end without positive developments in Montréal, Jackson wrote to organizer Doug Betts to remind him:

It should be understood that in this new period we cannot afford the luxury of having an organizer putting in his time in only one shop. We expect an organizer to have a dozen irons in the fire at any one given time and to be developing organization in several shops simultaneously. We are aware that no two shops are likely to move at the same speed at the same time, but we have instructed all our staff that they must in this period devote their energies to new situations and place the maximum responsibility in the new members in each given shop to the related work of bookkeeping, records, etc.<sup>21</sup>

When another campaign fizzled out Jackson complained that the Montréal office appeared to have no "well laid out plan of work" and, later, provided detailed proposals on how Betts should approach the Québec Labour Board.<sup>22</sup>

While he demanded answers, he did not expect staff to agree with him. In fact, it did not hurt if they fought back. Ralph Currie, who worked for the union in the 1960s and 1970s, recalled UE staff meetings as wide-open events:

Everybody participated. If you did not, Jackson would try and get you to participate. He did not want people just sitting there agreeing with him. He hated yes men. If you sat there, said yes to everything he said, then he did not like you. He resented the fact that people would say yes to him because that was what he wanted to hear. He did not mind if you got into a bitter battle with him. You could call him names and he would call them right back.<sup>23</sup>

For all his harshness, there were many union staffers and activists who believed they were personally indebted to Jackson. They claimed Jackson

<sup>20</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Bob Ward, 5 June 1944.

<sup>21</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Betts, 27 September 1945.

<sup>22</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Betts, 7 July 1945; Jackson to Betts, 27 May 1946.

<sup>23</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

had seen abilities in them they did not know they had and credited him with fostering their skills, although fostering might be too polite a word for a process that resembled sink-or-swim training.<sup>24</sup>

But this was not a unanimous perspective. Art Jenkyn, who started out as a metal worker in Toronto's Ferranti Plant and rose to the position of director of organization, felt none of the kinship of which other staff representatives spoke. At one point, Jackson told people he thought Jenkyn was after his job, a rumour which infuriated Jenkyn. "I walked into his office and I told him right straightforward, 'Jack, if you believe that then take my notice right now. I'm going back to the plant. I have no ambitions to be president of this organization or to take your job. I have too much goddamn respect for you in the job and secondly I do not think I am qualified or need it.'"<sup>25</sup> Like many of the Communist Party members on staff, Jenkyn and John Trufal enjoyed a closer personal relationship with Harris than with Jackson. According to Jenkyn, "when I was troubled by something — policy questions, difficulties in the negotiations or anything like that, George was the guy that I would go in and talk to. I really had a feeling of kinship with him."<sup>26</sup>

All this was mild compared to Jackson's conflict with Bill Walsh. Walsh, who was born Moishe Wolofsky, was a childhood friend of Dick Steele's. After Steele's death overseas, Walsh married Steele's widow Esther, who was working for the UE at the time. He led the Westinghouse local through the 1946 strike and remained the staff official responsible for Hamilton into the early 1960s. Walsh was friends with both Russell and Harris and like them was a staunch party member though he had never gotten on with Jackson. For his part Jackson saw Walsh as an "egomaniac who had to make everything he did look large, and everything everybody else did look small."<sup>27</sup> For a variety of reasons, including Jackson's desire to dislodge Walsh from Hamilton, Harris and Jackson switched responsibilities in 1959, with Harris taking over CGE negotiations and Jackson assuming responsibility for Westinghouse. For nearly a decade Jackson had wanted to dismiss Walsh, but had never been able to get Harris and Russell both to agree to the move.<sup>28</sup>

Walsh resigned in 1964 following an unsuccessful attempt to organize a number of Northern Electric plants. He argued that the national officers had vacillated on whether or not to commit themselves to a full-scale drive

<sup>24</sup>Doug Smith interview with Sheelagh MacDonald, 15 July 1992; with Bill Renwick, 15 July 1992; with Frank Piserchia, 17 July 1992; with Osvaldo Nunez, 8 July 1992.

<sup>25</sup>Doug Smith interview with Art Jenkyn, 17 July 1992.

<sup>26</sup>Doug Smith interview with Art Jenkyn, 17 July 1992.

<sup>27</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

<sup>28</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 27 August 1989.



and entered the campaign to make sure no other union got the certification. In quitting the UE, which he had served for 20 years, he accused the union of having helped maintain a company union at Northern Electric.<sup>29</sup>

Mike Bosnich was another longtime UE activist and staff member who left the national office. Bosnich quit the Communist Party in 1956 following the Khrushchev revelations. For this he was attacked by UE members as an egotist and felt himself to be "persona non grata amongst the left wing leadership of the national union."<sup>30</sup> Despite this Bosnich was put on national staff in 1966. But after two years he resigned and went back to work at the Page Hersey foundry, believing that the union ought to return to the CLC. He also thought that a number of other longtime union employees such as publicity director Bob Ward had been mistreated by Jackson, Harris, and Russell.<sup>31</sup>

#### THE PARTY LIFE

When C.S. Jackson read an earlier draft of this manuscript he totalled the number of times the word Communist and his own appeared. Both were a considerable number. He then accused the author of being nothing more than a ferocious anti-communist who was trying to make him out to be a Communist. There are many potential readings to such an exchange, but the denial and distrust it exhibits underlines both the crippling consequences of anti-communism and the Communist Party's approach to trade unionism. Although Jackson claimed to have left the Party in 1941, from the time he joined it in the 1930s until his death, he never left its political orbit. He was making significant donations to the party in the last year of his life. Yet to Jackson, being called a Communist, or being connected to the Communist Party, was not a description but a red-baiting attack. He responded with what was the traditional Communist reply — denial.

The two Communist leaders of the American UE, Julius Emspak and James Matles, also declined to acknowledge their connection to the Party, an omission which seriously marred Matles' history of the UE, *Them and Us*. According to Emspak, it was standard practice to never give a straight answer when he and Matles were asked about their politics at union meetings. "I didn't open my mouth. It was handled by a half-dozen different delegates. ... It was ... settled fast on the basis ... that it was nobody's business what anybody was, he was a member of the union and that was that."<sup>32</sup> Such

<sup>29</sup>Cy Gonick, unpublished biography of Bill Walsh, n.d.

<sup>30</sup>Mike Bosnich, *One Man's War: Reflections of a Rough Diamond* (Toronto 1989), 131.

<sup>31</sup>Bosnich, *One Man's War*, 158-60.

<sup>32</sup>Julius Emspak, quoted in Levenstein, *Communism*, 42.

an answer was the product of decades of red-baiting. From the 1930s onwards employers had attacked the UE as a red union. In the 1940s they were joined by social democrats. When these people called Jackson a Communist they were attempting to undermine him and the UE. And as following chapters will suggest, they hurled the anti-communist charge with such vigour because it was the only one which appeared to have much impact on union members, who were otherwise satisfied with the union's leaders.

A proud and arrogant man such as Jackson would have two other reasons for objecting to being described as a Communist or seeing the UE listed as a Communist union. Anti-Communists generally saw their opponents as a cascading series of marionettes: at the top, Stalin pulled the Comintern leaders' strings, who in turn pulled the national party leaders' string; they told the union leaders when to zig and when to zag; and the unionists manipulated the workers. There was considerable evidence to support such a mechanistic interpretation; the tactical switches of 1929, 1935, and 1939 seriously undermined the image of autonomous Communist Parties puzzling out tactics and strategy. Nor is there any evidence that on the large issues Jackson did not go along with the Party line, even after the Khrushchev revelations of 1956.

Jackson would have bristled at the suggestion that he was anyone's stooge. While he had considerable respect for Tim Buck and J.B. Salsberg, Jackson did not think much of the party's secondary leadership. One famous bit of UE folklore centered on Jackson's evicting then Communist Party leader William Kashtan from the UE offices: "He used to come around the office and try to give orders and I let him know straight off 'You don't give any orders here. I am running this show. If you have anything to suggest we will take a look at it.' He did not come around much after that."<sup>33</sup>

There was another reason for Jackson to resent any linking of UE policy and the Communist Party. Both Harris and Russell were leading Party members, if the UE was essentially a Communist union, then the party was responsible for shaping and directing it. Such an image was not particularly congenial to Jackson, who saw himself as the key UE leader.

The events of 1941, when the Communist Party was outlawed and Jackson interned, would have given him a final and pragmatic reason for denying connection with the Party. Should the Canadian government once more take repressive steps against the Party, Jackson might escape persecution if he was not officially linked to it. Indeed, he had regained his freedom in 1941 after falsely denying any connection to the Party; prudence, it would appear, dictated that he remain aloof.

<sup>33</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 20 July 1992.

While Jackson did not resume official membership after his release, he claimed to have been elected to the Party's central committee in the early 1940s, despite the fact that he was not a Party member. It was to be a brief and explosive experience. Jackson regularly found himself at odds with the committee members and ended up being subjected to Party discipline.

They decided I should come before the review committee, that I needed some straightening out. My recollection of that review committee was Annie Buller. She was a tough nut and she was going to beard me for my rough and critical style. According to her I was too brusque, I was too unbending. I didn't have an easygoing, friendly comradely style, and so on. All of which was quite true. Except not with the connotations she put on it. It's been the cross I had to bear all my life. I don't know how to unbend with people. I'm not the open and easy-going, friendly, type and therefore I have a severe front.

It was a very invidious position. Charlie Simms or Leslie Morris opened it up. Everybody was quoting chapter, book, and verse from Lenin. I knew my Lenin but I didn't know it from the stand point of quotes. It came around to me. I said, 'Well I don't have the luxury of dealing in matters on a purely theoretical level. I understand the theory and I can agree with the main theoretical points that are being made here. But still when you are proposing a plan of action, that's where I am right in the middle, in the fire, trying to carry it out in life. I see this problem and that problem and that problem, all of which are not apparent to you.' So I was considered a negative son of a bitch.<sup>34</sup>

This ended his Central Committee involvement. From then on the direct and public link between the two organizations was George Harris. Jackson felt Harris tried to use this connection to his advantage at times. "George was happy to have me isolated in that respect so that he could be the liaison and interpret party policy and explain the union to the party and so on."

This led to a question to which the Communist Party never found an adequate solution; namely, what is the role of a Communist trade unionist. Lenin, in a polemic intended to curb left-wing adventurism, had advised Communist trade unionists to

agree to every sacrifice even — if need be — to resort to all sorts of devices, maneuvers and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuge, in order to penetrate the trade unions, to remain in them and to carry on Communist work in them at all costs.<sup>35</sup>

These words were often thrown back at Communists, who were often at a loss as to how they could do Communist work while denying their party membership. It should be pointed out that at the time that Jackson, Harris,

<sup>34</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>35</sup>Vladimir Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder* (Peking 1965), 46-7.

and Russell led the UE, the Communist Party was not attempting to create revolutionary trade unions. It had followed such a policy with limited success during the early 1930s, but abandoned it in 1935. When Communists were helping to organize CIO unions like the UE, they saw themselves as returning to the labour movement's mainstream. Nor did Communists rise to the leadership of the UE because they sought to gain a stranglehold over a strategic industry with the hopes of delivering a crippled Canada into Soviet hands. A number of skilled Communists were in the right place, at the right time, and as a result they rose to leading positions in the union. The same constellation of forces brought Communists to the leadership of the fishermen's union in British Columbia and central Canadian garment worker unions, industries of at best limited strategic value.

What did the Communists seek from their union activity? The most obvious answer is members. The Party formed clubs in most factories where the UE operated, although they did this in many factories where the union was far more right wing. Party members sought to recruit militant union members to the clubs and, by extension, the Party. A tension inevitably arose within these clubs if the longtime party members attempted to move too far from trade union issues and embrace Communist Party campaigns.<sup>36</sup>

Jackson certainly never tried to recruit those UE staff members over whom he had the greatest personal influence. Rather, he sent out a very mixed signal about Party life. According to Currie, "he always tried to keep everything on the union level, rather than the political level of the party. To him the union came first, over the politics. Where the union policy was the same as the Communist party that was fine, but we had differences." When he could be lured into a discussion about the CP, it would be to explain what the party position was on an issue, and then describe where the position was deficient. During the Czech crisis of 1968, for example, Currie remarked to Jackson that he found it difficult to determine what was going on. To which Jackson told him: "It's simple. Dubcek is right, the party is wrong."<sup>37</sup>

Frank Piserchia, a non-Communist staffer, once questioned Jackson about his relationship to the CP, pointing out that while Jackson appeared to have few substantive philosophical differences with its leaders, he was always making negative comments about "the guys downtown" at the Party headquarters. Piserchia asked "where does it leave me as a young guy here, having the kind of thinking that you have. How the hell can you have a vision and work with them when you are on the outside?" To which Jackson replied that he could not give Piserchia, or anyone else, advice on whether or not they should join the Communist Party, he could only pass on his own

<sup>36</sup>Doug Smith interview with Joseph Levitt, 16 July 1995.

<sup>37</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

experiences of how it had treated him and the union. Said Piserchia, "he never discouraged you, but he never encouraged."<sup>38</sup>

After his retirement Jackson discussed the links between the Communist Party and the UE in these terms:

The question of the continuing relationship between Communists who are leaders of unions is a very delicate point. If that leadership puts the party first the union will go down the drain. They have to put the union first and have to impress on the Communist Party that that is their main job and that they have to be the best trade unionists in order to be a good party member. That has been the position this union has taken and has been taken by members of the Communist Party who have been in this union. On many occasions the pressures have developed to have the union turn its attention to a political campaign of the party. The union officers have always taken the position that we start from what is best for the members of the union. If that political campaign is not germane to that principle we make it quite clear that we are the ones who make the decisions, not the Communist Party.

The Communist Party can give advice if they want and we can listen to any opinions they might have just as we listen to the opinions of anybody that we think has something to say. We don't think we need any prompting on it. We think that we have been ahead of the Communist Party in espousing issues of concern to the working class. We have been accused of being business unionists by some leading members of the Communist Party.<sup>39</sup>

In other interviews Jackson was less charitable. He argued that his alone was the voice of trade unionism before politics among the UE leaders, while Harris and Russell gave a higher ranking to political concerns. Art Jenkyn, a longtime UE staff member and Communist Party activist, agreed that the differences between Harris and Jackson focussed on the degree of CP influence.

Jack was more the trade unionist, and George was more of the political guy. That created some clashes. Personal ego has a lot to do with it too. Jack felt at times that George was stealing his thunder, so there was not the total kinship that was required.<sup>40</sup>

Piserchia agreed there was a tension between Jackson and Harris over the role the Communist Party would play in the union. "George would come in after a central executive meeting of the party where a decision has been made to go down a certain direction. Then the discussion would take place among the three officers and then the internal fights would take place."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Doug Smith interview with Frank Piserchia, 17 July 1992.

<sup>39</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

<sup>40</sup> Doug Smith interview with Art Jenkyn, 17 July 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Doug Smith interview with Frank Piserchia, 17 July 1992.

These fights, according to Jackson, were about more than the degree of influence the Communist Party would exercise in the UE; they were a power struggle between Jackson and Harris, in which Harris used the Party as a power base.

The only thing that was important to me was that we not con our people. If there was information I thought [UE members] should have I made sure they got it. Even if George and Ross didn't agree that it should be given out. Therefore I represented something they could not knock over, even though in the [Communist] Party from time to time, there were a lot of elements that hated my guts. There was no point at which George could join with them, because he just couldn't get rid of me and hold that union together. His compromise was to protect the integrity of the officers, and at the same time to keep the rank and file as ignorant as possible and keep the leaders on the executive as ignorant as possible.<sup>42</sup>

This suggests that there were times when the UE could hardly have lived up to its claim that "the members run this union." Ever suspicious, Jackson interpreted Harris's decision to write a regular column in the *UE News* as another element in this campaign for control over the union:

George, probably with the support of the Party, moved out to be the leader of the union. So he started writing his weekly column. That took a lot of discipline. The column established him more than it did me. I was established mainly with the top leadership of the locals I worked with.<sup>43</sup>

Jackson also worried that the Party clubs, whose leaders regularly conferred with Harris, might be used against him.<sup>44</sup>

Jackson's biggest fears, which he never gave voice to at the time, revolved around a growing suspicion that Harris was a RCMP agent. Harris had been a member of the Mounted Police after he immigrated to Canada from Wales, and occasionally his political enemies would stick this to him. When Mike Bosnich resigned in 1968, he raised the issue of Harris' career as a policeman.<sup>45</sup> Years later, Russell chided Bosnich for mentioning this in his memoirs, telling him in a letter that "by innuendo you [tried] to blacken the character of a man who worked harder and more effectively than anyone in the interest of working men and women. This he did for the vast majority of his adult life."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>43</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>44</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 July 1992.

<sup>45</sup>Bosnich, *One Man's War*, 159.

<sup>46</sup>NAC, UEC, Ross Russell to Mike Bosnich, 26 June 1989.

It was only after Jackson retired from the union that he began to air his doubts about Harris. In one interview he said,

if my speculations as to George, if they were right, his job was to keep the union intact in order to have the kind of a source that it represented, access to the party, access to the left of the trade union movement.... I thought he was RCMP basically. There were a few incidents down through the years which gave some credence to that.... I would have had some problems on my hands if I had started to move [on this suspicion] at that time, so I just let it go by. He did a good job, he wrote a good column. He did a good job up to a point. I put him in charge of General Electric and I was not happy with his maneuvering there. He would bypass opportunities that I thought he should be much more militant on. I never accused him — he seemed to be running down to the post box at the bottom of the street frequently, as if he were mailing special items. I had doubts, but never anything strong enough to do anything about.<sup>47</sup>

Not one other person interviewed for this book ever expressed anything but the highest regard for Harris' commitment to the UE and the trade union movement. While many people who were both UE and Communist Party activists had mixed feelings about Jackson, they all recalled Harris with affection. This is not to say that it is impossible for the RCMP to have infiltrated the UE's senior ranks. In recent years it has been revealed, for example, that a senior Parti québécois cabinet minister was providing them with information. However, it is likely that this is another product of Jackson's paranoia, and may have been arrived at after his retirement.

The real benefit the Communist Party gained from having Party members in leading trade union positions was a platform. The Party's influence was most apparent in the political issues UE leaders pushed to the fore. The first significant issue from 1939 to 1941 was the UE's opposition to World War II. This opposition was of limited impact because the union had so few members. UE members were probably not as aware of the union's flip-flops on policy issues because two of the most spectacular decisions were undertaken before most had joined the union. After the German invasion of the USSR, the UE exhorted its members to make production the number one issue, even if this meant enriching their employers. This policy caused Jackson some problems, but it could hardly be seen as an example of the UE embracing an unpatriotic or even unorthodox policy. In the post-war period, the UE adopted the rhetoric of militant class struggle, but Jackson never led the union on any kamikaze missions. He was always interested in finding another union, preferably Steel, to lead any suicide missions. While the Communist unions played a major role in organizing many of the key

<sup>47</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980; Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 20 July 1992.

strikes in 1946, social democratic and even business unionists also participated, and often profited from the national wave of militancy. Once the UE was expelled from the CCL and the period of raiding had begun Jackson signed numerous lengthy contracts and rarely took the union's key locals out on strike. This caution was forced upon him by the hostility that was focused on a Communist-led union during the Cold War. While union members may have suffered as a result in terms of the quality of the contract the UE negotiated, they may well have benefitted from the emphasis Jackson put on contract enforcement, an emphasis which was his way of warding off raiding parties. Nor should the UE or the Communist Party have to shoulder all the blame for the excesses of this period of internecine warfare.

It should also be noted that while the Communist Party was hardly democratic, and shifted its policy in keeping with Soviet direction, members always had the option of leaving — and, of course, thousands upon thousands did. Jackson was not forced to stay within the Party's orbit, and while the Party had placed him in a leadership position with the UE, he had his own powerbase and, if he had chosen, might well have been able to change the union's political direction had he opted to make a serious break with the Party line. There is no indication that he felt so compelled. He might, in part, have been held back from such precipitous action because he knew of the satisfaction it would give the CCF union leaders. However, it would appear throughout his adult life that he followed the Party line because he believed in it. As the following chapters suggest, there was considerable merit to the Party's critique of the Marshall Plan, the dangers of a branch-plant economy, and tying labour to a single political party.

There was far less sense in the strategy the UE and CP adopted towards social democrats. Although the Third Period was over before he joined the Party, Jackson was always at ease denouncing social democrats. His attacks on Millard and Lewis were not undertaken at the behest of the Communist Party — he genuinely detested them and their approach to unionism and politics. No matter what one's opinion of the political approach of the CCL leadership, it is difficult to discern how the UE's tactics could lead to anything other than the smash-up which eventually occurred. To take but one example, there was sense in attacking Millard's politics and trying to turn his members against him, and there was sense in attempting to develop a common labour bargaining strategy among the leadership of the CCL unions, but there was no sense in doing these things simultaneously as Jackson did.

An important debate over the direction that post-war Canadian society was going to take was never held. That debate was largely stifled by the country's dominant elites who chose to conduct public policy under the cloak of the Cold War. However, the left, in both its social democratic and



communist guises, bear a responsibility for transforming that debate into an exercise in sloganeering. Jackson contributed his share of vitriol and, in fact, did it very effectively. The point to be made here is that in so doing he was not a Stalinist puppet, but acted upon firmly held beliefs in a manner that was consistent with his personal inclinations. The Cold War was his good war.

#### FAMILY TIES

Chaotic may well be the kindest word that can be used to describe Jackson's home life, but disastrous may be a more accurate one. Jackson was married three times and had a fourth long-term common-law relationship. All but the last ended in bitter conflict. Jackson had three children by his first wife. One died within days of his birth, while Jackson completely abandoned the other two. He and his second wife adopted a son, who was not on speaking terms with Jackson at the time of the latter's death. In addition to these four complex and troubled marriages, Jackson had numerous brief relationships, usually with female UE activists. There was a great deal of pain, a great deal of suffering and, on Jackson's part, not much remorse.

Jackson and Dena Pike were not married until 1945, when his divorce from Kathleen was finalized. With hopes of coming into a family inheritance, they were wed in a Jewish ceremony. They then adopted a son, Thomas Jackson. Jackson claimed that he had a good relationship with his son when he was around, but he acknowledged that the life he led meant there were many lengthy absences and late nights. "I was away a hell of lot. I had good relations with [my son] Tom when I was there. I'd play with him, bath him, put him to bed. He'd wake up in the morning and I was not there."<sup>48</sup> But Tom Jackson had deeply mixed feelings about the ten years he lived with his father. He recalled how pleased he was that his father did not act like other fathers:

We used to play in a ravine near our house and everybody was smoking. Once he found us he was pretty cool about it. He said, 'We got to go to your aunt's for dinner,' and just said 'Hi,' to the guys. So after that they thought he was pretty good because he did not start a big deal with them.<sup>49</sup>

Being easy-going was also the easy way to parent, and Jackson left most of the difficult work to Dena.

<sup>48</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>49</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

There were also many secrets in the Jackson-Pike household. It was years before Tom knew that both his parents had been married before, that he was adopted, or that his father had been interned. "We lived in a house with a barn behind it. A couple of kids and I were rummaging around and we found that I was adopted," he recalled later. "Like the time they found some letters about him being in the internment camp, and all my friends could say was that your dad was in jail and that kind of shook me up."<sup>50</sup> Dena was a trained psychologist who ran a nursery school during the 1950s. Eventually she became the chief psychologist for the City of Toronto. During her marriage to Jackson she was also an active member of the Communist Party. This would have placed additional strains on their marriage since she wished to socialize with party members whom Jackson despised, particularly future CP leader William Kashtan. "There was not an occasion we were together that I did not wind up telling [Kashtan] he was a phony," Jackson said.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, both he and Dena were very critical of the Party, but as Jackson remembered later, "we had differences on what the hell we were critical about."<sup>52</sup>

The marriage began to fall apart in the 1950s. Jackson's rationalization about what happened reveals a great deal about his attitudes to his wife, women, and their relative significance vis-à-vis the UE. "I did a little bit of running around in that period, but not in a way which in any way detracted from the union. After a meeting or something, I might take a wench out or something like that. I guess I had a reputation of chasing women."<sup>53</sup> He certainly did. As UEer Neil Young recalled, "Jack would belt a few back and go out on the dance floor and act like he was 25, he was quite a ladies man."<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, Jackson became alarmed when George Harris stabilized his personal life. Like many union leaders of the era, Harris was a heavy drinker. Jackson worried that Harris's drinking was interfering with his union work and complained about him bitterly to J. B. Salsberg.<sup>55</sup> In the late 1940s Harris reformed, quit drinking, and married Ivy Riley, a union member who had worked at Amalgamated Electric. At that point Jackson feared that Harris might take advantage of the ongoing turmoil in Jackson's personal life to stage an internal coup.

The worries were not strong enough for Jackson to address their real source. Jackson's reputation for philandering was maintained well into

<sup>50</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

<sup>51</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 July 1992.

<sup>52</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>53</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>54</sup>Doug Smith interview with Neil Young, 19 August 1992.

<sup>55</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

middle age. Ralph Currie, a UE staff official who worked with Jackson in the 1960s and 1970s, was amused and, sometimes, alarmed by the wildness of Jackson's lifestyle. The joke among UE staffers was whether women or speeding would kill him first. One night the two men were returning to Toronto from a day of organizing in Barrie when they came up against a police roadblock. An irate Jackson asked what the problem was, only to be told, "when the officer who has been chasing you for the last 35 miles catches up to you he'll tell you."<sup>56</sup> Welland area staff representative John Trufal was less than amused by Jackson's personal behaviour. "If he came down to Welland for a banquet, he would come early and would come by my house for a drink. We would sit there, him, my wife and I. He would say, 'You've got a beautiful wife Trufal. But why do you stick to one, why don't you go out and horse around?'"<sup>57</sup>

Jackson may have loved to use his own untrammelled lifestyle to put others on the spot, but he was seriously irked by a surprise event in 1952. He received a letter from Robert Jackson, the second child of his first marriage, inviting Jackson to attend his wedding. Jackson had not seen Robert or his mother Kathleen since he sent her back to Ignace, pregnant. Dena convinced him that he should attend the wedding.<sup>58</sup> Jackson's daughter Betty, whom he had never seen in his life and was now in her twenty, accompanied her mother to the wedding:

What I remember most was how upset she was. She did not know he was being invited and he got to be right front and centre at the wedding because Bob and he looked so much alike. Everybody was making comments and she was not getting the attention she liked to get and she was annoyed.<sup>59</sup>

The father and daughter meeting was something less than successful. According to Betty, "he actually told me right off the bat that it was not his fault that he had to get married. He kind of disclaimed any ownership or responsibility, that it was something that happened and it was kind of too bad."<sup>60</sup> After returning Jackson sulked because he had not received what he thought to be an adequate thank-you for his wedding gift.<sup>61</sup>

In 1955, Jackson left Dena Pike to live with Jean Vatour, formerly Jean Leslie, who was an active member of the Communist Party. Vatour had been one of the UE's first female staff representatives and involved in a number of spirited battles with the United Steelworkers. One observer thought that

<sup>56</sup>Doug Smith interview with Ralph Currie, 8 July 1992.

<sup>57</sup>Doug Smith interview with John Trufal, 7 July 1992.

<sup>58</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

<sup>59</sup>Doug Smith interview with Betty Dyck, 26 August 1992.

<sup>60</sup>Doug Smith interview with Betty Dyck, 25 August 1992.

<sup>61</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

she may have seen life with Jackson as the perfect marriage of the political and personal. It certainly added complications to both their lives. She had a son from a previous marriage and, while Tom Jackson lived with his mother, he often spent holidays with Jackson and his new family. According to Tom Jackson, his father never approved of the way Vatour raised her son, and this was a source of friction between the two of them.

Tom found himself caught up in a battle between his parents. Jackson would not call because he did not want to speak with Dena, while Dena interrogated Tom about his visits with Jackson and Vatour. Nor did Dena care for the fact that Tom still idolized his father.

She could not keep this stuff in any more. She said 'well you know your dad was running around.' I was about seventeen at the time. It shattered my image of him. I confronted him with it. He did not deny it, but he said it was the same with her. But I could tell that was not true. From the time he left, my mother never went out on a date, she devoted her whole life to me. I lost a lot of respect for him at that point.<sup>62</sup>

Jackson and Vatour separated after a decade. Jackson lived on his own during this period, although there were a number of ongoing relationships. According to Tom, his father said he tried to kill himself after one woman broke off a relationship.<sup>63</sup> But some stability returned to his life during the 1970s when he became involved with Mary Switzer. Mary worked for the CGE lampworks and was active in Local 537. According to Ross Russell, "Mary was a tower of strength in her plant. She was a very strong and outspoken person and a true Scot in terms of her working-class background. She played quite a role in union affairs and occupied the main posts in her local, from steward to a member of the CGE board." Switzer was also involved in a feminist labour body known as Organized Working Women and was active on peace issues as well. In 1977, she was elected president of her local, a position she held until her retirement from CGE in 1980. She and Jackson began living together in the 1970s, but it was not until Dena Pike's death in the mid-1970s that they were able to marry, since Dena and Jackson had never divorced.<sup>64</sup>

Jackson's daughter Betty, who never lived with her father as a child, was the only one of his children to develop a positive ongoing relationship with him. His name was never mentioned in her mother's home when she was growing up; she was seven or eight before she discovered that her father was not dead. After meeting him at her brother's wedding she maintained regular contact with her father.

<sup>62</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

<sup>63</sup>Doug Smith interview with Tom Jackson, 18 August 1992.

<sup>64</sup>*UE News*, 15 January 1987.

I think it was nice just having a father all of a sudden. We seemed to get along very well. He had his summers at Loon Lake and we had summers at Ignace. I went to collegiate in Thunder Bay and oddly enough had some of the teachers he had. In those days teachers stayed. I had the same mathematics teacher he had and the same Latin teacher.

She married a school teacher, John Dyck, and moved to Manitoba. Whenever union or political business brought Jackson to the province he would visit with them. Her mother did not like this development at all. "She was very jealous and very hurt. He had not done anything for us at all and she did not think he merited any attention. So, we did not always tell her what we were doing."<sup>65</sup> After Mary's death in 1986, Betty brought a belated sense of family into what had been a very disorderly life.

One can only speculate on the roots of such a self-centred approach to personal relations. Jackson claims never to have been close to his parents, whom he believed simply viewed their children as social adornments. He also thought that being brought up in a family of sisters and female cousins left him more comfortable around women than men. That might account for his ability to initiate so many relationships, but it does not explain why he approached those relationships in such a predatory manner. The life of a union leader, particularly during Jackson's lifetime, was extremely demanding. Long days and weeks, the need to travel, and the possibility of government repression took a toll on many union-made marriages. Nor was Jackson the only Canadian union leader of this era who was unfaithful to his wife. What characterizes Jackson's dismal personal life is his capacity to minimize his own responsibility, to suspect the worst in others, and to treat the home not as a haven in a heartless world but another theatre of combat, one in which the biggest loser is the person who has been played for a sucker. In that sense, the psychological traits that sustained Jackson in his life as a radical unionist (although other traits could well have served him better) replicated themselves in his personal life in a devastating fashion.

<sup>65</sup> Doug Smith interview with Betty Dyck, 25 August 1992.

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## 8 Establishing the UE in Canada 1942-1945

### BREAKTHROUGH IN WELLAND

In late 1942, C.S. Jackson received a phone call from Charlie Weir, a Communist Party member with whom he had been interned. Weir was living in Welland, Ontario, where he had organized an underground Communist Party club. The club had contacts in the Electro-Metallurgical plant and Weir believed the workers were ripe for organization. The firm was in the jurisdiction of the United Steelworkers of America, but it had the word Electro in its name, and Weir felt that was enough to justify tipping off the UE. Jackson went to a meeting at the local Hungarian Hall.

There were so many people outside the building I had to fight my way into the hall. When I got up at the front of the hall I could see there was no point wasting time. I gave a five minute speech and started handing out the membership cards. The demands for the cards were coming from outside as well as inside the hall. Cards were going across this way and coming back with two dollars attached to them. We had \$50 in the treasury of the union at the time and I took about 7 or \$800 out of there that night because it was \$2 initiation.<sup>1</sup>

Jackson set up a local office. The wives of Electro-Metal employees would come down to the office asking for half a dozen membership cards at a time. "They'd come back the next day. If you had given them five and they had only signed up four they would be apologetic."<sup>2</sup> While the organizing drive focussed on Electro-Metals, the UE was soon inundated with workers in other Welland metal working firms, including Atlas Steel, Page Hersey Tubes, Stokes Rubber, Commonwealth Electric, and Welland Iron and Brass.

On 22 January 1943, the UE won a government-supervised vote at Electro-Metal by a margin of 1,411 to 127. A short while later it negotiated

<sup>1</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 29 November 1980.

a contract. The union then asked the Page-Hersey management to open negotiations. The company agreed to let a committee selected by the company and the union examine the membership cards. The committee concluded that the union had a majority and negotiations were soon underway.<sup>3</sup>

Atlas Steel demanded the union prove its case before the newly-established Ontario Labour Court, which served as an early labour board.<sup>4</sup> The union members and the people who had witnessed their signatures were cross-examined by some of the country's most expensive lawyers. When the court ordered that a certification vote be held the company refused to let it be conducted in the plant. It also commenced negotiations with a company union. Jackson gave the subsequent UE convention this report of the vote:

When the [Labour Court] Commissioner again approached the Management of the plant in order to have the government posters announcing the vote posted up within the plant, he was virtually thrown out of the office of the company and had to post the notices on the telephone poles on the street outside the plant. Two days before the vote, the management, in an attempt to bribe the workers from voting according to their free choice, had a notice posted on the bulletin boards of the plant, informing the workers that the management had granted, through the independent union, a 50¢ an hour minimum wage, and time and a half for overtime. The following day, the Company union released a leaflet to the workers in the plant, calling on them to boycott the government vote.

It was necessary for the Commissioner to seek the aid of the Chief of Police to evict the Company police from the polling booths.<sup>5</sup>

The UE received 1263 votes while only 110 votes were cast against the union. Atlas refused to recognize the union and instead announced that it had reached an agreement with the company union. The management conducted a vote on the new contract; Jackson urged its members to boycott it. The vote went 820 to 702 in favour of the contract with 837 abstentions. Despite Atlas's numerous violations of Labour Court rulings, the court validated the contract with the company union.

Despite the loss at Atlas, the victories at Welland set the union securely on its feet. In three months the UE had organized six major plants and reached agreement at three of them.<sup>6</sup> Welland was to become one of the UE's success stories; in many ways the UE became *the* union in that commu-

<sup>3</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 17 April 1943.

<sup>4</sup>Sefton MacDowell, "The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System during World War II," 175-96.

<sup>5</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 17 April 1943.

<sup>6</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 17 April 1943.

nity. By 1960, the union had contracts covering 13 local industries and UE members and their families accounted for 10,000 of the 33,000 people who lived in the community. The union's success at the bargaining table was also apparent; in 1947, 1950, and 1956 Welland had the highest average family income of any community in Canada and was regularly in the top five communities. The UE also played an important role in community politics and union members and officers were regularly elected to town council.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE WAR AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The UE's success in Welland, where for two decades workers' attempts to create unions had been regularly put down, is a case study of the impact World War II had on industrial unions in Canada.<sup>8</sup> For UE and other CCL unions the war was a lifesaver because it ended the Great Depression and revitalized the economy. The rapid growth of the military services — the armed forces grew from 7,000 in 1938 to 779,000 men and women in 1944 — coupled with the demand for military production turned chronic unemployment into a labour shortage.<sup>9</sup> Manufacturing employment doubled in the years from 1939 to 1943, and 60 per cent of the country's manufacturing employees were engaged in war-related work.<sup>10</sup> Freed from the threat of unemployment workers rushed to join unions; membership in Canada climbed from 382,000 in 1939 to 724,000 in 1944.<sup>11</sup> In the United States, the government was able to get unions and employers to agree to a wartime ban on strikes and lockouts and a system of binding arbitration.<sup>12</sup> But in Canada, the government's labour policy made strikes, particularly recognition strikes, all but inevitable. In 1943, Canadian workers struck in record numbers to gain union recognition — their militance and willingness to support left-wing political parties forced a number of significant concessions from the federal government.

The war also saved the UE. In the spring of 1941 the union only had 621 members.<sup>13</sup> The war created many new organizing possibilities; in four

<sup>7</sup>Mick Bosnich, *How the UE transformed a Community* (n.p. 1960).

<sup>8</sup>Bosnich, *How the UE transformed a Community*.

<sup>9</sup>Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, *Canada: 1900-1945* (Toronto 1987), 379.

<sup>10</sup>Peter Jon Warrian, "'Labour is not a commodity': A Study of the rights of Labour in the Canadian Postwar Economy, 1944-1948," PhD thesis, University of Waterloo, 1986, 1.

<sup>11</sup>Bothwell, Drummond, and English, *Canada: 1900-1945*, 381.

<sup>12</sup>Joshua Freeman, "Delivering the Goods: Industrial Unionism During World War II," in Daniel J. Leab, ed., *The Labor History Reader* (Urbana 1985), 87.

<sup>13</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 14 June 1942.



years the number of jobs in the electrical industry more than doubled.<sup>14</sup> In addition, armaments industries, many of them under government control, were established throughout Ontario. By the fall of 1944, the UE had 31,000 members under contract in 31 plants.<sup>15</sup>

However, the UE did not make the strategic breakthroughs it had been looking for during the war. At CGE the organizing drive had been derailed by Jackson's internment and the sweetheart deal signed just before his release. In January 1942, a conciliation board recommended against certifying the UE at Westinghouse, bringing a major campaign to a halt. Before war's end the union won a vote at Westinghouse, but there was less than a month left in the war when it finally negotiated its first contract with the company.<sup>16</sup> Northern Electric in Montréal was as non-union at the end of the war as it was at the start.

While the war years were a growth period for Jackson and the UE, they were also a time of political turmoil. Repeatedly Jackson clashed with the leadership of the Canadian Congress of Labor, and these conflicts, on a number of occasions, led to demands that Jackson be suspended from the Congress. This chapter deals with the UE's wartime growth and the following one looks at Jackson's stormy relationship with the CCL and the government. It is important to remember that Jackson was waging all of these battles simultaneously.

#### THE NO-STRIKE POLICY AND PRODUCTION COMMITTEES

Jackson always cultivated an image of himself and the UE as a grass-roots union with a militant leader. This being the case one would expect to find Jackson and the UE at the head of the strike wave of 1942-43. Instead, it was the social democratic unions, including Charlie Millard's Steelworkers, which took the lead during this period. Following the 1941 holiday-cum-strike, the UE staged no further strikes during World War II. This was due to the Communist Party's influence over the union's policy.

Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union the CPC hastily reversed its war policy. Party leaders argued that the nature of the war had changed, it was no longer an imperialist war, but a war against fascism. The Party recommended that the defense of the economic interests of workers, independent political action, and the "abolition of all oppressive anti-working class legislation ... must now be subordinate to, and means by which to achieve, the main objective," which was winning "unqualified labour sup-

<sup>14</sup> M.C. Urquhart and K.A.H. Buckley, *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Cambridge 1965), 463, 472.

<sup>15</sup> NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.

<sup>16</sup> NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.

port for the Soviet Union.”<sup>17</sup> Many Canadian Communists greeted the new position with relief. The Hitler-Stalin Pact had disheartened activists and they were only too pleased to be able to fully commit themselves to the fight against fascism. Many were quick to enlist and many, including Jackson’s old comrade-in-arms Dick Steele, died overseas.

For Communist trade unionists the issue was simple, they were to turn their face towards production and take a no-strike pledge until the war’s end. The UE leadership adopted this policy with few hesitations. There is no reason to doubt that Jackson, Harris, and Russell all believed the future of the international working class and the Soviet Union were inextricably bound together.

At a time when other workers were making effective use of the strike weapon, Jackson had to fight to have the no-strike position adopted. For the UE, the crucial decisions were endorsed at the 19 March 1942 District Council meeting in Hamilton. Jackson told the delegates they did not fully understand why

the question of production is made point number one in the policy of the UE. The question of production today is the question of winning the War; it is a question of winning the rights of the worker.

We have set before this meeting a resolution which states to the Canadian people and the Canadian Government that the workers of the electrical industry are vitally concerned about Production in this war, that they are prepared to give an unqualified pledge to the Canadian people. ... Do this and we will spike the guns of all those who dare point to labour as the obstacle to the War Effort.<sup>18</sup>

The union was going to fight for the taxation of all profits above five per cent, but the UE would not countenance wartime slowdowns. After considerable debate, much of it in opposition to the policy, Jackson spoke again.

Naturally the workers say ‘the boss is getting more, why should we produce more for him?’ It is a dangerous attitude in the first place. It simply means that we call off the war as far as we are concerned and go into a war with the boss. The Russian and British Armies depending on workers in all these countries will be without materials and Hitler will be able to get further ahead. We are sending men into the Front Lines and we have to send them with whatever armaments are available.

What do we produce in these factories — money? No! We produce materials. The fact that the boss does take his cream off the contract and gets money for that contract from the Government does not get away from the fact that by more energy we produce more guns. We might as well be realists. We must win this war. If there is argument on this point it certainly must be cleared up. We must agree that we

<sup>17</sup>Kealey and Whitaker, *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series*, 388-9.

<sup>18</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 29 March 1942.

must produce more guns. There is no other conclusion. The fact that the boss gets more money is incidental. We will fight him on that, but not at the cost of production.

The union pledged itself to "do everything possible to win the co-operation of management for joint action to boost production." It also "accepted unqualified responsibility for doing all in its power to produce the tools of victory" and vowed to "boost bona fide war production by at least 10 to 15%" even if this had to be done "in the face of possible management opposition."<sup>19</sup>

Judging from the regularity with which the no-strike pledge was discussed at various union conferences it would appear that Jackson recognized that it was a contentious issue. Indeed, as the organizing drive in Welland demonstrates, the pledge often hindered the union's success.<sup>20</sup> In 1945, the union and Electro-Metals squared off over the issue of union security. In January 1945, local union representatives threatened to strike if the company rejected conciliation board recommendations on union security. The company was adamant in its refusal to make any concessions. While the government recognized that the employer was being provocative, it warned the union that strike action would be illegal. Jackson spent much of his time keeping the men on the job. At a district council meeting he spoke of the high degree of militancy being exhibited by some of the workers.

They have been pressing the union and the companies very hard on these questions, and there has been a slight tendency on the part of these workers that the union was not doing all it should because of their no-strike policy. I want to make it quite clear, certainly in the opinion of its officers, that they have no intention of setting aside the no-strike pledge, but we are faced with a situation in the Electro-Metals plant where it is doubtful as to how the union will be able to control it. We are doing everything in our power to settle this matter without strike action and we are appealing to the citizens of Welland to become the spearhead of a community drive to force that company to recognize the just demands of those workers and assist the union in maintaining its no-strike pledge.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 29 March 1942.

<sup>20</sup>Despite the fact that Communists were in a dominant position in the Canadian UAW during this period, that union did not adopt a no-strike position. It was involved in numerous wartime strikes, including two in Windsor that saw 14,000 autoworkers walk off the job. See Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 39.

<sup>21</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 28 January 1945.

A strike was averted when the company agreed to pay the wages of a union representative whose duties included collecting membership dues.<sup>22</sup> The Welland cases show the price Jackson and the UE leadership were prepared to pay to maintain the no-strike pledge. As Jackson explained in 1943: "In such cases there is a temptation to say: 'Well there is only one way to finish this one thing, and that is to strike.' But to give in to that temptation is to fall prey to provocation."<sup>23</sup>

Jackson wanted to see joint labour-management production committees established in all UE plants. He had to battle not only the suspicions that union members harboured against co-operation with the boss, but managers who had no interest in giving labour any role in the direction of their operations. Union support for the policy was slow in building; at the June 1942 district council meeting, Harris chided union members because the plans adopted by the union had "not been carried through in any satisfactory manner." He pointed out there were still no functioning production committees in any UE plants.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the year, however, Jackson could paint a more positive picture of the union's production work.

Our production committee working the Otis Fensom plant in Hamilton has been the instrument where we have exposed industrial sabotage and brought a constantly improving management outlook on production. Our production committee set up in the Small Arms plant in New Toronto is accepted as a model by the National Selective Service Department.<sup>25</sup>

At a July 1943 staff meeting, the production committees were discussed at length. Jackson commented that while it was apparent that production patterns were shifting in a number of plants and in some cases being curtailed, members were not providing the union with enough detailed information to make recommendations to government. Staff representatives reported on how some workers were being rewarded for suggested improvements. One man at Vickers, for example, had been given \$40 for his recommendation, but was told by his foreman that he would be fired if he came up with any more bright ideas since production was the foreman's job. Another representative said that "it is sometimes even more difficult to arouse the workers' interest in Production Committees than it is

<sup>22</sup>Except where noted, information concerning the 1945 Electro-Metallurgical negotiations is taken from Webber, "The Malaise of Compulsory Conciliation," 138-59.

<sup>23</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 31 January 1943.

<sup>24</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, June 1943.

<sup>25</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, December 1943.

the Companies [sic]. ... The connection between the workers in the plant and the soldiers in the various fields of operation is very slight."<sup>26</sup>

#### WARTIME ORGANIZING

During this period Jackson helped to bring the union movement not only to large companies like Electro-Metal and Page-Hersey, but to dozens of small machine shops. For decades owner-managers had operated them as their personal fiefdoms. As the story of Taylor Electric in London, Ontario, reveals, these struggles were often exceptionally bitter.

In July 1942, the UE launched an organizing campaign at Taylor Electric. Within a month, 90 per cent of the employees had signed up and Local 517 was chartered. When a union representative approached company President A.T. Taylor Sr., he was told to leave the building. An angry Taylor, who appears to have been the archetypal impulsive anti-union employer, shouted after him, "I don't know at all that you represent anybody, to say nothing of the bulk of my employees."<sup>27</sup>

Stymied by the company's intransigence, the UE applied for a board of conciliation. Taylor's attempt to create a company union collapsed when it turned out that the people elected to executive positions were actually UE activists. Taylor then discharged local president Wendell Smith, alleging he spent "too long in the toilet room." On 5 September 1942, the labour minister ordered Smith's reinstatement. The company appealed, arguing Smith was a trouble maker whose presence rendered the plant inoperable, but the labour minister re-affirmed the reinstatement.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor responded by saying that Smith had been doing some casual work for the company since his lay-off, which in itself raises questions about how disruptive he was, and therefore was not entitled to the full back pay that the minister had ordered. Neither the union nor the labour department were happy with these developments. As a result, Jackson and a department official travelled to London in October.

When Jackson and the labour department official met with Taylor he said that if he let Smith back the plant superintendent would quit. Growing more and more frustrated he snapped, "Oh, the Hell with it. I'll reinstate Smith and then I'll close down the plant." Jackson suggested that before he took any precipitous action, Taylor ought to speak with his lawyer.<sup>29</sup>

At a later meeting Taylor agreed to a proposal whereby he would sign a contract with the union and pay Smith the money he owed him, but only if

<sup>26</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 12 July 1943.

<sup>27</sup>NAC, J.L. Cohen Collection (JLCC), MG30, A97, Volume 33.

<sup>28</sup>NAC, JLCC, MG30, A97, Volume 33.

<sup>29</sup>NAC, JLCC, MG30, A97, Volume 33.

Smith would then resign. Jackson noted it was unusual to settle this sort of situation "by sending into exile the man who has been the subject of the proceedings." However, he agreed to take the proposal to a union meeting. After hearing that Smith approved of the plan, the members accepted it on the condition that Smith be allowed to work in the plant until the contract was negotiated and he had found a new job.

On the morning of 22 October 1942, Jackson, convinced that he had the makings of a deal, went to see Taylor. Taylor handed him a telegram. Addressed to the federal labour minister, it read as follows:

Please be advised that your order re reinstatement W. J. Smith has been observed STOP On account of your decision in this matter you have forced us to cease operations and our plant will be closed on October 22nd until such times as we can replace our Superintendents, Foremen and other key men who have resigned on account of your action in this matter.  
Taylor Electric Mfg. Co. Ltd.<sup>30</sup>

None of the events outlined in the telegram had taken place. As union lawyer J.L. Cohen later wrote:

It is seldom one obtains a candid camera shot of individuals in cases of this sort, but in this case we have a photo of the mind of Mr. Taylor in the telegram just filed. A certain plan is going to be carried out and a strategy is being adopted. 'We will reinstate Smith, we will then say that certain foremen have resigned because of Smith's reinstatement and we will close the plant, and see what comes out of the situation.'<sup>31</sup>

On 24 October, two days after the telegram had been sent, Smith returned to work. He was told to report to the superintendent's office. After a fifteen minute wait the superintendent came in, put on his hat and coat, and left, telling Smith, "You can take over if you like. I am through." Five other supervisors also left, turning off the power as they walked out. Taylor and his son then told the confused workers, alternately, that the CIO or the government had taken over the plant and if they wanted to know what to do next, they should ask Mackenzie King. Before the day ended, Smith had once more been terminated; the reason given was the "stoppage of war work."

By the end of the week 50 people had been laid off, including 4 of the 5 stewards, 5 of 6 executive members, and the president, vice-president, financial secretary, and secretary of the union. The superintendents returned to work and recommenced recruiting members for a company

<sup>30</sup>NAC, JLCC, MG30, A97, Volume 33.

<sup>31</sup>NAC, JLCC, MG30, A97, Volume 33.

union. According to the proposed constitution of this new union "supervisory employees shall have all the rights and privileges of a member except that of voting, holding office, or being a member of a committee." Cohen noted, "I have never seen yet a more dexterous method of placing labour spies within a meeting of employees."

The UE took Taylor to the labour court; it ordered the reinstatement of 21 workers. Most of them did not want to go back and chose instead to simply take their back pay. Without them the local had no leadership and the company union was more deeply entrenched than ever. For every Electro-Metals there was a Taylor Electric.

Despite such setbacks, the union continued to grow. By the fall of 1943, the UE had 17,000 workers under contracts in 13 plants and was on the verge of signing 8 more contracts. Jackson had won his members a week of paid vacation, time and a half for over-time, seniority provisions, and a cost of living bonus. Jackson could boast of winning over \$1.5 million in wage increases for the members. In the previous year the union had won 15 of 18 certification votes, taking an overall total of 81 per cent of the vote. In those cases where the union lost they were defeated by company-inspired unions.<sup>32</sup>

#### REMATCH: JACKSON VERSUS HOWE

There was more than a touch of hypocrisy in the King government's wartime labour relations policy, as was revealed by its treatment of the employees at Crown-run munitions plants. Even while it was encouraging employers to enter into collective negotiations, the government was unwilling to deal with unions in its own factories. The reasons for this reluctance are not difficult to discern — the minister in charge of wartime production was none other than C.D. Howe. Throughout the war Jackson and Howe regularly butted up against each other.

One of the most revealing confrontations between the two took place over the Dominion Arsenals plant. Originally built and operated by the government during World War I, it was shut down in 1918 and remained idle until 1939. By 1943, over 1,000 men and women were employed manufacturing shell casings. The men were paid 40¢ an hour and the women were paid 10¢ less.

According to a brief that Jackson presented to the Wartime Labour Board, working conditions in some departments were primitive:

Women were required to work in departments where water lay on the floor. Men worked with sulphuric acid without adequate protection, suffering both ruining of

<sup>32</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 October 1943.

clothing as well as acid burns. Trucks were continually overloaded, making them dangerous as well as difficult to handle and thus impeding production.<sup>33</sup>

After the UE had successfully organized two neighbouring armament plants, the union signed up a majority of Dominion employees in less than a month. Jackson approached local management to commence negotiations, only to be told the matter could only be handled by Howe.

There was probably no union leader Howe was less interested in having in his armouries than Jackson. Howe wrote to Jackson that the Arsenal employees were not covered by the order-in-council granting bargaining rights to Crown corporation employees. They were civil servants employed directly by Her Majesty and, as such, they had no bargaining rights. Jackson was taken aback by this revelation since it was due in large measure to the UE's lobbying that Crown corporation employees had been granted bargaining rights in the first place. Indeed, the union had reached contracts with other Crown corporations.

Taking a leaf from hundreds of anti-union employers before him, Howe refused to attend any meeting at which Jackson was present. In February 1944, Howe said he was willing to abide by whatever decision Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell recommended. Mitchell said he could see no reason why the employees could not join a union, but the labour board refused to enforce this informal ruling.<sup>34</sup>

The UE did have better success in other armament plants during 1942 and 1943. The organization of the Defence Industries Limited plant in Ajax brought 4,500 members into the union, as did the organization of the Small Arms plant in Long Branch, Ontario. At Small Arms, Jackson also enjoyed a brief set-to with Howe. In one of its few gestures to organized labour, the government allowed for the appointment of employees to the boards of directors of certain Crown corporations. At Small Arms, the UE recommended that either Jackson or Harris be appointed to the board. Howe ignored these recommendations and nominated a company employee, George Randerson. Randerson turned down the nomination, telling a UE district council meeting that

it would not be good business for [me] to accept this appointment, and that if the government could not make the appointment from the nominees sent in by the union then it would be better to have no representative at all (Applause).<sup>35</sup>

The armaments certifications were strange victories for the UE. Given the union's overwhelming commitment to the war effort and production,

<sup>33</sup> NAC, UEC, Undated brief on Dominion Arsenals.

<sup>34</sup> NAC, UEC, Undated brief on Dominion Arsenals.

<sup>35</sup> NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Five Council Meeting, 13 February 1944.



having organized these workers, it found itself in the unusual position of urging them to speed up their work and, ironically, work themselves out of a job and out of the union.

### THE BIG THREE

While the UE grew steadily during the war years, a galling fact remained — the United Electrical Workers had not cracked the giants of the Canadian electrical industry. Layoffs, a company union, and a cultural barrier — the UE, like other CIO unions, had no basis in Francophone society — prevented the UE from making any headway at Northern Electric in Montréal. According to Jackson:

Northern had a very efficient espionage system, but Northern was smooth. They didn't fire people, not very often. They just shifted them around. If they thought somebody was working for the union and making some headway, they would isolate them, by sticking them in some department where there was only one or two people.<sup>36</sup>

There was less than a month remaining in World War II when the UE signed its first contract with Westinghouse which did little more than incorporate existing employment arrangements. While the union had been able to negotiate individual contracts at some of CGE Toronto operations, CGE's giant Peterborough works remained union free.

### WESTINGHOUSE

The Westinghouse breakthrough was the result of years of patient, frustrating work, much of it carried out by Alf Ready, a skilled machinist who had been recruited to the UE by Bert McClure in the 1930s. For years Ready and a handful of supporters distributed pro-union leaflets and held poorly-attended secret meetings. Throughout this period the company regularly fired union activists. Ready believed his foreman protected him against dismissal because both men were Masons.

A major organizing drive in the spring of 1941 recruited a majority of workers at Westinghouse's East Plant. The company vice-president told the UE members he would welcome a Works Council (a form of company union). On 24 June 1941, just as Jackson was being interned, the UE organized a one day work stoppage. The next day workers discovered that the newly created Canadian Westinghouse Employees Association had been granted office space on the company premises. In response, the UE conducted a

<sup>36</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 1 December 1980.

strike vote at the East Plant: 1483 voted in favour of strike action, with only 11 opposed. Westinghouse claimed that the proper bargaining unit consisted of both plants combined and that it was already negotiating with the Canadian Westinghouse Employees Association. As a result, strike support crumbled.

According to Ready, every officer resigned and the local was down to 21 members. But the breaks started to come the union's way. An airbrake worker named Al Stratford joined the union and soon recruited over 200 members in his department. When a superintendent removed all the stools in the toolmaking department these skilled workers joined en masse.<sup>37</sup>

The company continued to make these mistakes, usually to the union's advantage. According to Jackson, "their attitude was that the workers are a bunch of morons. If there is a union it means that some silver-tongued bastard has come along and persuaded them to do anything he wants." In fact, Westinghouse workers, seeing their friends and neighbours joining the Steelworkers at Stelco and the Rubberworkers at Firestone, realized that if they wanted to claim their share of an expanding economy they would have to unionize.

At the same time, the union also shifted to a new recruitment policy. Instead of requiring workers to pay for membership, they were asked to sign authorization cards which allowed the union to represent the worker in collective bargaining. In November, the revived local, which now had cards from a majority of members in both plants, held new elections for union officers. Within days Westinghouse initiated a series of plant-wide layoffs that saw the union recording secretary, who was also the vice-president of the Canadian district of the UE, two of the local vice-presidents, and many of the shop stewards, dismissed.<sup>38</sup>

In April 1944, the UE won a Westinghouse certification vote 2386 to 592. Because the company appealed the certification to the Supreme Court negotiations did not get underway until August 1944. They were still continuing the following spring when a conciliator recommended that the two parties sign an agreement which, while it contained no wage increase, would at least establish collective bargaining between the company and the union. The UE reluctantly accepted this proposal, but Westinghouse initially refused. It was not until 20 July 1945 that the *UE News* carried this triumphal story:

<sup>37</sup> Alf Ready, *Organizing Westinghouse: Alf Ready's Story*, ed., Wayne Roberts (Hamilton 1979), 9-14.

<sup>38</sup> NAC, UEC, Memorandum: UE Relations with Canadian Westinghouse Company, Hamilton, April 1937 to October 1946.

## UE LOCAL 504 VICTORIOUS AFTER EIGHT-YEAR BATTLE

Hamilton, July 14. — Victory after eight years battle for Union Recognition today is celebrated by workers of Westinghouse here. On this anniversary of Bastille Day — which symbolizes for the people of France the fall of 'economic royalists' of the feudal era — UE Local 504 signed the first union contract with the Canadian Westinghouse company, Canada's second largest electrical goods manufacturer.<sup>39</sup>

## CGE

Throughout the war Jackson's most crucial battles were fought with Canadian General Electric. It was one of the most sophisticated anti-union corporations in North America, one that knew how to divide and conquer, the value of paternalism and favouritism, and when the time came for it, how to mount effective reprisals against unionists.

The General Electric Corporation was one of the first US companies to experiment with company unions. These councils were set up shortly after World War I in an effort to head off the establishment of independent unions. The company unions provided workers with a limited, but formal, grievance procedure. The first GE company union was established at its giant works in Lynn, Massachusetts. Shop committees, made up of an equal number of workers elected by secret ballot, and management appointees dealt with grievances and safety issues. However, the system allowed for no negotiations over wages or the pace of work.<sup>40</sup>

Gerard Swope was the president of General Electric in the 1920s and 1930s and earned a reputation as the consummate corporate liberal. By 1926, he concluded that since unionization was bound to come to the electrical industry, he wanted it to come on his terms. To that end, he met secretly with American Federation of Labor President William Green and promised there would be no opposition to an AFL organizing campaign at GE. There was only one stipulation: since Swope did not want to be dealing with half a dozen different unions, he insisted his plants be organized by an industrial union. Green passed this opportunity by, after all, the AFL was not interested in industrial unions. In 1930, Swope announced that General Electric would be introducing an unemployment insurance plan for its workers. A core group of 4,500 workers were guaranteed 50 weeks of work a year, while 45,000 GE workers were provided with insurance on a con-

<sup>39</sup>UE News, 20 July 1945.

<sup>40</sup>Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York 1979), 105-6.

tributary basis.<sup>41</sup> Swope did not have to be dragooned into dealing with the UE; in 1937, after reading that Walter Chrysler was negotiating with the UAW, Swope overrode his fellow GE officers and decided to open talks with the UE.<sup>42</sup>

In Canada, CGE never extended voluntary recognition to the UE. Throughout the war, the news out of Peterborough was never very encouraging. When UE staff member Bert Stuland arrived in Peterborough during the summer of 1943 to launch yet another UE organizing drive, he quickly concluded:

It has been considerably harder to get the boys started this time around than when we first began. But they are now coming in one by one, the old ones and some new faces have shown up. But believe me the company has utilized the time very well to build up all the old arguments against us.<sup>43</sup>

Jackson took personal responsibility for the GE campaign, both in Toronto and Peterborough.

In Peterborough we had an uphill fight because GE workers had been brought up under a paternalistic regime and didn't like to hear anybody downgrade the company officials. We combatted that by leaflets. I would say we had four leaflets a week, two sided, single spaced. The joke was that we used to write on the sides of the paper. We would be there at least twice a week, sometimes three times, outside the plant with a loudspeaker, and we did wean the people away.<sup>44</sup>

On many occasions Jackson recalled having to sneak down alley ways to get into houses and talk to people. "I didn't leave my car visible on the street within three blocks of somebody I wanted to see. The company seemed to know about it right away."<sup>45</sup> Despite these setbacks, in January 1943 Jackson had a particularly sweet victory to announce:

In the Genelco Plant at Peterborough on Friday of this week, after several weeks of attempting to secure the co-operation of the Company, we finally succeeded in bringing the Government into the picture and having a vote taken as between the

<sup>41</sup>Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker* (Boston 1960), 489-90.

<sup>42</sup>David Milton, *The Politics of U.S. Labor: From the Great Depression to the New Deal* (New York 1982), 86-7.

<sup>43</sup>NAC, UEC, Bert Stuland to George Harris, 3 June 1943.

<sup>44</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

<sup>45</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

UE and a shop committee. The results of that vote were 1,183 for the UE and only 265 for the shop committee on which the company was placing all its hopes.<sup>46</sup>

Genelco was a war production plant owned and operated by CGE in Peterborough. The victory proved to union organizers that a breakthrough at the main CGE plant in Peterborough was not impossible. In later years Jackson attributed the Genelco victory to the fact that the workers were new hires and, as a result, had not been subjected to years of CGE's corporate style.

First of all these were not traditional GE workers. They weren't workers who had years of the paternalism which GE practises. It was a period when the union didn't frighten people in the same way because of the no-strike pledge. I think that had something to do with it. And they were younger people who wanted something. They were against the wage freeze and everything.<sup>47</sup>

The campaign was further complicated by the presence of a contingent of pro-CCF employees in the Peterborough works. Some of the early UE plant leaders created additional problems for the union. In 1944, UE organizer Ellis Blair expressed considerable relief as he reported the resignation of a local president who often appeared drunk at local meetings and "attempted to draw the 'red herring' across the scene."<sup>48</sup>

The UE redoubled its efforts in 1945, but organizer Bob Ward soon found himself "getting completely bogged down in the horrors of Peterborough."<sup>49</sup> In February, he reported that "things are at an all time low as far as the UE is concerned. Had a get together with Ken Slater and Harry Pearce on Monday, these brothers are the only two reliable persons we have at the moment in the city — both of course being employed at Genelco — which leaves the situation at CGE a hell of a mess."<sup>50</sup> After six more months on the scene, Ward reached these pessimistic conclusions about why the UE failed in Peterborough:

(a) 99 per cent anglo saxon community. (b) a well-knit manufacturers group working on directives from CGE. (c) the opposition of the CCF and the tactic in CGE of the CCFers isolating UE, which has proven successful in this community to a greater extent than elsewhere in Canada. (d) a background of defeat after defeat for the

<sup>46</sup>NAC, UEC, Report by C.S. Jackson to the quarterly district council meeting of the UE, 31 January 1942.

<sup>47</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

<sup>48</sup>NAC, UEC, Ellis Blair to District Five UE, 20 May 1944.

<sup>49</sup>NAC, UEC, Robert Ward to CSJ, 13 January 1945.

<sup>50</sup>NAC, UEC, Robert Ward to Ross Russell, 7 February 1945.

workers here dating back to 1919. (e) a welter of mistakes which have been made by us over the period of UE organizing here.<sup>51</sup>

As the war progressed the UE was able to pick up certifications at the CGE plants in Toronto and, of course, at the Genelco Plant in Peterborough, but the UE did not crack Peterborough CGE itself until the strike wave of 1946 generated enough pro-union sentiment to put the union over the top.

#### PC 1003

After two years of record strike activity and the growth of support for both the CCF and the Communist Party, Mackenzie King's government began to reverse ground on its labour relations policy. In February 1944, the government proclaimed order-in-council 1003. Often hailed as the Magna Carta of the modern labour relations system, PC 1003 prohibited unfair labour practises, established a process for the certification of unions, affirmed the right to strike, and required companies to negotiate with bargaining agents.

While Jackson saw PC 1003 as an improvement, he recognized it was an extension of the King government's labour policies, rather than a radical departure. Just a week before its proclamation, after its general outline had been circulated among business leaders, Jackson presented a harshly worded brief to the federal government. He concluded that, "it is quite clear that our Prime Minister, in the matter of labour relations has stood still for 25 long years, that he has not departed from his position since 1918, when he was the outstanding exponent of company unionism on the American continent."<sup>52</sup> Jackson correctly anticipated that PC 1003, which required management to negotiate with bargaining representatives rather than certified unions, would spur the growth of company unions. And while PC 1003 outlawed unfair labour practises, it did not bother to define them.<sup>53</sup> Jackson noted that PC 1003 was being introduced in tandem with PC 9384, an order which virtually froze industrial wages. In a letter to Julius Emspak, Jackson wrote that he believed PC 1003 to be "a victory for labour in that it established collective bargaining as a principle under the federal law, but that there were many weaknesses in the act which in the main failed to make collective bargaining compulsory and failed to give adequate protection against company unions."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup>NAC, UEC, Robert Ward to Ross Russell, 6 June 1945.

<sup>52</sup>NAC, UEC, UE brief, 9 February 1944.

<sup>53</sup>Warrian, "Labour is not a commodity," 113.

<sup>54</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Julius Emspak, 6 March 1944.

## PC 1003 IN ACTION

As Jackson had feared, in practice PC 1003 was far from perfect. There were many loopholes that determined employers could use to keep their operations free from unions. The following two cases from the UE's 1944 files underline these problems.

The Packard Electric management sparked an organizing drive in February 1944 when it proposed to cut wages. The existing company union, the Packard Employees Council, voted to join the UE. The company refused to negotiate and fired the union president. Although the UE filed for certification on 28 April 1944 the company managed to delay the vote until 18 October. Five days before the vote took place the plant manager announced that the company was instituting two daily ten minute rest breaks and was going to ask the labour board for permission to pay overtime rates. The manager read the assembly a letter from company President Mr. Wyman. According to notes taken by a union member, Wyman

certainly hoped his employees would remain faithful, continue the friendly family relationship that had existed for so many years in the plant and that they, the Company officials, would be very disappointed if the employees chose an outside Union like the CIO. He told them the Union would do the employees no good and that this had been clearly demonstrated at the English Electric Company where the UE had been recognized and got absolutely nothing for the workers — did nothing but take their money for dues.<sup>55</sup>

The vote was 84 in favour of the union, 72 against, and 11 workers not voting, with 1 spoiled ballot. Because the union failed, by one vote, to achieve a clear majority of eligible voters certification was denied.<sup>56</sup> On 2 November, a foreman who had been with the company for fifteen years was fired for refusing to discharge a number of union members. Twenty-three members of his department walked off the job with him.<sup>57</sup> Despite this display of solidarity the union had been defeated.

A similar story can be told of a Philco organizing campaign the UE launched on 19 May 1944. The news of the drive leaked quickly to management and on 22 May a plant supervisor told an employee meeting, "We know who the ringleaders are — we have known it all along." On 1 June S.L. Cappel, the plant general manager, told a meeting of foremen, "the company would not be interested in looking for more work if it had to deal with foreign agitators and foreign elements in the plant...." He also

<sup>55</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 38, File 3104.

<sup>56</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 38, File 3106.

<sup>57</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 38, File 3104.

told them that the Philco Corporation's board of directors would not tolerate union organization in the Canadian plant.

By the first of June the union had signed up a majority of the plant workers and Ross Russell arranged a meeting with Cappel. According to Russell, Cappel

made it clear that he would have nothing to do with the union and made it equally clear that he was only seeing us out of both curiosity and courtesy and was not prepared to recognize the fact that the majority of his workers belonged to the union even though we were prepared to show him by membership cards, etc. that this was the case.

On 8 June, the union applied for certification. The following day the company posted a notice saying that with the invasion of Europe on D-Day, just a few days earlier, "our boys over there MUST HAVE the equipment you are building here, and they need it now. Make every working minute of every working day count for Victory. We MUST do our part." But while the company was appealing to the workers' patriotism to boost production, managers were planning a reduction in production that they hoped would also undercut the union.

In the weeks leading up to the September certification vote, union activist after union activist was released from the staff. Of the 125 votes cast, 71 were for the union, 53 were against it, and 2 ballots were not counted. Because the union failed to achieve a majority of the 148 eligible voters the application was dismissed.<sup>58</sup> To these and thousands of other workers, PC 1003 must have seemed like something less than the Magna Carta; bosses were still intimidating and threatening workers, firing union activists, and suffering nothing more than after-the-fact slaps on the wrist from the government.

#### WAR'S END

Although by war's end the UE had still not cracked the giants of the electrical industry, its accomplishments were considerable. By 1944 the union had 31,000 members under contract, had just opened negotiations in Westinghouse, and had won 446 of the 618 grievances it had filed in the previous year. In addressing the most bread-and-butter of bread-and-butter concerns, Jackson could boast that the UE had increased its members' wages by \$2 million.<sup>59</sup> While the union had fought for the rights of women, Jackson recognized that the companies had, for the most part, outmaneuvered it.

<sup>58</sup>NAC, MG30, A94, Volume 38, File 3106.

<sup>59</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.



We have fought for equal pay for equal work to make sure that there is no differential in the payment of wages on the basis of sex. Companies adhere to the principle of equal pay for equal work in many shops but they always put girls in a particular department on a type of work that they have agreed beforehand is a cheaper class of work.<sup>60</sup>

The union had also undertaken a number of important initiatives in the areas of education and policy development, becoming one of the first unions in Canada to establish its own research department and its own education and recreation branch. The staff officers for both of these initiatives, Idele Wilson and John Wigdor, were hired from the Workers Education Association.

If success in the electrical industry was elusive, radio and machine shops, including many which were not engaged in military production, were brought into the UE during the latter war years. Certifications were won at Leland Electric in Guelph, Smith and Stone in Georgetown, Canadian Locomotive and Gould Battery in Kingston, and Ferranti Electric, Amalgamated Electric, and Rogers Majestic in Toronto. A number of battery plants were also organized including Willards, Exide, General Dry, and Monarch.<sup>61</sup>

All of these gains were offset by the fact that the end of the war meant the closure of the armament plants. In a report to Emspak in January 1944, Jackson wrote that many employers now believed that war production had peaked. As a result, they were dragging their heels on agreements.<sup>62</sup> In late August 1945, Jackson listed the union's membership losses as war production plants closed their doors.

The virtual elimination of the anti-aircraft section of GE plant in Peterborough known as Genelco. Some 1600 people were eliminated in this regard. A similar cutback in the anti-aircraft gun section of the Westinghouse Company in Hamilton, involving another 1000, and a reduction in the Small Arms plant from 4900 to 1200 during the latter part of 1944.

As of last month, the Defence Industries Limited shell filling plant, under contract with this union, and formerly employing 3500 had been completely eliminated. As of last week the Small Arms plant gave notice to all but about 70 of the remaining 1200.<sup>63</sup>

The Small Arms workers did not give up without a fight. In May 1945 the director general of industrial reconversion had told union officers that the

<sup>60</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 April 1944.

<sup>61</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 27 January 1945.

<sup>62</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Julius Emspak, 14 January 1944.

<sup>63</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Julius Emspak, 25 August 1945.

SAL plant would "continue as an arsenal in the postwar with approximately the present staff." But in late August the word came that the company had been sold and that everyone would be laid off. The 1000 employees commenced what the UE called a "Sit-In for Jobs." According to the *UE News*, "the demand of the workers was that the plant is speedily reconverted to peacetime work with guarantees of present earning, rehiring on a security basis and a voice in planning to ensure production during reconversion." Before they called off the sit-in the UE had won a commitment from C.D. Howe that seniority would be respected when the new owners were rehiring workers.<sup>64</sup>

Despite this grim news Jackson could look back on the UE's wartime activities with a sense of accomplishment. In the fall of 1945 there were 41 plants under contract — even though because of the post-war shutdowns the number of union members in these plants had slipped to 13,240. In the crucial area of union security the UE had maintenance of membership and check-off agreements in four plants, irrevocable check-off in four, and a revocable check-off scheme in ten more. The 48 hour week was the norm in 23 plants and in 9 plants the work week, without overtime, was down to 44 hours a week. There was equal pay for equal provisions in a dozen union contracts and in fifteen plants workers received two weeks of paid holidays.

But there remained tremendous room for growth both in terms of membership and contract enrichment. There were over 50,000 potential members in the UE's jurisdiction and the industry's profits had swollen during the war. The post-war years would be either a period of consolidation and advancement or of retreat for the union movement. Many opportunities were seized and capitalized upon, but others were lost during the coming year-long strike wave as internal political divisions in the Congress were transformed into a bitter and destructive civil war. The seeds of that struggle were well watered by the inter-union conflicts of World War II.

<sup>64</sup>*UE News*, 31 August 1945.

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## 9 Union Politics 1942-1945

While the war years were a period of growth for Jackson and the UE, they were also a time of political turmoil. Repeatedly, Jackson clashed with the leadership of the CCL and these conflicts were, on a number of occasions, to lead to demands that Jackson be suspended from the Congress. One of Jackson's first tasks upon release from internment was to get himself re-admitted to the CCL executive council. Prior to his internment he had been expelled for his support of the shop stewards movement and for circulating executive council minutes. He quickly promised not to "give support to movements considered dual to the council, and that [he] would not publicize the minutes of the executive council."<sup>1</sup> It was the first of many such recantations.

The UE's organizing campaigns brought it into conflict not only with intransigent employers but with the Steelworkers. In 1942, Millard demanded that the UE halt a campaign at Anaconda Brass in Toronto, since he felt it was in the Steelworker jurisdiction. The CCL, attempting to reach a Solomonian verdict, placed the plant in the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' jurisdiction. Since Mine-Mill lacked the resources to organize the plant, Mosher said the CCL would charter it as an independent union. Jackson saw this as a power grab on Mosher's part. He broke his promise to accept the CCL's verdict on Anaconda vowing he would appeal the decision to the next CCL convention. Jackson and the UE were once more suspended from the CCL executive on 7 March 1943. Jackson apologized and the suspension was lifted.<sup>2</sup>

While some of the battles Jackson fought with the CCL revolved around questions of jurisdiction, the central issues, however, involved political action. Would the industrial unions affiliate with a single political party or would they strike out on a course of independent political action? The CCFers within and outside the CCL were determined to gain its political endorsement. The Communists, recognizing that they stood no chance of

<sup>1</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 19 March 1942.

<sup>2</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 176-7.

gaining such support, stood for independence, which depending on the situation could mean supporting the Liberals, union-sponsored candidates, the CCF, or Communists.

The challenge facing Jackson was to remain in the Congress — and thus a part of the mainstream — while vigorously and often intemperately opposing its political leadership. Despite the conflicts this engendered, Jackson was able to chart a course that, with the help of alliances with unions like the United Auto Workers, allowed the UE to exercise considerable political independence and avoid expulsion from the Congress for the duration of the war.

#### POLITICAL ACTION AND THE CCL

In the summer of 1943 the Communist Party returned to above ground activity under a new name — the Labor Progressive Party (LPP). A parliamentary committee had recommended that the ban on the Party be lifted, but the King government was under pressure from the Catholic Church not to remove the party's outlaw status. The government made it clear to Party leaders there would be no persecution if the Party surfaced under a new name. And so the LPP was born. It enjoyed early success; on 4 August, two LPP candidates, A.A. MacLeod and J.B. Salsberg, were elected to the Ontario legislature. Five days later, Fred Rose won a Montréal by-election becoming the first Communist elected to the House of Commons.

The wartime alliance between Canada, Britain, the US, and the USSR meant that the era of public attacks on the Soviet bogeyman was at a momentary end. The LPP platform advocated industrial peace in support of the war effort while suggesting the post-war period would be marked by the peaceful co-existence of the socialist and capitalist worlds. The UE leadership raised the possibility of continuing the no-strike pledge after the war concluded. In keeping with this Jackson told a 1944 union conference that “the strike weapon will not be as necessary in the post-war years. The strike weapon in the immediate postwar period would put management in the position of advocating strikes and thus being able to get rid of the union.”<sup>3</sup>

Some of the harshest language in the LPP manifesto was reserved for the CCF, which was warned that it could expect the LPP to “advance its criticism of the CCF policies and combat the CCF's opportunist policies and tendencies.”<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, the CCF turned down the LPP's application to join the party as part of a united front.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.

<sup>4</sup>Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 195.

<sup>5</sup>Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 44.

August 1943 also marked a breakthrough for the CCF. In the Ontario election the party received 32.4 per cent of the popular vote and won 38 seats to become the official opposition. The results reflected David Lewis's efforts to build links between the labour movement and the CCF. Both Charlie Millard and Robert Carlin, the Canadian leader of Mine-Mill, were elected.

The 1943 election provided a concrete example of the dilemma facing the UE leaders. At a mid-campaign staff meeting Jackson and Harris discussed what was to be done about their "dear friend Charlie Millard." The UE had organized the Small Arms plant in his riding and many members were supporting the CCF. In summing up the argument, Harris concluded that, "there is no other position we can take but to support Millard in this election."<sup>6</sup> At the same time that it was providing half-hearted support to Millard, the UE asked the CCF to withdraw the candidate it had fielded against J.B. Salsberg, something the party was loathe to do.

#### BATTLING THE CCF

The re-emergence of the Communist Party and the successes of the CCF sparked a bitter confrontation in the Canadian labour movement over the next two years. Jackson outlined the attitude the UE would take towards these developments on 19 August 1943, when he addressed a meeting of the union's district executive board.

It is not the role of the trade union movement at this stage in Canadian history to state to its members that their political action requirements can be met through any one particular party. ... This is particularly true because of the fact that the membership of the trade union has come together in that trade union on the basis of the economic program of the Union and the workers became members of that Union regardless of their political affiliation and belief. It would be contrary to the basic interests of the workers at this time and productive of division in the ranks of the union if attempts were made to force the membership into one political mould or party.

... Here in Canada, with at least two working class political parties on the scene, the task of the trade union movement is not to divide itself in its struggles as to the merits of these two parties, but to preserve its full identity as a Union and to use its influence to bring about cooperation between these two parties.<sup>7</sup>

This is the language of the United Front of the 1930s. The argument for unity is not without merit, but it should be noted that whenever Jackson

<sup>6</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes UE staff meeting, 12 July 1943.

<sup>7</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 29 August 1943.

veered off the topic of political action he did not think the CCF was much of a labour party.

The CCF sought to translate the momentum built up during the 1943 Ontario election into a formal link with labour. A decisive moment came at the September 1943 CCL convention. Delegates were presented with a resolution, drafted in part by Lewis, calling on them to "endorse the CCF as the political arm of labour." All CCL member unions were urged to affiliate with the CCF. The terms of affiliation stipulated that affiliated unions could only send CCF members to party conventions and gave the unions far less influence in the party than it gave to constituency organizations.<sup>8</sup>

Although Jackson was to later oppose the CCL's affiliation to any political party, his early objections centred on the terms of affiliation, rather than the concept of affiliation. This reflected the LPP's initial interest in affiliating with the CCF. In his October report to the UE district council, he said

the conditions laid down by the Constitution of the Ontario CCF did not permit freedom for the Unions to democratically choose their own delegates to CCF Constituency Conferences and Conventions, and that while it called for a check-off of dues to the CCF from the membership of the Local Unions, it denied representation except on the basis of separate and individual of members of the trade unions in the CCF club.<sup>9</sup>

As a result the council passed a resolution calling for labour unity, which was the UE's way of expressing opposition to an endorsement of the CCF.

At Lewis's suggestion the CCL established a Political Action Committee (PAC) to give life to the CCF endorsonment. When the committee's membership list was released in February 1944 alarms bells went off throughout the Congress. All five committee members were active CCFers and the chair and vice-chairs, Millard and Carlin, were CCF members of the Ontario Legislature. The secretary was David Lewis's brother-in-law Andy Andras. The narrow make-up of the committee worried Congress treasurer Pat Conroy, who distrusted Millard's judgement. While he was no Communist, Conroy put the Congress ahead of the CCF. He believed if the PAC was not to be a point of division within the Congress it had to include representation from all major unions.<sup>10</sup>

For the rest of the war Jackson characterized the CCF position as an ultra-left one of "socialism now" while calling for a labour-CCF coalition to defeat the Conservatives provincially and prevent them from taking power nationally. These views provoked sharp responses from the CCL leadership. While Jackson and Millard can be seen as the main protagonists in this

<sup>8</sup>Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto 1968), 78-9.

<sup>9</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 October 1943.

<sup>10</sup>Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 92.

conflict, Conroy and UAW leader George Burt both played crucial roles in the political battles that preoccupied the country's industrial union leaders for the next two years.

Ever since Burt ousted Millard from his position as Canadian UAW director the two men had been at odds. And while Burt was not a Communist, there were a number of party members in significant positions within his union and the Party enjoyed considerable support among UAW activists. In retrospect, Jackson concluded that Burt, who was to play public roles in both the Liberal Party and the CCF, was in essence a trade unionist first and a socialist second. Burt's animosity towards Millard and the strength of the Communist Party within the UAW, led him to support the UE political action position throughout the war. Because Burt was not a Communist, Conroy and the CCL leadership never attacked him or the UAW with the vigour that it reserved for Jackson and the UE.

The original five member PAC had a short-lived career. By June 1944, the Congress suspended the Committee's activities until it could be reorganized. A new enlarged PAC included representatives from the UAW, IWA, and UE; George Harris became its vice-chairman. But these changes did not mean that the PAC's operations would be any less controversial. A 29 point political program, which made explicit reference to the CCL's 1943 endorsement of the CCF, was adopted over Harris' objections. Jackson attacked it as being "completely in line with the unrealistic 'Socialism Now' program of the CCF." The UE then proceeded to turn the tables on Millard by demanding that the PAC play a more aggressive role in developing political opposition to George Drew's Conservative regime in Ontario. With the UE's support, Burt proposed the creation of a Liberal-LPP-CCF coalition to drive the Conservatives from office.<sup>11</sup> Millard, who had no interest in seeing the UE or Burt take the political initiative, said that the PAC was restricted to federal politics and to gaining support for the PAC program. At the UE's fall conference Jackson attacked this position:

The answer of Millard shows how far blind partisan politics can go. In the face of the threat of toriyism Millard said that it is not the business of PAC and the sole function of PAC is to build and elect his CCF party. This is the most glaring example of party first politics, regardless of the effect it has on the workers and the nation. In fact, it means that in a bid for partisan power, leaders of the CCF are prepared to risk throwing the country and the people's future into the hands of the Tories.<sup>12</sup>

Jackson turned his attention to the CCL convention's endorsement of the PAC program. The decision represented a failure to broaden the PAC "to

<sup>11</sup>Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 110-1.

<sup>12</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.

make it a non-partisan committee and an instrument through which the 20,000 members of the Congress could extend its support toward bringing about a coalition of labour and genuine liberals in the fight for national unity to win jobs and security." He concluded with a direct shot at the CCL leadership:

Let it be said, however, that the vote of the majority of the delegates at the convention did not by any means reflect the position of the majority of the workers in Canada who are members of Congress affiliates. The difference in the number who voted against it was in the main made up of paid officials who had been instructed how to vote and threatened with loss of their positions if they failed to carry out instructions. The United Steelworkers of America, the union headed by Charles Millard, had 23 paid organizers and officials as delegates.<sup>13</sup>

In moving away from questions of policy to attacking the integrity of the Steel leaders, Jackson had laid himself open to attack. The comments were reported in the *Globe and Mail* and drew a speedy response from Pat Conroy who called Jackson's "disparaging remarks" a "deliberate attempt at sabotage." As a result, he proposed that UE be suspended at the next council executive meeting. Jackson declined to apologize.

But before the motion to suspend the UE could be dealt with, the PAC underwent yet another change. At a 16 November meeting Harris put forward a proposal that would have clearly marked out the committee's non-partisan role and explicitly stated that it was not an agent of the CCF. For the left, the key element in the proposal was one that would have allowed the committee to establish links with other "labour and democratic bodies." This would have opened the door to PAC endorsements of LPP and even Liberal Party candidates in the coming federal election. The motion received the support of the IWA, the Shipyard Workers, the Leather Workers, and the UAW. The committee's CCF majority defeated the proposals. As the leaders of the defeated left-wing unions were indicating that this defeat could lead them to withdraw from the Political Action Committee, Millard introduced what appeared to be a compromise resolution. It stated that PAC was an instrument of all CCL unions, was independent of all political parties, and would join with "all other democratic organizations to defeat re-action and to ensure the election of a ... government of the people." The resolution was given unanimous support.<sup>14</sup>

The UE was ready to embrace a policy based on this position. In a news release Jackson wrote that "we believe that PAC can play a powerful, progressive and unifying role in the country based on the understandings

<sup>13</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 27-28 October 1944.

<sup>14</sup>Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 96-7.



contained in the resolution agreed to in Ottawa." The union called on its locals to immediately create PACs.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps Conroy was grateful to have a little peace and quiet between the UE and Millard, for at this point he decided not to press his case against Jackson and the UE. A somewhat surprised Jackson sent this message to Emspak in mid-December.

I have just returned from the CCL executive council meeting in Ottawa, and I must say I found the atmosphere there much different from what I had expected. The issue of our expulsion was solved in a few minutes discussion with Mosher and Conroy on the basis of a commitment on my part to jointly with Brother Conroy release a statement of retraction of the remarks that were contained in the District Council report and carried in the press. That statement has not yet been worked out but I anticipate no difficulty in arriving at a formulation.<sup>16</sup>

A UE press release stated that the comment about the CCL convention was "not in accordance with the facts, and was wholly unwarranted. .... [I]t is hereby fully withdrawn."<sup>17</sup> Greatly pleased with the events of the past year, Jackson concluded his letter with the observation that "these are all very good signs of weakening on the part of the leadership of the Congress and the recognition of the role that the progressive section of the Congress plays."<sup>18</sup>

Jackson and the UE did more than simply oppose the political direction the CCF was charting for the CCL. Early on in its history the American UE had established Legislative Committees that regularly met with members of Congress and state politicians. In February 1944, the Canadian UE conducted its first of many "Caravans to Ottawa" that would see hundreds of UE members descend on Parliament Hill. There they met with individual MPs from all parties and pressed them for their views on a wide range of issues.

During the 1944 caravan, members spent three days lobbying MPs for amendments to order-in-council 9384 which froze industrial wages. The union published a report that summarized the reception they had received from various politicians. These ranged from the caustic description of High Park's A.J. Anderson ("Politically blind — secretary does all his work and she did not know anything about wage order") and W.H. Mills of Elgin ("Labour is pretty well looked after. Unions should be kicked out of the country") to reports that many government MPs were upset with the cabinet for introducing the order without consulting them, to commitments from

<sup>15</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson, undated news release.

<sup>16</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Emspak, 13 December 1944.

<sup>17</sup>NAC, UEC, UE press release, 2 January 1945.

<sup>18</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Emspak, 13 December 1944.

the Communist and CCF MPs to work for its repeal. In reporting back to the UE District Council Jackson said:

Four of the most historic days in labour history have passed. For the first time 60 to 70 per cent of the members of parliament actually met organized workers, and for the first time these 60 to 70 per cent have found out what was contained in the labour bill which was enacted by the Order-in-Council PC 9384. The members [of parliament] did not like that situation nor the situation which brought it about. The Liberal members of the House were put out at the complete ignoring of their position as the legislators of the country. ... This delegation has been a real eye-opener to us and has given us a better understanding of what political action means. When we suggested to our membership that they should encourage their friends and their fellow members to sit down and write personally to a member of parliament, setting before that member the thinking of the worker on many acts of legislation, there was a hesitancy on the part of our members to do this, and they felt it would not do any good. Secondly, there was a feeling of not knowing just how to put the question on the minds of the workers at that time. I think much of this is changed already.

Jackson noted that the international UE had just come out with a booklet on how to establish Political Action Committees. With a few changes he said it could be used in the Canadian context.<sup>19</sup> While there was much that was rhetorical about Jackson's approach to political action, he never flagged in his enthusiasm for shipping members to Ottawa or Queen's Park to personally lobby politicians.

The UE booklet Jackson referred to was a nuts-and-bolts guide to lobbying that was published as part of an overall CIO campaign to swing labour votes to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party in the 1944 US election. Just as Communists had been hired by anti-Communist John L. Lewis to organize the CIO, anti-Communist Sidney Hillman hired them to mobilize labour support for the Democrats through a CIO Political Action Committee. The PAC endorsed and campaigned for pro-labour candidates, which generally meant Democrats. Jackson always argued that this was the sort of political action he envisioned for the Canadian labour movement.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE 1945 ELECTIONS

The first test of the new non-partisan CCL political action committee was a disaster. A federal bi-election had been set in the Ontario riding of North Grey for February 1945. Millard was determined that the PAC throw its support behind the CCF candidate, Air Vice Marshal Earl Godfrey. Jackson,

<sup>19</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 13 February 1944.

<sup>20</sup>Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, 232-3.

and other left-wing union leaders, supported the Liberal candidate, General A.G.L. McNaughton, who had just been appointed defence minister.

Jackson thought the national PAC should enunciate the labour movement's political platform while PAC's in local ridings would endorse specific candidates based on both their commitment to such a platform and the likelihood of their defeating the local Conservative candidate. The chances of realizing this sort of vision were dashed at a PAC meeting held 16 January 1945. Millard reported that the Committee's 29 point platform had been circulated to all the major political parties, including the LPP, and had been endorsed by only one party — the CCF.

Based on this Millard proposed that the PAC endorse the CCF candidate in North Grey. The resolution was adopted, over the objections of Harris, Burt, and Morgan.<sup>21</sup> Harris resigned from the committee attacking the endorsement as a "reversal of the basic policy by the PAC-CCL whereby it substituted partisan all-out work for the CCF for its previous position of cooperation with other democratic bodies."<sup>22</sup> His resignation was followed by that of Burt, Morgan, and the other left-wing union leaders from the Committee. All this guaranteed that the final three weeks of the North Grey bi-election would feature some spectacular examples of labour movement infighting as the CCL threw its support to Godfrey and the Communists embraced General McNaughton. The Steelworkers' Eamon Park placed an advertisement in the Owen Sound *Sun Times* which asked:

Who do the North Grey Liberals think they are kidding? We ask the Liberals is it not a fact that George Harris of Toronto who spoke on the radio for McNaughton, is a well known adherent of the Tim Buck Labor Progressive (Communist) Party and that members of the union to which he belongs did not even know of his intentions to speak for McNaughton?

Following the appearance of this advertisement, Harris told a UE executive board meeting, "I don't speak as an individual or as a member of the LPP. I speak on the basis of the policy of this union made by District Council delegates and that I didn't go beyond that policy." He said that he had merely told the voters that "their duty is to rise above party and vote for the country."<sup>23</sup> The UE responded with its own ad that attacked the CCF for "utilizing a well-known weapon of Hitlerism — red-baiting." There was one last controversial newspaper ad to appear during that election. On 3 February the *Daily Times* ran a full page advertisement listing the national union leaders supporting McNaughton — prominent display was given to

<sup>21</sup>Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 97.

<sup>22</sup>NAC, UEC, UE press release, January 1945.

<sup>23</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 27 January 1945.

Jackson and Harris, along with Harold Pritchett of the IWA, Michael Kennedy of the UAW, Malcolm McLeod of the Shipyard Workers, and Pat Sullivan of the Canadian Seaman's Union.

The Conservatives won the election while Godfrey finished a distant third. The results were subject to wildly differing interpretations. According to the UE analysis, the Conservative victory was the result of irresponsible vote splitting on the part of the CCF, while David Lewis viewed the LPP support of the Liberal Party as an "illicit honeymoon ... [which] did the Liberal Party no harm."<sup>24</sup>

The events in North Grey were but a preparation for two of the most significant elections in Canadian history — the June 1945 Ontario election which gave the Conservative Party a majority it would hold for four decades and the federal election of the same month which gave the federal Liberal party a mandate to create a post-war Canada on the values of corporate liberalism. The Federal election was a high-water mark for the Communist Party in Canada — Fred Rose was re-elected in Montréal and the Party received the greatest share of the popular vote it would ever poll. It was also a complete disaster for the federal CCF, which failed to elect a single candidate in Ontario. In the Ontario election the party fell from official opposition to third party status, electing only eight candidates — among those who suffered defeat was Charlie Millard.

Both elections saw a considerable degree of co-operation between the Liberals and the LPP — usually in the form of providing joint backing for certain candidates. In Peterborough, the UE engaged in lengthy negotiations with the Liberal Party, but after a suitable candidate had been agreed upon the Liberals withdrew their backing because the man in question was Roman Catholic.<sup>25</sup> In three Windsor ridings the UAW and the Liberals provided support to George Burt, Windsor mayor Art Reaume, and Alex Parent, a member of the LPP and president of UAW local 195. As a result, the CCF lost all three seats, two of the them to the Conservatives while Parent won his riding and joined the Liberal caucus.<sup>26</sup>

The CCF leadership laid much of the blame for the party collapse at the door of the Communist Party and certainly from the summer of 1945 onwards CCF supporters within the CCL redoubled their efforts to remove CP supporters from positions of influence within the labour movement. When that failed they moved to expel "red" unions from the Congress.

The candidacy of a number of UE members in the 1945 election, including Harris and Russell, created controversy at a UE conference.

<sup>24</sup>David Lewis, *The Good Fight, Political Memoirs, 1909-1958* (Toronto 1981), 263.

<sup>25</sup>NAC, UEC, Robert Ward to C.S. Jackson, 10 May 1945.

<sup>26</sup>Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 113

Jackson gave this defence of the obviously partisan actions of an avowedly non-partisan union.

You may be sure that the funds of this union are used only for the organization of workers into this union. It should also be clearly understood that members of our staff who are candidates in the election are standing on a program which is fully in conformity with the policy of this union. If in any respect they were advocating a position contrary to our policy then I assure you they would not be permitted to run.<sup>27</sup>

In his report to the delegates Jackson devoted much of the speech to the current political scene. After scoring the King government for not paying sufficient attention to the concerns of labour, he reiterated his view that this was not the time to put forward a radical position.

We must as realists accept the fact that we are going to continue to live under a profit system, known as capitalism, for many years to come. This is the thinking of the bulk of the people of Canada and the United States, and as such, it will of necessity be the prevailing mode of our economy.

Again as realists, therefore, we must seek ways and means of changing the operation of that profit system, or capitalism, in such a way that it provides greater guarantees of security to the people.

... Labor has never and can never refuse to make common cause on specific programs with others, including employers, who are prepared to fight for the things that labour wants. This is the essential lesson that we have learned out of this war.<sup>28</sup>

This represents the zenith of the UE and the CP's war-time people's front position. Such views led American Communist leader Earl Browder to attempt to dissolve his own Party. Just a week before Jackson gave the above speech French Communist leader Jacques Duclos revealed that the Soviet line had changed and that Browder was not a far-sighted leader but a "notorious" revisionist. Class struggle would once more be the order of the day.<sup>29</sup>

In a brief letter sent to the union's staff and officers, Jackson's commentary on the election results stated that while the UE's position on political action was correct, there was no getting around the fact that the Conservatives had been returned to office and in fact, had increased the number of seats they held. "We must ... admit that the lessons which naturally flow from the correct policy of the UE were not in any full measure carried out by our

<sup>27</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson, Address to the District Council of the United Electrical Workers, 27 May 1945.

<sup>28</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson, Address to the District council of the United Electrical Workers, 27 May 1945.

<sup>29</sup>Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 217.

own membership.”<sup>30</sup> The political strategy of both the CCF and the LPP had failed. Union members were as adverse to taking political direction from the leaders of their own union as from the CCL.

The wounds and recriminations created by the Political Action Committee, which itself lay in ruins at the end of the election campaigns, still festered when Jackson, Burt, Millard, and Conroy were all thrust together in the country’s first significant post-war labour conflict — the 100-day Ford strike at Windsor.

<sup>30</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all Political Action Committees, local secretaries, and District Executive Board members, 13 June 1945.

In September, 1945 C.S. Jackson and George Burt led a delegation of 250 unionists to Ottawa. They were reacting to a potential economic crisis. World War II had come to an unexpected end in August 1945. War production contracts were being cancelled and unemployment was spreading. In response, Jackson and Burt organized their "Labour Trek" to Ottawa. Jackson presented a brief calling for jobs for all who wished to work, income commensurate with abilities, the 40 hour week, and a national labour code. Following a meeting with the prime minister, he told a crowd of supporters that: "The remarks of prime minister King indicated that with the end of the war the thinking of the government was in the direction of as far as possible evading responsibility for labour matters and hiding behind the cry of 'provincial rights' in this connection."<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie King had not been keen to meet with Jackson, however, he felt it would "only be giving the agitators what they wanted if I did not turn up." King listened to their presentation for about an hour and then left, taking time to shake hands with each of them before departing. He recorded his impressions in his diary.

I am told that all who were present were communists. Jackson, who did much of the speaking, was interned for three years during the war. Also one or two others were interned. One had just been dismissed from a position in a Labour Union. All had very dour and bitter countenances. I thought Jackson very skillful. On the other hand, I did feel by trying to be as sympathetic as possible, that they were a hard and dangerous lot. Their presence in Ottawa and the kind of demonstrations they had been making, along with the presence today of another group of the seaman's union, demanding the retention of war bonus in time of peace, with what I learn of other movements, makes clear that Canada is more or less honeycombed with communist leaders who have a close association with the movement in the U.S. and that all are very closely associated with the movement in Russia. I became more

<sup>1</sup>CSJ, personal files, statement issued by the organizing committee of the Labour Trek to Ottawa, n.d.

convinced of this than ever when, after this meeting, I had a long talk with Robertson about the Russian embassy situation.<sup>2</sup>

The last sentence refers to an event of which only a handful of Canadians were aware. Less than a week earlier a Russian cipher clerk had defected from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa. Igor Gouzenko claimed to have proof of a Soviet spy which involved leading Labor Progressive Party members. Gouzenko's allegations would breathe new life into the War Measures Act and help to usher in the Cold War in Canada.

The Grand Alliance of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union that had brought World War II to an end was about to shatter. The concept of peaceful existence between the super powers that had been promoted at the Teheran Conference, and embraced by Jackson, was to quickly give way to a vision of the world divided into warring camps. Depending on one's interpretation, the Cold War pitted militaristic American imperialism against the peace loving people's democracies of Eastern Europe or the Evil Empire and the Bolshevik menace against all the world's freedom-loving democrats. Cold warriors on either side had little use for those who wished to draw finer or more subtle definitions about the underlying reasons for this rapid falling out between wartime allies.

In North America, the diplomatic Cold War was intertwined with its domestic counterpart, the relentless hunt for Reds under the beds, in the unions, in the movies, in the universities, and in government. In his diary, King cloaked this paranoiac view in religious imagery:

Each day emphasizes anew the appalling alignment that is shaping up between Capitalist and Communistic countries. The insidious nature of the Communist movement is its worst feature. It is the dragon in action. Destructive of all that is constructive. Undermining standards of morality, beauty and truth; religion and all else that makes for enduring peace, happiness, and prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

Small wonder that the campaign against communism took on many of the trappings of an inquisition.

People with radical views found themselves hounded out of public life. This sort of struggle was not new to the trade union movement; the battles between Jackson and Millard, between Steel and the UE, can be read as a dress rehearsal for the Cold War. A distinguishing feature of the Cold War was the alliance that developed between the social democrats, both in the CCF and the CCL, the Liberal government, and the leaders of Canadian

<sup>2</sup>J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, eds., *The Mackenzie King Record*, Volume III (Toronto 1970), 16.

<sup>3</sup>Pickersgill and Forster, *Mackenzie King Record*, Volume IV, 29.



business to eliminate the Communist Party from a position of influence within the labour movement. In this they were largely successful, but in the process they severely eroded the level of democracy within Canadian trade unions and undermined their own movement by allowing the right to red-bait socialism.

The Cold War led to a period of lengthy conflict within the UE itself. This struggle took place both in Canada and the United States and resulted in the UE withdrawing from the CIO and being expelled from the CCL. A new union, the International Union of Electrical Workers was created to displace the UE from the electrical industry.

Within days of receiving Gouzenko's allegations, the King government moved from disbelief, to shock, and finally, to action. By February 1946 a Royal Commission into Espionage, headed by Justice Robert Taschereau and Justice Roy Kellock, had commenced its secret hearings. People were interned indefinitely, denied council, and interrogated *in camera*. The Commission identified more than twenty Canadians as spies and traitors. By the time they were placed on trial, they had been all but convicted in the public mind. Jackson's was one of the few voices raised in opposition to what amounted to a frontal assault on civil liberties. He claimed the charges were part of an assault on both the USSR and domestic dissent.

The order-in-council ... 6444, recently revoked as the result of a storm of protest from the Canadian people, was an order which was passed in secret several months ago, contrary to the constitutional rights of this government which clearly declares that all orders-in-council must be made public within a matter of a few days after their passage.

This vicious order-in-council permitted the government in peace time to seize, detain, third degree any one suspected of having any connection with or knowledge of any foreign agent, and to hold such suspects incommunicado for an indefinite period of time without benefit of counsel. ... Not content with this fascist method of conviction without trial, it encouraged the press to prejudice these individuals before the accused had the benefit of counsel or trial, and the government attempted to whip up a hysteria in this country against the Soviet Union and against these individuals, and anybody who might have had even casual acquaintance with them.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the people named by the Kellock-Taschereau Commission, particularly those who pleaded not guilty, were acquitted by juries, while others won acquittal on appeal. In the end, 11 of the 26 people named by the commission were convicted of various crimes.

<sup>4</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 28 April 1946.

#### THE COLD WAR AND THE AMERICAN UE

In the United States the split between left and right exploded at the UE's 1941 conference. In an effort to remove Matles and Emspak from the UE leadership, a Pittsburgh local moved to bar "Nazis, Fascists, and Communists" from union office. While the resolution was defeated, President James Carey supported this policy and attacked the Communists for flip-flopping in their support of the war effort. The UE convention took place shortly after the German invasion of the Soviet Union and, in the name of labour unity, the Communist Party urged its members to support Carey. However, there was a limit to the extent to which Emspak and Matles were prepared to follow the party line. Believing the majority of members wanted to see Carey replaced they ignored the party directive and supported a challenger, a young socialist electrical worker named Albert Fitzgerald. He defeated Carey by a margin of 635 votes to 539 votes.

Carey continued to serve as the CIO's secretary-treasurer. From that position he campaigned relentlessly against the UE. He also worked closely with the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. In keeping with the direction these men were charting for the labour movement, the 1946 CIO convention adopted, without debate, a resolution stating that the "Congress of Industrial Organizations resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party, or other political parties and their adherents, to interfere in the affairs of the CIO."<sup>5</sup> As a part of its increasingly convoluted strategy, Communist union delegates supported the policy.

It was against this backdrop of an emerging Cold War and resurgent witch hunt that the Canadian labour movement's two major post-war struggles — the Ford Strike of 1945 and the 1946 strike wave — unfolded.

#### THE FORD STRIKE

In the fall of 1945 it was clear that a strike was unavoidable at the giant Ford works in Windsor, Ontario. The key issues were the union shop and the check-off, gains American Ford workers had won in 1941. On 12 September 1945, 10,000 Ford workers took to the picket lines. From the start it was a

<sup>5</sup>David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York 1978), 377; James Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth Century America* (New York 1980), 195; Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On: The American Communist Party During the Second World War* (Middletown, CN 1982), 116-7; Matles and Higgins, *Them and Us*, 130-4; David Milton, *The Politics of U.S. Labor*, 137-8; Frank Emspak, "UE. The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, 787-8.

militant and successful strike. The local police refused to break the picket lines and company officials were forced to set up offices in a Windsor hotel.

Jackson had been in constant contact with the UAW's Windsor leadership, which included a considerable number of Communists, and sent a telegram of support as soon as the strike commenced. The CCL leadership was not as enthusiastic. Congress President Aaron Mosher and Millard were both angered that the CCL had not been consulted about the strike's timing. Millard, who was still bitter about his defeat as UAW leader by Burt, warned that the strike was showing signs of being run by Communists. A motion calling on the Congress executive to support the strike was withdrawn by its proponents when it appeared that it would be defeated. It was replaced with a more general resolution that supported the UAW's strike demands—but was silent on the strike. A National Ford Strike Committee, including Jackson, Burt, Millard, and Conroy, was established. By mid-October, every UE local had established a Ford Strike support committee and the union would eventually raise \$3,784.51 for the Ford strikers.<sup>6</sup> While Jackson and the UE were peripheral to the strike—it was being fought by another union in a city in which they had few members—they played an important role in bringing the strike to national attention and inadvertently prolonged it. In the process, Jackson managed to antagonize both the CCL leaders, who already hated him, and George Burt, whose support he had previously enjoyed.

Jackson felt that as the first post-war labour conflict the Ford strike was of national importance. For this reason he supported a call from the Windsor local that all CCL unions hold a one day sympathy strike on 12 November. Jackson believed this would force the “government to step in and settle the strike in favour of the Ford Workers.”<sup>7</sup> To demonstrate that the UE was not afraid of putting its money where its mouth was, the union's Westinghouse local held a one day support strike on 8 November. But the leadership of both the Congress and the UAW were aghast over the prospect of an illegal sympathy strike, particularly since the local had called for it without Congress approval. Burt and the National Ford Strike Committee repudiated the proposal and Conroy made a quick trip to Windsor to make it clear that any such strikes would receive an unsympathetic hearing.

While the Windsor local's resolve was strong, Ford was not going to give in easily or quickly. Conroy began to conduct secret talks with the federal government. He told Burt that if the union agreed to let the union security question go to arbitration, the government was prepared to select any arbitrator recommended by Conroy. If, however, either Conroy or Burt

<sup>6</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Alex McAuslane, 15 October 1945.

<sup>7</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all UE members, 24 November 1945.

publicly discussed the deal's details, the government would cancel it.<sup>8</sup> Members of the National Ford Strike Committee were not told about the government's promise, so when the committee was told that the union was prepared to drop its demand for union security Jackson opposed the move, while Millard supported it. Burt announced he would leave it up to the membership.

Before the members got a chance to vote on letting the dispute go to arbitration, Jackson and Harris publicly attacked the idea. Jackson told the press that by supporting the arbitration proposal the Ford Strike Committee was "sabotaging the Ford Strike."<sup>9</sup> And at a LPP meeting in London, Harris accused Millard of "trying to sell the workers down the river in trying to get them to accept the company's terms."<sup>10</sup> In the wake of these stories, the membership turned down the arbitration proposal. A furious Burt immediately dissolved the committee, banning all of its members except Conroy from the Windsor area.<sup>11</sup>

As the strike dragged on, Jackson and the UE attempted to revive the idea of a one day work stoppage. Jackson said the strike had "reached a critical stage mainly as a result of the refusal of the leadership of the CCL to issue a call for a one day demonstration in every plant across this country. ... The Ford Strike, because of the failure of the Congress in the above regard, requires the maximum support that the workers of Canada can rally."<sup>12</sup>

In mid-December UAW membership accepted the arbitration proposal. The government appointed Justice Ivan Rand as the arbitrator. Rand's recommendations, released in early 1946, became known as the Rand formula. Although he declined to recommend that all workers in a plant should be forced to join a union, he did support the automatic check-off since non-union members benefited from the existence of the union and therefore must also "shoulder the burden." Under the Rand formula there were also penalties for strikes during the life of a contract — these would include fines against strikers and the loss of the check-off.

Union security had a price tag. The Rand formula allowed management to do much of the union's work for it and reduced the level of regular contact

<sup>8</sup>Gloria Montero, *We Stood Together: First Hand Accounts of Dramatic Events in Canada's Labour Past* (Toronto 1979), 107-9.

<sup>9</sup>NAC, UEC, C.H. Millard to Aaron Mosher, 21 November 1945.

<sup>10</sup>*London Free Press*, 10 November 1945.

<sup>11</sup>According to UAW historian Charlotte Yates, the Communist Party and Communist activists within the UAW supported this settlement. She says it was local militants who managed to have it defeated. It is difficult to see how George Harris would have publicly opposed the agreement, unless it was being opposed by the Communist Party. See Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 54.

<sup>12</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all UE members, 24 November 1945.

between union activists and the general membership. Jackson foresaw this problem and at the time said "the judgment contains a cleverly devised formula which, if not fully understood and properly dealt with by the union, could mean a setback for genuine union security and a major obstacle in the way of achieving wage demands."<sup>13</sup>

As early as 1943 Jackson had been worrying about the check-off's impact on union life. He told a staff meeting that when the American UE had won the check-off at GE and Westinghouse, "a total of one thousand stewards [were] cut off from the rank and file, namely, there [was] now no contact with the rank and file for the collection of dues."<sup>14</sup> At a 1945 union meeting Jackson spoke of how "for too many years employers have sapped the initiative of the workers by telling them that they are there to work and not to think." He presented this somewhat tortured analysis of the UE's developing relationship with its rank and file.

The company does not like to have thinking workers on the job. Now we must give the workers in the plant encouragement to think. We have been trying to do this too quickly out of a sincere desire to get workers moving, but the manner in which we have been doing this has resulted in stifling because we have been doing too much thinking for the rank and file. While workers appreciate having these things done, at the same time they resent it and show this by staying away from meetings.

At the same time, members are critical of other members if they make mistakes in their thinking. The result is that the blame is often put on the organizer. These things can be changed but only by the staff and leadership of the locals understanding the new type of relationship that has been developed.<sup>15</sup>

The relationship between a union's leadership and its rank and file, particularly when the leaders were as highly politicized as Jackson, Harris, and Russell were, is always a contentious one. In the post-war era labour relations were to become highly bureaucratized and the UE's leadership was certainly centralized. The tremendous anti-communist pressures generated by the Cold War provided a litmus for the bonds of trust that Jackson and company had forged with the UE members — although such trust should not necessarily be seen as a sign of rank-and-file participation. And while Jackson recognized that the Rand formula was at best a double-edged sword, the UE accepted it. Ironically, though, in future years the union's leaders had to limit and restrict wild-cat strikes.

<sup>13</sup>*Globe and Mail*, 31 January 1946.

<sup>14</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE Staff meeting, 12 July 1943.

<sup>15</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 18-19 October 1945.

## THE 1946 WAGE DRIVE

1946 marked a major role reversal within the CCL. Where Jackson and the UE were once the opponents of strike action, arguing that the no-strike pledge could be continued into the post-war period, they now attempted to organize a national strike wave involving most of the country's industrial unions. Jackson argued that during the war Canadian industry had accumulated huge reserves of capital while workers had seen their standard of living frozen or reduced. A united wage negotiating strategy would allow workers to recapture the fruits of their labour. He also thought such a campaign should be an annual event. He proposed the wage campaign to Mosher, emphasizing that the various CCL unions all have the same post-war objective: "In honesty, we must confess that very little has yet been achieved. Each union is struggling with the problems alone, though the barriers which each encounters are pretty much the same."<sup>16</sup> In the United States, the UE organized a meeting of steel and auto union leaders in December 1945 to coordinate a similar wage drive.<sup>17</sup>

The CCL leadership in general, and Millard in particular, was cool to this proposal. Millard realized that, as one of the country's leading industrial unions, it was Steel, not UE, which would be taking the biggest risks. Congress research director Eugene Forsey did not share Jackson's belief that Canadian industry could afford to make major concessions. Mosher claimed he did not understand "all this ballyhoo about wages and hours and did not think that the situation was any more critical today than at any time in the past." Both Forsey and Mosher viewed the wage campaign as little more than the latest Communist Party strategy to raise a ruckus within the Congress.

As the leaders of Canada's industrial unions were debating whether or not a national strike wave was a foolhardy endeavour or a strategic breakthrough, their American brothers and sisters took the gamble. By the end of 1945, over 3.5 million US workers had engaged in post-war strike activity and the biggest strikes were yet to come. The United Electrical Workers and the United Steelworkers were both looking for a \$2 a day pay increase while the Autoworkers were asking for a 30 per cent increase. The Autoworkers went on strike at General Motors in December 1945, putting 225,000 people on the picket line. By mid-January they were joined by 174,000 Electrical Workers, and 800,000 Steelworkers. The GM strike was the longest of the 3 strikes — 113 days — and ended with an 18.5 per cent increase, the same as the UE and Steel won for its members.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Mosher, 27 December 1946.

<sup>17</sup>Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, 254.

<sup>18</sup>Green, *The World of the Worker*, 194; Matles and Higgins, *Them and Us*, 139-47.

It appears that Jackson was right about industry's ability to pay — certainly many unions won considerable concessions in the wake of the 1946 strike wave. However, the united front that Jackson and the UE tried to assemble did not survive the struggle. This was due in part to Millard's opposition. However, the UE's ability to provide national leadership was undermined by a number of UE locals that either went on strike too soon or else settled for too little without the district's approval. Additionally, the UE leaders spent as much time attempting to discredit the CCF union leaders, in hopes that left-wing caucuses would come to power in those unions, as they did trying to make common cause with the existing leadership.

Given the hostility that existed between the country's union leaders, it is perhaps surprising that there was as much of a unified bargaining strategy as there was in 1946. At the same time Jackson was trying to create a united front with Steel, Millard was busy trying to expel Jackson from the Congress. He had seized upon Jackson's comments about the Ford Strike Committee's betrayal of the strike and Harris's allegations about the CCL selling the workers down the river to request that the UE be suspended from the Congress.

Despite Mosher's misgivings, in January 1946 the first, and most representative, Canadian Congress of Labour wage committee meeting was held at Toronto's Royal York Hotel. Millard and Cleve Kidd of Steel, Harvey Murphy, Thomas McGuire, and Robert Carlin of Mine-Mill, and George Burt and George Harris were there. While no formal position was adopted, a common wage demand started to emerge. Burt thought a \$2 an hour proposal would be more popular, while Harris and Millard, in a rare moment of agreement, believed a 25¢ an hour proposal would receive more support.

Three days before the February CCL executive council meeting where both the national bargaining strategy and the motion to suspend Jackson and Harris would be on the table, the UE held its district council meeting in Niagara Falls. There Jackson outlined his strategy and rationale for the coming six months.

The whole question of the levelling down of the hours of work and the attainment of a decent wage is on the agenda in every plant. ... What is involved in undertaking a program of struggle on the wage front is virtually a test of the strength of our union.

The job you have given your Officers is the job of carefully planning each stage in the fight for wages and reduced hours — planning it so that we don't put ourselves out on a limb; where we don't try to fight battles that should be fought by others; and where at times we don't negate or hold back the necessary struggle of the membership of this union — and that, I assure you, is not going to be as easy task.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10 February 1946.

Millard and other CCL leaders might well have wondered if they were the others who Jackson was counting on to carry the battle. Jackson said he believed that for the UE the key struggle would be fought at the Westinghouse plants in Hamilton.

Jackson had a carefully worked out case for a 25 per cent wage increase. He boasted that during the war the UE negotiated some of the best contracts in the country. The wages of Phillips workers in Brockville had doubled over seven years. "In fact, when we were trying to bring up examples to show why an increase in wages was necessary, we had to admit that in our industry wages have increased more than the cost of living."<sup>20</sup>

But productivity was increasing at an even faster pace and due to technical improvements was expected to increase by 10 to 15 per cent in the coming year. "We claim it is just and logical that the working people should share, in the form of wage increases, in that increased productivity." Making use of Bank of Canada figures he showed that profits before income and excess profit taxes rose from \$296 million in 1937 to \$560 million in 1944. Net profits had increased by 25 to 30 per cent. According to Jackson's calculations the 25¢ an hour increase would only cost Westinghouse and CGE 5¢ an hour because, he reasoned, the "rest is taken care of in the rebate they are getting as a result of the reduction in the excess profit tax."<sup>21</sup>

If the labour movement did not go on the offensive in the post-war period it would soon find itself on the receiving end of another depression. Jackson accused manufacturers of holding back production so as to justify 25 to 30 per cent price increases. Since productivity could be improved through technical advance unemployment would drive down wages and any recovery would be jobless.

With two years of such highway robbery of the Canadian people and swollen money bags on the part of the corporations, they will then be prepared to sit it out at no cost to themselves for a further period of two or more years of intense depression of the Canadian people.

This process of sweating the people first, then soaking them in a so-called boom period, and then sweating them again in a depression is very obviously the program of big business with the full support of government.<sup>22</sup>

Jackson did not content himself with attacks on big business and the King government; instead, he continued to take swipes at Millard and the CCL leadership. Days before the CCL was to sit in judgement on his plan for a united bargaining front, Jackson told his members that

<sup>20</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10 February 1946.

<sup>21</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10 February 1946.

<sup>22</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 28 April 1946.



during the Ford Strike there was a sharp struggle within the labour movement, and particularly within the CCL, as to the role which labour in the country should play in support of the Ford strikers. There were those who by word and action limited the role of labour to propaganda and a money raising agency, while on the other hand there were those who pressed for militant action on the part of Canadian labour in the form of demonstrative stoppages of work which would focus public attention on the strike on a national scale and would exert the maximum pressure on government to legislate the union security demands of the workers.<sup>23</sup>

He accused Millard of having called a Hamilton meeting to which everyone who was at the first wage strategy meeting was invited, except Harris. If the campaign failed, he said, Millard would have to shoulder the blame. "In my opinion, the key to the situation is Steel, and if Steel will lead and work closely with other unions then I think we could break through, but if Steel does not, then the struggle is going to be a difficult one."<sup>24</sup>

In response to Millard's efforts to have him suspended Jackson wrote to Mosher reiterating his complaints about Millard. Referring to the Ford strike he maintained a one day national strike would have "turned the trick and far reaching labour legislation would have been the result." And he repeated the charge that Millard undermined the Ford strike. "At different stages in the Ford Strike Millard blew either hot or cold. At one time he would, mainly by inference, threaten sympathetic strike action, at another time he would come out openly against it. ... Climaxing all this wavering, inaccurate reports, and outright sabotage of the leadership of the Ford Strike" was Millard's speech urging locals to "refrain from plans to stage one day sympathy strikes." The Congress, he wrote, should be taking disciplinary action against Millard rather than himself.<sup>25</sup>

Not surprisingly, the CCL executive committee meeting that addressed both the wage strategy and the charges against them did not go well for either Jackson or Harris. A national wage committee was struck, but Jackson was denied a seat on it. Instead, it comprised Conroy, Millard, Burt, McAuslane, and Carlin.<sup>26</sup>

Conroy opened the debate on the charges against Jackson and Harris by saying the accusations were a sign of the Congress's immaturity and called for the creation of a sub-committee to meet with those involved and "get them out of this nonsense." In referring to Jackson's attack, Conroy said that if Burt could not testify to his bringing the Ford Strike to a satisfactory end, he was prepared to quit. The Mineworkers Silby Barrett and Mine-Mill's Tom Maguire urged that a tougher line be taken against

<sup>23</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10 February 1946.

<sup>24</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10 February 1946.

<sup>25</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to A. Mosher, 12 February 1946.

<sup>26</sup>NAC, UEC, George Harris to District Council delegates, 21 February 1946.

Jackson and Harris. Barrett said "these men have said today that they had the right to say what they did. If this continues I will recommend that the Mineworkers pull out of the Congress." Maguire referred to "the efforts of a certain political party to tear down the good name of honest leaders in the labour movement. How long are we going to tolerate this condition?" George Burt, upon whose support the UE was dependent, said he did not agree with Jackson's statements, but neither did he agree with suspension: "If the UE were suspended he would have to go back and explain this issue rather than explaining and getting support on the wage question. He said about half of his membership liked Jackson and about half liked Millard." But when support shifted off that balance, Burt shifted with it.

Mosher, quite accurately, pointed out that there really did not seem to be anything that needed to be investigated. Despite this, the sub-committee that Conroy asked for was struck and, for the moment, the CCL was committed to going ahead with a united wage campaign and to allowing the UE to retain its Congress membership.

The committee of inquiry held its hearings a week later and concluded that Jackson and Harris's statements had been detrimental to the Ford strike and the Congress. It recommended that they be suspended if they did not apologize.<sup>27</sup> Both men did so in June 1946, although in a letter to the UE membership Harris explained that he and Jackson had little choice in the matter since they would not have been able to participate in an executive debate on the wage campaign unless they apologized.<sup>28</sup>

The Congress's wage committee held strategy sessions, without UE participation, through the spring of 1946. The committee recommended unions put forward their wage demands by 1 May 1946 and then quickly obtain strike mandates. It was hoped that mass shutdowns of key industries would draw government intervention, speed the end of the strikes, and enhance the size of the settlements. The committee worried that union locals might weaken the Congress position by making individual settlements before the start of the campaign. Much to Jackson's chagrin, through the spring of 1946 UE locals did just that.<sup>29</sup>

The first problems were encountered in Brockville where negotiations with Phillips had dragged on fruitlessly for over a year. The situation was complicated when the UE won certification for 200 Montréal Phillips workers in January 1946. The company refused to pay lost time wages of union negotiators, even though some of them had to come to Brockville

<sup>27</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to CCL executive, 12 June 1946.

<sup>28</sup>NAC, UEC, Harris to district executive board members, staff, and secretaries, 19 June 1946.

<sup>29</sup>NAC, UEC, Proceedings of the wage coordinating committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour, 19-10 March 1946.

from Montréal. When the locals protested this with two hour-long work stoppages in February the company locked the workers out.<sup>30</sup> The lockout lasted until late April, when the union settled for a 5¢ an hour increase at a time when the national union was still talking about a 25¢ an hour goal. The Brockville local at Phillips never recovered from the lockout. In May, Doug Betts wrote to Jackson reporting that

morale in the shop is not good and a number of workers are still trying to get money out of us on the basis that they did not receive sufficient during the lockout. There are a number of cliques in the shop all working in different directions and with different axes to grind.<sup>31</sup>

Jackson minimized the Brockville settlement by arguing that the five cent an hour agreement did not undercut the wage drive because it was the result of a lock-out rather than a strike. However, the in-plant work stoppages that precipitated the lock-out were UE initiatives and had been encouraged by the UE leadership. The UE District Council meeting in April called on all locals to hold strike votes before the end of May and stipulated that all wage offers had to be approved by the district executive before being presented to the membership.

Establishing this sort of discipline, particularly in a union where decision making was in local hands, was easier said than done. In May, the Ferranti Electric local agreed to the company's first offer, without holding a proper membership meeting. A disgusted Jackson wrote to the local, telling them that the "hasty action that was taken in signing the company's first proposal has resulted in our members receiving considerably less than they could have."<sup>32</sup> Even more troubling events were on the horizon at General Electric.

There, Local 507 was led by the same men who had signed a sweetheart deal on the eve of Jackson's release from internment in 1941. In the spring of 1946, without giving the District office any notification, they recommended that the Davenport workers settle for three cents an hour. Jackson only heard about the vote, which was held on company property, at the last minute. He and Harris rushed down and set up loudspeakers on the sidewalk. They urged the workers to reject the deal, but by then the majority of workers had already voted. The executive, led by local President James Waugh, signed the contract.<sup>33</sup> All of the loose cannons on the UE deck had

<sup>30</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Robert Carlin, 11 March 1946.

<sup>31</sup>NAC, UEC, Betts to C.S. Jackson, 29 May 1946.

<sup>32</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to the UE Local at Ferranti Electric, n.d.

<sup>33</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to the members of UE Local 507, 28 June 1946.

been fired; while they did not inflict mortal damage, the union's rhetoric about wage drive unity was far outrunning its performance.

And even as Jackson and Harris were preparing their apologies to the CCL executive another crack was appearing in labour's united front. In May, UE staff representative Jean Leslie paid a visit to the UE local at the Sully Brass Company in Long Branch, Ontario. She was shocked, if not surprised, to discover a Steelworkers' representative trying to convince the workers to quit the UE for Steel. Sully was owned by the same company which owned the neighbouring Neptune Meter plant, where the workers were represented by Steel. Earlier that day the company vice-president had made a similar presentation. According to an angry letter that Harris sent to Millard: "Sully and others on his staff had made statements to the effect that they would never deal with the UE in as much as it was a 'communist' union, but were quite willing to deal with the Steelworkers."<sup>34</sup>

The raid, which was beaten back, was coupled with a far more significant breakthrough; the 3 June 1946 issue of the *UE News* announced that the union was applying for certification as the bargaining agent for the 3,500 employees of the CGE Peterborough works. The 25¢ an hour wage drive had captured the Peterborough workers' attention. Nine years of effort and heartbreak were about to pay-off. The union reported that the wage campaign had brought an additional 1,000 workers from smaller plants throughout Ontario into the UE.

#### THE WESTINGHOUSE STRIKE

For the UE the major battle of 1946 took place in Hamilton. The UE submitted its wage demand for 25¢ an hour increase, the union shop, check-off of union dues, and the 40 hour week to Westinghouse management on 15 May. The company offered 7.5¢ an hour and no improvement on the other major issues. A strike vote was held and Jackson was handed an overwhelming strike mandate; 2831 voted in favour of strike action, compared to 630 against. On 28 June, Westinghouse came back with an 8.5¢ an hour offer along with two paid holidays, two weeks vacation after five years, and a voluntary dues check-off. This, management let it be known, would be its final offer. Jackson recommended that it be turned down. On 4 July, 74 per cent of those present at a general membership approved this recommendation. The following day the UE put up picket lines at Westinghouse and the 1946 strike was on.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup>NAC, UEC, George Harris to Charles Millard, 14 June 1946.

<sup>35</sup>NAC, UEC, Undated memorandum on UE relations with Canadian Westinghouse Company, April 1937 to October 1946.

Westinghouse responded with a public announcement that hit the two notes it would continue to play for the rest of the strike; the UE had signed with General Electric in Toronto for three cents an hour and that a strike jeopardized workers' jobs.

Westinghouse greatly regrets this action as being against the best interests of the employees especially in view of the fact that the United Electrical Workers Union have recently signed agreement with important competitors of the Westinghouse Company. The proposals made by the Westinghouse have been equivalent of those accepted by the union in these competitive plants.<sup>36</sup>

Despite its anti-union history, Westinghouse made no effort to break the UE picket lines. Both Westinghouse and the UE were waiting to see if the proposed national strike wave was really going to take shape. And their eyes were on the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco) in Hamilton.

#### STEEL AND STELCO

Hamilton, with its huge steel, rubber, and electrical plants, was then the country's industrial heartland. And the Steel Company of Canada was the heart of the heartland. It employed over 6,000 workers in its mammoth operation. World War II made Stelco extremely wealthy. Indeed, as production soared, the company, thanks to special wartime tax exemptions, rapidly expanded its physical plant. Like Westinghouse, Stelco had used a Works Council to keep industrial unions at bay, but in early 1944 Stelco workers voted two-to-one in favour of joining the United Steelworkers of America. They were later chartered as Local 1005.

Local union politics were dominated by the same battles between Communists and CCFers that characterized the political life of the CCL. While the local's early leadership had been provided by Communists, the CCF mounted a concentrated campaign in 1945 that saw their candidate, Reg Gardiner, defeat the Communist local president by only three votes. Just as Jackson saw a Steel strike as the centrepiece of the 1946 wage campaign, Millard was determined that Steel was not going to have its priorities set by any outside bodies, especially Jackson and the UE. In January 1946, when the CCL was establishing a wage co-ordinating committee, Millard held a meeting of Hamilton Steelworkers that adopted a target wage increase of 19.5¢ an hour along with a 40 hour week.

Jackson denounced this goal as being both weak and divisive. But to Stelco President Hugh Hilton, it was outrageous; when talks opened he offered workers 5.5¢ an hour. On 11 May 1946 the Steelworkers voted 3,114

<sup>36</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 5 July 1946.

to 80 in favour of strike action. But, much to the displeasure of Jackson and other union leaders, the Steelworkers vacillated, finally setting a 15 July strike deadline.

Stelco did not sit idly by waiting for the strike to start. Throughout the spring it undertook extensive — and ominous — renovations. The company built up stockpiles of iron ore, shipped in hundreds of beds, laid in a huge supply of food, constructed temporary dormitories, and built a 1,500 foot air strip. The message was clear: if the workers struck, management intended to keep the plant running. They appeared to have a supply of ready workers. On 4 July the Independent Steelworkers Association declared its existence, denounced Steel for precipitating a strike, and suggested that something in the range of ten cents an hour would be reasonable. Hilton agreed and raised his offer to that amount.

Days before the strike deadline the federal government passed an order-in-council putting the steel industry under national control. Under this order any strike would have been illegal and workers who left their jobs were liable to a \$20 a day fine. Jackson attacked the move, saying that when “our government passed an order-in-council to ‘take-over’ the steel plants they took the biggest step toward fascist forced labor taken by any government anywhere since the war.”<sup>37</sup> It was toothless fascism, few orders-in-council have ever had as little impact. The strike went ahead and Stelco made it clear that the federal government was not going to dictate its labour policy.

On 14 July the Steelworkers held a mass meeting in downtown Hamilton. At evening’s end they burst from the hall into the streets and onto the picket lines. Steel had finally joined the 1946 strike wave.<sup>38</sup> The Steel picket lines were reinforced by 10,000 striking rubber workers and 6,000 electrical workers. Also on strike were 5,000 textile workers in Quebec, 2,000 miners in British Columbia, and 3,000 autoworkers in Ontario. Only a month earlier the British Columbia woodworkers and the Great Lakes seamen had ended lengthy strikes.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup>*UE News*, 12 July 1946.

<sup>38</sup>Doris Jantzi, “Strike at Stelco, 1946,” in Robert M. Laxer, ed., *Union Organization and Strikes* (Toronto 1978), 59-79; Robert Storey, “Workers, Union and Steel: The Shaping of the Hamilton Working Class, 1935-1948,” PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1981, 380-9; Bill Freeman, *1005: Political Life in a Union Local* (Toronto 1982), 51-66.

<sup>39</sup>Stuart Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66* (Ottawa 1976), 298.

## THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS HEARINGS

Within 48 hours of the Stelco strike's start Mackenzie King convened a special session of the Committee on Industrial Relations. Donald Gordon, the head of the Wartime Price and Trade Board, was the government's key witness. He warned that any increase above ten cents would unleash a wave of inflation. Wages must also, he said, be controlled in the interest of developing that most fragile economic commodity — investor confidence. According to Gordon, Canadians could only expect to enjoy a high rate of employment if businesses were allowed to set their profit levels.

Millard told the committee that the Steelworkers would settle for 15.5¢, the same amount that the International Woodworkers of America had won in British Columbia. This increase could be phased in, with a ten cent increase immediately and two increases by the end of the year.<sup>40</sup> This infuriated Jackson, and apparently many of the other unionists present. In a letter to Empsak, Jackson painted this picture of the Committee room:

There was a spontaneous reaction on the part of these strikers to the proposals made by Millard for what appeared to these workers a reduction in their demands.

At a meeting held in a park in Ottawa the same afternoon following on Millard's offer for settlement, George Burt, Canadian Director of the UAW made the statement that he did not think such an offer would be accepted by his workers. Speaking after George Burt at the same meeting, I echoed the sentiments expressed by Burt and went on to say that in the opinion of the union the offer made by Millard appeared to constitute an acceptance of the government wage price formula which called for holding the wage line at ten cents an hour while continuing to rapidly decontrol prices.

I do not doubt that Millard has conveyed his own peculiar interpretation of his actions to certain of the CIO and steel officials in the US.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed he had. A week later Empsak wrote to Jackson saying that he had just returned from Washington where he ran into a Steel official who told him that UE officers, "namely you, had acted in a very ungentlemanly way while Brother Millard was presenting his arguments to the government officials in Ottawa. Needless to say, I pleaded ignorance and said 'My, how regrettable.'"<sup>42</sup> When Jackson appeared before the committee he quickly seized on Gordon's earlier testimony.

<sup>40</sup>Warrian, "Labour is not a commodity," 203.

<sup>41</sup>NAC, UEC, Jackson to Empsak, 16 August 1946.

<sup>42</sup>NAC, UEC, Empsak to Jackson, 23 August 1946.

There has been a growing suspicion among the working people over a period of the last several months that the employing interests have utilized a further weapon, namely, the sitdown strike on production, as a means towards securing the above mentioned benefits of price increase, tax reduction and ceilings on wages.

Support for this suspicion was given only a few days ago by Mr. Donald Gordon, when, in the course of his presentation before the House Committee he admitted that many companies had thrown out the threat of refusing to produce as a means of securing higher prices for their commodities. ... Almost the whole of Mr. Gordon's presentation before the committee is proof of the fact that the employers have been refusing to go into full production and that the Wartime Prices and Trade Board has gone along with them in this manoeuvre by granting price increases on the basis of guaranteeing to the corporations, as a minimum, the retention of their war profit position.

By the time Jackson appeared before the committee there were over 6,700 UE members out on strike: aside from the Westinghouse strikers, 1200 Canada Wire and Cable workers in Leaside, 1300 Electro-Metallurgical workers in Welland, 600 Amalgamated Electric workers in Toronto, and 60 Monarch Battery workers in Kingston had all joined the fight for 25¢ an hour. "These workers have for the past several months become increasingly convinced of the existence of a full-blown conspiracy on the part of Canadian manufacturers against the Canadian people," Jackson said. "This conspiracy has several facets but is designed in the main to place the full cost of the war and the cost of reconversion on the Canadian people while the corporations proceed apace to garner in expanding profits." Referring specifically to the electrical industry he pointed to the fact that a lifting of the 25 per cent tax on household appliances had not resulted in any decrease in appliance prices. In addition, he said, the wage rates in the branch plants represented by the UE were 50 per cent below the American rates.<sup>43</sup>

The press referred to Jackson as the "belligerent red-haired president of the Electrical Workers' Union," but government MPs were equally belligerent. Ignoring the substance of his evidence, Liberal James Sinclair asked Jackson what he had done during the war, to which Jackson spoke of his being interned one day after the "glorious day" when the USSR entered on the war on the Allied side.

According to the *Hamilton Spectator*, later, Mr. Sinclair "referred to the 'insufferable gall' of a man coming to this committee and publicly boasting of celebrating the day Russia went to war while he forgot the day in 1939 we went to war." He went on to compare the conduct of Jackson's union, "in their demonstration in Ottawa

<sup>43</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.S. Jackson brief to the Parliamentary Committee on Industrial Relations, 12 August 1946.



and in sending 'a man like that' to represent them, with the competent evidence given by other labour representatives."<sup>44</sup>

The hearings were punctuated with allegations that the strikes were inspired by Communists bent on sabotage. Labour Minister Humphrey Mitchell claimed that "in my judgment some of the so-called [union] leaders in this country have deliberately set in motion policies designed to destroy the reconversion efforts of the Canadian people."<sup>45</sup> Matters were not helped by the fact that the Steel strike started on the same day that the Kellock-Taschereau report on espionage was released. A banner story in the *Hamilton Spectator* described the Commission as an "exposure of a Russian fifth column that has drawn its lifeblood almost exclusively and with 'uncanny success' from cells of the Communist movement in Canada itself."<sup>46</sup>

In the end the hearings proved ineffective. After meeting for several weeks the committee simply recommended that a mediator be appointed in the Steel dispute. Despite the fact that the Steel strike was clearly illegal, the government made no effort to force open the picket lines or prosecute the union leaders.

#### THE STEEL STRIKE IN HAMILTON

The 1946 Steel strike opened with a mass rally that brought together workers from the Steelworkers with striking members of the UE and the United Rubber Workers who had gone on strike against Firestone in June. The united effort of all three unions prevented the company from opening the picket line. But it could not stop production.

Stelco moved hundreds of men into the plant and kept production going during the strike. The men who crossed the picket line were given a 10¢ an hour raise and were paid for 24 hours a day. These workers defiantly referred to themselves as the "Loyal Order of Scabs."

From Mayor Sam Lawrence on down the strikers received a high degree of support from the people of Hamilton. Lawrence announced that he was a union man first and a chief magistrate second, and led a UE-sponsored parade of over 10,000 strikers and strike supporters.<sup>47</sup> Hamilton police

<sup>44</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 12 August 1946.

<sup>45</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 23 August 1946.

<sup>46</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 16 July 1946.

<sup>47</sup>Sam Lawrence has entered labour history by way of this quote. However he denied every saying it. In a letter to the *Hamilton Spectator* he wrote, "I did not say, 'I am a labour man first and a chief magistrate second' as some reports state. What I did say was that 'I'm going to speak to you first as a union man, and secondly, as your mayor and chief and magistrate.'" *Hamilton Spectator*, 22 July 1946.

chief Joseph Crocker told the press, "If the Steel Company doesn't force our hand my opinion is that the steel strike will be conducted in an orderly way."

Since none of the other employers were attempting to bring in strike-breakers or maintain production, the Stelco picket line was the focus for all the Hamilton strikes. In the strike's early days the pickets were successful in turning back a train, but not without considerable rock and brick throwing.

The reluctance of the Hamilton police to open the picket line became a significant political issue. Hamilton civic politician Nora-Frances Henderson insisted that the police crackdown on picket-line confrontations so that Stelco could ship its production. When the Hamilton Police Commission decided not to call for outside police help, Henderson recommended that city council consult the Ontario attorney general about how to best ensure law enforcement in Hamilton. On 9 August the council debated her resolution for four hours before rejecting it. After the meeting thousands of strikers waited outside the council chambers. When Henderson appeared the crowd started singing "We'll hang Nora Henderson from a sour apple tree," and a police officer had to assist her to her car. The *Hamilton Spectator* portrayed the scene as one of near riot.

Wide eyed and pale, a little woman last night walked out of the City Hall, with an escort of two aldermen, into a jeering, cursing mob of over 2,000; made her tortuous way for more than 100 yards while scores in the crowd buffeted her, clawed, punched, and kicked at her.<sup>48</sup>

The Steelworkers were quick to disavow the events, issuing a statement which said:

We wish to make it explicitly clear that the demonstration at city hall last night was in no way organized by the Steelworkers Union. ... The actual organization of the crowd at the city hall emanated not from the union movement of the city, but from the Labour Progressive Party rally held the previous evening.

The UE was unapologetic about the whole affair. Local president Al Stratford said "the people of Hamilton have nothing to be ashamed about. Controller Nora-Frances Henderson lost a few locks of her hair. You won a great victory with your demonstration of solidarity."<sup>49</sup>

The strike took on the trappings of a military campaign. Steel hired an air force veteran to drop pro-union leaflets over the plant; the company

<sup>48</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 9 August 1946.

<sup>49</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 16 August 1946.

hired an ex-fighter pilot to tail him. The union bought a boat from a local rumrunner and outfitted it with two large engines. Whenever the strikers caught sight of the boat headed for Stelco they would try to swamp it. The pages of the *Hamilton Spectator*, which was then in the process of breaking a typographers' strike, were filled with stories of arrests arising from scuffles created by the strike.

Concern with public relations led the Steelworkers to open the picket line on 20 June. Trucks were soon pouring in with food and supplies. Jackson and the UE saw it as an act of betrayal and set to work rebuilding the line. UE staff member Bill Walsh got a sound truck and went up and down the streets of Hamilton urging people to get back out to the Stelco gates. Jackson was among the over a thousand people who gathered at the Stelco gates. They were confronted by 60 police officers and a huge diesel truck loaded with steel trying to leave the plant. The *Spectator* gave this account of what happened next:

The strange truce-like atmosphere of Tuesday on the Wilcox street picket line of Stelco's Hamilton Works was changed into one of swirling violence yesterday afternoon when police battled more than 1,000 strikers and sympathisers as the company made an unsuccessful attempt to ship steel through the gate by truck and as non-strikers vainly tried to re-enter the plant at that point.<sup>50</sup>

When Hilton's efforts to appeal to the strikers over the heads of the union leadership failed, he authorized federal controller F.B. Kilbourne to act on his behalf. Millard agreed to a 13.5¢ increase with another 5¢ to come at the end of the year. On 1 October the strikers overwhelmingly accepted the offer.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE WESTINGHOUSE STRIKE

The Westinghouse workers were still on strike when the Stelco picket lines came down. Rather than try to keep its plants open, Westinghouse sought to starve the strikers into submission. Westinghouse also put considerable effort into undermining the union's solidarity. In the early stages of the strike each employee received numerous letters from the company. The first one informed them that the company was going to continue to provide coverage under the company's mutual benefit and insurance scheme, a decision that was only reached after the UE picketed the corporation's offices. Along with these reminders of corporate generosity were allegations

<sup>50</sup>*Hamilton Spectator*, 22 August 1946.

<sup>51</sup>Doris Jantzi, "Strike at Stelco, 1946," 59-79; Storey, "Union and Steel," 380-9; Bill Freeman, 1005, 51-66.

that the strike was the work of a minority in the plant, suggesting that the workers would be well advised to revolt against the union.

In early August, Westinghouse Vice-President C.H. Mitchell warned all striking employees that "the longer the strike lasts the more customers and orders we lose to our competitors and the fewer jobs there will be in Westinghouse factories in the future." Jobs lost during the strike, he suggested, might never return. "Customers are now placing their orders with our competitors. So we are now losing many orders for appliances and equipment, which means there will be less work for all of us in the future." After reminding the strikers of UE's low-increase agreement with CGE, Mitchell suggested that the strike had only minority support:

That is the greatest penalty that the one-in-four strike minority is exacting from all Westinghouse worker. Yet they took that step, knowing full well that many of our competitors were remaining in full production because locals of the same union in these plants had accepted offer of wages and other conditions less favourable than those proposed by Westinghouse.<sup>52</sup>

The Cold War spilled into the internal operations of the UE in mid-August when the *Spectator* ran a front-page story about a new American drive to "purge the CIO United Electrical Workers Union of Communists." This campaign was being spearheaded by one of the union's vice-presidents, Harry Block, who charged that Communists were making the union "a vehicle to advance the foreign policy of the Soviet Union." To counter the Red menace he created the UE Members for Democratic Action. This group held a conference in Philadelphia to plan their strategy for the UE's international convention where they hoped to prevent the UE from going to "its own destruction as a front for the American Communist Party."<sup>53</sup>

In August, the federal government appointed J.C. Reynolds to investigate the Westinghouse dispute.<sup>54</sup> The strike continued with few developments until 13 September, when the UE reduced its wage demand to 18.5¢.<sup>55</sup> This came after the Steelworkers reduced their demand to 15.5¢. Westinghouse refused to come to the bargaining table unless the UE dropped its wage position to fifteen cents.<sup>56</sup>

Jackson placed the full responsibility for the retreat from the 25¢ an hour position squarely on the shoulders of Charlie Millard:

<sup>52</sup> *Hamilton Spectator*, 10 August 1946.

<sup>53</sup> *Hamilton Spectator*, 12 August 1946.

<sup>54</sup> *UE News*, 2 August 1946.

<sup>55</sup> *UE News*, 13 September 1946.

<sup>56</sup> *UE News*, 27 September 1946.

When I say that the demands of labour have in the main been reduced from 25 cents to 15 cents an hour, I am dealing with the hard cold facts of the situation, namely, that through the whole process of one-sided bargaining by the steelworkers union with and through the government without consultation with the rest of the unions that make up the wage coordinating committee and without consultation with the workers on the picket lines, the leadership of that union repeatedly reduced its demands and left the rest of us in a position where our employers could take advantage of the steel situation to force us to bit by bit reduce the demands of our fighting fronts.

Nevertheless the very fact that we were in there fighting, the leadership of steel was not able to bring about the type of settlement which they very consistently and very strenuously sought, a settlement which in the main was directed towards making a hero out of their leader at the expense of the workers of Canada — a policy which, in the main, was directed towards finding an agreement with the department of labour rather than using the organized strength of the workers to force employers to grant the full demands of labour.<sup>57</sup>

Jackson argued that the Woodworkers went on strike in the spring with assurances that Steel would be out shortly. This did not happen and, as a result, the IWA found itself isolated. Despite this the IWA held out for 37 days and won a 15¢ wage increase and the 40 hour week.<sup>58</sup> Jackson charged that Millard was planning to sell out the rest of the CCL in the same way.

Even before the steelworkers went out on strike Millard was prepared to work out an agreement with the government at or below ten cents an hour. He wasn't able to do so because one major section in the steel industry, namely the owners of the Steel Company in Hamilton knew that because of Millard's improper tactics that there was a weak union situation in that plant and it made full use of it to create one of the most difficult labour situations in Canada, where there are inside the plant approximately the same number as there are out on the picket line.<sup>59</sup>

When Westinghouse returned to the bargaining table in the wake of the UE decision to cut its demand to fifteen cents it was only to demand that the union reduce its wage position to ten cents an hour. Jackson took the proposal to a membership meeting and no one would even second a motion to consider the offer. Reynolds asked the union to agree to 11.5¢ an hour,

<sup>57</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 21 September 1946.

<sup>58</sup>Jerry Lambcke and William M. Tattam, *One Union in Wood: a political history of the International Woodworkers of America* (Madeira Park, BC 1984), 114.

<sup>59</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 21 September 1946. In the United States the situation was somewhat reversed. There, it was the UAW's Walter Reuther who attacked the UE for "unparalleled treachery" when it settled for eighteen-and-a-half cents while the UE was striking for nineteen-and-a-half cents. See Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, 253.

a figure which he believed he could get Westinghouse to settle for. However, the UE refused to consider a proposal which did not come from the company.<sup>60</sup>

In mid-October, the UE achieved its first settlement of the strike wave. In keeping with the Stelco pattern, the Electro-Metallurgical workers settled for thirteen cents.<sup>61</sup> Westinghouse responded with an outburst of anti-union propaganda which only served to increase the activity of the UE picket lines. Alf Ready told the *UE News* that "during the past week, the company has sent out to every worker two lying letters. In the last of these a vicious attack was made against the stewards and they even called for a revolt in the ranks to pick a 'new' committee, free from 'communist' influences with which the company could deal."<sup>62</sup>

It was the company's last gasp. On 24 October 1946, the UE and Westinghouse settled for 13.5¢. In addition, the union won a dozen other wage and contract improvements including three paid holidays, voluntary check-off, and two weeks holiday after five years. On 28 October, the 116 day walk-out, the longest and most significant in the union's history to that point, came to an end.<sup>63</sup> By the beginning of November all the UE's strikes had been settled for 13.5¢. The 1946 campaign had won 223,000 workers an additional \$64 million in wages. On 15 November, after nearly half a year of negotiations, the UE signed a contract with CGE Peterborough. The new agreement, which covered 3,500 workers, had increases that ranged from 14¢ to 18¢ an hour. A week later, the company extended these rates to its Toronto plants.<sup>64</sup> This settlement laid the groundwork for rebuilding the CGE local in Toronto which, until then, had been in the hands of Jackson's opponents.

#### CONCLUSION

The satisfaction that Jackson felt at the end of 1946, with both Westinghouse and General Electric under contract, was tempered by the knowledge that the union was heading into a period of intensified conflict. Like all trade unions the UE was going to have to fight with its employers for continued contract improvements; but as the Cold War heightened there was no avoiding more struggles with the CCL leadership. And that struggle was bound to generate internal splits in the union. At the UE District Five Council meeting in 1946 Jackson addressed this issue:

<sup>60</sup>*UE News*, 4 October 1946.

<sup>61</sup>*UE News*, 18 October 1946.

<sup>62</sup>*UE News*, 18 October 1946.

<sup>63</sup>*UE News*, 1 November 1946.

<sup>64</sup>*UE News* 15 November and 22 November 1946.

I say, let us clear up our differences here before we go into the CCL [convention]. Our organization works on the basis of fighting things out inside. I have one fault to find with our UE gatherings, and that is that there has not been enough discussion on the floor on the questions which come before our meetings from time to time. People who are opposed to certain questions don't get up and argue against them. They go out and argue in the corridors, have discussions in their locals, but they won't take a stand on the convention floor.<sup>65</sup>

A period of intense growth was over. Partisan politics and the Cold War were to dominate the life of the union for the next three years. On occasion Jackson was able to coax his opponents into open debate, other times, ironically, he himself would stifle that dialogue. The disfiguring of the labour movement was about to begin.

<sup>65</sup> NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 20-21 September 1946.

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## 11 Expulsion 1947-1949

The UE was not immune to the battles that split the Canadian labour movement in the 1940s. As the fight between Co-operative Commonwealth Federation supporters, who led the Canadian Congress of Labour, and the Communists and Communist supporters, who led unions such as UE, Mine-Mill, and the Woodworkers, intensified the CCL leadership joined forces with CCFers who were members of left-led unions. Depending on the circumstances, they sought to use these alliances to drive the Communists from union office — as had been done in the Steelworkers union in the early 1940s — or to launch raids that would bring the specific locals into a CCF-led union such as the Steelworkers or a newly created union.

Throughout the late 1940s, Jackson fought three separate, although often allied, opponents. The giant electrical corporations, stung by the gains that the UE had made in 1946, launched a counter-offensive. New management policies were designed to co-opt shop floor union leaders, while red-baiting was employed to block the union's growth. The UE's ongoing war with the CCL's social democratic leadership culminated in the union's expulsion from the Congress in 1949. Finally, Jackson was faced with internal dissent. Anti-Communist UE members, working with Canadian and American-based opponents of the UE, spearheaded several attempts to create a breakaway union. The success that Jackson enjoyed in confronting these opponents over the next decade is probably the greatest single testimony to his abilities. Before examining that story it is worthwhile to review the Cold War assault against radical trade unions.

### THE COLD WAR AGAINST AMERICAN LABOUR

The central weapon in the US attack on the left in the labour movement was the Labor Management Act or Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. It denied the services of the National Labour Relations Board to unions whose officers refused to swear they were not affiliated with the Communist Party. While it was attacked by both the American Federation of Labor and the Congress



of Industrial Organizations, neither organization defied the law. Indeed, AFL and CIO leaders were soon conducting their own witch hunts. By spring 1949, the CIO had banned Communists from its executive board and prohibited Communists from holding office in any CIO union. Between November 1949 and August 1950 ten unions were either expelled from the CIO or chose to leave before they were expelled. These unions, with a combined membership of 1,000,000, included the Mine-Mill, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, and the International Fur and Leather Workers Union.<sup>1</sup>

#### PURGING THE LEFT UNIONS IN CANADA

In Canada the first union to be singled out for the Cold War treatment was the Canadian Seaman's Union (CSU). In spring 1947, CSU president Pat Sullivan told the press that despite his previous disavowals of Communist Party membership, he was indeed a longtime party activist. Claiming to have seen the error of his ways, he was establishing a new, non-Communist union. This union never enjoyed much of an existence, but his revelations helped to destroy the CSU. In violation of both the law and their contracts, shipping companies barred CSU representatives from their ships. Other companies illegally terminated their contracts with the CSU. At first the Trades and Labor Congress supported the CSU, but after the union engaged in an international shipping strike the Congress shifted its support to the American-based and mob-dominated Seafarers International Union (SIU).<sup>2</sup>

Jackson was one of the few people to rise to its defence. After Pat Conroy criticized CSU members for fighting with strikebreakers, Jackson told a UE meeting, "it is indeed amazing to hear Pat Conroy condemn workers for defending their jobs and their union against scabs. Conroy comes from the Miners Union and he should know that strikes are not fought nor won with creampuffs when you are faced with the vicious opposition of the bosses and police."<sup>3</sup> The union's death blow was delivered by the Labour Relations Board which, in a move that clearly exceeded its mandate, decertified the CSU on the grounds that it was a Communist-dominated organization. The SIU, led by the American racketeer Hal Banks, built union loyalty by weeding out CSU supporters on the strength of a blacklist that by 1951 had over 2,000 names.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dan Georgakas, "Taft-Hartley Loyalty Oath," in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, 769-70.

<sup>2</sup>Kaplan, *Everything that floats: Pat Sullivan Hal Banks, and the Seamen's Unions of Canada* (Toronto 1987).

<sup>3</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

<sup>4</sup>William Kaplan, *Everything that floats*, 49, 51, 63, 65, 70-4.

To escape the impact of the Taft-Hartley Act, the Mine-Mill leadership moved the union's head office to Canada. CCL President Aaron Mosher did not greet them with open arms and went so far as to publicly warn them that "Canada should not be a playground for Communists." When a Mine-Mill newspaper accused Mosher of selling out the members of his own rail union in 1948, he had the union suspended by the executive council. Jackson told a UE meeting, that "the Almighty [Mosher] had been criticized and the guilty must be punished. One of the oldest and most militant unions of the North American continent has been suspended to assuage the anger of Mr. Mosher."<sup>5</sup> The Mine-Mill leaders apologized but the Steelworkers had begun raiding. With the support of the CCL the Timmins and Port Colborne locals broke away from the union. Mine-Mill was later expelled by the CCL Executive Council in early 1949 and at the October 1949 CCL convention the union's expulsion was upheld.<sup>6</sup>

In 1948, the CCL moved against the Canadian District of the International Woodworkers of America. Unlike the situation in Mine-Mill and UE, the Woodworkers' international executive had an anti-Communist leadership. Canadian IWA leaders Nigel Morgan and Harold Pritchett, worried that the International would seize the district's assets and install a new district executive, decided to leave and take the union with them. On 2 October 1948, the IWA's Canadian District seceded from the international union and created the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada. The logging companies refused to deal with the new union, pointing out that their contracts were with the IWA, not the WIUC. Not surprisingly, the CCL declined to let the WIUC affiliate and the workers were soon forced back to the Woodworkers.<sup>7</sup>

According to Jackson, the IWA's decision to break away was made against the wishes of the Communist Party. Jackson was at J.B. Salsberg's home the night the news of the breakaway reached Toronto.

Tim [Buck] was there and some other person, I can't remember who it was. We were waiting for this phone call from BC. I took the phone and said [to the IWA leadership] 'You're a goddamn fool. You can't anticipate what workers will do. All there is [is] a supposed threat. How the hell do they know. They've got to see the whites of their eyes.' I said, 'You're going to get shot down.' But they said 'too late.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

<sup>6</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 95-107; Mike Solski and John Smaller, *Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895* (Ottawa 1985), 125-6; Jamie Swift and the Development Education Centre, *The Big Nickel: Inco at home and abroad* (Toronto 1977), 59.

<sup>7</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 126-49; Lembcke and Tattam, *One Union in Wood*, 103-34.

<sup>8</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, n.d.

No matter how harsh Jackson's criticism of the CCL leaders, he insisted that the only way the UE would leave the Congress would be if it were forced out. This represents both the Communist policy of sticking with the main stream and the protection from raiding that the Congress putatively provided.

Events unfolded differently in the Autoworkers union. There, the Congress went after the leadership rather than trying to expel or raid the union. Charlie Millard would have loved to see his old nemesis George Burt removed from office, but Burt was too shrewd to let this happen. A true survivor of labour's civil wars, Burt conducted a delicate political balancing act: almost simultaneously he applied for membership in the CCF, maintained the support of the core of Communist Party activists in his largest locals, and ran for the provincial legislature with the Liberal Party's endorsement. When it became apparent that his long-time alliance with the Communists was going to cost him his job, he forged new, albeit uneasy, alliances with the CCF.

The tide began to run against the left in Auto in early 1946 when David Lewis contacted Walter Reuther, the American autoworker who was about to capture the union's international leadership with the support of a Catholic anti-Communist coalition. Lewis and the CCF leadership used an alliance with the UAW's international leaders to put the squeeze on the union's Canadian leftists. The CCL leaders arranged to have Burt humbled at the 1947 Congress convention where he was denied a seat on the Congress executive board. Later that year Burt hung on to his position as the UAW's Canadian director by only eight votes. Burt's left-wing supporters were being turned back at the Canada-US border when they tried to attend the UAW's international conference. The message was clear. Burt let go of many of the Communists on staff and, while maintaining the UAW's independence, brought the union into the CCF's orbit.<sup>9</sup>

Jackson paid close attention to Burt's transformation and made these observations to James Matles following the 1948 CCL convention:

Another important factor in the CCL convention was the moving over to the right of George Burt, the Canadian director of the UAW. While it is not fully clear how far Burt will go, he has always been a reed in the wind, although generally speaking his policies have been that of fighting on the main issues confronting the labour movement. He publicly made his peace with the administration in order to be elected on their Executive Committee. It may be that he has reasoned for the moment, that with his own international convention coming up and with the border closed to some of his strongest supporters from Canada, that he is, therefore, wholly dependent on the Reutherites for his re-election and is making his peace with that one idea in mind. I do not propose, at this time, to make any further characterization

<sup>9</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 165; Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 115-8.

of Burt, but to point out that the result of his defection, if you call it that, was to completely immobilize the whole of the UAW delegation at this convention.<sup>10</sup>

By the end of 1948 the left-wing unions were for the most part driven from the CCL and TLC or, in the case of UAW, their leaders had reached an accommodation with the establishment. But the UE followed a different trajectory than these unions in that it maintained its left-wing leaders, policies, and its members.

#### THE UE AND THE MARSHALL PLAN

While the major wartime battle between the UE and the CCL leadership focused on domestic issues, most particularly the Congress's relationship to the CCF, the post-war struggles centred on international questions. The CCF and CCL joined ranks with the Conservative and Liberal Parties in supporting the American strategy for global economic and military security that was realized through the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Since Jackson's opposition to these plans was used to brand him as a traitor it is important to review both the plans and the nature of his critique.

Even before the end of World War II, American strategic thinkers were laying the groundwork for their country's post-war economic expansion. American interests would be protected through the establishment of liberal democracies that were supportive of American economic policy where possible and by propping up dictators where necessary. The centrepiece in the American economic strategy was the European Recovery Program, dubbed the Marshall Plan after American Secretary of State George Marshall. The plan had three primary goals: the provision of immediate relief to a continent devastated by war; the salvation of the American economy which would have fallen into a deep recession if there were no European markets for its exports; and the construction of a healthy European community which could be enlisted as an Cold War ally. To these ends, the US spent \$13 billion in Europe through the Marshall Plan.

The Plan depended on a political environment friendly to US interests, by no means a sure thing since Communists had played a leading role in resistance movements throughout Europe and stood a good chance of coming to power through democratic elections in several Western European nations. The European working class paid a stiff price for recovery. The US imposed a ceiling on the French budget and all treasury expenditures had to be covered by "non-inflationary revenues." As a result, unemployment in France doubled in the first two years of the Marshall Plan. And

<sup>10</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 18 October 1948.

when Americans spoke of rebuilding industry, they meant capitalism. Before the war, French industry paid out 45 per cent of its gross income in wages, but under the Marshall Plan this fell to 34 per cent while the per cent devoted to the payment of profits rose from 29 to 50 per cent. In 1950, the Italian unemployment rate was 20 per cent while in Belgium it had risen from 2 per cent in 1947 to 11 per cent.<sup>11</sup>

The military counterpart to the Marshall Plan was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a military alliance which comprised Canada, the United States, and most of Western Europe. Established in early 1949, the roots of NATO can be found in early post-war American military documents which painted dark pictures of a coming nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union. In February 1947, Mackenzie King told the House of Commons that the wartime military co-operation between Canada and the United States would continue; it was certainly a benign statement, one that shielded the degree of co-operation that this would entail.

Although Canadian politicians had hoped to enlarge the scope of NATO to include a number of non-military concerns, they viewed both the Marshall Plan and NATO as inevitabilities. The Marshall Plan was developed during a period of economic crisis for the King government. Britain, impoverished from wartime spending, was drawing heavily on a Canadian loan at the same time that Canadian consumers were spending money on American products. The result was a drastic shortage of American dollars. From May 1946 to November 1947, Canadian holdings of American dollars fell from \$6.17 billion to \$480 million. Finance Minister Douglas Abbott placed severe restrictions on imports from the United States and on travel to that country. Because of the burgeoning dollar crisis the King government was an early promoter of the Marshall Plan in order to ensure that a portion of the supplies bound for Europe were purchased in Canada. In this the government enjoyed a mild success; by April 1949, \$706 million of Marshall Plan money was spent on purchasing Canadian goods.<sup>12</sup>

Neither the Marshall Plan nor NATO were debated in terms of their underlying rationale. Instead, they were wrapped in the Cold War rhetoric of the period; indeed, the rhetoric was needed to assure widespread public acceptance of these initiatives. Support for them came to be seen as a Cold War loyalty test. Marshall even went so far as to address the 1947 CIO convention, becoming the first US secretary of state to do so, and warned

<sup>11</sup>Richard J. Barnett, *The Alliance: America-Europe-Japan, Makers of the Postwar World* (New York 1983), 117-20; Dennis Smith, *Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948* (Toronto 1988), 194; Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York 1980), 429-30.

<sup>12</sup>R.D. Cuff and J.L. Granatstein, *Ties that Bind: Canadian American Relations in Wartime from the Great War to the Cold War* (Toronto 1977), 142-3.

that his plan was needed to save nothing less than "Western civilization."<sup>13</sup> Jackson was in attendance and criticized Emspak and Matles for not offering more vocal opposition to the Plan.

They didn't take a prominent position on the floor at that convention. I couldn't figure out why. I was getting pretty angry at them I was almost ready to get up myself. They were just not quite certain of just how far the CIO was going in terms of the UE. Emspak was still one of the key people around the CIO board you see. I guess he was still having some illusion as to how far these buggers were going to go.<sup>14</sup>

The CIO forbade staff from criticizing the Plan. It is not surprising, then, that both the Liberal and Conservative Parties supported the plan and NATO. However, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation also climbed on board. In 1949, M.J. Coldwell told the House of Commons that, "contrary to the propaganda against the proposed North Atlantic Treaty, the proposal is not an attempt on the part of so-called American imperialism to bring western European democracies into an alliance for destroying the Soviet Union. It originates in the anxiety of western European democracies to persuade North America to support them in a defensive union."<sup>15</sup> Such anxieties were grounded in real events; social democrats were genuinely alarmed by the 1948 Communist takeover of the Czech government and the Berlin blockade of the same year. When two Manitoba CCFers campaigned against NATO and the Marshall Plan they were expelled from the party in 1949.<sup>16</sup>

Within the CCL the Marshall Plan replaced affiliation to the CCF as the key political debate of the post-war period. And the battle against the plan and NATO was directed by Jackson. In carrying on this struggle Jackson was, among other things, advancing the position of the Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform, which had been formed under Soviet direction by nine European Communist Parties in 1947. The Cominform line was simple: the world was dividing into two camps, an imperialist and anti-democratic camp led by the United States and a democratic, anti-fascist camp led by the USSR.<sup>17</sup>

According to Jackson, a study of the "real intent and purpose of the Marshall Plan [revealed] that Canada too [was] slated for complete domi-

<sup>13</sup>Levenstein, *Communism*, 221-2.

<sup>14</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 1 December 1980.

<sup>15</sup>Cuff and Granatstein, *Ties that Bind*, 140.

<sup>16</sup>Nelson Wiseman, *Social Democracy in Manitoba: A History of the CCF/NDP* (Winnipeg 1983), 37-62.

<sup>17</sup>Levenstein, *Communism*, 222; Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 217-8.

nation by American imperialism.”<sup>18</sup> The CCL’s endorsement of the Marshall Plan was, he said, achieved only by stacking the convention with “union staffers” and by creating a “wild anti-communist smokescreen.”<sup>19</sup> Jackson also recognized that the UE was on weak ground as long as the debate was framed in the language of international politics. To counter this the UE stressed the domestic implications of further integration of Canadian and US policy. Jackson presented the federal government with an assessment of the future of the electrical manufacturing industry in Canada that linked the federal government’s economic policies with the Marshall Plan. He argued that Abbott’s import restrictions were having a disastrous effect on living standards.

Much of the left’s criticisms of the Marshall Plan were couched in the language of the Cold War. At times it suggested that Canada and the US were intent on rebuilding the fascist powers of Europe, an argument that was bolstered by the rearmament of Germany<sup>20</sup> But in this presentation Jackson examined both the economic causes and consequences of the plan.

In fact there is a serious danger that the American price to Canada for Canada’s participation in this plan — the provision of strategic raw materials for stockpiling purposes in the United States — will drain Canada of essential materials for the operation of the electrical manufacturing industry, such as copper for the wire industry.

Jackson turned his attention to the recently signed General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and made very prescient remarks on its long-term implications for Canadian industry.

The Geneva Agreements also hold out very limited prospects for expanding exports into this industry, and no prospects for developing markets in the United States. On the contrary there is a distinct danger that, once the import bans are removed, electrical goods will flow into Canada from the United States in increasing quantities, and that American dominated companies in Canada will prefer to restrict production rather than lower prices to meet this competition.

Jackson said the Canadian government seemed to be willing to accept this since it was placing its emphasis on exporting forest, agricultural, and mineral products and moving away from supporting industry. The UE was not wholly opposed to Abbott’s decision to ban the import of American

<sup>18</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the Annual Convention of District Five of the UE, 5 October 1947.

<sup>19</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the Annual Convention of District Five of the UE, 5 October 1947.

<sup>20</sup>Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, 306.

finished electrical products, but Jackson said that unless industry expanded, rather than simply raising its prices, there could be no domestic market.

All of these finished electrical consumer products which are now temporarily banned from entry can and should be made in Canada. Certainly the Canadian industry should be encouraged at once to expand its production to supply Canadian consumers with these goods which they have been getting from the United States, as well as to tap potential, new mass markets in Canada.<sup>21</sup>

The strategy that Jackson recommended was not adopted. Indeed, it may well have been politically impossible for Canada to chart an independent economic path at that time. As Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse have observed, the

long-term consequences [of the Marshall Plan] challenged Canadian economic autonomy. Canadian interests were being increasingly identified with those of the United States not in the first instance because of ideology, but rather because the pursuit of the national interest led inexorably to external links that drew Canada always deeper within the American orbit. Perhaps stretching a point, one might say that the postwar Canadian interest in a liberal trading world led, step by step, to the current denouement of a bilateral free-trade arrangement with the most powerful economy in the world.<sup>22</sup>

To stretch the point a little more, one might say that Jackson's post-war warning about the implications of the Marshall Plan were the precursors of the warnings that left-nationalists were to raise, albeit unsuccessfully, in the 1970s and 1980s. Jackson's opposition to what amounted to a tri-partisan Canadian foreign policy may well have been grounded in economic analysis, but it also served to underline how politically isolated the UE had become. This isolation contributed to the internal political battles that were to rack the union for the next half decade.

#### THE UE'S CIVIL WAR

In 1947, CIO secretary and former UE president James Carey launched another campaign to regain control of the UE. He accused the leadership of turning the UE into "a transmission belt for the American Communist Party." The Members for Democratic Action (MDA), which he helped to create, published *The Real UE*, a newsletter which regularly attacked the

<sup>21</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson, "Assessing the Future of Canada's Electrical Manufacturing Industry," January 1948.

<sup>22</sup>Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957* (Toronto 1995), 129.



union's left-wing leadership. This campaign was carried out with the support of the Catholic Church. The Reverend Charles Owen Rice, the head of the Association of Catholic Trade Unions (ACTU), conducted a door-to-door campaign in Pittsburgh urging union members to either quit the union or vote out the union leadership.<sup>23</sup> Thousands of copies of his leaflet "How to De-Control Your Union of Communists" were distributed by churches in the US and Canada. CIO president Phillip Murray used Rice as a conduit to funnel Steelworkers funds into the MDA.<sup>24</sup>

To coincide with Carey's latest unsuccessful bid for the UE presidency, the House Committee on UnAmerican Activities commenced hearings into Communism in the UE. Four leading UE figures all claimed that the union was run by Communists. Two said that they were former Communists themselves and that from as far back as 1935, "the Communist Party ... used to prepare all the resolutions, all the reports, and so on, that were given at the meetings."<sup>25</sup> Carey's campaigns spilled over into Canada as Jackson's opponents developed links with both MDA and the ACTU.

#### THE OPENING ROUNDS

The coming civil war was exacerbated by the division and opportunism that existed amongst Jackson's opponents. They had a great deal of difficulty in settling on a strategy or sticking to it once it had been agreed upon. At times they sought to displace Jackson and the UE leadership, while at other times they simply sought to break away from the UE and join another union. At membership meetings Jackson regularly predicted that his opponents were really planning to take their locals out of the UE and into the Steelworkers, when this happened on occasion, Jackson's opponents lost considerable credibility. The fact that internal battles weakened the union's bargaining power also strengthened Jackson's hand.

One of the first battlegrounds in this fight was also one of the UE's oldest — General Electric's Davenport Works in Toronto. Animosity had existed between Jackson and the leadership of Local 507 ever since 1941, when the skilled tradesmen had signed a deal with GE hours before Jackson's release from internment. In 1946, the local, led by James Waugh, had broken ranks with the union's wage campaign and signed an agreement without consulting the union executive. Jackson reported that for "several years a reactionary company-minded clique has dominated this local and succeeded in

<sup>23</sup>David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York 1978), 353, 377.

<sup>24</sup>Levenstein, *Communism*, 211 and 241.

<sup>25</sup>Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 175-8.

isolating the membership from the activities and developments both of the District and the union as well as the other UE workers.”<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of the 1947 negotiations, Waugh, who was a CCF member, circulated International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers membership cards. It was a fatal act of hubris. Jackson attended the next meeting of the local executive. “I simply laid it down. I told them you are members of the UE, this is a UE meeting, you have no right to discuss leaving the UE for any other union and any of the people here who don’t hold those views, get the hell out of here. They packed their bags and walked out, leaving about four people.”<sup>27</sup> Jackson was able to reconstitute the local, which promptly expelled the former union leaders. The IBEW campaign fizzled out by the end of the summer; however, it weakened the Davenport workers resolve and they failed to get as good a contract as the UE won in other CGE locations.<sup>28</sup> Waugh, though, had delivered the local into Jackson’s hands. The new local leader John Bettes was respected by the members and was extremely loyal to Jackson.

#### THE UEW-CCF UNITY CAMPAIGN

The anti-UE campaign was not without its outside agitators. The most prominent of these was Oliver Hodges. Originally a National Union of Shoe and Leather Workers representative, he was hired by the Ontario CCF Labour Committee in early 1947 to raise labour support for the CCF. In reality this meant undermining the left-wing leadership in a number of unions. Throughout 1947, for example, he worked with George Burt’s opponents in the UAW.<sup>29</sup>

In the summer of 1947, Alex Welch, a former UE organizer who had been fired for taking a local out of the UE and into a company union, brought Hodges into contact with Carey’s American organization. Welch also provided Hodges with a detailed outline of the UE. Hodges received Carey’s approval to organize an internal opposition to the UE leadership and later organized an opposition slate to run in the local’s election.<sup>31</sup> It met with a crushing defeat — only one of their nineteen candidates was elected. In a letter to Conroy he outlined the weaknesses of the anti-Jackson faction:

<sup>26</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to J. Dermody, UE International Representative, 25 February 1947.

<sup>27</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

<sup>28</sup>UE News, 11 July 1947.

<sup>29</sup>York University Archives (YUA), Oliver Hodges Papers (OHP), Box 74.

<sup>30</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 70, n.d. by Alex Welch.

<sup>31</sup>Terry Copp with Al Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada: A History* (Elora, ON 1980).

The opposition to this group [was] defeated by about two to one. The opposition refused to use an anti-Communist lable [sic] and would not make an effort to publicly declare themselves opposed to the Communist Party. As a matter of fact the opposition group had no political identity for themselves, which left them in a negative position. No one could argue with the gains made for the workers by this group operating with the [Labor Progressive Party] during the last negotiations with the company.

... It is quite evident that the rank and file of the membership are satisfied with the job their executive is doing and do not regard other basic issues with much concern.<sup>32</sup>

That assessment was to be repeated again and again in different contexts. Jackson and Harris's ace in the hole was not necessarily the rank-and-file nature of the union — both left-wing and right-wing activists regularly lamented low turn-outs and membership apathy — but that the UE leaders were seen to be competent and honest negotiators and administrators. For his part, Hodges recognized that his strongest card was anti-Communism.

In December 1947, Hodges met with members of English Electric Local 529 in St. Catharines. UE representative Bob Ward prepared this report based on one of the worker's comments.

The meeting was something you could have written about without being there. It consisted of remarks by Hodges about the CCF taking power within the next ten years; that the CCF doesn't want to get into the labour movement; it wants the labour movement to get into it; that the UE is a blemish on the body politic, that Jackson is always attacking the CCF, ... that Burt was a commie, as was every organizer in the UE (they had to be) .... And so on and so on.<sup>33</sup>

In February 1948, the leader of the St. Catharines Local, Joseph Bacon, called for a purge of the UE's Communist leadership. He was taken to task by the District Executive for distributing "material opposed to the democratically established policies of this union." The *UE News* also rejected an article of his because it was "designed to create division within the union on the basis of distortion of accepted policy and that he be informed that the purpose of the *UE News* is to unite our membership in support of UE policies when those policies are accepted by the majority of the membership."<sup>34</sup>

On 17 April, Hodges and Bacon met with the leaders of the CCF faction at the Brockville, Peterborough, and Hamilton plants to create the UEW-CCL Unity Committee. On the very next day the name of the committee was changed to the UEW-CCF Unity Committee since Mosher had objected to

<sup>32</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 70, Hodges to Conroy, 8 December 1947.

<sup>33</sup>NAC, UEC, Bob Ward to Ross Russell, 15 December 1947.

<sup>34</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Executive Board Meeting, 3 April 1948.

the use of the Congress's name. It was recommended that at union meetings CCF supporters should take a militant anti-Communist stand on any topic.<sup>35</sup>

Another major centre of opposition was the Peterborough plant. Local President Jack Morton ran unsuccessfully for the CCF in the 1948 provincial election and led the plant's UEW-CCF Unity Committee. Morton saw himself as a potential replacement for Jackson and also was in communication with the Carey forces in the United States. In a letter to an American UE official Jackson painted this portrait of Morton:

He threatened to resign from the presidency in the middle of negotiations in 1946 when the going got a little tough with the company. He did resign immediately following the conclusion of negotiations and attempted to run the organization from the outside. ... He has been on the Negotiation Committee of the Local since 1946 and in the course of each of the annual negotiations has played ball with the company in many indirect ways, most particularly in 1948 in threatening a walk-out by the Peterboro delegation when we proceeded in our demand for the 40-hour week. Because we could not afford a split at that time, we were forced to concentrate on the money issues rather than on the twin issues of money and hours.<sup>36</sup>

In Brockville the anti-Jackson forces were led by Bill Miller, a returned veteran who also ran, unsuccessfully for the CCF in 1948. Miller had started to lose his faith in the UE when at a mass meeting during the Phillips strike in 1946 Harris referred to the Communist Party as a "grand and glorious party." He was recruited to active opposition to the union executive by Morton and Bacon.<sup>37</sup> According to Miller, Hodges ran a "cloak and dagger operation" which was characterized by its inefficiency. He gave this description of a set of instructions from Hodges:

'Take a train from Brockville to Port Hope, get off at the station, go out the front door turn to your right, go [to] the left, the fourth car over, open the door get in the car.' There would be Ollie sitting there with his hat pulled down and his coat collar pulled up. There would be two or three others. We would get in the car. 'Where are we going?' 'Top secret.'<sup>38</sup>

Jackson decided to carry the fight into the enemy's territory when he devoted the entire May 1948 meeting of the district council to anti-communism. He went into the meeting armed with an executive resolution condemning the UEW-CCF Unity Committee for its attempts at "taking over the direction and leadership of this union and hand it over to outside interests."

<sup>35</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 35.

<sup>36</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Don Tomay, 19 January 1950.

<sup>37</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

<sup>38</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

In opening debate Jackson stated that the time had come to “deal with the question of defending our union — defending it against attacks from without and against division from within.”

Morton argued that the committee’s purpose was not to undermine the union but to sell the CCF to UE members. While Morton claimed the committee was merely recruiting support for the CCF, a party which the UE supported, other delegates painted a different picture. W. Membury of Local 508 said he had been contacted by Hodges twice, once with the stated purpose of getting rid of the leadership of the UE, and the second time to set up action blocs within the UE. James Cunningham of the Brockville local also spoke of being contacted by Hodges, who wanted to know whether or not he was “interested in a change of leadership in the union.” Al Stratford, who had helped organize the Westinghouse local, said “he was at one time associated with this group when they called themselves the New Deal Committee, and he knew what their purpose was — it was to take over the UE and get rid of the present leadership.”

In the end the executive’s resolution passed, with the only opposition coming from the Peterborough and St. Catharines’ locals. The meeting also confirmed an executive decision not to print Bacon’s submission to the *UE News*. Bacon attacked Jackson and Harris angrily, claiming that they had “done a job on me, the machinery had moved into line, and the organization was perfect.” In his closing address, Jackson laid his cards on the table:

Over the past few weeks a number of individuals, most of whom have consistently opposed the basic needs of our workers and in terms of the overall political action position of this union, have banded together and hope, with outside direction and aid, to superimpose their position on the membership.

They have been encouraged by, and are making full use of, the employers’ anti-communist slogans. They have sought to make use of the political action policy of this union in support of the election of a CCF government as the cloak behind which to hide their real designs, namely, to either take over control of the union for their own narrow political and personal gain, or to so weaken this union that certain labor climbers can move in and take over. Rule or ruin is their real motto.<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after this Bacon and his supporters circulated a cartoon with the headline titled “The Shape of Things to Come?” It portrayed Jackson, Harris, and Russell as marionettes, with Stalin pulling their strings. Standing before the three UE officers was a manacled Bacon with a gag on his mouth. In the background, the sun, labelled “free speech,” sinks behind the hammer and sickle; a ball and chain attached to Bacon’s legs reads “No criticism of Communist Policy.”

<sup>39</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 1-2 May 1948.

Throughout the summer the conflict in St. Catharines continued. Bacon was not allowed to attend a District Executive Board meeting.<sup>40</sup> Jackson also credited the ongoing public rupture as the reason why the union's organizing campaign at a new CGE plant in Barrie failed to gain an absolute majority.<sup>41</sup> In September, Bacon defected to the Steelworkers, taking the English Electric local with him. Jackson registered a protest with the CCL. Conroy and Mosher wrote back that "raiding against your union is the inevitable by-product of the failure to adhere to Congress policy."<sup>42</sup> As far as the CCL was concerned it was open season on the UE.<sup>43</sup>

Bacon's defection gave credence to Jackson's argument that the UEW-CCF Unity Committee was dedicated to splitting the union. Bacon's move came close to splitting the anti-Jackson forces. Hodges gave Bacon a dressing down for doing just what Jackson had predicted. At a UEW-CCF meeting in September 1948, Norm Davison of Hamilton accused Bacon of selling his friends "down the river." Morton told him that he was very "disturbed about it when I heard about it. It put us in a hell of a position for the next convention. We are going to be a whole lot weaker position being associated with ... Bacon."<sup>44</sup> At the union's district council meeting in September 1948, Morton criticized Bacon's move and announced that he was resigning as the Unity Committee chairman.<sup>45</sup>

#### TROUBLE WITH BORDERS AND BOSSES

It was at this time that the interference of the American government in the UE's internal affairs became apparent. In the fall of 1948, Jackson flew to New York City to attend a UE convention. He was interned on Ellis Island and then deported. When Ernie Briginshaw, the Local 512 business agent, attempted to cross the border he was peppered with inquiries about his political beliefs. Asked who he took his orders from, he replied, "from my local membership, executive board and president." The immigration official angrily told him "you take your orders from C.S. Jackson," and denied him entrance. But not all Canadian UE delegates were excluded; those who supported the Carey faction, which was mounting one more unsuccessful campaign to takeover the UE leadership, were admitted without any problem.

<sup>40</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of the UE District Executive Board, 13 June 1948.

<sup>41</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 10-11 July 1948.

<sup>42</sup>NAC, UEC, Mosher and Conroy to C.S. Jackson, 10 September 1948.

<sup>43</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Mosher, 13 September 1948.

<sup>44</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 33, minutes of meeting 11 September 1948.

<sup>45</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

Most of the companies that the UE dealt with were delighted with the disruption in the UE, and several contributed to it. Despite Canadian General Electric's reputation for enlightened labour relations, the corporation's senior officers were not above employing the crudest of red-scare tactics. In December 1948, Canadian Vice-President Kirk Corkery visited the company's new plastics plant in Cobourg. His trip came in the middle of a UE organization drive. He spoke with Doreen Wade, the local president, and Bunny Hill, the union's chief steward, for over an hour. After returning to Toronto, Corkery sent them an American Chamber of Commerce booklet on Communism. In the accompanying letter Corkery said:

I am satisfied that neither of you is a Communist and that you aim for the betterment of Canada and Canadians. Realizing such, I am prepared to go a long way. From this pamphlet you will realize what I meant when I said you were in a tough spot being between your leadership and the Company.<sup>46</sup>

CGE was not alone in red-baiting the UE. In the fall of 1947 the vice president of the Canadian Landis Machine Company wrote the Ontario Labour Relations board in opposition to a UE bid for certification. In his letter John H. Elliot wrote:

That the board can take judicial interest of the alleged fact that Communists have strived, and are still diligently striving to infiltrate and control labour unions for subversive ends; hence public policy seems to require care and caution in certifying a Union as a collective bargaining agent for employees, and then only upon the best possible evidence of the true wishes of the employees.<sup>47</sup>

In the summer of 1949 the newly appointed president of Canadian Westinghouse told the press that the government should "take action against the communists within the union movement who are agitating for wage increases that threaten the Dominion with a depression."<sup>48</sup>

Despite the infighting and the loss of the Rogers Tube local following a bitter strike, the union continued to expand. In 1948, the union signed a master agreement with General Electric that covered nearly 6,000 workers in 6 plants and gave them a 13¢ an hour increase. By September 1948, there were 20,000 dues paying members, 24,483 members under contract, 7,800 of whom had joined in the previous year.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup>UE News, 13 February 1949.

<sup>47</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 12-14 October 1947.

<sup>48</sup>UE News, 8 July 1949.

<sup>49</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

### FIGHTING BACK

While Jackson was more than willing to take on his opponents in open debate or to try to beat them at the local ballot box, the UE leadership's commitment to maintaining links between the leadership and the membership was more than rhetorical. Jackson's strategy counted on an aroused membership that would serve as a counterweight to local executives that might try to monopolize union affairs. At a 1948 district council meeting he noted there "is still much left to be done before we can lay full claim to the title of a rank-and-file union." He claimed that those locals, which in the union's oldest or largest plants were often the most critical, also had the lowest level of member involvement.

It is necessary that we strengthen the setup and operation of our stewards system in every one of our plants. We can draw some vital lessons from those situations where disrupters have gained a foothold and have brought about a weakening of the local situation. We find that in every such case gains are made by disrupters only as a result of the lack of a fully operative democratic stewards system.<sup>50</sup>

Jackson also indicated that he believed that union security provisions could be used in the battle for the union's political direction as well as to protect union members from employer discrimination.

The basic principle of the union shop is the right of the membership to discipline a member or members who are carrying on activities against the basic interests of the members. The form that that discipline takes in a full union shop is the right of the membership to give trial to and expel from membership, and thereby remove from employment in the plant, any person who is attempting to destroy the organization of the workers.<sup>51</sup>

There was often the air of the kangaroo court to such protective proceedings. During the spring of 1948 Jackson consolidated the union's position at the GE Ward Street works with the expulsion of Reg Hebert from Local 516. According to the *UE News*,

a report was prepared recommending expulsion and listing dozens of instances where Hebert was found guilty of carrying on disruptive activities, attempting to undermine the union during negotiations, slandering union negotiators and leaders, distributing lying and vilifying leaflets, attempting to aid the company to the detriment of the workers, etc.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

<sup>51</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

<sup>52</sup>*UE News*, 19 September 1948.



At Hebert's trial, Jackson's supporters suggested that Hebert was getting outside funding for his anti-UE campaign and insinuated that he could not have written the leaflets he was distributing.<sup>53</sup>

While the UE's leadership never dropped its overtly political stance, there was a decidedly bread-and-butter side to their attack on the CCL and Steel in particular. For every time they assaulted Mosher and Millard for their political views, they also stressed the UE's success at traditional bargaining. To cite only one of dozens of examples, the 22 October 1948 issue of the *UE News* featured a full page spread that asked members to "Compare the Record: The UE at Electro and Steel at STELCO." The text said that:

The militant policies and democratic rank-and-file control of the UE-CIO pays off with big dividends for UE members and, of course, the employers aren't too happy to deal with a strong fighting union which makes them come across with higher rates of pay. As a consequence the employer controlled press has been railing against the UE-CIO — condemning its policies and its duly elected leaders. Recently some unions which have been shown up to their disadvantage when gains of the UE are held up for comparison, have joined the hue and cry.<sup>54</sup>

Nor did Jackson and Harris shrink from pointing out that they were being paid considerably less than most other national and international trade union leaders.

Philip Murray now gets \$25,000 per year as President of the United Steelworkers of America, compared to [UE International President Albert] Fitzgerald's \$7,500 per year. A goodly slice was also added to the salary of C. H. Millard as Canadian Director, giving him \$8,000 per year as compared to the \$3,300 salary of Brother Jackson.<sup>55</sup>

As one frustrated letter from Hodges to Conroy made clear, Jackson and Harris enjoyed considerable support within the union because they were accomplished trade unionists.

There has been considerable difficulty in getting through to the membership of the locals where the Jackson machine has the administration. The propaganda and publicity job done by the administration is quite remarkable. Members are pelted continually with literature advising them of the superiority and excellence of the UE. The Canadian section has a weekly paper which all members get. This propaganda medium has been used to very considerable advantage to put across the labour baiting arguments of the UE. The majority of workers are aware of the make-up and political ideology of the UE leadership but in several cases they have

<sup>53</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 33, minutes of the trial of Reg Hebert.

<sup>54</sup>*UE News*, 22 October 1948.

<sup>55</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

achieved very good agreements. There have also been some abysmal failures for the UE but these have been carefully hidden from the membership.

... Once again in the overall picture, it is the lassitude and lack of interest by the average union member, his non-attendance at meetings, and his attitude of 'don't give a damn so long as he gets a wage increase' that makes CCL efforts in Communist administered unions extremely difficult.<sup>56</sup>

Hodges concluded that it would take a shock, such as the UE's expulsion from the CCL, to rock them out of their support for Jackson. This was a misdiagnosis.

#### TANGLING WITH THE CCL

While the Marshall Plan dominated the struggles between Jackson and the Canadian Congress of Labour leadership during this period, conflict also erupted around the need for a Congress-wide bargaining strategy and the labour movement's political strategy. Jackson lobbied for a second wage campaign in 1947. He was opposed by Eugene Forsey whose 1947 economic forecast concluded that while "Canadian Corporations are not poverty stricken [a] wage increase of 11½% would very nearly wipe out the 1945 net profits of these corporations and take close to half of their profits before taxes." The UE broke the 11.5¢ figure set by Forsey to win a 13.5¢ increase in its first set of joint negotiations at CGE. The following year Conroy decreed that no Congress affiliate should criticize, comment upon, or try to influence the negotiating position of any other affiliate.<sup>57</sup> Jackson said this removed any opportunity of inter-union co-ordination and scored both the CCL and Millard for scuttling a wage drive.<sup>58</sup>

The 1948 Ontario election also brought the UE into conflict with the Ontario Federation of Labour leadership. While the UE did not take part in the OFL's campaign supporting the CCF, it did urge members to work towards the election of a CCF government. Following the election, which saw the Conservatives re-elected with a comfortable majority, OFL official Cleve Kidd wrote a campaign assessment that pilloried the UE's contribution:

It is nothing new, however, to find the UE following a policy in direct contradiction to the policy of the majority as laid down in [OFL] conventions. Such democratic methods are not commonly used in the UE. As a matter of fact, in at least one

<sup>56</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 72, Hodges to Conroy, September 1948.

<sup>57</sup>NAC, UEC, UE Brief To the Investigating Committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour, 14 April 1949.

<sup>58</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 1 May 1948.

instance, the stand the UE took was nothing short of sabotage of the chances of a CCF candidate. We refer to Jack Morton. ...<sup>59</sup>

In response to such "slanderous lies," Jackson argued that

the CCF failed to organized a serious campaign in Peterborough. Brother Morton, who was the candidate, did not even request his own local to endorse his candidature or to hold membership meetings in support of his candidacy, and the local Executive Board ignored the repeated request of the District to set up a Political and Legislative Committee to spearhead and mobilize the membership for the election tasks.<sup>60</sup>

By the end of the 1948 CCL convention there could be little doubt that Mosher and Conroy were determined to expel the UE. Mosher warned the UE that "unless you change your tactics, and damned soon, whether you leave or not, you will be thrown out." Conroy announced that "every local union must clean the Communists out of the unions and out of the trade union movement if it wants to live, if it wants to grow and flourish, if it wants to preserve its right to think and plan and if it wants to get on with the job of bringing security and freedom for the great mass of the workers."<sup>61</sup> It was at this convention that Mine-Mill was suspended and that Burt dropped his support for the left. Despite the left's diminished ranks, Jackson garnered 154 votes, compared to Mosher's winning 564 votes, in his bid for the Congress presidency. This figure was down from the 192 Jackson had received the year before.<sup>62</sup>

In a letter written to James Matles after the convention, Jackson noted that the

two highlights of the convention in terms of policy of the CCL leadership were Conroy's statement that the one task of the Congress was to clean out the communists wherever they exist in the trade union movement and the contribution of Charles Millard of Steel in which he stated that he and his union would welcome and were inviting all workers in the metal trades field in Canada to come into the house of Steel.<sup>63</sup>

The first post-convention battle over jurisdiction between the two unions came when the workers of Hamilton's Sovereign Potteries asked the UE to organize them. By November 1948, the UE campaign was successful, despite

<sup>59</sup>NAC, UEC, Cleve Kidd to OFL affiliates, 25 June 1948.

<sup>60</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 24-25 September 1948.

<sup>61</sup>Cited in Abella, *Nationalism*, 149.

<sup>62</sup>Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto 1975), 195.

<sup>63</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 18 October 1948.

the fact that CCL officials had sent the Pottery workers letters denouncing the UE. The Congress decided that the workers should affiliate to the Congress directly. Showing considerably more enthusiasm in enforcing jurisdictional rules than they had in the case of English Electric, they demanded that the UE give up the local. Faced with the threat of suspension, Jackson complied.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, the Steelworkers commenced a raid on the UE local at the Outboard Marine plant in Peterborough.<sup>65</sup>

Jackson went on the offensive at the UE's 1949 District Council meeting. He once again attacked the CCL leadership for failing to demonstrate any leadership in a wage drive. (Forsey's latest research report had concluded "To sum up I don't think there is any case for a general 'fourth round.'"<sup>66</sup>) Because the CCL had refused to co-ordinate a wage campaign, Jackson said that most of the UE's 1949 wage campaign would centre around the success of negotiations with CGE, which were being conducted on a joint basis.<sup>67</sup>

The 26 February 1949 issue of *UE News* was largely devoted to the Ontario Federation of Labour conference, which had been a rematch of the previous fall's CCL convention. The UE accused the Federation leadership in general, and the Steelworkers in particular, of stifling debate, avoiding issues, and anti-communism.<sup>68</sup> A week later the paper accused the OFL leaders of being in

complete alignment with every anti-union and union-busting individual and organization in Canada, and with the employers of Canada, as indicated by their continued echoing of the most vicious statement of employers and anti-union groups. The members of CCL unions will have to awaken to an understanding of the course which some within the labour movement have set out for themselves, if we are to head off these fascist-like developments within the ranks of labour which are the inevitable preparation for another war of the same kind and for the same aims as that launched by Hitler in 1939.<sup>69</sup>

OFL leaders lodged a complaint and the UE was suspended from the CCL Executive Council. On 14 April a special hearing was held before a packed room at the Royal York Hotel. Kidd, with the assistance of Burt, who had abandoned the UE, accused the UE of making slanderous and misleading statements and subjecting OFL leaders to character assassination. The day before the hearing the CCL fired another salvo in the battle with the UE,

<sup>64</sup> Abella, *Nationalism*, 150.

<sup>65</sup> *UE News*, 28 January 1949.

<sup>66</sup> NAC, UEC, UE Brief To the Investigating Committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour, 14 April 1949.

<sup>67</sup> NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 29 January 1949.

<sup>68</sup> *UE News*, 26 February 1949.

<sup>69</sup> *UE News*, 4 March 1949.

releasing a paper entitled "Labour's Answer to Communism" which spoke of the insidious "Communist Germ."

Jackson said the UE did not intend to imply that any CCL officer was a deliberate warmonger or fascist, and apologized for any misapprehensions. He added that the actions of some Federation leaders had the same impact as those of warmongers and that in such a circumstance "one cannot be guided simply by a choice of delicate language nor by the fact that some persons' feelings may be hurt." He went on to suggest that the *UE News* was not the only union publication guilty of employing intemperate language.

Some of the members of this investigating committee, and the top leaders of the Congress who voted for the suspension of the UE from the Executive Council, have on many occasions slandered the UE in public, and repeated the lies of the employers as to the nature of the democracy within the UE and the character of the membership and leaders of the UE. But we are not that thin skinned, because we have a much more basic principle for which to fight, namely, the welfare of the working people through the development of a labour movement which recognizes its obligation for militant and progressive struggle on all fronts affecting the working people.<sup>70</sup>

After this attack on the people who were sitting in judgement over him, reminiscent of his performance before the panel which investigated his internment, Jackson noted that UE workers at Westinghouse were making a higher hourly rate than Stelco employees, a reversal of the pre-war situation. The rest of the brief was not a defence at all, but a cataloguing of the UE's battles with the Congress leadership. Jackson said the Congress had for three years in a row scuttled efforts to co-ordinate a wage campaign and that by binding the Congress to the CCF it eliminated free debate of political questions. Indeed, that its allegiance to the CCF had forced the Congress to back the Marshall Plan which was bound to deindustrialize Canada and turn the "country into a raw material supply base for American big business."<sup>71</sup>

It was a bravura performance, but it certainly cut little ice with the investigating committee. It recommended that Jackson, Harris, Russell and two other UE officers be banned from Congress activities for five years. Once more Millard was to be frustrated because the decision was subsequently softened to a suspension from the executive council.

Jackson planned to appeal the suspension at the October CCL convention. He considered letting the union become two months behind in its dues

<sup>70</sup>NAC, UEC, UE Brief To the Investigating Committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour, 14 April 1949.

<sup>71</sup>NAC, UEC, UE Brief To the Investigating Committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour, 14 April 1949.

payments, the most a member union could be in arrears, since it would "save money for ourselves and at the same time deprive the CCL of a few hundred dollars which they would only use to attack us." However, he rejected this idea since it could reduce the number of delegates the UE could send to the convention. He advised the international union, which made the payments to the Congress, to "embarrass the Congress a bit by being a little late in the payments of our monthly per capita."<sup>72</sup>

The suspension heightened the internal struggle in the UE. Morton told the Peterborough *Examiner* that the decision would "weaken our union and react against strong contracts." While deploring the Congress's decision, Morton said "we are not in favour of public vilification of responsible union leaders" and that the leaders of the CCL and the OFL were "sound and sincere trade unionists."<sup>73</sup>

In a stinging open letter to the *UE News*, Jackson said that he would have expected to

find in the statement of a responsible leader of such a large local as 524 some such comment and indignation at the fact that the rights of minority viewpoints — and the right to be in opposition to policies on legitimate differences are both to be expected and necessary — were being ruled out in the parliament of labour. No one is better aware of this than yourself, because you have occupied the role of consistent critic and of opposition within the UE but have never been denied the right to oppose and criticize.<sup>74</sup>

Morton responded with his own letter, accusing Jackson of setting up Local 524 as the scapegoat if the CGE negotiations failed. "Brother Jackson does not like its right-wing leadership (anti-Communists)," Morton wrote. "I would like to point out that the only statements I recall against the UE is that it is Communist-dominated and follows closely the party line. As I am not able to contradict this and in fact, consider it to be true, I therefore have no intention of denying it."<sup>75</sup> There were real strains in the CGE negotiations. At the April District Council meeting, Morton hinted that he was thinking of pulling 524 out of the joint negotiations. "I for one am not afraid of separating the GE plant in Peterborough and see Peterborough coming out with the best contract. We will go out alone if we have to, and we don't want your support if you are not going to give it to us," he said.<sup>76</sup> Delegates from Peterborough also opposed plant-wide seniority provisions, preferring instead a seniority system for each department or shop. Jackson was

<sup>72</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Emspak, 6 July 1949.

<sup>73</sup>*UE News*, 15 July 1949.

<sup>74</sup>*UE News*, 15 July 1949.

<sup>75</sup>*UE News*, 2 September 1949.

<sup>76</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 30 April to 1 May 1949.

able to exploit the differences over this policy in his battles with Morton. In a letter to Matles, he gave his assessment of the situation at Peterborough:

For the moment the local leadership, who are [anti-Communist] and teamed up with the CCF here, are maintaining a certain militancy with regard to having a fighting front. However, there is considerable apathy in the Peterboro situation, following in the main on the red-baiting and divisive tactics of the same leadership in the past years, and owing also to the fact that Peterboro is a very backward community where very great gains have been made in the past years without these workers having to do anything more than take a strike vote.<sup>77</sup>

By the fall, the UE's position was turning around. After Morton accepted the seniority proposals without proper authorization, Jackson convinced the local membership to repudiate the agreement. This was the first time the UE administration defeated Morton on his own turf. While Morton was attending the UE's American convention, Jackson seized the opportunity to strengthen the district's position in the local.

During the past three weeks, and in the absence of Morton in Cleveland, there were two major stoppages of work in Peterboro Works in two departments around this whole question of speed-up and seniority. We thus have the workers in motion for the first time in years in that plant. Our job is to increase that activity with a view to bringing that plant, within a matter of weeks, to a point where they are ready for full action against this Company. In the course of such a campaign, naturally, we will carry through the further exposure of the sell-out tactics of the Morton clique.<sup>78</sup>

When Morton returned to the plant he and Jackson became involved in a bidding war as each sought to out do the other in militancy. Morton led a work stoppage in the winding department while at the same time Jackson served CGE with court papers in an effort to have a prior arbitration award enforced. Since the management refused to discuss the winding room concerns with the writs hanging over their heads, Morton accused the district officers of frustrating the local's initiative by instituting the court action. Jackson, however, said he had no objection to dropping the writs and proceeding with local pressure on the company. As he wrote to Matles:

I allowed the thing to roll at that point, but insisted that there must be a full meeting of the stewards and executive at 7 the next morning to re-assess the situation .... At this stage it was obvious that Morton had no solution to the problem but was prepared to indulge in very adventurous moves, even to full-scale plant-wide work

<sup>77</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 27 June 1949.

<sup>78</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 19 September 1949.

stoppages on the issue. ... My main concern was to see that the workers had some say in where they were going in this whole fight.<sup>79</sup>

Jackson feared that Morton's inflexible position was forcing the union into a strike position. When Morton saw the direction that his policies were headed, he looked more kindly on the idea of using the courts to enforce the arbitration award.

Jackson proposed a one-day strike to be followed with a meeting of the entire CGE Conference Board. At that meeting it was decided to hold strike votes in all the plants immediately. "Because of the fact that the Peterboro stoppage had taken place on the basis of a limited objective and had become too rigid and inflexible, we called upon the Peterboro workers to return to work with a strike vote in their pockets and that we take strike votes in all GE plants to amalgamate the issue with the large issue of the contract and to show the company that we meant business."<sup>80</sup>

With Peterborough on the edge of a strike the battle between the UE and the CCL reached its climax.

#### THE ROAD TO EXPULSION

Jackson and the other UE officers unsuccessfully appealed their suspension from the Congress executive council at the 1949 CCL convention. Jackson spoke for over an hour, concluding that "we say we MUST in order to protect our own members — be free to discuss and decide on our own policies and representatives. We have convictions about our position on policy issues and we are not afraid to state them in open debate."<sup>81</sup>

The struggle now shifted to the United States. When Carey once more failed to capture the leadership of the UE at the union's 1949 convention he and CIO president Philip Murray decided to create a new non-communist electrical workers union. Murray intended to expel the UE from the Congress and charter the new union, with Carey as its president, at the November CIO convention. All through October, Carey supporters in the United States and Canada were kept abreast of the plans to create the new union.

In September, the UE's international leadership announced that it would be boycotting the upcoming CIO convention unless the UAW and the Steelworkers stopped raiding UE locals. They also demanded that those locals which had been raided be returned to the UE. In a move which was to have unforeseen consequences for the Canadian district, the UE also

<sup>79</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 19 October 1949.

<sup>80</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 19 October 1949.

<sup>81</sup>UE News, 7 October 1949.



stopped paying its per capita to the CIO. At the 1949 CIO convention, the UE and nine other unions were expelled. Murray told the delegates, "we can no longer tolerate the Communist Party masquerading as a labor union." A new union, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), was unveiled and an old president, James Carey, was installed at its head.<sup>82</sup> IUE proponents and UE activists across North America swung into action.

On 3 November, Jack Morton convened a meeting of electrical workers at Peterborough's Brock Street Arena. A resolution was presented that would have given the local executive the full power to dispose of union funds and property as well as the right to change affiliation "within the confines of the CIO-CCL." This would have given the go-ahead to a switch from the UE to the IUE, which Jackson was now calling the "Imitation UE." Morton refused to allow any debate on the resolution; all "in one breath, [he] put the question, declared it carried, and adjourned the meeting."<sup>83</sup>

Jackson was in the audience. He turned what could have been a rout into the first victory in District Five's battle against the IUE. Years later Jackson gave this account of the meeting.

Comes the night there are 1,400 people present. Morton of course is in the chair as president. He informed me that I would be given fifteen minutes to speak. ... They had a motion to put, they didn't say what the motion was. He arranged that his people be seated pretty well up the front and that he was going to move a motion that the membership turn over all power of the local to the executive. He started the meeting and he was grandstanding.

I got up to speak and I was speaking for about ten minutes and I was laying it on a bit. Morton tried to interrupt me and one of the lads, Peters, he was a former CSU boy, came dashing up the aisle and took a swing across the table at Morton, which created a bit of pandemonium.

I grabbed the mike and pulled it up on the stage because they had this table down below and I started attacking Morton and his followers. I called them every sort of bastard and I said 'We have a dissident group here who are trying to sell you out on the seniority question. They have no relationship to you as workers. They are simply out and out fascist bastards and they bring their henchman here, ... and they're going to try and take over our meeting and our union. All good UE people will remain and all those bastards are now asked to leave.'

So about 300 of them got up and walked out and the rest of the people stayed. I gambled because if that meeting had ever broke up, we were finished. Eleven hundred people stayed. So I put through about ten motions — I guess they were illegal. We declared the old committee out, we declared the new committee in.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup>Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 184-5.

<sup>83</sup>*UE News*, 11 November 1949.

<sup>84</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

All officers of the local identified with the “right-wing” were suspended and a temporary committee set up to run the local. The following day the UE secured court injunctions restraining Morton from using the local’s assets.<sup>85</sup> After the meeting Jackson hit the road, travelling to Cobourg to meet with UE loyalists who were being confronted with another breakaway attempt from the CGE local there.

There were about ten [pro-UE] people at the meeting in a local church in Port Cobourg. I guess the meeting had been going on for about three quarters of an hour. We were trying to assess things and so on. Somebody said, ‘Hey, there’s a whole gang coming down the street.’ So I told everybody to get out. They went out the side door. My car was across the street. I went out the front door and just as I went out the front door about 45 of them came onto the church grounds. I started yelling ‘Where is your leader?’ and was pushing people aside.

I got in the centre of the group and said to their leader ‘You’re a yellow-livered bastard, you get all these people drunk and come down here to try to break up a meeting of about half a dozen people. Get the hell out of my way.’ So I walked across the street and found my tire was flat. I walked up and down talking to the workers. They said I had half a dozen Cadillacs. I said ‘You’ve been filled with a bunch of lies.’ Meanwhile they pumped up my tire. I got the hell out of there fast but we had nothing left there.<sup>86</sup>

While Morton had failed to take over the Peterborough local he still had the blessing of the CCL and IUE. He was quickly appointed the Canadian director of District Five of the IUE. On 12 November 1949, he applied for affiliation to the CCL. This created a problem for the Congress, since the UE had not been expelled from the Congress. Until that happened it was hardly proper for the Congress to accept the UE’s main opponent as a member. Aside from this, many observers recognized that the UE stood a very good chance of retaining its members.

Congress official Norman Dowd provided the solution to Mosher’s dilemma. He noted in mid-November that the UE was two months behind on its per capita payments to the Congress. The Congress constitution allowed for the expulsion of any union which was three months behind in its dues. Mosher told Dowd to keep this information a secret. Each morning the two men examined the mail apprehensively — but each day brought no cheque. On 1 December 1949, Conroy, losing no time, sent out a telegram to all executive council members requesting permission to suspend the UE for being three months delinquent in its dues payments.

Jackson heard of the attempted expulsion from a sympathetic executive member. He fired off a telegram stating that the union had been making

<sup>85</sup> *UE News*, 11 November 1949.

<sup>86</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

its payments in the middle of the month, not the beginning and that it would not be delinquent until 15 December. He then posted a cheque for the amount owing. The problem had arisen because the UE's International office in New York City had traditionally made the payments to the CCL. When the UE stopped making payments to the CIO in September 1949, the international officers, without informing Jackson, had stopped making payments to the CCL as well. Mosher received Jackson's cheque on 5 December, but by then he had already suspended the union and the cheque was returned uncashed.<sup>87</sup>

Four days later Jackson issued the following public statement on the creation of the IUE.

In their actions they carry out the dictates of American big business through their appointed leaders like James B. Carey. Carey, the man whom UE members for 8 years rejected through 8 consecutive ballot votes. Now Carey is appointed by Phil Murray as the head man (without elections) of a paper electrical workers union. This is disorganization — dictatorship and disruption at its worst.<sup>88</sup>

For Jackson and the UE the Cold War was now a struggle for survival.

<sup>87</sup>Abella, *Nationalism*, 154-7.

<sup>88</sup>NAC, UEC, Statement of the UE on the Creation of the IUE, 9 December 1949.

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## 12 Survival

### 1950-1955

On 3 December 1949 Jackson convened a special meeting of the UE's District Five council. With his major opponents having left the union for the IUE, the tone of this meeting was far different from those where Jackson and Harris had clashed with Miller and Morton. The new Peterborough president, Tom Davies, opened the conference by saying that

this was the first time in the history of local 524 that the delegation had come to the District Council meeting united as a body. In the past there had been nothing but fear, disruption, malice, and hatred on the part of the Local Officers toward the District Officers. ... The 524 delegates were one hundred per cent solid in their fight behind the District Executive Board and the District Officers, because it was recognized that they could not go anywhere without the direction of the District Officers.

But such bravado was tinged with realism. As another Peterborough delegate said, "whether we like it or not, we have to face the facts that we have a large group of very well organized people in opposition, which has expert advice, the help of the company, and, in some departments, a really hard core of old employees who have had absolutely ground into them the propaganda of the red bogey."<sup>1</sup>

The speakers were right: the UE was in the fight of its life. The IUE had formed local organizations throughout the district. It threatened to capture the UE's certification at CGE in Peterborough and Toronto and at Phillips in Brockville. Both unions were in a weak position in Québec where Duplessis continued to repress all unions, be they Communist or social democratic. Only the UE local in Hamilton seemed secure. Although in coming years the anti-Communist onslaught would wipe out the CSU and Mine-Mill and drive the UAW and the IWA to the right, the Canadian UE would emerge from the Cold War isolated, but largely intact.

<sup>1</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the special meeting of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Council, 3 December 1949.

The IUE campaign was launched as the Cold War reached its zenith. In 1949 the Communist Party came to power in China, creating fears of a domino effect throughout Asia. In the United States, Joseph McCarthy launched a witch-hunting crusade that would ruin hundreds of lives; and, in June 1950, the Cold War intensified as North and South Korea plunged into a three year civil war in which Canadian soldiers fought the Chinese Red Army.

In the United States, the Truman administration and the Congress worked hand in glove with the IUE to destroy the UE. While a variety of tactics were employed, the scenario was usually the same: a company would petition the National Labor Relations Board for a new union election under the Taft-Hartley Act; the IUE would be given the free run of plant during the campaign; and, on the eve of the vote, one of the various red-baiting Congressional committees would set up shop in town and subpoena the local UE leadership. It was not unusual for senior government officials, including Truman's secretary of labour, to show up at the plant gates to pass out leaflets for the IUE. During the 1953 campaign, Carey turned over the names of 200 UE members to the Massachusetts Special Commission on Communism. GE president Ralph Cordiner declared that employees who admitted to being members of the Communist Party would be dismissed. As a result, at least two dozen GE workers lost their jobs.

The government also took action against the union's leadership. Julius Emspak was indicted for contempt of Congress, William Sentner was convicted of violating the Smith Act which had outlawed the Communist Party, and Matles, who was originally from Romania, temporarily had his American citizenship revoked for falsely denying Communist Party membership. The FBI infiltrated the UE and a number of agents were on the union payroll. The Atomic Energy Commission ordered GE not to deal with the UE at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratories in Schenectady. The War and Navy Departments ordered firms with whom they were doing business to fire personnel who they thought were security risks.

But the UE's American leadership fought back. In 1950 it won almost as many certification votes as it lost to the IUE, but the plants where the IUE won were usually larger. After the first year of raiding, the IUE represented 41,500 Westinghouse workers, while the UE was down to 12,000. In 1948, the American UE had 325,000 members in total and was the third largest union in the CIO, by 1954 it was reduced to 140,000 members.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Caute, *The Great Fear*, 378-86; Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 10-1, 179, 225, 239.

PETERBOROUGH AND BROCKVILLE: ROUND ONE

In Canada, however, the story was very different. The IUE won two quick and easy victories at the small CGE plant in Cobourg and the Leland Electric plant in Guelph. Its overall strategy was based on the premise that Peterborough and Brockville would then break away from the UE. Building from this base the IUE would win the Toronto CGE plants and finally Westinghouse. But the men who had fought Jackson so bitterly for so long, soon fell to fighting amongst themselves. Morton was appointed the union's first Canadian director and soon fired off imperious letters to IUE staffers. Oliver Hodges, who had been seconded to the IUE's Hamilton office, received a stinging letter in early 1950 that chastised him for the amount he spent on a Christmas party (fifteen dollars) and for purchasing a frame for the local's charter. Hodges began counting the days until his secondment would end.<sup>3</sup>

The IUE sent Tom Fitzpatrick, the son of a leading American IUE activist, up to Canada to serve as Morton's assistant. Although the two men were often at odds, they did manage to enlist the support of the local Roman Catholic Church. According to an IUE leaflet of January 1950:

A pastoral letter from the Most Reverend Gerald Berry, Catholic Bishop of Peterborough, was read in the Catholic Churches during Christmas and New Years in which the Bishop declared the issue to be one between Communism and anti-Communism. The Bishop further stated that his people were confused by the tactics used in this dispute and described the UE as a 'Communist dominated union' and urged support of the new right-wing union, the IUE-CIO.<sup>4</sup>

The main plank in the IUE's campaign was anti-communism. During the course of a number of meetings in 1948 and 1949, Hodges worried aloud about the UEW-CCF Unity Committee's inability to come up with a more positive program. Despite these concerns, Hodges found himself playing the same game when he opened the IUE's Hamilton office:

The issue today before the thousands of Hamilton workers who are members of the UE is whether they will continue to pay their dues into what has proven to be the sounding board for Russia's foreign policy and the mass base of the Communist Party (LPP) in Canada, or whether they will build a new, sound and more effective union by joining the millions of organized workers on this continent under the banner of the CIO.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>YUA,OHP, Box 37, Jack Morton to Oliver Hodges, 17 and 20 January 1950.

<sup>4</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 37, IUE leaflet, January 1950.

<sup>5</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 37, IUE press release, 16 November 1949.

Another early IUE leaflet raised the spectre of communist expansionism on its front page.

We are fighting a bear!

The bear which has enslaved Russian people!

The one which has grasped Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and a huge section of Europe impoverished by war and weakened by hunger. This is the same bear which has moved into China and is preparing to swarm all over Asia.

This is the same bear which seeks control of people all over the world.<sup>6</sup>

However, the IUE leaders were to discover that Canadian workers were not about to panic; their ties to the union and to Jackson were much deeper than their fears of Communism.

Jackson and Ralph Sullivan, the UE's key staff person in Peterborough, spent much of their time rebuilding that local. In early February 1950, Jackson reported that 1,000 workers had participated in a snake dance demonstration throughout the plant to protest CGE's decision to halt negotiations until after the labour board ruled on the IUE's certification application. "[T]he situation is certainly changed sharply in our favour and the IUE is running around like a chicken with its head off," Jackson wrote. "The company has forced John Morton to back into the plant and to stay at his machine. The thousand or more workers on the march passed Morton's desk a couple of times and really gave him the works."<sup>7</sup>

Over Fitzpatrick's objections, Morton applied for certification before the union had signed up a majority of the membership. The IUE eventually submitted 1628 cards to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Since there were just over 3000 Peterborough workers, this should have guaranteed a certification vote.<sup>8</sup> However, Jackson submitted 1312 cards from union members who said they had not signed IUE cards or paid initiation dues. The UE charged that the IUE forged union cards and did not collect initiation fees from new members. The Board scheduled hearings in Peterborough.

Ten days before the labour hearings commenced, Jackson was starting to think that if the union could "put on a good show" it might succeed in getting the IUE's application dismissed.<sup>9</sup> Over 50 General Electric workers appeared before the labour board. The UE's future lay in the hands of its young lawyer Charles Dubbin. The UE had been one of Dubbin's first clients and his performance in Peterborough was an early highlight in a career

<sup>6</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 37, IUE-CIO leaflet, 1950.

<sup>7</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 7 February 1950.

<sup>8</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 28-9.

<sup>9</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Emspak, 5 February 1950.

that would eventually see him become one of the Chief Justices of the Ontario Supreme Court.

Dubbin subjected Morton and IUE secretary Keith Chiles to a merciless cross-examination, forcing them to admit to a variety of irregularities in their recruiting campaign. Time and again, Dubbin demonstrated that workers had not paid the initiation fee, even though the union had issued them receipts. As the deadline for the IUE's application approached, it appeared that an increasing number of questionable receipts were issued. At the hearings' conclusion, Dubbin charged "more evidence of fraud has been brought to light in this case than the Board has had in all its cases in recent years."<sup>10</sup> The IUE application was rejected, the Board saying that it was not "prepared to accept the evidence of membership in good standing submitted by the applicant."<sup>11</sup>

The decision left the IUE in complete disarray. Morton resigned as director, announcing that he was going back into the plant to work "shoulder to shoulder with Peterborough workers in bringing the benefits of IUE to all those who have suffered through the corruption of Communist exploitation ... We shall run Clarence Shirley Jackson and his despots of doom out of this town once and for all." The press release announcing Morton's resignation claimed that the UE leadership knew nothing about loyalty to fellow workers because they did not come from the shop floor: "None of them have ever experienced speed up, discrimination, and low wage rates, for they come from such backgrounds as 'brokerage agencies' (is your face red, Clarence), [and] the cleanliness and discipline of the Mounted Police barracks."<sup>12</sup> Morton's resignation created one more problem for Fitzpatrick because Carey instructed him to organize a "spontaneous campaign" among the membership to persuade Morton to withdraw his resignation. The campaign was unsuccessful and, as a result, the union's leadership fractured.

The labour board ruling cleared the way to the settling of the contract with CGE. It was an agreement that IUE leaders were quick to call a sell-out. There was a reduction in the hours of work, an improved grievance system which provided compensation for time spent processing grievances, and a seniority system which provided bumping rights both within departments and on a plant-wide basis.<sup>13</sup> Despite these gains, Jackson recognized that it was not as good a contract as had been reached with Westinghouse and

<sup>10</sup>*UE News*, 24 February 1950.

<sup>11</sup>*UE News*, 3 March 1950.

<sup>12</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 37, IUE press release, 14 March 1950.

<sup>13</sup>*UE News*, 31 March 1950.



the Toronto CGE plants, but he placed the blame on the lengthy period of inter-union rivalry.<sup>14</sup>

The war between the IUE and the UE then shifted to Brockville. The local President William Miller was one of the leading members of the UEW-CCF Unity Campaign and a skilled propagandist. Within days of the creation of the IUE, Miller convened a meeting of Phillips Electric workers. A secret ballot was held and, according to Jackson, only 18 of the 180 people present favoured remaining in the UE. Miller was elected president of the IUE local and began publishing the *IUE-CIO Beacon*. The newsletter featured regular attacks on Jackson and on Communism; song lyrics meant to be sung to the tune of McNamara's Band, for example, combined the two to create an impressive piece of red-baiting propaganda:

Oh, my name is C S Jackson, I'm the front to Tim Buck's band,  
Although we're few in numbers, we're the reddest in the land.  
Of course I am the leader and we often have our say,  
Before the Communistic people you read of every day.  
Oh, the hammer bangs, and the sickle clangs,  
And the red flag flares away!  
G. Harris calls Mosher a big baboon  
While Conroy I do flay.  
Ross Russell talks hard of Charlie Millard,  
The result is simply grand,  
A credit to old Uncle Joe, is C.S. Jackson's band.<sup>15</sup>

Miller originally came to power on the heels of the local's failed strike of early 1946 which resulted in only a five cent an hour increase. He claimed Jackson had urged the workers to stage the work stoppages which provided management with the pretense it needed to lock them out.<sup>16</sup>

Jackson visited Brockville within days of the IUE's first meeting there and reconstituted the UE local. Two organizers, William Cambers and Ellis Blair, were assigned to the Brockville campaign. Cambers painted this picture of the local in late spring:

Particular concentration at the moment is the re-organizing of the Shop Stewards Council. Constant hammering has at last resulted in the appointment of several new stewards and some re-allocation of responsibility for existing stewards has given at least a semblance of plant coverage. We now have 18 stewards out of a possible 25. ... The General membership meeting held last Thursday, May 11th was exceedingly poor as to attendance (15) but content was better than usual. District

<sup>14</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all locals, Business agents, staff and the District Executive Board, 27 March 1950.

<sup>15</sup>*IUE-CIO Beacon*, 6 February 1950.

<sup>16</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

council reports were made by several delegates. The reports, although very immature, halting and ill-prepared, did reflect considerable sincerity and promise.<sup>17</sup>

While the IUE campaign was based on a desire to drive the Communist Party out the trade union movement, ironically, the UE was able to use the links between the CCL and the CCF to its own benefit. The UE presented itself, somewhat disingenuously, as a non-partisan union, while it suggested, more correctly, that the IUE was tied to the CCF. One leaflet warned members that by voting IUE they would "become a milch cow for the CCF." Instead they should "Vote UE and remain free."<sup>18</sup> According to the *UE News* Miller,

throughout the weeks preceeding the vote, has never attempted to place before the workers any economic demands which the IUE would make upon the company. Leaflets issued by the IUE have concentrated on spreading false statements about the UE and red-baiting. The vast majority [of] the workers ... now see that the IUE has no program except red-baiting as a means to get them to relinquish the security won during the past 12 years with the UE.<sup>19</sup>

In April 1950, the Ontario Labour Relations Board conducted a vote at the Phillips plant. The results made it clear that while a "vast majority" had not rejected the IUE, they had not embraced it either. The IUE received 331 votes, while the UE received 329. While the IUE had won a majority of those members who had voted, nine union members had abstained. Under the Ontario labour laws the failure to win a majority of all eligible voters meant that the status quo prevailed. The UE retained the Brockville certification. It quickly negotiated a contract, one which was good enough to leave Miller wondering if the company was not backing the UE.<sup>20</sup>

This defeat created further dissension in the IUE ranks. Miller was angered by the lack of support he received from the IUE and wrote that he was going to contact "Pat Conroy about switching the local to some outfit that will at least see that we have our organizational expenses without making us pay our eye-teeth to get it. Most of the gang here wanted to go straight CCL originally, anyway."<sup>21</sup> While he did not make good on this threat, discontent and disunity was rampant in the IUE. Tom Fogden, an IUE supporter in the Toronto area, expressed his displeasure with the IUE campaign.

<sup>17</sup>NAC, UEC, W.R. Cambers report, 8-15 May 1950.

<sup>18</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 42

<sup>19</sup>*UE News*, 14 April 1950.

<sup>20</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

<sup>21</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 43

We don't know what is going on with the IUE here. There have been no directives and T.J. Fitzpatrick has gone to Pittsburgh for [a] while. ... I have not heard from Fred Hannah for a long time nor have we heard from Art Knipfel so we don't know a darn thing. ... We have lost ground badly by not being able to back up our claims to being a powerful union. If there is not a change in policy soon we shall have to ask the CCL for help and start all over again.<sup>22</sup>

While the Peterborough and Brockville campaigns collapsed, the IUE made even less headway in Toronto where the UE had established cadres of young, politically-conscious workers in most of their shops. In the spring of 1950 Jackson could actually celebrate when he addressed a District Council meeting in Peterborough.

We meet here today less than four months after the all-out attack on our Union, an attack which was greeted by every section of the employers' press, an attack which was heralded as meaning the end of this Union, the UE, an attack which had the support of almost every agency of government and the employers. After this attack (the like of which has never taken place in this country before), the total effect of this blitz against this union has been the [loss] of some 400 members out of 25,000. In these cases where the 400 were lost, they were cases where the membership in these locals had never truly been a participating part of this union. They were situations where, in fact, the leadership of these locals had been successful in completely isolating the membership from the general stream of life of the UE.<sup>23</sup>

Jackson had every right to be sanguine, the opening rounds had gone overwhelmingly to the UE.

#### ORGANIZING IN DUPLESSIS' QUÉBEC

In Québec Jackson was counting on a young French-Canadian Communist, Jean Paré, to rebuild the UE in the post-war years. One of his early successes was the organization of the RCA Victor plant in Montréal. The union was strong enough to force RCA to sign a contract without having to be certified by the Québec Labour Relations Board. This was fortunate since the Board reflected Premier Maurice Duplessis's anti-union politics.

In 1949 General Electric constructed a new plant in Montréal. Paré recruited the majority of the 450 production workers, but the labour board rejected the application since there were still several hundred construction workers finishing the plant. The board ruled that the UE would have to represent a majority of the combined production and construction staff; but, later, it ignored its own ruling and certified a company union.

<sup>22</sup>YUA, OHP, Box 36, Tom Fogden to Oliver Hodges, 1 April 1950.

<sup>23</sup>NAC, UEC, Minutes of UE District Five Council Meeting, 22 April 1950.

The following year the UE signed up 850 of 1250 eligible workers. However, the CCL's Québec representative took over negotiations on behalf of the company union which had affiliated directly with the Congress. Despite the fact that it rarely gave certifications to CCL unions during this period, the labour board reaffirmed the company union's certification.<sup>24</sup>

Duplessis took the UE's 1951 campaign to organize a Westinghouse plant in Trois-Rivières as a personal affront. "I will not have any Communist unions in my hometown," the premier told the press.<sup>25</sup> When it became apparent that the Labour Board hearings were going to turn into a witch-hunting jamboree, Jackson withdrew the UE's application. A *Montreal Star* report outlined the degree to which the mainstream of the labour movement was prepared to co-operate with Duplessis:

[Twelve] important labor leaders of the Montreal district, many of them representing unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and the Canadian Congress of Labor, had received summonses to appear before the Q. L. R. B. today. ... Most of the witnesses were ready to leave for Quebec last night with bulging brief cases filled with documents allegedly aligning the UE leaders with Communism.<sup>26</sup>

Duplessis then moved against the UE local at RCA. Jackson gave this account of how the IBEW did the company's dirty work:

The IBEW was called into the picture by the company and supplied with a complete mailing list of the employees (the company finally admitted to its complicity). When the IBEW failed to achieve more than half a dozen signed applications for membership, the attorney general, who was also premier of the province, intervened in the Labour Board Hearings.<sup>27</sup>

Among those who appeared before the board to denounce the UE were former CSU president Pat Sullivan and former UE representative Alex Welch. After nearly two days of hearings, the IBEW was certified to represent the RCA workers, even though it had no support in the plant.<sup>28</sup>

In 1954 the Duplessis government completed its legal assault on trade union rights. Bill 20 allowed the Labour Board to decertify any union engaged in, or threatening to call, a strike in the public sector. Bill 19 decertified unions with Communist leadership. Both laws were declared to

<sup>24</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all secretaries of Canadian Congress of Labour Local Unions and Council, 7 February 1951.

<sup>25</sup>*UE News*, 25 November 1951.

<sup>26</sup>*The Montreal Star*, 30 November 1951.

<sup>27</sup>NAC, UEC, Draft for speech to the UE international convention by C.S. Jackson, 22 July 1952.

<sup>28</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Millard, 20 October 1952.

be retroactive for the past ten years which allowed the Board to decertify unions for their past practices and leaders.<sup>29</sup>

Rather than viewing these laws as an assault on the fundamental rights of workers, the IUE regarded them as an organizing opportunity. The CCL was given advance notice of the legislation so that its members could capitalize on the decertification of left-wing unions. In the spring of 1953, the CCL's secretary wrote to James Carey to tip him off to what was coming.

We have received confidential information that it is probable that every local of the UE in the Province of Quebec will be decertified on the ground that the leaders of this Union are directly controlled by the Communist Party. ... Since you informed me that your international union would do something about the situation in the Province of Quebec, I am sending you a list of groups that will be affected by the contemplated action of the board.<sup>30</sup>

By the end of 1954 the UE had been driven out of Québec. To achieve this victory the IUE co-operated with one of the continent's most repressive governments, an unholy alliance not lost on Québec Labour Minister Antonio Barrette. According to the *Montreal Herald*, he claimed that the IUE could not have achieved its objective of ousting the UE without the complicity of the Quebec Labor Relations Board and the attorney-general. "In other words," the minister declared, "the United Electrical Workers could never have been ousted from Quebec's labor ranks by [the IUE leaders'] union alone."<sup>31</sup>

By the mid-1950s it was apparent that the UE, if it was to survive at all, would essentially be an Ontario union. In Québec, the collusion between the state and the social democratic unions, coupled with the UE's historic inability to sink roots into the Québécois working class, doomed Jackson's hopes of representing the entire electrical industry.

#### SECURITY CHECKS AND THE UE

The Cold War restricted Canadian independence in a number of unanticipated ways. The Korean War brought armaments contracts to Canada, but this work did not come without strings attached. Under American pressure, the Canadian government stipulated that employees doing defence-related work, which was given a broad interpretation, had to be given a security clearance. While the government had not insisted that employees who failed the security test be fired, that is what happened to an employee of aircraft

<sup>29</sup>Quinn, *The Union Nationale*, 94.

<sup>30</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 50.

<sup>31</sup>*Montreal Herald*, 4 March 1954.

manufacturer A.V. Roe in 1951. When the matter became public, the government indicated to employers that it merely wanted security risks transferred, not dismissed. Not surprisingly, the UE fell afoul of these regulations on a number of occasions.

In May 1950, Victor Walker, the president of UE Local 531 at the RCA-Victor plant in Montréal, was barred from the Engineering Products machine shop. From then on he was not to enter any section of the factory where "war or government work was done." The manager could give no reason for the decision. When Walker pointed out that he had worked for the company throughout World War II without incident, the manager said he felt that somebody had made a mistake, but there was nothing he could do. According to the *UE News* Walker had been questioned by government officials about his political beliefs.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in September, Bob Stevens, the secretary of UE Local 515 at CGE's Royce Works in Toronto, was transferred out of the transmitter division to the radio receiver division. The company claimed the transfer was undertaken "to comply with an instruction received on behalf of the Minister of Trade and Commerce [C.D. Howe] that Mr. Stevens is to be denied access to all classified work in connection with contracts for the Department of National Defense."<sup>33</sup> In response to UE complaints, Howe acknowledged that the workers were not "accused" of "any particular action or misdeed," but they would remain banned from war-related work.

The UE won an arbitration board ruling against the transferring of an employee in such cases. However, the arbitration board noted that if the company had not made the transfer the government could have cancelled the contract and many union members would have been laid off. At this point the UE allowed CGE to insert a clause into the contract which denied UE members the right to launch grievances that challenged government national security regulations.<sup>34</sup>

#### BROCKVILLE LOST

Given the UE's narrow margin of victory in 1950 the IUE concentrated its efforts on Brockville. The UE's local leadership was weak, divided, and lacked community support.<sup>35</sup> In the fall of 1952 the IUE campaign went into high gear with regular leaflets and radio broadcasts. Again the main feature of the campaign was anti-communism: "Now is your opportunity to help the boys in Korea; you can't do much to prevent the Russians helping the

<sup>32</sup>*UE News*, 2 June 1950.

<sup>33</sup>*UE News*, 6 September 1950.

<sup>34</sup>Whitaker and Marcuse, *Cold War Canada*, 355.

<sup>35</sup>NAC, UEC, W.R. Cambers, 2 May 1952.

North Koreans on the side over there; but you can do plenty to stop the UE from helping them over here."<sup>36</sup> The UE's Brockville leadership was complacent and recommended against responding to the IUE allegations; it was a decision that worried local union official William Chambers.

The situation is most difficult of assessment ... on the one hand our people insist that [the IUE] are not getting anywhere, on the other hand there is this new sharp position that we have got to go after them. This can only be taken as a reflection of some uneasiness. The IUE is hammering at the fact that the weak UE cannot win grievances.<sup>37</sup>

The vote took place in January 1953 and the IUE won 417 to 352. The battle for Brockville was not over, however. Phillips announced that it was selling a portion of its Brockville operation and building a new plant for the operations it was retaining. On the advice of its lawyer, David Lewis, the IUE reapplied for certification. The UE campaign was spirited and effective. In late June one organizer wrote optimistically that the UE had

50% of [the] plant signed up. In this there is no leeway for defections. IUE filed 557 old membership cards with 415 'reaffirmations' additional slips picked up between application and hearing to 450 with 10 questionable. Our present card count is 406 or 54 more than our previous vote. Employment figures however have advanced to 817 or an increase of 48.<sup>38</sup>

But the increase was not big enough and, as a result, the Labour Board reaffirmed the IUE's certification without ordering a vote. In 1954 the UE mounted a final campaign which the IUE won by 134 votes.<sup>39</sup>

Years later, Miller argued that the IUE strategy involved more than simple anti-Communism. In fact, he claimed that because Communists were being targetted during the Cold War they were not able to be effective unionists. However, he did acknowledge that red-baiting was at the heart of each campaign: "The issues were the same in each election. The communist issue — we figured that this was their vulnerable point and I was always taught that if you find a weak spot, you keep hammering away at it. We figured this was their weak spot and we hammered away at it."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 44

<sup>37</sup>NAC, UEC, W.R. Chambers, 31 October 1952.

<sup>38</sup>NAC, UEC, Doug Tyner to Russell, 26 June 1953.

<sup>39</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 47.

<sup>40</sup>Jim Turk interview with William Miller, 20 August 1979.

# PETERBOROUGH RETAINED

The Peterborough rematch followed a different script. There it was the IUE, not the UE, which suffered from leadership problems. "Rubber Joe" Mackenzie, so-named for his background with the United Rubberworkers, had been loaned to the IUE and found himself in a power struggle with Fitzpatrick. When Conroy told Mackenzie to leave, the local IUE committee sided with Mackenzie. Eventually, Fitzpatrick was sent back to Pittsburgh.<sup>41</sup>

Jackson and Sullivan retained responsibility for the Peterborough campaign. After the poor contract the UE settled for the previous year, the 1951 negotiations were crucial to the union's existence. On 1 February, the company proposed a three year contract that would eliminate guaranteed rates for piece work and allow for a reclassification of skilled trades. The UE membership rejected this by 97 per cent. The company, working with the IUE, was encouraging members to opt out of their dues checkoff to the UE. Jackson observed that this tactic amounted to an anti-union strike vote being conducted by the company.<sup>42</sup>

As the negotiations proceeded the UE found itself in a tight situation — the workers in the Toronto plants were prepared to strike, while the IUE had once more applied for certification in Peterborough. "With that application hanging over our heads in the midst of the negotiation, our bargaining power was seriously reduced, ... the problem of what would constitute an adequate settlement was made more difficult," Jackson wrote to Matles.

We were confronted with the necessity of agreeing to important departures from principle in this District in order to avoid being pushed into a position where we would be faced with either an illegal strike with uncertain support in Peterboro, or a long delay in waiting for conciliation which too might have worked in the interest of the IUE and a possible vote.

CGE tried to have Peterborough excluded from the negotiations, but the government backed the union. As a result, in late April the UE and CGE came to an agreement. The contract contained a cost-of-living bonus, an escalator clause, and, to everyone's surprise, the UE won a 12 per cent wage increase.<sup>43</sup> This pay hike was hailed as a tremendous victory and constituted the turning point for Jackson and the UE in Peterborough. As Jackson noted, the UE's

ability to come out with a contract settlement in itself was quite unexpected to a lot of Peterborough workers, including our own people. And then again, the amount

<sup>41</sup>Copp with Knipfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 32.

<sup>42</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 9 March 1951.

<sup>43</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 30 April 1951.



of the settlement, well above what the Company had offered IUE and had already put into effect for the non-union personnel, also came as a pleasant surprise to the Peterborough workers. The attendance of over 1700 at the ratification meeting was a good indication of that.<sup>44</sup>

Under such conditions a labour board vote was the last thing that the IUE wanted.

Jackson believed that just as in the previous IUE campaign there were serious irregularities in the union cards the IUE submitted. However, he did not think the UE would be able to get the individual workers to incriminate themselves.

We know that the IUE did not succeed in collecting \$1.00 from each of these people as required by the Labour Relations Act, but because the IUE over a period of several months of pressuring the workers in their homes and in the shop did get people to counter-sign a receipt saying they did pay a dollar, and at the same time in many cases telling them they would forget about the dollar, it has placed these workers in a very embarrassing position where, if called before a Board or a judge, they would have to admit their signature on the receipt, and then try to convince the judge that they had not paid.<sup>45</sup>

Jackson tried to neutralize the Church which, in this particular case, chose not to play a central role in the campaign.

In connection with the church, it should be remembered that the church went out on a limb about one year ago with the bishop calling for all-out support for the IUE. The church got quite a set-back on that, and we capitalized on that by sending a committee up to see the Monsigneur when the vote was announced. He was snarling and nasty but obviously was impressed by the confidence that our committee expressed for the UE victory. We took one simple position with him, namely, that the Catholics in the plant, of whom we had representatives on our committee, were going to vote UE regardless and that the church would only be facing another defeat by stepping into the picture.<sup>46</sup>

The vote on 25 June was not the two-to-one rout Jackson had predicted, but the UE won a victory that few would have foreseen a year earlier. The UE received the support of 1,909 union members compared to the 1,582 who voted for IUE. Morton blamed his defeat on the UE's success at the bargaining table.

<sup>44</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 25 June 1951.

<sup>45</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 25 May 1951.

<sup>46</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Matles, 25 June 1951.

There's no doubt that in my mind the greatest single factor that led to our losing the vote was the company signing with the UE for 17 to 20¢ wages increase. We had swung many GE workers to IUE on the grounds that UE was no longer a strong bargaining agent. Many of the workers felt that UE could not keep up wages in line with the cost of living.<sup>47</sup>

The fall of 1951 saw the start of yet another IUE campaign to capture Peterborough. While the union failed to collect enough cards to trigger a labour relations board vote, the campaign created considerable delays in the UE's negotiations with CGE. While the IUE carried on its activities in a desultory fashion, the UE was also plagued by inactivity during this period. The "general situation in the plant is dangerously quiet, and can be attributed in my opinion, to the lack of interest on the part of our Stewards and Officers. The card campaign re dues seizure is positively a failure to date. Out of approximately 3000 cards in the plant for a period of one week, less than 200 have been returned," Sullivan wrote to Jackson later that year.<sup>48</sup> But by early 1953, when Sullivan set about rebuilding the local once more, he reported that things were looking up: "The annually elected Stewards Council had made a profound improvement in the Union activities. In fact, in my opinion, it is the best Stewards Council we have had in the Local. We are making every effort to have the Council meetings properly conducted, and with an educational every week."<sup>49</sup> There was considerable debate among the IUE supporters in Peterborough as to whether or not a certification drive should be attempted in 1953.<sup>50</sup>

The phony war ended in the spring of 1953 when the IUE made another application for certification. Once again the UE questioned the legitimacy of the IUE application. Jackson wrote to all UE locals that the

task confronting the UE in Peterboro is therefore one of securing documentary evidence of the fraudulent nature of the IUE's application. We don't doubt that they have filed some 13[00] to 1400 cards and if that is so, then those cards are either complete forgeries or a re-use of cards signed more than a year ago.

On reporting the IUE application to your membership stress should be laid on the fact that this is a most fraudulent application and that it is the third time in four years that the IUE has made a fraudulent application.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 July 1980. Turk is reading from a letter from Morton to Carey.

<sup>48</sup>NAC, UEC, Report from Sullivan, 22 November 1952.

<sup>49</sup>NAC, UEC, Report from Sullivan, 23 January 1953.

<sup>50</sup>Copp with Knipsfel, *The IUE in Canada*, 60

<sup>51</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to all Locals, 28 March 1953.

On 4 May 1953, the Ontario Labour Relations Board dismissed the IUE application, ruling the union had failed to gain the support of 45 per cent of the potential membership. The struggle for Peterborough was all but over. In 1954 the IUE initiated a half-hearted effort, but it too ran out of steam long before an application could be made to the labour board.

#### OTHER FRONTS

While Peterborough and Brockville were the key theatres in the struggle between the UE and the IUE, the battle was not limited to these locations. In Toronto Jackson's opponents were hard core anti-communists; indeed, they were the same people who had tried to move the CGE local into the IBEW in the mid-1940s. This group supported the IUE but was never able to gain the support of more than about 200 members at any one time. In 1953 a Toronto-based business agent of the UE, John Osborne, quit the union to go and work for the IUE, but he was not able to pry any of the large locals loose. In Hamilton, where the UE's leadership was provided by Bill Walsh and Alf Ready, one or two IUE supporters won elections to positions such as chief steward, but the local leadership never wavered in its support for the UE.

Throughout this period the UE did not back away from unpopular causes. The *UE News* carried regular reports on the activities of left-wing peace campaigners like James Endicott and UE officers regularly attended Peace Congress conferences and international conferences of left-wing unionists. In 1951, Jackson wrote to Mine-Mill's Harvey Murphy and outlined the international issues he felt that radical unions should discuss with their membership. His letter, quoted at length below, demonstrates the ways in which left-wing unions attempted to balance larger political questions with the bread-and-butter concerns of the membership. It also shows Jackson displaying the same relentlessness with one of his political allies that he often exhibited in conflicts with social democratic union leaders.

Obviously the paramount issue is the issue of peace, and formulation of that question is most clearly set out in the reports from the Vienna Peace Conference. The issue of disarmament and trade becomes a key question in providing a focal point for the understanding and action of the trade unions and provides the bridge in more respects between the needs of the workers in those industries where unemployment is mounting and the fight for peace.

I don't think it is necessary for me to belabour the point that it is on this very issue that any differences which might exist between UE, Mine-Mill and Fur still find their sharpest expression. In the last meeting we had with Nels [Thibault] in Sudbury, there was an obvious hesitancy on his part to proceed with any formulation of a unity call, particularly in terms of how and if the peace issue should centre in

the statement. ... While it is probably true that your industry is one of those which would appear to batten on the war preparations, and therefore, is not at this time affected by unemployment, yet it seems to us that is all the more reason why there should be a clear-cut definitive position on the need for a peace-time economy.<sup>52</sup>

The ban-the-bomb campaign was one of the UE's most controversial initiatives. At the CGE Royce Works, where a right-wing faction was trying to use the security check issue to drive the UE out of the plant, it was explosive. According to UE member Phil Cunningham, these men circulated copies of the *UE News* with articles outlined in red ink and flagged as "Commie Propaganda." Cunningham alerted Jackson to what was going on and organized a group of ex-servicemen to oppose the IUE supporters.<sup>53</sup>

When the UE gave full support to the Canadian Peace Congress's ban-the-bomb campaign in the early 1950s, the Royce local nearly self-destructed. The union held a special meeting and Jackson attended. Cunningham's account of Jackson's performance provides a glimpse at the fine distinctions he was prepared to draw in preserving the union and maintaining its political objectives:

The meeting was packed and all the fireworks started. If we did not back off [from the Ban-the-Bomb campaign] they were going to get rid of the union. Jackson could see that and the union came first with Jack. Jackson's position was that we ban debate on the topic from our local indefinitely. Then he turned to a motion that had come up saying that the union should keep out of politics. He explained, 'The union is politics.' He went on to explain all the things that the right-wing connected with politics from unemployment straight on through.<sup>54</sup>

For strategic reasons Jackson was prepared to forego a CP-initiated campaign, but he was not prepared to categorically rule out such campaigns.

At other times Jackson pushed for greater UE involvement in political campaigns. For example, he took Emspak to task because the international union was not doing enough to promote the left-leaning World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). He argued that it "seems to us on this side of the line that it is of vital importance that the progressive sections of the trade union movement should have a uniform and strong public position on the question of the need for unity and growth of the WFTU as the major instrument for peace in this world today."<sup>55</sup> Emspak's reply was as negative as it was laconic: "The WFTU has never been a meaningful organization to

<sup>52</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson's report to the District council of the UE, 27 February 1954.

<sup>53</sup>Doug Smith interview with Phil Cunningham, 15 July 1992.

<sup>54</sup>Doug Smith interview with Phil Cunningham, 15 July 1992.

<sup>55</sup>NAC, UEC, C.S. Jackson to Emspak, 16 February 1949.

our membership. As a matter of fact I imagine most of them have never even heard of it. Should we now use this question as a point to take issue with the CIO, we would be on our weakest possible ground.”<sup>56</sup> Despite this, Jackson remained a staunch supporter of the Federation and in 1954 he attended its annual conference in Vienna.

#### STRANGE ENEMY

During the 1950s the UE leaders struggled with governments, employers, and the IUE. This is not surprising. But they also found themselves at odds with the leaders of the Communist Party. After the UE was suspended from the CIO, the leadership of the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) began to pressure Matles and Emspak to fold up the UE and turn its members over to the CIO. Party leaders believed it was important that the workers return to the mainstream of the labour movement. Emspak and Matles were not prepared to hand over their life’s work to people who had been vilifying them for the past decade. In rejecting the party position, Matles angrily noted that “the mainstream is a sewer.”<sup>57</sup> While Emspak and Matles still viewed themselves as Marxists, and were facing legal persecution for their involvement in the Party, their days as Communist Party loyalists were over. But the Party still enjoyed considerable support among the lower levels of UE leadership. Under the direction of the CPUSA in 1955, the presidents of 4 American districts, along with 30 staff members, left the UE and took 50,000 members with them. Some ended up in the IUE, some in the IBEW, and some the UAW.<sup>58</sup>

The Canadian UE leaders supported Matles and Emspak in this conflict. According to Jackson

it was resisted by the party leadership in Canada at that time. In part because we just simply told them that that’s not the course. We were in on some discussion with some of the Party people in the United States advising against the goddam thing. But the question of the role of the Communist Party in the trade union movement is the same as the role of any political party in the trade union movement, it doesn’t belong in a sense.<sup>59</sup>

At the same time that some of the Communist Party’s leading officials were calling for the UE to go back into the mainstream, one of the union’s staff representatives, Peter Hunter, broke with the Party and the UE because Jackson and Harris refused to chart such a course. Citing Lenin’s *Left-Wing*

<sup>56</sup>NAC, UEC, Emspak to C.S. Jackson, 3 March 1949.

<sup>57</sup>Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 231.

<sup>58</sup>Cochran, *Labor and Communism*, 293-6.

<sup>59</sup>Doug Smith interview with Norman Penner, 15 July 1992.

*Communism — An Infantile Disorder*, Hunter argued that the UE should seek re-admission to the CCL at all costs, even if it meant getting rid of Communist staff members like himself.<sup>60</sup> This led to a bitter clash between Hunter and Jackson. Hunter described Jackson as “high handed,” while Jackson saw Hunter as an “ineffective liberal” — an all-purpose epithet of Jackson’s.<sup>61</sup> At a later staff meeting they had a set-to. Unfortunately for Jackson, his long-time left and right hand men, Harris and Russell, declined to back him up. “I never forgave Harris and Russell for that,” he remembered bitterly. “They expected me to defend them against all kinds of crap, and they weren’t supporting me.”<sup>62</sup> By the end of 1955, Hunter had left both the UE and the CP. In his memoirs he spoke bitterly of his experiences with both, but acknowledged that the UE was a competently run union which fought diligently for its members.

#### WINNING THE COLD WAR

Why, when anti-communism was rampant in North America, when Canadian soldiers were fighting the Chinese army in Korea, did electrical workers prove to be so unresponsive to the IUE’s highly charged campaign? The answer to this question is multi-faceted. As noted above, the most powerful reason for UE members to stick with their union was the simple fact that Jackson, Harris, and Russell, ran an effective, aggressive trade union. In short, they delivered the goods.

By this time, people in our own union were able to start making comparisons between the degree of democracy, the struggles that this union carried on inside the plant on grievances and so on, with other unions because there were more people moving around from plant to plant during the higher employment periods. So that there was an exchange of experiences and we came out on top in most comparisons. We had a very firm base, an unshakable base, which none of the others could understand and so they would attribute it to the spellbinding ability of Harris or Jackson.<sup>63</sup>

Beyond that, Jackson thought there were three points that were key to the UE’s survival.

The first one, no dissension at all. That is the Achilles’ heel in every situation. Once you have dissension at the top, people are going to line up and your dissension is

<sup>60</sup>Peter Hunter, *Which side are you on boys: Canadian life on the left* (Toronto 1988), 171-2.

<sup>61</sup>Hunter, *Which side are you on boys*, 163.

<sup>62</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 15 July 1980.

<sup>63</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

bound to go right down into the ranks. Number two, we have been honest with our people right down the line. At no time could anyone prove otherwise. Number three, we have kept our people fully informed as no other group of workers in this North American continent has been kept informed, bar none.

The lack of public disagreement between the union's three leading officers was crucial. Often Jackson, Russell, and Harris would lock themselves into an office and conduct full-volume, table-thumping meetings. Once the door opened it was impossible for anyone to find out who had won and who had lost. Nor did they interfere in each other's areas of responsibility. "We had an unwritten rule that if two of the three agreed on anything that was it. If you were the odd man out, you still try to keep the discussion going until you can win a change of position. But externally we present a united front at all times."<sup>64</sup> Given Jackson's suspicions that Harris was plotting his removal from the union's leadership (if not betraying UE to the RCMP), it should not be surprising to discover that Jackson breached the rule of unanimity on occasion. In Jackson's opinion, Harris treated the union's executive board as a rubber stamp. Jackson often felt that Harris and Russell were trying to force Communist Party policies on the union.

The agreement was that we must always go into an executive board meeting completely in agreement. Many times I didn't agree with George's position but he had Russell's almost unquestioning support. ... We'd get to an executive meeting, George would read the minutes and the executive recommendations for discussion. As soon as we got into discussion, I'd open up. George would take a look at me, Ross would take a look at me, but I wanted to involve the executive in the discussions. I opened a dozen doors for the executive to become a meaningful executive. But I was under tremendous pressure from George and Ross not to do it.<sup>65</sup>

Equally important was the close contact the leaders maintained with the membership, even when the locals were headed by people who were trying to drive them out of the trade union movement.

In those years I don't think there was a membership meeting or a stewards meeting or a committee meeting of any kind that there wasn't one of the officers attending so that we were part of the whole team. The fact that the officers of the union have been personally known by the main leadership in the main sectors of the union, right down the line. We were no strangers. We went to meeting after meeting and never passed up a call to a meeting. We didn't even wait for calls most of the time, we were there.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 July 1980.

<sup>65</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 30 November 1980.

<sup>66</sup> Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.

While Jackson attended hundreds of local union meetings, he never tried to win friends by telling them what they wanted to hear. It was the strength of his argument, not personal relations, that he trusted to carry the day.

The reputation I have in the union is that I tell the facts bluntly that I don't try to con them, that I don't try to put anything over. I may be a little too crude but I put the facts and you either take them or lump them. You're getting advice anyway. On the other hand a lot of the people looked at George on the basis of 'well, George is going to con you.' He was a powerful orator, second to none in this country, no question about [it].<sup>67</sup>

The UE also provided members with many tangible examples that the leaders respected members and were concerned about their development beyond the workplace. Aside from the newspapers, leaflets, and endless rounds of meetings, the UE put a high premium on union educational and social activities. The UE made extensive use of the Workers Educational Association to deliver a variety of courses on trade unions, history, economics, and organizational life. UE members were sent to public speaking courses, some conducted at Lorne Greene's broadcasting school, put its members in contact with left-wing book clubs, and sponsored concerts by singers such as Pete Seeger.

The purges of leftists from other unions were a recruiting bonanza for the UE as well. Many skilled Communist trade unionists were put on UE staff. While IUE officials complained about the number of Communists working for the union, UE members received a very high level of service from these Communists. The IUE officials may also have been able to provide service of an equal quality, but many union members were not interested in taking the gamble.

It is also important to realize that while Communism may have been a liability, Communists themselves were not. The party had sent many of its young activists to work in UE plants and they, in turn, recruited militant workers into party clubs. These clubs played an important role in fending off the IUE, particularly in Toronto. Art Jenkyn was a young Communist tool-and-die maker working for Ferranti Electric in the early 1950s. He was in the front lines of the battle with the IUE. According to him:

The IUE failed because the UE's local leadership did a good job defending the day to day interests of the workers. I was known in the shop as a Communist but at that point I was not in the leadership of the union. The guys respected me as a worker in the shop. Local officers like Roy Holmes would fight for a worker's grievance like

<sup>67</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 22 August 1979.



a terrier. So the workers saw UE staff constantly defending them, as opposed to the IUE guys who were either cosying up to the bosses or playing no role at all.<sup>68</sup>

Jenkyn believed the party club members were the secret to the UE's survival. They were, he said, "the most dedicated and the most knowledgeable and in most respects the most capable."<sup>69</sup>

Finally, the IUE leadership must shoulder a good portion of the responsibility for their union's failure. While it would be foolish to accept Jackson's personal assessment of them, it is clear that they lacked the unity that made the UE leadership so strong. They could not put personal ambition aside; they were often as motivated by partisan concerns as a desire to provide electrical workers with an effective collective bargaining agent. The IUE's greatest success, Brockville, was in a community which was quite conservative and isolated from the district leadership. Furthermore, Miller was the most capable and effective of IUE leaders. Unfortunately for that union, its American leadership insisted that Morton, its most ineffective and ambitious leader, be placed in command in Canada.

The fact that the UE was shattered in the United States and driven from the house of labour in Canada meant it had to forge a new role for itself in the 1950s. The UE continued to fight for its members and make efforts to organize the unorganized, but its bargaining power had been limited. At the same time the electrical industry was on the verge of a number of changes that would transform the industry and ultimately reduce the number of Canadians it employed. In response to these pressures Jackson would attempt to carve out a larger political presence for the union.

<sup>68</sup>Doug Smith interview with Art Jenkyn, 17 July 1992.

<sup>69</sup>Doug Smith interview with Art Jenkyn, 17 July 1992.

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## 13 Ungentle Patriot

For the men and women who had joined the Communist Party in the Depression, the 1950s were a period of intense crisis. Many of those who stuck with the Party through the battering years of the early Cold War left in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev acknowledged that the Stalin years had been years of brutal repression and human waste. Khrushchev's invasion of Hungary convinced others that there were no immediate prospects for change. J.B. Salsberg, for example, dropped away from the Party to which he had devoted his life. Jackson and the other UE leaders, still engaged in a struggle for their union's survival, emerged from this period with their faith in the USSR intact. It was a time for charting new directions — they chose to make the UE one of the leading left-wing voices of an emergent English-Canadian nationalism.

In the UE's 1955 brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, which was headed by future Liberal cabinet minister Walter Gordon, Jackson offered one of the first laments for Canada:

Up [until 1947], Canada had been moving towards greater industrial maturity and nationhood, firmly based on increasing industrialization. The new policy [adopted by the King government in 1947] placed the emphasis on seeking to open wider United States markets for the raw and semi-finished products of our mines, forests and farms, exports that drain our country of vital natural resources that can never be replaced and that do not make full use of our equally valuable human resources....

We are most strongly of the opinion that this new line of policy must be reversed without delay. Carried to its logical conclusion, it would result in the de-industrialization of our country, the control of its economy by the United States in United States' interests, and the loss of Canadian nationhood.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle for sovereignty was a theme that ran through the rest of Jackson's career. Not only did the UE warn of the dangers presented by American control of the Canadian economy, but under Jackson's leadership it argued for a Canadian labour movement that would be independent of

<sup>1</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, December 1955.

the US-based unions and for greater political independence within the Canadian trade union movement.

Canada's branch-plant economy was the child of Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy which created high tariff walls to protect Canadian industry from international competition. The policy was successful, but not necessarily in the way its framers originally contemplated. American manufacturers established branch plants in Canada to serve both the Canadian market and, to a limited degree, the Imperial market. They provided employment and facilitated the country's industrialization, but this development came at a price. Canadian entrepreneurs were often unable to compete with branch plants, American tastes were imported into Canada, and most research and development was done in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Many Canadian academics felt the critics of American economic domination were exhibiting "small-town pettiness" and diverting the country into a "narrow and garbage-cluttered cul-de-sac."<sup>3</sup> However, there was no avoiding the fact that the benefits of American control of the Canadian economy were rapidly diminishing. For one thing, the money that Americans invested in Canada was no longer coming from the United States, but from the profits of the Canadian branch plants themselves. From 1957 to 1964, 73 per cent of US direct investment in Canadian manufacturing, mining, and petroleum was raised from retained earnings and depreciation reserves on their Canadian operations. Only 15 per cent came in the form of new funds from the United States. This figure was greatly exceeded by the amount that Canadian branch plants sent south of the border as royalties, dividend, and management fees. Canadians were financing their own exploitation.

Since 1948 Canada's economic strategy had been built upon a special relationship with the United States. As the American economy unravelled in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Washington called an end to all special relationships. In 1971, Richard Nixon imposed a ten per cent import surcharge designed to reduce exports to the United States. At the same time, he proclaimed a new tax regime, the Domestic International Sales Corporation, which encouraged American multi-nationals to export from their American operations, rather than from their branch plants. Such developments fed the left-wing nationalism of the Waffle movement in the New Democratic Party and later anti-free trade campaigns. Those move-

<sup>2</sup>James Laxer, "Canadian Manufacturing and U.S. Trade Policy," in Robert Laxer, ed., *Canada Ltd.: The Political Economy of Dependency* (Toronto 1973), 127.

<sup>3</sup>Harry Johnson quoted in Philip Resnick, *The Land of Cain: Class and Nationalism in English Canada, 1945-1975* (Vancouver 1977), 135.

ments had, however, been prefigured in the 1940s and 1950s by the work of the Communist Party and unionists like Jackson.

A number of factors contributed to Jackson's nationalism. One of the most important of these would be the political policies of the Canadian Communist Party. In a 1948 pamphlet entitled *Keep Canada Independent* Tim Buck attacked the Liberal government's economic policies for subordinating "both the immediate welfare and the national interests of Canadian people to the imperialistic aims and policies of United States finance-capital."<sup>4</sup> Throughout the 1950s Canadian Communists produced a variety of programs and documents that stressed the threat of American imperialism.

There was a great deal in Jackson's personal experience to confirm those views. While working at CIL, a branch plant corporation, he had seen the ways in which companies shifted losses and profits from one division to another. His time in the lumber camps and pulp mills of the Lakehead had exposed him to the perilous nature of resource-based economies. Large and often corrupt American corporations had wrung concessions out of governments, heedlessly stripped communities of natural resources, and then shut the mills down because of over-expansion. As UE leader, Jackson dealt with two of the world's largest corporations — General Electric and Westinghouse. While foreign control of Canadian industry in general was a political issue for Jackson, the foreign control of the Canadian electrical industry was very much a trade union issue. He recognized the importance of the electrical and electronics industry in modern economies and the need to have those industries domestically controlled.

Thus, the UE's brief to the Gordon Commission contained a prescient picture of the dangers of foreign ownership of a technologically-sophisticated secondary industry. The electrical industry was the country's most highly developed industry and one upon which its economic future depended. It provided relatively well-paying, skilled employment and there was a growing international demand for its products.<sup>5</sup> Foreign ownership prevented the industry from reaching its potential.

Beating the Science Council of Canada to the punch by fifteen years, Jackson said Canadian subsidiaries of US corporate giants were dependent on their parents for basic research, design, and engineering. The ownership pattern also meant that Canadian consumers had their tastes molded by American marketers; 70 per cent of the electrical imports to Canada in 1954 came from the US. He went on to argue that the American corporations could "skim the cream off the Canadian market through their newer models

<sup>4</sup>Tim Buck quoted in Penner, *Canadian Communism*, 229.

<sup>5</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, December 1955.

and high-pressure advertising, because United States-controlled firms in Canada generally tend to know about and favour United States-made equipment, and because the United States industry with its large home market can take full advantage of the economics of large-scale production."<sup>6</sup> The brief pointed out that Canada exported virtually none of the products of electrical industry.

We have approached the companies with which we have collective bargaining contracts many times on the question of seeking new markets abroad. Many of these companies, including the Canadian General Electric Company and the Canadian Westinghouse Company, have told us that their export policies are decided by their parent company in the United States. The parent company tells its Canadian subsidiary whether or not to bid on a particular export order. In other words, the Canadian companies are confined to the export of left-overs, to the orders that the parent company may be too busy to fill itself, and to the orders whose filling in Canada (because of special price, tax or tariff conditions) would contribute most to the over-all profit of the parent company chain.<sup>7</sup>

The brief called on the government to take a number of steps to Canadianize the electrical industry. These included encouraging research and the development of a parts industry in the electrical manufacturing field, reducing imports of finished electrical goods from the United States, making greater use of the legislation designed to prevent restrictive and monopolistic practices, and using tax laws to encourage greater Canadian capital participation and control of the industry. While it called for a Canadian-controlled industry, it did not explicitly call for the nationalization of CGE or Westinghouse.<sup>8</sup>

Gordon presented his *Preliminary Report* to the St. Laurent cabinet in 1956. He had personally concluded that the issue of foreign control of the economy was destined to become central in Canadian politics, but the report dealt with the issue in a tentative and cautious manner. It recognized there was "little evidence" that branch plants operated against the Canadian interest, but noted that "it is not axiomatic that this will always be the case."<sup>9</sup> The recommendations were equally mild-mannered; where possible, foreign-owned firms ought to employ Canadians in senior and technical

<sup>6</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, December 1955.

<sup>7</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, December 1955.

<sup>8</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America brief to the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, December 1955.

<sup>9</sup>Denis Smith, *Gentle Patriot: A Political Biography of Walter Gordon* (Edmonton 1973), 40-1.

positions, make their purchases in Canada, publish full details of their Canadian operations in their annual reports, and sell appreciable interest in their stock to Canadians. They were not mild-mannered enough to win the approval of the most senior member of the St. Laurent cabinet, C.D. Howe.<sup>10</sup> Howe viewed the Commission with distrust and dismissed the *Preliminary Report* with one word: "Bullshit!"<sup>11</sup>

The positions advanced by Jackson and the UE during the 1950s on questions of economic nationalism are notable when compared to the lack of interest paid to this subject by both the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Canadian Congress of Labour. Aside from Walter Gordon's mild-mannered report, much of the nationalist sentiment of this period in English Canada came from conservative thinkers such as Donald Creighton who believed that the Liberal Party was presiding over the "decline and fall of the British Empire-Commonwealth and the growth of a continentally organized North America."<sup>12</sup> The CCF rarely raised concerns over the growing influence of American investment in Canada. The party's 1956 Winnipeg Declaration did not address the issue, while Stanley Knowles' book *The New Party*, published in 1961, made but passing mention of it.<sup>13</sup>

The CCL's reluctance to address this issue is likely to have sprung both from the role international unions played in the Congress and also from the views of its longtime research director Eugene Forsey. He was a staunch defender of foreign investment in Canada. In preparing the Congress's brief for the Gordon Commission, he concluded that talk about the dangers of American ownership was "overdone."<sup>14</sup> In 1962 he wrote that "I have searched diligently and even eagerly for the horrors inflicted on Canada's economy by U.S. investment but have found none."<sup>15</sup>

In the 1980s, Forsey told essayist Charles Taylor that "his trade union position had made it unlikely he would ever argue against any investment which provided jobs for workers." He admitted that for him the question of economic nationalism was "a tricky subject. I've never gone into it

<sup>10</sup>Sylvia Bashevkin, *True Patriot Love: The Politics of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto 1991), 19.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe* (Toronto 1979), 320.

<sup>12</sup>Donald Creighton quoted in Robert Chodos, Eric Hamovitch, and Rae Murphy, *The Unmaking of Canada: The Hidden Theme in Canadian History since 1945* (Toronto 1991), 30.

<sup>13</sup>Stanley Knowles, *The New Party* (Toronto 1961), 52.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Taylor, *Radical Tories: The Conservative Agenda in Canada* (Toronto 1982), 117.

<sup>15</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, District Five Convention, 1962.

thoroughly. I've had other preoccupations. I'm certainly a perfervid nationalist in constitutional and cultural matters."<sup>16</sup>

#### FROM THE SEAWAY TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Aside from taking a nationalist position on the future of the electrical industry, the UE became deeply engaged in two political controversies which, at first blush, seem removed from the immediate concerns of electrical workers. One was the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the other was the development of the Columbia River in British Columbia.

From 1945 onwards the UE lobbied to have the Seaway built by the Canadian government. In the spring of 1954 it issued over ten thousand copies of *The St. Lawrence Seaway: It's Canada's river for Canada's future*. Written by UE research director Idele Wilson, it echoed the arguments of historian Donald Creighton and economist Harold Innis, both of whom saw the St. Lawrence River and Great Lake systems as the inspiration for, and the means to create, a transcontinental nation and economy. The UE leaflet took the position that the "completion of a great Canadian Seaway is our national dream. Like the transcontinental railway, it would bind Canada together economically and politically, and establish Canada as one of the great nations of the modern world." It was of equal importance to the UE that the Seaway would be coupled with the construction of a number of large hydro-electric generating stations. UE workers would build the turbines and Canadian consumers would buy UE-built appliances to run on the cheap electricity they generated.

While the Canadian government had committed itself to an all-Canadian project, it delayed taking any action. When Dwight Eisenhower was elected president in 1952 the American government proposed a joint project. Under this proposal the United States would contribute less than a third of the amount of money that Canada would contribute to the Seaway, would route a portion of the Seaway through the United States, and would have an equal say in the administration of the entire Seaway, even though most of the system ran through Canadian territory. Jackson argued that joint control of the Seaway would turn Canada into a Panama of the North.<sup>17</sup> Despite these objections the American proposals were accepted.

The Columbia River Treaty pitted the federal governments of both John Diefenbaker and Lester B. Pearson against British Columbia's Social Credit Premier W.A.C. Bennett. The dispute centred around which level of government was responsible for water and power treaties. The UE, with the

<sup>16</sup>Taylor, *Radical Tories*, 117.

<sup>17</sup>Lionel Chevrier, *The St. Lawrence Seaway* (Toronto 1959), 50.

support of a number of other unions, questioned the validity of the entire project.

The rapidly developing American Pacific Northwest was desperate for additional electrical power and the most obvious source was the Columbia River, which flows through the Kootenays in British Columbia before travelling through Oregon and Washington. If the Americans were to gain maximum power supplies and ease flooding problems, it was desirable that a number of reservoirs be constructed on the Canadian side of the border. The Americans were to pay \$64.4 million for flood protection and also were to provide British Columbia with one half of the power that was generated by the new dams on the American side of the of the border.

Jackson, following a plan that had been put forward by International Joint Commission chairman A.G.L. McNaughton, believed the electricity should be generated in Canada.<sup>18</sup> He said that the original "agreement is not designed to promote Canada's industrialization, but to relegate Canadians to the role of dam builders and water controllers for the benefit of United States development."<sup>19</sup> The UE poured considerable resources into a campaign that took place in a province where the union had virtually no members, all to no avail. Just as the Seaway was built as a joint Canadian-American venture, the Columbia River Treaty further integrated the Canadian and American economies.

In the early 1960s the UE also addressed other aspects of the Canadian national question. It campaigned for a transnational power grid and a nationally-owned natural gas pipeline. Its 1963 convention, for example, called for action on French-Canadian grievances. Jackson argued the Québécois had been oppressed by the terms of Confederation, and proposed a reworking of the Canadian constitution on the basis of equality between the country's two founding nations.<sup>20</sup> Arthur Anderson, the secretary of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, addressed the same convention. After hearing his presentation the union passed a resolution supporting aboriginal demands:

without loss of aboriginal, hereditary and occupancy rights established through time, ... we demand that the Liberal government fulfill its election promise of an Indian Claims Commission to assure full title to these aboriginal hereditary lands and rights, and

<sup>18</sup>David J. Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver 1983), 298.

<sup>19</sup>CSJ, personal files, Brief of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five on the Columbia River Treaty and Protocol submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, 24 April 1964.

<sup>20</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Convention Report, 1963.



Be it further resolved that we support the Indian Bands and the Eskimos in their rights, without interference by government departments or any outsider, to operate under their ancient laws and customs within the Bands, and on their reservations in the case of the Indians; and that we call on the government to provide, without strings attached, the required funds to assure health and decent conditions, adequate educational facilities commensurate with the needs and customs of these people, and in development of their resources for their own needs and enjoyment.<sup>21</sup>

The UE's sensitivity to French-Canadian nationalism had, it would appear, sensitized it to the question of self-determination in general.

From 1958 onwards Jackson's collaborator on the union's many briefs and policy documents was Eric Adams. A former federal civil servant, Adams was a member of the Canadian delegation to the Bretton Woods conference that established the International Monetary Fund and many believed that he was slated to become governor of the Bank of Canada.<sup>22</sup> His career was cut short when he was arrested in February 1946 and charged with being a member of the spy ring that had been identified by Gouzenko.

In coming to the conclusion that Adams was a "convinced communist," the Kellock-Taschereau Royal Commission noted that Adams's library was "literally full of Communist books, including such authors as Marx, Engels and Lenin."<sup>23</sup> Adams was defended by Joseph Sedgwick who argued that with the exception of the testimony of one witness the case against Adams was largely circumstantial. According to Sedgwick "Eric Adams got into the witness-box and he performed like a lion."<sup>24</sup> On the strength of his testimony — and the circumstantial nature of the government's case — Adams was acquitted.

Adams became an economic and engineering consultant. After Idele Wilson left the UE in 1958, he worked almost full-time for the UE, although he was never placed on staff. He provided his services on a consulting basis, even though he had an office in the UE headquarters. Like the UE officers, he never charged more than the going rate for UE members. In 1969 he was charging as little as six dollars an hour; even though he worked for the UE into the late 1970s, he never charged more than ten dollars an hour.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Convention Report, 1963.

<sup>22</sup>June Callwood, *Emma: The True Story of Canada's Unlikely Spy* (Toronto 1984), 212.

<sup>23</sup>Jack Batten, *Lawyers* (Toronto 1985), 238.

<sup>24</sup>Batten, *Lawyers*, 251.

<sup>25</sup>CSJ, personal files, undated videotape interview with Eric Adams.

## FOR AN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

When the Waffle, a left-wing caucus with the NDP, raised concerns about American control of the Canadian economy in the early 1970s it was promptly batted down by the leaders of American-based unions who believed the less said about foreign control of businesses the better. The Steelworker's Larry Sefton argued that, "nationalism has never put a penny in a worker's pocket and it never will. Nationalism has never rallied the workers to anything but the trenches for conflicts between the races of people on the earth."<sup>26</sup> While there is more than a kernel of truth in that assessment, the international union leaders also knew that questions about international control of Canadian corporations could not but lead to an examination of international control of Canadian unions. As early as 1963 Jackson had warned that a "rebellion is brewing in the ranks of Canadian labour against the degrading relationship they now have with U.S. unions. The demand for autonomy is being raised as never before and it will not be satisfied by words, but only by deeds."<sup>27</sup>

Jackson was well aware of the role American unions played, and had not played, in the creation of Canada's industrial union movement. District Five, for example, had depended on the international union for funding for much of its first decade. Jackson had always enjoyed cordial relations with Emspak and Matles. The Cold War also had a peculiarly liberating impact on the UE since Canadian UE members were denied entry into the US, while the Canadian government refused to let American UE leaders into Canada. To deal with this, the international office of the UE granted Jackson more autonomy than other leaders of the Canadian divisions of American-based unions enjoyed.

At the UE's 1963 convention the union adopted a resolution asserting the Canadian district's right to secede. Matles, who was finally allowed into Canada, told the delegates he had nothing against the district having the right of secession, adding that during the height of the McCarthy period he and Emspak had toyed with moving the union headquarters to Canada.<sup>28</sup>

Jackson believed that the internationals stifled democracy within their Canadian affiliates and within the Congress. In addition, they often imported Cold War policies and rhetoric from the United States. This, he felt, was destructive to the long-term interests of Canadian workers because the "road from cold war collaboration on the part of the main body of the trade

<sup>26</sup>Laxer, *Canada's Union*, 119.

<sup>27</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Convention Proceedings, 1963.

<sup>28</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Convention Proceedings, 1963.

union leadership, with its red-baiting, its purges, its capitulations, has, as we have already stated, led directly into the swamp of new laws to hamstringing and frustrate the labour movement."<sup>29</sup> Jackson and others pointed out that numerous international unions wielded so much power over their Canadian sections that Canadian workers could not vote on their own contracts nor could they elect their union's senior officers. The nationalism of Canadian workers also sprang from the fact that American unions were becoming increasingly supportive of protectionist measures. It was galling for the Canadian members of international unions to see their American international leaders promote policies that would move their jobs south of the border.

↪ Jackson argued not for a severing of the affiliation between the Canadian and American union movements, but for granting greater Canadian autonomy. As a result Jackson did not seek to link the UE with the various independent left-wing unions which had either been expelled from the TLC and AFL or had been created by left-wing unionists who had been fired from international unions. In 1953 the UE and the Canadian Textile Council, which was headed up by Kent Rowley with whom Jackson had been interned, organized a conference of independent Canadian unions, representing over 100,000 workers, in Hamilton. Rowley wished to see the creation of a new national trade union centre. Jackson and other Communist trade union leaders believed that such a move would only serve to further splinter the labour movement.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the conference issued a call for a single national trade union centre. Jackson argued that the Canadian Labour Congress, created in 1956, could become such an organization. In 1958, the UE passed a resolution stating its determination to join the CLC, but the Cold War had to get a lot cooler before that could happen.

Commencing in 1968 Jackson and Harris pressed their case for admittance. They were successful in getting a number of provincial federations to pass resolutions supporting the UE's membership. The Congress leadership maintained that the UE would have to affiliate with another union before it would be admitted. At the same time a reconciliation between the UE and the IUE was underway. IUE leader George Hutchens had spoke at the Edmonton CLC convention in favour of the UE's membership. He then addressed a UE convention, while Jackson addressed an IUE gathering. After that the UE and the IUE began to co-ordinate their bargaining strategy.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District Five Convention Proceedings, 1959.

<sup>30</sup>Rick Salutin, *Kent Rowley — The Organizer: A Canadian Union Life* (Toronto 1980), 89-90.

<sup>31</sup>CSJ, personal files, speech by C.S. Jackson to the UE National School, 27 February 1978.

In 1972, the UE was readmitted to the Congress, along with another Communist-led union, the United Fisherman's Union. At the time, Kent Rowley's Confederation of Canadian Unions was making considerable strides. Congress officials feared that if the Communist-led unions were not let back in they would join the CCU.

It was not surprising that nationalism dominated the first CLC convention to which the UE sent delegates in 1974. The new leaders of the opposition in the labour movement were from the public sector. They included people such as Canadian Union of Public Employees President, and one-time UE employee, Grace Hartman. While the sort of floor fight that Jackson would have hungered for was avoided when a backroom deal was cut, the conference marked the beginning of the Canadianization of the CLC. When at the beginning of the 1980s the building trades unions were expelled from the CLC, it was for failing to meet the Congress standards of Canadian autonomy.

Unlike Walter Gordon, Jackson was no gentle patriot. Nor is there much indication that his nationalist arguments fell on anything other than deaf ears during the 1950s and 1960s. There are no consolation prizes for being ahead of one's time, as Jackson —along with other members of the Communist Party— appear to have been on this issue. But if at the end of the 20th century it is becoming increasingly difficult to imagine an independent Canadian community, it is partially because the issues Jackson championed turned out to be lost causes. And, to his credit, Jackson was never so naive as to place his country's future in C.D. Howe's hands.

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## 14 1955-1980

1955 does not mark even the half-way point in Jackson's career as the UE's Canadian president. He was to hold that position for another 25 years, a period which was as full of incident as the previous 18. There were strikes, organizing drives, internal conflicts, and political campaigns. Jackson attempted to carve out a political role for the union as a critical independent voice in the Canadian labour movement. However, the UE had been marginalized. When the UE returned to the CLC Jackson was again able to deliver speeches attacking the Congress leaders and their political policies, but this time the opposition was being led by the public-sector unions, particularly the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. While it had survived the IUE's raids and was the dominant union in its industry, that industry itself was in decline and the UE membership was stagnant. Despite articulating some spirited criticisms of the coming deindustrialization of the electrical industry, Jackson was not able to protect UE members from the process. Finally, the UE leadership, which had withstood the assaults of the state, employers, and mainstream political leaders for more than three decades succumbed to their own political mortality.

### AN INDEPENDENT UNION

After winning the initial wars with the International Union of Electrical Workers in the early 1950s, UE membership levelled off at between 20,000 to 25,000. Maintaining that level was to prove difficult as employment in the industry entered a steep decline as the decade progressed. Jackson's skills as a negotiator were an important element in the union's continued survival. In 1959 he reported that the UE had "not fallen behind either individual unions or the movement generally in the matter of economic gains and contract protections. Indeed, the past twelve months have shown that in major negotiations, for example Westinghouse, the total economic gains exceeded those made in the auto industry and in basic steel."<sup>1</sup> A 1961

<sup>1</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1959.

survey of industrial contracts conducted by *Canada Labour Views* concluded the UE had won five of the eight highest labour rates that year.<sup>2</sup> By 1960 the bulk of the membership was protected by comprehensive welfare plans, including hospital, medical, sick benefit, life insurance, and pensions. The gains the UE negotiated were limited by both the existence of an alternate union, the internal strife the IUE continued to generate, and the weakness of the electrical sector itself. While the UE won significant contract gains, its members were not as well-paid as those in the automotive and steel industries.

As well, managers were becoming adept at manipulating the certification procedure; indeed, in 1959, unions won only 45 per cent of the labour board votes held in Ontario, down 23 per cent from 1956-57.<sup>3</sup> In 1958, for example, the UE signed up 64 of 65 employees of a small electrical plant. The company delayed the vote until the following summer. After the union won the election, the company laid off 34 workers and defeated the union in a new election.<sup>4</sup> But the UE's problem was not simply the recalcitrance of small employers. When the UE applied for certification for the Westinghouse Service Department, the company transferred all the employees to non-union branches and contracted out the department's work.<sup>5</sup> With Maurice Duplessis's death in 1959 the UE attempted to re-enter Québec. The union did establish itself in Montréal, but an organizing campaign failed to break into that city's Northern Electric plant.

The early 1960s marked the beginning of the runaway-shop phenomenon. The runaway shops of the 1960s did not run very far, usually just far enough that the Ontario Labour Relations Board would rule that the union contract did not apply to the new plant. When the Globelite Battery Company announced it was moving from Kingston to Toronto, the UE responded with a wild-cat strike and forced the company to recognize the union contract in the new plant. Both the International Silver and General Steel Wares companies moved their operations to rural Ontario without fulfilling any obligations to the UE. The Amalgamated Electric Company laid off 188 workers and moved their operations to Markham, Ontario.<sup>6</sup> Upon moving to Markham, the company hired local residents at \$1.05 per hour for females and \$1.30 for males — rates that had been in effect at the

<sup>2</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1961.

<sup>3</sup>*Globe and Mail*, 30 September 1959.

<sup>4</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1959.

<sup>5</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1958.

<sup>6</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1963.

Toronto location 12 years previously. In the mid-1960s, Amalgamated Electric and Globelite provoked strikes which they subsequently broke.<sup>7</sup> Strikes, particularly for first contracts, could lead to total defeat.

We'd just organized the plant. They had a big corporate lawyer and he was forcing us to go on strike. They were out about a week. The ranks were looking pretty weak. Looked to me like come Monday they would be split. About half of them would go back and you'd have the other half on the picket line for how long you don't know. Victimization and everything. I called a meeting on Saturday to discuss the question. It was just split right down the middle. I sent them back to work without a contract.

I've done that on a couple of occasions when in my judgement the workers were going to take a goddamn kicking. I am not out to see a bunch of workers victimized when it has all the ear-marks of a lost strike. My position has always been: what's the best interest at that time of those people?<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, with the addition of a set of radical social and foreign policies and the problems created by raiding and red-baiting, the UE of the late 1950s was consumed with the same problems that beset other industrial unions of the period. In the 1960s it had to deal with many of the consequences that arose from the way it accommodated itself to the post-war system of labour regulation.

#### OLD LEFT MEETS NEW LEFT

A standard theme in the history of the Canadian labour movement is that the 1950s was a period of not only political housecleaning, represented by the expulsion of the Communist-led unions, but of housebreaking, as a militant union movement was tamed by a rising standard of living and a narrowed focus on bread-and-butter concerns.<sup>9</sup> As bargaining centred on wages and benefits, employers were accorded all significant management rights. It was a regime of rules and regulations; unions became bureaucracies and policed their members to provide employers with a reliable workforce in exchange for a healthy wage packet. Shop-floor revolt was strangled by a web of grievance rules and regulations. The UE was not immune to this process. By developing a dedicated and skilled union staff Jackson unintentionally encouraged these developments. By 1960, he was starting to worry about the union's internal quiescence.

<sup>7</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Report, 1966.

<sup>8</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 January 1981.

<sup>9</sup>Roberts and Bullen, "A Heritage of Hope and Struggle," 125.

Looking back over previous conventions, I can't help but feel that this convention was slightly different. There didn't seem to be the same vigour in the presentations at the mike. ... We have all, in one way or another, succumbed to the legalisms that have been adopted as a matter of policy by the leadership of the Canadian trade union movement. We have lost, in some respects the instantaneous reaction in an active way to the problems that confront us from day to day.<sup>10</sup>

Much of this was challenged in the 1960s when a new generation of workers entered the workforce. The baby boomers only knew of the Depression from their parents' stories; they were unaware of the challenges that the industrial workers of the 1930s and 1940s faced to build the union movement. As inflation hit the Canadian economy in the 1960s, thousands of workers showed they were prepared to question authority, including the authority of their union leaders. In 1965-66 there were 369 wild-cat strikes in Canada. The following year saw a record number of strikes and a record number of Canadian workers out on the picket lines. These strikes were lengthy and often violent.

In its briefs to government inquiries examining the "labour problem" the UE attacked the way courts freely dispensed anti-picketing injunctions and questioned the need for compulsory arbitration before a union could strike. Jackson called for an end to the ban on strikes during a contract, saying this was necessary because governments were refusing to legislate meaningful restrictions on the introduction of technological change.<sup>11</sup> Jackson and Harris had hoped to make reductions in the hours of work and control over the introduction of automation key elements in UE bargaining in the early 1960s. But they concluded that the CGE and Westinghouse membership was not prepared to strike over the issue.<sup>12</sup>

The wild-cat movement gave Jackson some uneasy moments; no matter how radical his commitments, he recognized that the UE was as tightly woven into the industrial relations web as any business union. In 1967, he asked the young militants to demonstrate patience, arguing that

while we can understand the impatience of the younger workers in industry today, and can agree in essence with their anti-authoritarian outlook, we also must ask of them that they give some important weight to the history of their union and the labour movement, and learn from the experiences of those who have grown up in different times and under different conditions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, 24th Annual Convention, 3-6 November 1960.

<sup>11</sup>CSJ, personal files, Submission to the Royal Commission Inquiry into Labour Disputes by the United Electrical Workers of America, January 1967.

<sup>12</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Convention Reports, 1963 and 1964.

<sup>13</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the UE Convention, 1967.



That was the year the strike wave hit the UE. The production workers at Canadian General Electric went out on strike for the first time and they were followed by the Westinghouse production workers. The CGE strike involved over 8,000 workers in 16 plants scattered across 6 communities. The strike lasted 3 weeks, cost the union over \$500,000 in strike pay, and was prolonged by CGE's inability to bargain on a number of issues without getting approval from its corporate parent in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

For its size the union had fewer strikes than most industrial unions, particularly involving its key employers, General Electric and Westinghouse. Jackson rejected the argument that this meant the UE was less militant than other unions. He believed this case was borne out by the union's success at the bargaining table and the leadership's support of shop-floor action. According to Jackson, there were numerous illegal stoppages at CGE along with a strong steward organization which policed the contract.

We counselled the workers that if they kept up a stoppage too long or if they go beyond a certain point, they're on unknown ground. So we told them when they had better take a look at the warning signals. We had to warn them more often than we liked to about illegal strike legislation and what could happen. I don't doubt that had a bit of dampening effect on some militancy on some occasions. That was a fact of life.

... Our position has been that you're not settling any grievances merely by procedure, you're settling grievances when the boss knows bloody well that he's going to have production stopped if he doesn't settle this thing.<sup>15</sup>

Jackson could be tough in dealing with wild-cats. Union staff representative Bill Woodbeck recalled how one group of workers, who he and Jackson felt were "pretending to be super militant," organized wild-cats at the Peterborough CGE plant. CGE threatened to discharge 59 workers if the strike did not end immediately. According to Woodbeck,

Jackson said, 'You are going to have to get those people to go back to work.' I said, 'Forget it. I told these people they were in trouble. I am not going to stand up in front of 2500 people and tell them they have to go back to work. They will boo me right off the stage.'

Jackson said, 'What is the right thing to do?' I said, 'There is no question that the right thing to do is to tell them to go back to work.' 'And you are not going to do it?' I told him that it made me mad. He said 'It makes us all mad but we have to do these things even if you do not want to.'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the UE Convention, 1967.

<sup>15</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 January 1981.

<sup>16</sup>Doug Smith interview with Bill Woodbeck, 15 July 1992.

Jackson found himself in a delicate position when the Westinghouse membership chose to go out on strike against his advice in 1978. "As we moved up to the day I spent two hours with the committee and I warned them. I said, 'The dangers are looming up in this situation. This company is ready to take us on. I don't like this one. I think we should pass it up.'"<sup>17</sup> At a negotiating session a company representative virtually dared the union to strike. Reports of such provocation so angered the membership that it refused to ratify a proposed settlement. After four months on strike it took Jackson five hours to get the negotiating committee to recommend an offer which had been rejected at the strike's start.

Jackson was not above brinkmanship. In the 1970s Westinghouse was attempting to sell its Canadian appliance division to White Consolidated and it desperately wanted to avoid labour strife. Jackson discovered that the new presidents of Westinghouse Canada, Westinghouse America, and the White Industries were all meeting in Toronto at the same time that the UE was bargaining with Westinghouse. Even though the company had just presented a rich offer, Jackson put on a show. He denounced the proposal and the company officials, then stormed out of the meeting.

I said to the negotiating team, 'Let's get going, let's get back to the workers. We've got to get the workers out tomorrow morning. We've got to pull that bloody shop. We've got to have the maximum pressure on this company.' The committee just stood there shivering. But when I get going, I'm pretty powerful. I said, 'Every one of you get on the phone, get hold of the steward you're responsible for. You tell the stewards that every one of those stewards has got to be at the union office tomorrow morning at eight o'clock.' This was at about ten o'clock at night.

The plant was shutdown immediately. Before the weekend was over, Jackson moved a panicked Westinghouse from 54¢ an hour to 80¢.<sup>18</sup> While such victories were sweet, they were not without their political price. In 1975 the federal government introduced a wage control regime designed to curb the bargaining table successes of unions like the UE. It was a severe test for the CLC.

#### BACK IN THE CLC

Following the energy crisis of the early 1970s, Western economies were hit with a combination of inflation and stagnating economies, or stagflation. Unions battled for ten per cent a year wage increases just to maintain their members' living standards. The post-war labour accord was coming un-

<sup>17</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 January 1981.

<sup>18</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 1 December 1980.

glued and governments were more than happy to let unions take the rap. In October 1975, Pierre Trudeau brought in a system of wage and price controls to be administered by an Anti-Inflation Board (AIB). Fully 93 per cent of UE members had their wages controlled by the AIB. CGE workers, who struck for a month in 1974, found their increases rolled back by 40 to 58¢ an hour.

The Canadian Labour Congress responded to the AIB with a great deal of bluster, but little action. Congress leaders believed they had to embark in a new political direction. Phenomenally, they called for greater co-operation with the government which had just kicked the labour movement in the shins.<sup>19</sup> Delegates to the CLC's 1976 convention were presented with "Labour's Manifesto for Canada" which made the case for tripartism — a strategy of increased co-operation among unions, government, and corporations.

This was grist for Jackson's political mill. He argued that the manifesto made no sense in terms of the real state of relations between labour and the federal government and it undercut the membership's determination to oppose wage controls.

Leadership preoccupation with chasing the illusion of a business-labour partnership has defused the working-class struggle against wage controls and the effects of the economic crisis — a struggle that promised so much up to the country-wide work stoppage on October 14, 1976. The chase for 'partnership' became a leadership ambition for collaborative deals with boss and government, and the trade union membership were not called upon for mass involvement to carry the struggle forward for their needs. Since October 14, 1976, the fight against wage controls, and the effects of the economic crisis, has been sacrificed to the totally unattainable concept of tripartite partnership, while in all this period wage controls have been rigidly enforced,<sup>20</sup> prices have escalated wildly, and the economic crisis has deepened.

Time had not mellowed Jackson's attitudes towards social democrats in the labour movement. In 1977 he claimed that the Ontario Federation of Labour's policies "essentially took the 800,000 OFL members out of the fight on jobs and inflation and reduced them to spectators while the NDP played at politics, and presented as the only solution to the economic problems the election of an NDP government."<sup>21</sup> While the UE returned to play an oppositional role within the CLC, often working with the new public sector

<sup>19</sup>CSJ, personal files, Discussion Paper on the Manifesto for the Think In of the Executive Committee of the Canadian Labour Congress, 7-8 December 1976.

<sup>20</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the UE Convention, 1978.

<sup>21</sup>CSJ, personal files, Report to the 1977 Ontario Federation of Labour Convention, n.d.

unions, it found itself in an increasingly desperate battle to stop the erosion of the Canadian electrical industry throughout the 1970s.

#### THE DECLINE OF THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY IN CANADA

The 1960s were a pivotal decade for the Canadian electrical industry. New home entertainment technologies were sweeping the world; the computer was starting to make its mark; electrical consumption and generation were rising annually. An industry based on electrical products possessed a golden future. But that future was not to be played out in Canada.

In some cases American corporations returned production from international branch plants to American plants. Others moved production to so-called Third World countries, where authoritarian governments helped to keep unions in line and labour costs low. The large multinational corporations that dominated the electrical industry carved up world markets and world labour forces amongst themselves.

A UE study prepared the year before Jackson's retirement presented a doleful accounting. While there were still 130,000 people employed in the industry, this represented a loss of 26,000 jobs since 1974. Imports of electrical products were equal to 75 per cent of domestic production. The industry had a trade deficit of \$2.5 billion in 1977 and 70 per cent of the industry was now in foreign hands.<sup>22</sup> The multinationals were deeply embedded into the Canadian economic and social establishment. Officers and directors of CGE, Westinghouse Canada, and Northern Telecom sat as executive members and directors on the board of four of the country's largest banks, four of the largest trust companies, a dozen major manufacturing concerns, ten major insurance companies, a number of investment companies, and two of Canada's major holding companies — Argus and Power Corporation.<sup>23</sup> Their links were world-wide — General Electric controlled the operations of more than 300 subsidiaries in over 30 countries around the world. At the same time, GE and Westinghouse had developed links with their supposed international competitors.<sup>24</sup>

Jackson believed that multinational corporations were a "higher stage of development of the system and they have refined all the methods of exploitation used in previous stages and added some new ones." As a result

<sup>22</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Brief to the government of Canada on an industrial strategy for Canada with particular reference to the electrical industry, October 1979.

<sup>23</sup>CSJ, personal files, UE brief to the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration, 1976.

<sup>24</sup>CSJ, personal files, UE Brief to the Government of Canada on the Electrical Industry, 1970.

electrical workers saw their incomes and futures diminished as the power of multinationals grew.

Product lines have been eliminated as far as manufacture in this country is concerned and the domestic market for that product is supplied from either a factory in the home country of the multinational parent (economies of scale) or more usually a foreign subsidiary of the parent firm located in a country where labour costs are cheaper. Deals have been made between the corporations on allocation of production and markets. ... In appliance manufacture, factories have been shut down and workers dismissed with little or no warning. Heavy apparatus production has been severely curtailed in this country. Cutbacks have been made in the manufacture of propulsion equipment for large generators with loss of jobs.

Multinationals control the development of technology and where it is to be applied. Internal pricing policies and inter-company charges within the multinational corporate empire make it simple to hide profits generated in any particular country. Higher charges for royalties or parts can be levied or earnings retained for the purpose of increasing ownership. This makes it difficult, if not impossible in many cases, for unions to refute the inability-to-pay arguments of subsidiary companies. A further drawback to the public is that government cannot collect full taxes (even at favourable rates) from the corporations that operate this way within their jurisdictions.<sup>25</sup>

For the Canadian electronics industry rationalization simply meant that Canadians were consigned to manufacturing a limited number of components until they became obsolete or could be manufactured more cheaply elsewhere. In the late 1960s and early 1970s electrical jobs started disappearing at a tremendous rate. Between 1969-1971 Westinghouse Canada closed its Grimsby, Ontario, electronic tube plant and its cathode ray tube operations in Hamilton. CGE shutdown its Toronto electronic tube facility at the Dufferin Street works and its cathode ray tube plant in Rexdale. Production of home electronic products in Canada came to an end. In most cases these jobs were ended as soon as the products created by new technologies could be imported from foreign, low-wage sources.<sup>26</sup>

Jackson regularly urged the government to regulate the electronics industry and to establish Crown corporations to do the research and manufacturing that the private sector was refusing to undertake. Jackson

<sup>25</sup>CSJ, personal files, The Impact on workers in manufacturing prepared by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5 for the World Conference on Multinational Corporations, Toronto, Ontario, 14-16 November 1975.

<sup>26</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Submission to the government of Canada on measures necessary to maintain electronic tube production and a comprehensive independent electronics industry in Canada, 13 May 1970.

argued that the government should establish a Crown computer utility that would be free to those using it for scientific and educational purposes. "A utility of this type should be set up to provide for easy access by the public to socially useful information retrieval and computation services." Such an east-west computer grid would, like the national railway or the CBC, serve to keep the country out of the cultural orbit of the United States, he argued.<sup>27</sup>

Just as the multinationals withdrew from Canadian production for the home entertainment industry, they wound down the heavy electrical equipment industry. In 1968, Westinghouse announced it was terminating the production of water-wheel generators in Canada. That same year CGE, which had purchased and modernized the John Inglis turbine plant in Scarborough, Ontario in 1965, made public its plans to phase out turbine production altogether. Work that CGE was contracted to do for Ontario Hydro was carried out at renovated American GE plants.<sup>28</sup>

The runaway-shop movement continued into the 1970s. It was a localized version of what was happening to the electrical industry in the United States. In the 1950s General Electric decided to decentralize its operations; Westinghouse followed suit shortly afterwards. By 1961, General Electric had 170 plants in 134 cities across the United States. And while it retained a presence in the North East, it was now located on the West Coast and in the South.<sup>29</sup> In the late 1970s, Jackson and the UE fought a rearguard action when Westinghouse attempted to decentralize a portion of its Hamilton operation.

Following a 1978 strike, Westinghouse management moved its switch-gear operations to three different rural Ontario locations —Mount Forest, Perth, and Alliston. Documents that Westinghouse was forced to submit to the labour board provide insight into the decision making process of a modern corporation. The five main criteria used to determine where the new plants would be located made it clear that Westinghouse was determined not to deal with a union, and particularly determined not to deal with the UE. The ideal location was in a community more than 40 miles from Hamilton, London, and Port Colborne (all cities where Westinghouse had been unionized by the UE), where less than 50 per cent of the population was unionized, and no local residents were organized by either the UE or the IUE. The labour board concluded that this "company was not estab-

<sup>27</sup>CSJ, personal files, Synopsis of a submission to the government of Canada on the present status and future of the Canadian Electrical Manufacturing Industry (1971), United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, May 1971.

<sup>28</sup>CSJ, personal files, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, District 5, Brief on the Economy and the Electrical Industry, 1970. .

<sup>29</sup>Schatz, *The Electrical Workers*, 235.

lishing a new operation but relocating a unionized one." It ruled that Westinghouse would have to move any employee who wanted to be moved, and had to maintain his or her salary and benefits. But it did not extend the UE contract to the new plants.<sup>30</sup> Jackson noted that this development was a

new gambit for multinationals. Instead of having large-scale multi-product plants, requiring a stable workforce, Westinghouse is setting what might be termed 'disposable' plants, breaking down the skills and re-locating in union-free rural areas, so that if the company decided to discontinue a certain product line, because they are not reaping the maximum profit demanded by its foreign owners, it can simply close out, move way, and not be saddled with severance pay, pension benefits, and other job security measures for its dispossessed workers.<sup>31</sup>

With a few elaborations this process that Jackson described in 1980 has expanded internationally and is known now as globalization.

#### TOWARDS RETIREMENT

By 1976 Jackson had been leading the UE for 39 years. The other three figures in the union's leadership — Harris, Russell, and Paré — had all been with the union for three decades; it was time to prepare for a renewal of the union's leadership. They agreed that one officer would resign at the end of each coming year until all four had been replaced. Ross Russell did not seek re-election as the union's director of organization in 1976. He was replaced by Val Bjarnason, a long-time UE staff member.

The rest of the transition did not take place according to plan. Vice-President Jean Paré was stricken with cancer and passed away in the summer of 1977. Throat cancer robbed Harris of his tremendous oratorical skills; he withdrew from union activities and died within weeks of the union's 1978 convention.<sup>32</sup> Bjarnason moved into Harris's position and Art Jenkyn took over as director of organization. Osvaldo Nunez, a Chilean refugee, took over as vice-president.<sup>33</sup>

In the fall of 1979 the UE's national officers sent out a letter announcing Jackson's intention not to seek re-election. The executive recommended

<sup>30</sup>CSJ, personal files, Ontario Labour Relations Board Decision, 28 April 1980.

<sup>31</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the UE Convention, 1980.

<sup>32</sup>CSJ, personal files, statement by C.S. Jackson, n.d. There is an allusion in Jackson's notes that in 1968-1970 there was an effort to replace some of the officers and bring the union into the USWA.

<sup>33</sup>Nunez was elected to the Canadian Parliament in 1993 as a representative of the Bloc Québécois.

that Dick Barry, a UE staff representative in Hamilton, become the new president. Barry had worked for the union for fourteen years, having come out of the West Plant of Westinghouse. He had worked on the campaign to organize the Westinghouse salaried staff and had conducted their negotiations. "While having strong views of his own on policy, and tactical approaches to issues, we feel he will also be a good team worker with his fellow officers, the staff, and the membership, and that he has many of the qualities and capabilities we feel to be a vital factor in the choosing of a new leader," the UE executive wrote to the local presidents and secretaries.<sup>34</sup>

Fittingly, Jackson's departure from the union leadership was marked with a conflict with the Peterborough local. The local executive objected to the officers' decision to endorse any candidate for president.

We feel a very serious error has been made on your part, an error that if not corrected may very well lead to a precedent, a precedent that once established and in place could then be used as the policy and accepted procedure for all elections at conventions in the years ahead. We have had and still do a certain percentage of our members who honestly believe that they have no choice in who will be their national officers. Your actions and letter will only serve to add fuel to the forces of discontent and confirm in their minds that the only input they have is their right to pay union dues and hold a union card.<sup>35</sup>

Jackson responded, as he always had, in kind. He accused the Peterborough executive of trying to split the UE. "These forces see in the disappearance of the older officers, an opportunity to create divisions within the UE and are working daily at it, seeking out disgruntled or opportunistic elements within the union. At the same time they suggest that the UE disappear by merging with another union."<sup>36</sup>

The 1980 convention marked the end of Jackson's career. He was present at the UE's creation, helped build it during the war years, guided its political direction, fought and won the battles of the Cold War, and witnessed the union's return to the mainstream labour movement. Even in this, his last convention report, he did not pull any punches. He struck many of the themes that had dominated his career with the UE. He criticized the NDP's performance in the 1980 federal election, chiding the party for its reliance on Madison Avenue tactics. "The NDP orientation toward currying favour with the middle-class betrays either one of two things. It either shows their ignorance of the forces that motivate our society or their fear of a united, militant, active labour movement." He touted a popular front strategy

<sup>34</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.S. Jackson and UE national officers to the Presidents and Secretaries of all UE locals, 16 October 1979.

<sup>35</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.M. Leal to Val Bjarnason, 13 November 1979.

<sup>36</sup>CSJ, personal files, C.S. Jackson to Peterborough Local of the UE, n.d.



which completely ignored the decades-long collapse of the Communist Party (the NDP's collapse having yet to begin): "Canada desperately needs an alliance of organizations along with the NDP and the Communist Party of Canada and, in our view, it is incumbent on the organized labour movement to take the initiative and be the catalyst in seeing that such a coalition comes into being." He harkened back to warnings he had been delivering 25 years earlier about the future of Canadian independence.

Canada is in serious danger of losing its place among the leading industrial nations of the world through de-industrialization. This is so because we have a branch-plant economy that is in the tight grip of U.S. multinational control and dictation. This can only spell disaster for Canada's working people, and it need not be.

In 1978-79, every hour of the day, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year, an average of \$100,000 was exported from Canada from profits, made here by US-based firms. They have, in truth, taken over Canada with our own money.<sup>37</sup>

It was a fighting, and fitting, end. While he skirted some bitter truths, he flung down some accurate assessments of the problems facing Canadian labour. He may have hung on to power for too long; given his ego, he found it hard to believe anyone could replace him. But if he held on too long it was also because his grasp on so many issues of importance to Canadian workers — and his commitment to them — was so strong. Strong grips leave their marks and Jackson's marked many of the achievements and the failings of Communism and the Canadian labour movement.

<sup>37</sup>CSJ, personal files, Minutes of the UE Convention, 1980.

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## 15 Jackpot 1980 to 1993

During the 1950s, the UE decried the amount of money flowing out of the country to the Irish Sweepstakes and other foreign lotteries and urged the federal government to establish a national lottery. The money raised by this government venture into legalized gambling could be used to support a national health-care system. It was not until the 1970s that governments moved into the lottery business, but when they did, Jackson was a regular customer. In 1979, a few months before he was to retire, he came across a Lotto 649 ticket which had been sitting in a drawer for several weeks. He gave it to his wife Mary to check out the next time she went shopping. "When she came back she said 'Well, you won,'" Jackson recalled.<sup>1</sup> At 73 years of age Jackson had, quite unexpectedly, become a millionaire. He split the money with his wife, and then distributed gifts of \$20,000 to each of his children and other family members. Many of the political causes and movements he had supported over the years also received generous donations. He then set about building his dream house.

He and Mary had already purchased a small cottage on an acre-and-a-half of land on Lake Huron near Coldwater, Ontario. Prior to winning the lottery, Jackson had sold his house; he and Mary were living in an apartment on Mary's salary, putting aside his modest UE pension to build a retirement fund. The lottery windfall allowed them to completely renovate and expand the cottage, adding two 80 foot wings. Jackson paid to have a road and a number of other local improvements done, which improved the quality of life for most of the people in the community.

Jackson was seeking a return to the Loon Lake years. As his daughter noted, he was in many ways a country boy at heart, an observation confirmed by Neil Young, who felt Jackson was happiest when he was in the bush chopping down a tree.<sup>2</sup> He also had the opportunity to indulge his passion for canoeing and eventually achieved his goal of having canoed in every province and territory in Canada.

<sup>1</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 20 July 1992.

<sup>2</sup>Doug Smith interview with Neil Young, 19 August 1992.

Jackson moved to the cottage with the intention of writing his memoirs. Shortly before his retirement he was approached by University of Toronto sociologist Jim Turk, who was interested in doing a study of how the UE had survived the Cold War. The two men conducted many hours of interviews over a two-year period. Before Turk completed his research, Dick Barry asked him if he could recommend any graduate students who might be interested in taking over as the UE's research director. Turk, who was eager to get out of the academy and into the labour movement, said he would be interested in taking on the job. Once he was on the job at the UE, he never had the opportunity to complete his work on the union's history.

For his part Jackson discovered that without regular access to the union's records it was impossible for him to make headway on his memoirs, although he did reorganize his files. He entered into a series of frustrating relationships with co-authors, none of whom measured up to Jackson's standards — either in their politics or their ability to understand the importance of his role in the history of Canadian labour. While several different biographies, autobiographies, and histories of the UE were begun, none was ever completed to Jackson's satisfaction. He also began to worry that he was being written out of the union's history. He felt that Barry did not draw on his expertise or provide him with the respect that as the union's founder he thought was his due. He took to saying that Barry was treating him like a "non-person." Even worse, he said he had heard that Barry had joined the New Democratic Party. By the end of 1992, Jackson had to confront the fact that he would outlive the UE; the union he helped give life to was preparing to merge with the CAW.

Jackson's personal life continued on its uneven keel. Mary was far more social than he was and arranged a number of large family gatherings at Coldwater. Jackson would pay to have his children and other family members flown in. He and his daughter Betty continued to grow closer, but he remained estranged from his sons. It was only at one of these family gatherings that Betty Dyck met her half-brother, Tom Jackson.

The rural life was short-lived. Mary had a heart condition which grew more difficult over the years. In November 1986 they sold the cottage and moved to Toronto. On 26 December 1986, she died of a heart attack.<sup>3</sup> In 1988 Jackson moved to Whiterock, British Columbia where he made another unsuccessful attempt at writing a biography. During this period his health began to deteriorate, although he demonstrated considerable strength and resilience as he recuperated from a variety of encounters with the health-care system. In the summer of 1990 he asked Betty if she would mind his moving to Winnipeg. A soft-spoken and caring woman, who had written a number of books, including a biography of a Saskatchewan CCF

<sup>3</sup>*UE News*, 14 January 1987.

politician, Betty tried, with some success, to provide her father with something he had little sense of for most of his life — family.<sup>4</sup> “I think he has realized what he missed. He has seen his great grandchildren from babies up. It is very difficult for him to interact with them but he is learning and he is enjoying it,” she recalled. Which does not mean she ignored, or approved, of his overbearing nature: “You do not have political discussions with dad, you get a lecture. He is very strong in his views and does not like to hear any others. John [her husband] can have a discussion with him, with difficulty. I have found I do not need the confrontation. I have tried over the years to develop a relationship and politics is not a subject to discuss with him.”<sup>5</sup> In 1992, the family was struck by another tragedy, when Jackson’s oldest son Robert, who had never enjoyed a good relationship with his father, died of cancer.

Betty’s son Greg was one of those people towards whom Jackson expressed affection in his final years. At Jackson’s family memorial service, Greg Dyck recalled how when he first moved to Winnipeg, Jackson was suspicious of the hospitality that his family showed him. “He kept looking for the angles of why we were doing this for him. He seemed frustrated by our lack of interest in his wealth and had to admit that we cared for him for reasons other than money.”<sup>6</sup> Greg also recalled that his grandfather read every day and “prided himself that if he read nothing else during the day, he at least read the *Globe and Mail* from front to back.”<sup>7</sup> A series of strokes impaired Jackson’s memory and his ability to read for any length of time, but he continued to pay close attention to the world around him, subscribing to a wide range of periodicals, reading many current political books, and watching a considerable amount of television news. One last attempt at a biography left him more frustrated than ever because he realized that no one would be able to write his story the way he envisioned it. He slowly lost his powers of speech, memory, and sight. He told Greg, “Don’t ever get old.”<sup>8</sup>

To the end, Jackson remained a harsh critic of many of the people with whom he was associated. He suspected one of his closest colleagues of having been a spy, while categorizing the other as “not very bright.” He described many of the men and women he worked with as undependable or weak. He even expressed regret at splitting his lottery winnings with his wife, since she left her share of the money to her family when she died.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Betty L. Dyck, *Running to Beat Hell: a biography of A.M. (Sandy) Nicholson* (Regina 1988).

<sup>5</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 20 July 1992.

<sup>6</sup>CSJ, personal papers, Greg Dyck, eulogy, 7 July 1993.

<sup>7</sup>CSJ, personal papers, Greg Dyck, eulogy, 7 July 1993.

<sup>8</sup>CSJ, personal papers, Greg Dyck, eulogy, 7 July 1993.

<sup>9</sup>Doug Smith interview with C.S. Jackson, 20 July 1992.

According to Betty, "I think his whole outlook on life [was] negative. The one positive thing in his life was his union presidency, and now that he is not in charge of the union, he has difficulty coming to terms with himself."<sup>10</sup>

On 5 July 1993 Jackson died of heart failure following a massive stroke. Greg Dyck gave the eulogy; in it he quoted from a number of letters from his grandfather that showed that his youthful spirit of continuous questioning, coupled with a union leader's self-confident hectoring, continued up until his final days. In one such letter, Jackson told his deeply religious grandson that

You are young yet, you are questioning, put your faith in yourself and ultimately in your fellow men and women who everywhere in the world, in different forms, languages, etc., are seeking peace and brotherhood which will only come through the understanding and appreciation of the fact that we people are interdependent and that goes for people and their environment.

Look at what is being done to people by power groups — look what raping of our environment is committed everywhere, every hour, by the same groups.

Whatever you are told, ask who benefits from that line or position — dig, dig for answers!! They are there to be found.

I hope I have provoked your curiosity and deepened your determination to keeping asking why. I still do.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of the 20th century the struggles of a Canadian labour leader's life may seem evanescent. In Jackson's case, his union disappeared, the industry which it sought to organize was largely eviscerated in this country, and the nation's economic and political sovereignty and unity are still at risk (Jackson is entitled to a hearty "I told you so" on this score). The Communist movement with which he identified has come apart, while the Canadian labour movement is split (indeed the splits of the 1990s, Steel versus Auto, mirror the splits of the 1940s and are characterized by a level of destructive rhetoric which is all too sadly reminiscent of the past). But institutions come and go, compared to other radical trade unions the UE had a long run of it.

But aside from ensuring the union's survival, what impact did Jackson and the other UE leaders have on the union's membership? While the majority of electrical workers were not prepared to reject their leaders because they were Communists, only a very small minority of UE members ever joined the Communist Party. With all their speeches, position papers, and resolutions, did the UE leaders politicize their members? What were the results of so many years of struggle and turmoil? This is how Jackson attempted to assess his political legacy:

<sup>10</sup>Doug Smith interview with Betty Dyck, 25 August 1992.

<sup>11</sup>CSJ, personal papers, Greg Dyck, eulogy, 7 July 1993.

It's a nice question as to what you mean by politicized. That's the whole question. If by being politicized you mean 'Did workers come to understand their role as a citizen in a democracy?' which is a fairly important political step, then I'd say you still have to give a lot of credit to the UE in both the United States and Canada. The involvement of the membership at the political level, in fighting for their needs is unparalleled in any other organization both in the United States and Canada. So what degree of politicization, if you can use the term, are we talking about? If we're talking about whether we have developed a socialist coterie that is prepared to stand out against one and all as the propagators of the socialist ideology, that's asking for miracles in terms that a small group in a huge bloody sea of non-ideological people. Because you can't say for instance that the American people have an ideology. It is purely a pragmatic approach. It is a capitalist approach in the sense that they accept private enterprise and the right of every person to stand on somebody else's face to get ahead. But, is it an ideology in the theoretical sense? I wouldn't say so.

I say the UE in Canada has been far more outspoken in terms of socialism, in terms of the class struggle, than they dared to be in the United States. They could not have carried those people if they had been as outspoken as we, because they could have been slaughtered in the process because of the greater power of the media and the corporation in the United States. In Canada we did not face the same concerted power against us. I am quite satisfied that we have done a very good job within the milieu to bring forward numbers of people to a better understanding of what rights they have or should have and how it is possible to go about insuring them and advancing them.

I don't think there is any particular relationship in North America between the way people vote and political convictions because I don't think people have political convictions of substance. They don't have an ideology. It's amorphous. So bloody amorphous that you can't say it is an ideology. It is those terms that I say that I think we made a basic contribution to the democratization, if you want, of an important number of people. We played a role equal to that of any political organization, in keeping large section of the workers with their eye on the ball, where the hell they stand as a bloody working class.

It manifested itself in terms of their militancy. Militancy in collective bargaining. It did in terms of their readiness to confront the spokesmen of big business in parliament in delegations. I would say we exposed a thousand or more people to the mechanism of government, how capricious and without substance it can be, and certainly you can't wipe that out as having no effect.

The opposition attempted to use all of our left policies to destroy us. They failed to do so. Therefore there was acceptance in the broadest sense of the membership for the policies and practices of this union. That isn't to say that in the same numbers, there was an understanding and complete acceptance of our policies but there was an acceptance of the fact that this union speaks the language of the working man and speaks for the working man. They weren't allowed to forget for one bloody minute that the boss is the enemy, that he is of the enemy class and that the government is with the boss as a part of that class.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Jim Turk interview with C.S. Jackson, 16 January 1981.

This assessment displays many of Jackson's strengths and weaknesses. Weakness in his unapologetic acknowledgement that the UE's policies came from the top and were, at best, "accepted" by the members rather than being reflections of their views; strength in his determination that UE members keep their eye on the political and economic ball. Through a life of discipline, sacrifice, and indulgence, Jackson never dropped his guard. A lonely, intelligent, and egotistical man, Jackson was the Communist union leader best prepared to lead his members through the Cold War years. That he was only briefly an official Party member or the fact that he would bristle at the thought of being identified as a Cold Warrior is a commentary on the contradictions of the time he lived through. Those Canadians who believe these contradictions are easily overcome must pay close attention to the lives of people such as Jackson. They contain lessons and warnings for those of us who come after.

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# COLD WARRIOR

## C.S. Jackson and the United Electrical Workers

### TROUBLEMAKER!



*"Please permit me to call your attention to the activities of one C.S. Jackson, who is undoubtedly one of the most active trouble makers and labour racketeers in Canada today."*

C.D. HOWE,  
MINISTER OF MUNITIONS AND  
SUPPLY, 1941.

*"I am told that all who were present were communists. Jackson, who did much of the speaking, was interned for three years during the war. Also one or two others were interned. One had just been dismissed from a position in a Labour Union. All had very dour and bitter countenances. I thought Jackson very skillful."*

MACKENZIE KING,  
PRIME MINISTER, 1945.

C.S. Jackson was the labour leader that the establishment loved to hate. Tough, intelligent, courageous, and incorruptible, he was one of the founders of industrial unionism in Canada in the 1930s. He served as the head of the Canadian division of the United Electrical Workers for 43 years. During that time he battled with some of the world's largest corporations, with powerful politicians who had him interned, and with most of the leadership of the Canadian labour movement.

Long-associated with the Communist Party, Jackson and the UE were victimized by the Cold War, expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour, and subjected to red-baiting raids conducted by unions under a more moderate political leadership. But in the Cold War, which disfigured both Canadian society and the Canadian labour movement, he gave as good as he got. This biography demonstrates that Jackson thrived on conflict and challenge and rarely shrank from a confrontation – in either his public or his private life.

Making extensive use of interviews conducted with Jackson and his associates, it provides an intimate portrayal of one of the most controversial and successful radical labour leaders in Canadian history.

Doug Smith is a Winnipeg writer and researcher. He is the author of *"We are workers just like you": The 1990 Manitoba Home-Care Strike; Let Us Rise! an illustrated history of the Manitoba labour movement; Joe Zuken: Citizen and Socialist; and An Injury to All: A history of the occupational health and safety movement in Manitoba*. He is the co-author of *Lives in the Public Service: A history of the Manitoba Government Employees' Union* and *All that's made of Wood: The story of Local 343 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners*.

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