Proletarian Publics:

Leftist and Labour Print in Canada, 1930-1939

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines a selection of print materials from the radical and Communist-affiliated Left in the 1930s, a group and time period that are often passed over in assessments of Canadian literature. While similar texts have been studied in the context of legal evidence or political propaganda, they have rarely been considered as print objects in themselves, operating within a network of production, circulation, and response alongside other literary and non-literary media. In looking at the 1930s, a moment when the project of Canada was acutely challenged by the political and economic forces of the Great Depression, I see an equal challenge to scholars and critics by writers and readers struggling to organize from below. By considering examples of Canadian proletarian print from different points along the communication cycle, this project seeks to connect the imaginary aspirations and rhetorical strategies of these texts to the material contexts of their producers and readers. Chapter One addresses the existing gap in Canadian literary history, which maintains a liberal orientation throughout its associated institutions, approaches and subjects; this orientation has been upheld through political and legal structures hostile to proletarian movements. This chapter discusses Ronald Liversedge's *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek* as a text that

highlights and crosses such institutional boundaries. Chapter Two takes up the methods of book history, using the example of the "Worker's Pamphlet Series" to discuss expanding this approach to include material such as pamphlets, periodicals, and manifestos as part of an explicit class analysis. Chapter Three analyzes the self-reflexive circulation of proletarian print in the restrictive legal environment created by Section 98 of the Criminal Code through materials produced by the Canadian Labour Defense League. Chapter Four examines surveillant readings and misreadings as they intercept proletarian print, using the Edmonton Hunger March and the subsequent pamphlet "The Alberta Hunger-March." By mapping locations associated with this event and with the print economy in 1932 Edmonton, Chapter Five considers the formation of proletarian publics as highly localized interpretive communities, and how the application of tools such as GIS mapping might further re-center readers' material lives in the analysis of print culture. As a whole, this dissertation demonstrates how the methods of analysis and historicization offered by book history can and should be applied to bring proletarian print and readers into conversation with the wider patterns of Canadian writing through the twentieth century. This is a necessary confrontation: as the study of Canadian literature begins to acknowledge the construction and contestation of our national myths, it must also avow the lasting political consequences for those who have been excluded.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Andrea Hasenbank. Some portions of this thesis have been published previously in peer-reviewed journals and collections.

Chapter One was published as "The Proletarian Thirties and Canadian Literary History." in Harol, Corrinne and Mark Simpson, Eds. *Literary/Liberal Entanglements: Toward a Literary History for the Twenty-First Century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. I am the sole author of the chapter, and I thank Dr. Harol and Dr. Simpson for their editing work on this chapter and collection.

Portions of Chapter Three were published in "Assembly Lines: Researching Radical Print Networks." *English Studies in Canada* 41.1 (Spring 2015): 129-153. I am the sole author of the article, and I thank Dr. Paul Hjartarson and Dr. Hannah McGregor for their editing work on this article and issue.

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The mapping in Chapter Five grew out of the "Geographical Information Systems in the Digital Humanities" seminar taught by Dr. Ian Gregory at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria in June, 2014.

Early versions of much of this work were presented at various Canadian academic conferences. I wish to thank organizers, panel members, moderators, and members of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers, the Canadian Historical Association, the Bibliographic Society of Canada, and the Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures for their comments and feedback.

Dedication

To my father, Ron Hasenbank, and my mother, Arlene Hasenbank, whose work made all this possible.

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Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

"The ethical needs of the present determine…how the past is to be read."
Alec McHoul[1]

There are two good ways to read decades-old pamphlets and periodicals.

The first is by the carefully guarded path to the special collections library and archival repositories. As a scholarly initiate, I feel the privilege of entering into these beautiful spaces, controlled for temperature and light, perfectly quiet, designed for monk-like scrutiny of texts and other artifacts. I recognize the training and the immense amount of time staff have devoted to reviewing, cataloguing, preserving, and displaying things deemed to be worth saving by academic professionals. I am able to deploy my own set of skills, honed in the same disciplines, to read and write in ways conversant with these same professionals. I

[1] *Semiotic Investigations* 12.

am aware, too, of the institutional power of these places, often named for luminaries and infused with significant public funding alongside the contributions of private donors. All of these names bear weight. When I am reading some select texts, often in restricted rooms and under watchful eyes, I am also made aware of the looming power of the state to seize, frame, and cull these materials, and potentially me, too, if the reading poses enough of a threat.

The second is far less predictable. This is when I come across something unexpected, when the textual encounter interjects into the path of my everyday life. This happens sometimes when I am in small towns, poking around in the drawers of antique shops. It has happened when I was helping to clear out a shed and came across a stack of print far older than me or the shed's owner. Sometimes texts are stuck to other things and found when sifting through files, or they are wedged between the covers of books shelved in a store basement, catching my eye as a bright streak against faded borders. I find these texts in some of the same ways they might have found their original readers, as part of work or leisure activities, as an interruption rather than an intention. In these moments, I am no less of a reader than when I am at the desk in Special Collections. Without details of provenance or the frame of a finding aid, I can still recognize these pamphlets and periodicals where they are. They have different meaning to me than those imagined other readers might have made of them, but they remain legible.

The work of this dissertation is to hold these two acts of reading together, and to consider the politics that shape how these acts are understood and valued. I

have chosen to examine periodicals and ephemeral print—such as political pamphlets, handbills, newsletters, and posters—in order to achieve a clearer, more grounded understanding of the role of print in developing and mobilizing political action in western Canada. This research moves away from the traditional institutional/organizational narrative of working-class politics and into a more diffuse understanding of the shifting populations (including different ethnic and linguistic groups), audiences, technologies, and historical encounters that have continually reconfigured Canada. It is a re-orientation of history—the literary and the more broadly public—as well as a refocusing of critical discussion on readers and mass audiences rather than on producers, made possible by an emphasis on material concerns, as they shape the production and circulation of print, and as they form the conditions under which that print was used and understood. In my work, this becomes a consideration of how different ideas about public life, shared values, and the politics of resistance collided during the interwar period, and how, by their transmission and circulation through print, these ideas created the possibility of a proletarian public in Canada.

In looking at the 1930s, a moment when the project of Canada was acutely challenged by the political and economic forces of the Great Depression, I see an equal challenge to scholars and critics by writers and readers struggling to organize from below. The idea of the proletarian as an acutely class-conscious mode of political understanding and organization among working and non-working people is intimately connected to the material and the time period addressed by my

research. The frank language of resistance and revolution expressed in the pamphlets and periodicals of the 1930s has never been closer to the surface of public discourse in Canada: the power and the potential envisioned by these movements is utterly captivating to me. Historian Ian McKay has identified three key periods, or "formations," of the Left in Canada (see Rebels, Reds, and Radicals). "Left" in this sense is defined by an articulation of resistance against the dominant modes of power; in this, it overlaps with working-class movements, but is not equal to them. The first of these dates from 1900-1920, ending with the Winnipeg General Strike and its aftermath. In this period, leftist resistance focuses on questions of evolutionary transformation through existing institutional structures. The second formation, saturated by the impact of the criminalization of radical political activities, dates from 1920-1939, incorporating the Third Period of the Communist International. This formation is focused on questions of revolutionary praxis, and, in Canada, it is vocalized by protest against the restrictive criminal and immigration laws that circumscribed Communist activity. The third formation, which lacks a clean divide from the second, dates from 1932-1960, and takes up the questions of unity and reform at the heart of both the antifascist Popular Front and social democracy more broadly. The material I am considering falls mainly into McKay's second formation, in the interwar period. This was a significant time for the entrenchment of the Canadian state, which occupied itself with setting up many of the institutional forms that would

concentrate political, economic, and cultural power through much of the twentieth century—forms which are now again being challenged.

My project is one rooted in the material ground of print history, and in language as it was spoken, written, used, and understood by people in their everyday lives. In Western Canada especially, that language is inflected by foreign tongues and carried on the lips of waves of newcomers struggling to be heard among traditional authorities and against distant centres of power. The impacts of immigration, of industrial and resource expansion, of warfare and state intervention, and of a nationalism struggling to define itself, mark the ways in which people could, and did, express themselves and continue to colour our interpretation of them today. The texts that remain are inextricably tied to the communities that produced them; my work is equally linked to the local and the regional.

This body of material, to the extent it has been examined at all, has been used as a supplement to documentary history, rather than as a complex interlocutor with other forms of text and media. It appears largely in organizational or party histories, where pamphlets or related periodicals are mined as primary sources for dates, names, events, and locations. I have used pamphlets and other sample texts in a similar a way, tracking and dating particular objects by referencing them against one another. I have also found it useful to set pamphlets against other sources of historical record, such as the RCMP surveillance briefs collected by Greg Kealey and Reg Whitaker, to uncover information about writers,

publishers, distributors, and other agents that was otherwise suppressed during the publication period. I will not deny the value of pamphlets as sources of such evidence; however, they offer a critically rich resource to literary scholars as well. Proletarian print should also be read for how its effects are structured in language, how particular texts make use of style, allusion, and reference, and how they invoke particular audiences of readers. The first step for a more complete textual analysis has already been laid, in terms of identifying and cataloguing the range of material, by bibliographers such as Peter Weinrich. The work of this dissertation extends the reach of this documentation by historicizing these texts as specific print objects, used and read by real, working people.

The methodologies of book history, particularly the communications circuit developed first by Robert Darnton and expanded upon by Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, are instrumental in linking bibliography with a nuanced application of class analysis. The communications circuit re-figures a print object as the manifestation of a network of social relationships, giving primacy to the material embodiment of a text rather than its abstract message. In beginning with a concrete object and proceeding to understand its form and meaning as the residue of a number of intersecting processes, from production to circulation to use, Darnton, Adams, and Barker treat the book in much the same way as Marx treats generic commodities. At core, the communications circuit examines the labour involved at the different points of print production. The circuit reveals the print object not as the creation of an author disseminated to a reader, but as the

product of multiple workers, under varying influences, acting in historically specific circumstances. Throughout this work, I will mainly refer to a "print object" rather than a "book," as I apply the communications circuit to non-book ephemeral print. This is not always a smooth transfer of terms, as a "book" has a different valuation than a pamphlet within the discipline. Mass-circulated and disposable print has not typically borne a great deal of symbolic capital; this may be read very much as the inflection of class on criticism.

I have given particular attention to the material markers of these texts, such as size, paper quality, appearance, price, illustrations, layout and contents, and indications of later use or notation as a way of tracking the text within particular networks. These markers are often seen as extra-textual, falling into categories of what Gerard Genette terms the "paratext" or "peritext." Genette's analysis of the paratexts of a print object is valuable for considering the intertextual and social networks of the Canadian Left. Much of my bibliographic analysis has involved a hunt through lists of print and other texts within any given pamphlet, as I begin to outline participants within a particular political formation. For texts with little to no critical background, and very limited bibliographic identity in the traditional sense (author, publisher, place), material markers offer a way in—a way of connecting to other known entitites, or at the very least, a way of sorting them into a taxonomy for deeper analysis.

My consideration of the material elements of pamphlets is due to the influence of archival factors, as described above. I have interacted with the texts I

discuss in one of three ways: by finding and purchasing it for my own collection; by scanning through microfilm; or by visiting one of the few archival collections that contain it, rather than reading disembodied, edited, or extracted text. As such, material markers appear as catalogue data, noting size, material, and location. Critical consideration of ephemeral proletarian texts is too dependent on the luck of collection, while isolating them from their co-circulating materials, the circumstances of their readership, and even the space of their reading. What was once a productive, circulating object becomes reified.

There are several critics whose work can be applied to a more explicitly class-oriented model of analysis. Raymond Williams's idea of formations, brought into the context of Canadian leftism by McKay, emphasizes clusters and shifts of groups of actors in the realm of textual production, rather than institutions and individuals. For the study of proletarian print, it is usually more illuminating to replace the circuit's points of single author, editor, or distributor with clusters of people organized around particular activities and politics. In this way, the politics of a formation can be read and discussed as part of the print object produced within it. As well, the concept of formations attends to the contingency of proletarian organizations and movements. The Communist Party, and its affiliates, were never stable entities. Their members, practices, directives, and locations changed often, and such change must have an influence on how we read the print to which it is connected. Formations remind us that a point in the communications circuit is always only a singular point in time. Building on this, Michael Warner's

discussion of publics and counterpublics is very attuned to the role of print in the formations of modern social life. As he asserts, for a text to have a public, it must circulate. A public is not a perfect overlap of intended, or actual, readers, but rather anyone attending to particular text for whatever reason. This concept offers a lens through which to view the use of print, such as pamphlets and periodicals, as part of the ongoing organizational work of proletarian formations. Furthermore, Warner's notion of a counterpublic considers the creation of parallel circuits of textual production and use, within conditions of suppression or hostility.

The above distinction in acts of reading draws from Alec McHoul's notions of "reading-in-the-classroom" and reading within interpretive communities. In *Semiotic Investigations*, McHoul outlines an ethnomethodology for processing how communities of readers make sense of a text by setting it within and against their real-life experiences. The classroom reader (or the archival reader, or the library reader) and the reader in the street are both valid publics for a proletarian text, though they are historically different, positionally different, and equipped with different sets of tools for meaning-making. Neither of these is more authentic than the other; as readers of any kind, we must be self-conscious that our activities anywhere, for whatever purpose, are readings in history. I do not find it critically or politically worthwhile to ruminate on what texts mean in the abstract; we must consider how the world of the text is taken up and used by the world of people. In the classroom, reading involves the isolation of particular ideal factors for analysis. This is the position of literary studies in the liberal mode: it is an end in itself to

discuss genre, systems of figuration, or linguistic style as singularly knowable and permanently fixed. However, all of these literary elements locate a given text within a deeper network of other texts and their meanings. These intertexts do not come as ethereal beings: they, too, are social products formed of real, human relationships.

Engaging with proletarian texts as a scholar and critic, rather than as a worker reading in her everyday life, requires both historical and literary modes of analysis. Particular rhetorical structures and writing styles have historical resonance: they cluster around key events and movements, and come to be recognized metonymically as part of them. Looking at the materials produced by the Communist Party and related groups like the Canadian Labor Defense League in this period, we can see this signalling at work in the repeated use of images of the boot and the fist to stand in for the forces of oppression and collective resistance, as well as in graphic emblems like the red flag. In its material poverty, in its language of labour, in its collective pronouns and rhythms of speech, proletarian print stands in our imaginations for the Depression era and its volatile politics. In his consideration of the impact of leftist formations in Canada, McKay puts forth a series of propositions for understanding the "common language of the left" as an interrelated set of formulations (*Rebels* 30). He posits that first a given formation of leftist organizers must assert a concrete statement of wrongdoing, and then it must propose an alternative. From this proposition, the public must collectively refuse the existing mode of being, first by recognizing the wrong as

systemic, and then by recognizing collective action as a systemic response. This response proceeds through narrative, engaging and reinforcing common codes of representation that allow both the wrong and the response to be named, and to be re-told. These codes find fixity in institutions, parties, and print as the guiding principles of a new movement (*Rebels* 140-3). These codes can be usefully applied to proletarian texts as a pattern of stylistic conventions that encourage an analogous set of reading practices. These patterns make up the stories that members of a community tell each other, and from these stories come the possibility of transformation. There is a self-consciousness to proletarian print, as well as a highly attuned sense of shared recognition, that calls into being a particular public. In my research, I seek to bring together an understanding of these historical processes with literary modes of analysis by treating these formations as something readable, both on the page and among communities of readers.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Each chapter seeks to identify and explicate proletarian texts as they intersect with different modes of reading within distinct historical conditions. The chapters are organized around case studies to clarify and illustrate the argument. However, the case studies are also intended to be sites of recuperation for these print objects as I describe them in detail and consider their particular paths along the communications cycle.

Chapter One addresses the existing gap in Canadian literary history, which maintains a liberal orientation throughout its associated institutions, approaches

and subjects; this orientation has been upheld through political and legal structures hostile to proletarian movements. McKay's "Liberal Order Framework" offers a set of provocations for reframing Canadian literary history in ways that better account for the material conditions of textual production and circulation, and that permit the inclusion of proletarian elements as part of the narratives of Canadian national identity. This chapter discusses Ronald Liversedge's *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek* as a text that highlights and crosses institutional boundaries, first as a record of a significant event in Canadian radical history, then as an amateur text produced by voluntary labour, finally achieving institutional sanction within the frame of academic scholarship.

Chapter Two takes up the methods of book history and bibliography as avenues for discussing the materiality of print objects. This discussion extends to the value of expanding this approach to include non-book material such as pamphlets, periodicals, and manifestos as part of an explicit class analysis. Using the example of the "Worker's Pamphlet Series," I engage in thick bibliographical description to identify and analyze the elements of pamphlets as a distinct form of print, and as participants in a wider network of proletarian texts.

Chapter Three analyzes the self-reflexive circulation of proletarian print in the restrictive legal environment created by Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Section 98 has often been taken up as an example of explicitly class-directed legislation, which has had significant impact on the historiography and cultural legacy of the working-class movement during the interwar period. The print

output of the Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL) is particularly focused on communicating the legal rights of workers before the courts, as part of its prolonged campaign for the repeal of Section 98. This chapter considers a set of pamphlets produced by the CLDL, as well as the ever-changing formats of its periodical, the *Canadian Labor Defender*, as mutually reinforcing components of this organizational strategy.

Chapter Four examines surveillant readings and misreadings as they intercept proletarian print, building on the previous chapter's discussion of the ways in which the Left was criminalized during the 1930s. Taking the event of the 1932 Edmonton Hunger March and the subsequent CLDL pamphlet "The Alberta Hunger-March and the Trial of the Victims of Brownlee's Police Terror" as a focal point, this chapter extensively uses archival sources to track the activities of several identifiable readers connected to the march. The narratives of these readers—a participant in the march, and a police officer observing and informing on the activities and materials surrounding the march—show a complex relationship between representations in print and other forms of media and the ways in which public and personal memory are recounted.

Chapter Five considers the formation of proletarian publics as highly localized interpretive communities, and how the application of tools such as GIS mapping might further re-center readers' material lives in the analysis of print culture. This chapter is somewhat experimental in that it utilizes bibliographic and archival data discussed in previous chapters to produce a map of what might be

described as the print circuit in Edmonton at the time of the 1932 Hunger March. This process offers opportunities to expand the work of book history by linking print objects directly to real-world locations and readers, as well as to visualize networks of print at a given moment in time. This work is still rudimentary: I include it here as a gesture towards future possibilities for studying this body of print and the readers who engaged with it.

As a whole, this dissertation demonstrates how the methods of analysis and historicization offered by book history can and should be applied to bring proletarian print and readers into conversation with the wider patterns of Canadian writing through the twentieth century. In this research, I assert the need to bring readers, and localized acts of reading, more clearly into the communications circuit. This is a political act and a necessary confrontation: by explicitly seeking out proletarian readers and texts that challenge the power structures that have defined Canadian literary studies, we have the opportunity to open up entire communities of people that have been excluded from the many projects that have gone into the making of Canada. As the study of Canadian literature begins to acknowledge the construction and contestation of our national myths, it must also avow the lasting political consequences for those who have been excluded. We are again in a moment of furor, when the voices of the marginalized are articulating the harms they have suffered and drawing together to shout their resistance to structures of oppression. Again, Canada must find a way to hear these voices, or they will find a way to remake the nation and the state to satisfy them.

And, again, we as readers must determine where we will be standing—in the archive, or in the street.

Chapter One

The Proletarian Thirties and Canadian Literary History

The On-to-Ottawa Trek had all the elements of a great Canadian story. In the spring and summer of 1935, a group of young unemployed men gathered together on the west coast and set off to bring their plight to the nation's capital. This group, mixed in origin, ethnicity, and background, traversed the prairies along the CPR rail line, invoking the symbolism of the railway's nation-building power. Along the way, communities turned out in full force to support "the boys," with food, money, and large celebrations. The group stopped in Regina, Saskatchewan, while a delegation of its leaders completed the trip to Ottawa and managed to meet with Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. The delegation's return came on July 1, the national holiday then called Dominion Day.

In reality, the Trek played out in reversal of every national myth: the trekkers returned from the frontier crippled by poverty; their delegation was forcibly ejected by the Prime Minister; and Dominion Day in Regina erupted into violence as the RCMP turned horses and clubs against Canadian workers. This

story, in many ways a stand-in for the period as a whole, is not one that fits easily into larger Canadian narratives, nor do its animating forces of class conflict, deprivation, racism, and state-sponsored violence find much representation in the country's histories. Like reactions to the Trek within political history, the proletarian texts[2] that address the tensions of the Depression era are regarded as aberrant within a literary tradition equally structured and policed by liberalism. However, during the 1930s in Canada, an emergent network of Left political groups, organizations, labour unions, cultural bodies, and publications (dominated by, but not limited to) the Communist Party, transmitted and amplified an increasingly politicized response to the precarious position of ordinary people. A handful of key events—the legal battle against the repressive Section 98 of the Criminal Code, the On-to-Ottawa Trek, and, in the latter half of the decade, the global fight against fascism—were tirelessly relayed and repeated in print campaigns designed to provoke working people into a state of resistance energized by anger. The language and speech of the pamphlets and manifestos produced by these groups infused the organizing power of their political and social movements with urgency, drawing variously on socialist and populist modes of address to project a proletarian public onto the Canadian populace. Equally, Canadian poets, novelists, journalists, and jurists grappled across genres with the economic and

[2] In her study of Depression-era US fiction, Barbara Foley asserts that the question of class-consciousness must be "central to both rhetoric and representation" (x) for a text to be called "proletarian," a general guideline which I will also maintain.

social conditions of strife lived out in the workplace, the relief office, the picket line, the courtroom and the jail.

What might be described as "the proletarian thirties" captures the particular confluence of economic hardship, agitation among workers and the unemployed, strict laws surrounding immigration and political protest, and the rise of challengers to the Canadian political firmament on both the left and the right. The cultural impact of these was mediated through a discrete set of writers, publishers, artists, and critics—many of whom were actively involved with these protesting labour and political groups, or who at least expressed sympathies with them. Individually and organizationally, they collaborated to share the resources that comprise public communication: work space, performance space, publication space, shops and shelf space, presses, distributors, even readers, as they were reproduced side-by-side on the same pages. Together, their interactions and relationships formed a network that made class legible within the politics and the literature of the decade.

This ethos of collaboration and the shared labour of cultural production were certainly not unique to the Canadian scene.[3] However, the ways in which Canadian literary history has been made blind to this proletarian thread are very particular. Canadian culture remains uneasy with both its colonial/colonizing origins and its modern multicultural face. Canada's cultural production has been

[3] See Denning, Wald, and Foley for in-depth considerations of American proletarian networks during the interwar period. For the UK context, Hillier's work on left-wing publishers is a recent addition to a long critical history on working-class writing.

caught between the influences of Britain and the United States, superpowers alternately aligned in the Canadian national discourse with tradition and invention, inheritance and commercialism, effacement and corruption. In order to grapple with these conditions, the federal and provincial governments established a system of specifically Canadian institutions immediately following the Second World War, supported by a national communications network. The postwar period saw the dominance of a liberal political ideology that was able to be enacted, and reproduced, through these networks, while being also being enforced through political institutions. This dominance was maintained culturally by tacit policing of the answers to three prevalent questions: What is "Canadian"? What is "literature"? What supports the liberal project of Canada? These questions have contributed to the erasure of proletarian texts as literature from the narrative of Canadian literary history. To the extent that these texts have found an audience at all, they have only been legible as historical documents, and not as part of an ongoing literary tradition.

A different methodological lens may help in making the proletarian readable within Canadian literary history. As I employ it, book history has allowed me to view the production, circulation, and reception of texts in social and material terms; and indeed, this disciplinary orientation shares some elements with labour history and histories of working-class culture. By taking the book as the material intersection of a set of social relationships, this approach gives prominence to collective enterprise with the potential to reconfigure liberal

assumptions about the circulation of ideas, the composition of the public sphere, and the operations of a given text. As a methodology, it draws first on the thick descriptive powers of bibliography, setting these into an understanding of "the book" (or any print object) as embedded in a fluid set of processes, themselves operating within a specific economic, political, legal, and social context.[4] Proletarian texts often exist outside of the book form: with limited resources to publish, and limited access to the cultural capital that deems some texts as worthy of attention and others not, my materials are more likely to be found in newspapers, handmade periodicals, or typewritten broadsides. These texts are less likely to be preserved in libraries and archives, and more likely to be destroyed, lost, or illegal, which compounds their exclusion from literary history. The inclusion of non-book texts as objets of study has been for me absolutely crucial to understanding proletarian literature as operating within the same conditions and conduits as mainstream Canadian literature, but also to recognizing how different types of privilege have altered its trajectories. The very concept of "literary" history excludes the majority of proletarian writing while replicating problematic power relationships between writers, readers, critics, and legislators: the discipline itself is complicit in the exclusion of the proletarian. Critical book history has the necessary tools to address proletarian texts as they appear at the juncture of literature and documentary; in this view, I am interested in centring material questions within literary studies, while also emphasizing the formal, narrative, and

[4] See Darnton and Adams and Barker for detailed theorizing of the communications circuit. Chapter Two will take up bibliographical method in detail.

figurative elements of proletarian writing that make these texts so appealing as historical accounts.

Ronald Liversedge's memoir, *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek*, is itself highly appealing, both as a narrative text and as a colourful adjunct to the documentation of historical event. Furthermore, the publication history of the *Recollections*, first in its proletarian form as a local memoir produced by volunteer labour and shared among comrades, and then in its documentary form as part of a paperback edition of historical evidence relating to the Trek and the Regina Riots, clearly reveals the multiple circuits through which proletarian texts are circulated, and diverted. My reading of Liversedge's text allows me to push on definitions of both "proletarian" and "literary" in ways that show these attributions to be a function of how the text is framed and read. The *Recollections* can be significantly dated to 1935 (the context of the memoir), 1963 (first publication as a pamphlet/booklet), and 1973 (the release of the Carleton Library edition edited by Victor Hoar). Each of these dates marks the confluence of various cultural networks and institutions at different points in the development of Canadian literary history, and the situation of the memoir at each juncture illustrates the ways in which proletarian texts can be "written out" of literary history while being "read into" political and social history. A fresh focus on the proletarian texts stemming from the 1930s, like Liversedge's *Recollections*, has the potential to destabilize liberal assumptions about what counts as Canadian literary history, as these texts allow

critics to address issues of exclusion in the dominant narrative, including colonialism, classism, and elitism more broadly.

Liberal Interventions in Canadian Literary History

From the decisive 1935 election that saw William Lyon Mackenzie King defeat 'Millionaire' R.B. Bennett's Conservatives through to the end of the century, Canada's politics were dominated by a liberal ethos, in both the small-l and capital-L varieties. Between 1935 and 2005, Parliament was led by the Liberal Party for a total of 55 years.[5] However, historians have traced the role of liberalism in shaping not just the political and economic concerns of Canada, but also its social and cultural development over a much more expansive span of time. Ian McKay's reworking of Canadian history, first set out in "The Liberal Order Framework," has been transformative to conventional Canadian historians, and we are now beginning to feel its effects on the formulation of literary histories as well. McKay takes up the "liberal order" as the "project of liberal rule" deriving from the central concepts of liberty, equality, and property: that is, it is an ideology manifested in institutions, practices, language, and social organization rather than one embodied strictly within those core concepts (627). In this, he configures Canada as a Gramscian political terrain, organized not in terms of a fixed top and bottom, but as a centre and a periphery pressing ever against each other: rather than rulers and ruled, we have the insecure leadership of the liberal order and its

[5] Significant interruptions to Liberal rule came under the Diefenbaker Conservatives (1957–1963), and the neoliberal resurgence of the Conservatives under Brian Mulroney (1984–1993).

resistors (638). McKay's framework is intended as a method for re-invigorating the fractured writing and study of Canadian history, but it provides a needed shot to the arm of Canada's literary history as well. Indeed, what McKay calls the "Canadian nationalist myth-symbol complex" is especially applicable to reworking received literary histories and the role of state institutions in shaping Canada's cultural production (638). Reimagining Canada as a project perpetually on-the-make, demands an awareness of how it is made, rather than acquiescing to false depictions of Canada as an essentialist nation or as an empty geographic space. A focus on making preserves the complex network of very human endeavours so needed to read Canada's proletarian current as one of many possible histories.

By invoking the term "liberal" to displace other ideological monoliths—capitalism, modernity, bourgeoisie, democratic system—historian Jeffrey McNairn claims McKay's "Liberal Order Framework" makes a shift to an intellectual framework for Canadian history, rather than a political or an economic one (65). This framework emphasizes the imaginative work of structuring the nation, as well as the shared creativity of sustaining it. The received narrative of Canadian literary history as the necessary scaffolding for the construction of national identity construction upheld by state-building projects such as transportation, communication, and industrial networks situates Canadian literature as one institution among many governed by state policies and regulated by gatekeeping functionaries. Canadian literature, in this telling, exists to shore up Canadianness, which is a civilized, contained, and above-all middlebrow enterprise. McNairn

finds that McKay's focus on the entity called Canada, rather than North American, or even trans-Atlantic relationships, risks "re-privileging the nation-state" in a way that may not be productive for understanding the circulation of ideas and culture (68). However, I would argue that the intense focus of the state on Canadian cultural institutions and industries in the postwar era, including the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (otherwise known as the Massey Commission), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board, the Canada Council and others, and the influence of those formations on Canada's literary history, renders the nation-state a necessary component of any historical analysis of Canadian literature. The study of national identity is certainly adjacent to these, but the position of such institutions as producers, distributors, responders, and preservers along the communications circuit makes them central for addressing textual questions.

The Massey Commission has been ascribed a gravitational pull for its reconfiguration of the mid-century Canadian cultural firmament.[6] Certainly, the Commission's 1951 report is one of the key elements of the postwar liberal order,

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[6] The mandate of the Commission, both forward- and backward-looking in scope, is as follows:

> That it is desirable that the Canadian people should know as much as possible about their country, its history and traditions; and about their national life and common achievements; that it is in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural as well as urban.
>
> There have been in the past many attempts to appraise our physical resources. Our study, however, is concerned with human assets, with what might be called in a broad sense spiritual resources, which are less tangible but whose importance needs no emphasis. (Canada 4)

but its intervention into the cultural industry must be read within the political conjuncture of the same moment for a more complete view of the ways in which earlier proletarian texts were effaced by the construction of a particular kind of national identity. In this way, the Massey Report goes hand-in-hand with the 1947 Citizenship Act, sharing the work of shoring up the state by shaping ideas of the nation and the citizen as a unified body. The creation of the national narrative itself is the primary struggle of liberals to define the terms of Canadian identity. Not only is class unavailable as a category of identity, but the elements that define proletarian literature—transience, instability, and radical politicization—actively threaten the national narrative. As such, proletarian texts, and the decade to which they are connected, became increasingly illegible within Canadian cultural history in the postwar period.

In an address marking the passing of the Citizenship Act, Justice A.M. Manson of the British Columbia Supreme Court posits citizenship as connoting "something more than mere nationality; it has to do rather with the individual's attitude and conduct … One wonders how many of the twelve million odd people in Canada are real Canadian citizens and how many are merely inhabitants of our country" (4). Manson goes on to put the new legislation within a lineage of Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and then British, ideas of the public and of justice. His version of history leaps over the suffering and exclusion of the Depression era, and the great changes to public life more generally in the interwar period. A contemporary pamphlet, "How to Become a Canadian Citizen," produced by the

newly formed Canadian Citizenship Branch of the federal government, offers a similarly truncated narrative. The guide moves straight from the Treaty of Versailles to the Second World War, covering the 1930s only with a cursory mention of the Statute of Westminster (37). Caren Irr remarks that during this period, in between the Statute of Westminster and the Citizenship Act, Canada attained the status of a nation, but that nationhood was marked by a "confusion of practices" (68). This confusion was formally resolved for an emergent Canada in the figure of the citizen, distinct from both British subjects and immigrant masses. Paul Hjartarson has pointed to efforts by the state to "'Canadianize'" allophone cultures in between the First and Second World Wars through legal measures. Indeed, the Conservative government revised the Immigration Act and the Criminal Code in the 1920s and 1930s to continue policies enacted under the War Measures Act to restrict immigration and censor the importation, printing, publication, or circulation of any seditious material, particularly those published in an "enemy language" or the equally suspicious Russian, Ukrainian, and Finnish—a project continued by the Liberals in the postwar era. These materials, and their assumed connection to politically radical groups of newcomers who entered the country following the Bolshevik Revolution were notably targeted. To further uproot the influence of both print and speakers who might be more concerned with participation in Canada's economic and political life than in upholding its self-told story, the state engaged in "assimilative work on the children of immigrants [through] compulsory schooling in English language and culture" (25).

This suspicion of foreigners generally, and especially foreigners with any perceived connection to Communist radicalism, plays a significant, though under-examined, role in the extinguishing of proletarian texts from the history of this period. Reflecting on this fractured relationship among ethnicity, language, and class identity, Irr comments on the potential of the skills and social knowledges immigrants attained through activity within local formations for undoing other collective identities: "Some argue that the assimilation tactics immigrants learned in left groups helped participants to move into the middle class, thus defusing the political potential of both ethnicity and class in Canada" (Irr 147). The loss of language continuity, as well as printing houses and readerships in these languages, severed a potential throughline of resistance for generations.

In both Manson's speech and in the citizenship pamphlet, as in Canadian law during the interwar period, non-Anglo immigrants are treated with wariness. Manson points to various nationalities of European origin and labels them "regrettable…cells of foreign born" people capable of becoming "good Canadians if only we will take them in hand, and naturalize them culturally, politically, and spiritually" (12). The Citizenship Branch pamphlet, presumably aimed at many of these same groups, refers only to "people, drawn from every racial group, [who] are welded into a mighty democratic force through their love of freedom, hatred of oppression, and the steadfast determination that the powers of government shall be exercised by and through the people for the common benefit of all" (37). Linguistic heterogeneity, and especially the possible taint of radical politics

concealed within unfamiliar tongues, was a source of anxiety for Canadian officials; rhetorically, citizenship represents an erasure of difference, through the ideological work of the liberal order that works on these populations as potential sites of disruption.

As book history has oscillated between particular case studies and large-scale national projects, it has given attention to the role of printing and reading among the linguistic practices that support the nation-state. The *History of the Book in Canada* project, completed in 2007, shows the tension between the more totalizing narratives of state and nation and the more pluralistic accounts of the one-to-one relationships between readers and text objects that comprise the history of Canadian print. The third volume of the collection, which covers the period of 1918–1980, examines modern print production and circulation, ranging beyond the book—in fact, editors Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon identify Canadian book publishing as a late development, growing out of earlier newspaper and periodical presses only in the second half of the twentieth century (3). However, proletarian texts, particularly those dating to the 1930s, still remain underserved in this history. In relation to publishing, Gerson and Michon summarize the decade thusly:

> The Great Depression of the 1930s led to stagnation in publishing activity as some firms set up in the previous decade were forced to close. However, the decade also saw the development of new forms of solidarity as collective publications and small magazines brought

> together socially committed writers and artists, many of whom would become prominent during and after the Second World War. (6)

The editors figure the postwar moment as the full maturation of modern Canadian print, particularly under the influence of the "decisive impact" of governmental inquiry and guidance (3). Indeed, Canada as an object of reflection and study becomes possible only when demographic shifts and the corresponding boom in Canadian universities solidified Canadian literature as a field of study, supported by professor-writer-critics and a newly posited canon of texts.

The Canadian literary canon began to take shape in this moment, addressing itself to a homogenized version of the Canadian citizen defined against outsiders, both geographic and ideological, and connected to the nation through the new state media. Furthermore, postwar prosperity and demographic shifts saw greater investments in education, including universities, as part of this social project. It is this audience in particular that is marked out by this nationalist framing. Perhaps most durably, Northrop Frye has been linked with the erstwhile dominant narrative of Canadian literary history. Frye situates his narrative of literary history within a recognizably liberal historiography: "Like other kinds of history, it has its own themes of exploration, settlement, and development, but these themes relate to a social imagination that explores and settles and develops" (822) What this account of history lacks is an agent and a sense of the active social struggle that propels this development. Frye offers a cogent account of the interconnected institutions and formations that supported and governed

Canadian literature at mid-century: "Scholarships, prizes, university posts, await the dedicated writer" (823). Frye's history follows Donald Creighton's Laurentian Thesis, which locates the St. Lawrence Seaway as the throughline of Canadian development, both geographically and economically. Creighton's idea, a driving force in conventional Canadian history even up to the present moment, in turn draws on Harold Innis's staple theory, first synthesized in *The Bias of Communication*. Both ascribe centrality to colonial relationships with Britain and France, extended into the twentieth century by trade with First Nations, resource extraction, and agriculture. From this historical narrative, dominated by geographical immensity and mediated by transplanted and isolated colonial subjects, Frye posits his own theory of Canadian literature as rooted in a "garrison mentality," to use his now infamous term (830). For Frye, the garrison is an insular community, tightly bound by law and order (both political and moral), up against unknowable natural threats as well as the more human threat of outsiders. Sectarian fractures drive conflict inside the garrison, whereas class consciousness and action remain always on the outside. To Frye, the role of the "creative mind in society"—and by extension the role of the critic—is to help cohere a national identity (833), rather than to challenge the Canadian firmament.

Legible and Illegible

Locating ideologically-charged texts within Canada's literary history is not just a problem of retrospection; marking and claiming proletarian writing posed a challenge to critics in its own time as well. Ruth McKenzie's 1939 article in the

Dalhousie Review, "Proletarian Literature in Canada," offers an inside view of the difficulties with identifying the "proletarian" in a Canadian context, particularly when critics are equally invested in identifying a distinctly national literature. McKenzie, asking whether such an object exists, defines proletarian literature as

> literature which describes the life of the working class from a class-conscious and revolutionary point of view," in which "the worker is regarded as the victim of capitalist exploitation; as the instrument of revolution by which a new social order will be ushered in. He, himself, is of more importance as a factor in society than as an individual. (49)

Again, issues of authorship and authenticity are central to such evaluations. McKenzie pointedly states that proletarian writing is not limited to working-class authors—not with an eye to inclusiveness, but because "few members of the labouring classes are articulate in the literary sense" (49). This assessment is preoccupied with determining the characteristic marks of proletarian writing, mingling class identity with value judgements. McKenzie's definition of proletarian literature revolves around the portrayal of the worker as "the instrument of revolution" rather than an active voice circulating through text (49). Her survey takes in a range of forms, genres, and authors, but concludes that although numerous Canadian writers show "proletarian interest," "very few of their works are truly proletarian according to our definition" (63). As well, she identifies two barriers to a large-scale movement toward proletarian fiction in Canada: a limited pool of writers who are both talented and concerned about the exploitation of workers; and few outlets for publication (56). McKenzie argues that those works

showing the dynamic revolutionary force of the worker are "generally lacking in literary value" (63). Her consideration of proletarian writing is not open to unpolished or populist texts; rather, her critique is invested in a schematic that privileges poetry over fiction while also claiming a typically "romantic tradition" for Canadian writing (59).

The apparent gap between political commitment and literary prowess is also a point of contention for Earle Birney, whose writing as literary editor for the *Canadian Forum* takes a charged view of the ideological significance of proletarian fiction. Commenting on the *Forum*'s 1937 short story contest, Birney raises the issue of craft over content, stating that "to be a 'proletarian' artist it is not enough to voice the protests of workers; it is necessary also to be an artist, to shape material painstakingly into an illusion of life" ("Short Story" 96). Writing style becomes a figure of class conflict, through which assumptions about education, intelligence, and intrinsic worth are played out. Birney takes the reverse position of McKenzie: rather than looking to the poor outputs of working-class writers, he decries the condescension of middle-class authors who "seem to think that the 'lower classes' should be written about only in words of not more than five letters … with a careful absence of anything unusual in phrasing" ("Short Story" 96). This serves only to propagate "ignorance about the complex realities of a working-class character," who is neither "simply, incoherent, passive," nor a "mechanized man" ("Proletarian" 58). The tendency to portray the working classes in stock types, or to use revolutionaries for "atmosphere and fashionable value" is a way to

signify proletarian sympathies ("Proletarian" 59), as in McKenzie's discussion, while denying the agency and energy of actual proletarians.

Both Birney and McKenzie look to social revolution only in a future state, seeing "ripples of revolutionary thought," but no "vigorous current threatening to sweep the stream out of its placid course" (McKenzie 63). Writing pessimistically from the end of the 1930s, both critics concede that with prosperity seemingly just around the corner, Canadian writers are likely to return to traditional, romantic themes. Notably, the *Canadian Forum* fiction contest judged by Birney selected Luella Creighton's "The Cornfield," a naturalistic story of children on a Mennonite farm rather than any of the more markedly proletarian submissions (Birney, "Short Story" 97). Indeed, Irr notes that few literary works were produced that met the criteria set forth by Birney and McKenzie or that met the criteria American proletarian writers were debating among themselves (Irr 145). The task of contemporary critics is to follow this path even as it is trampled over by the histories of war and the welfare state. We must seek out obscured texts and work through the impact of the 1930s on Canadian cultural and public discourse afterward.

For literary history, the proletarian problem is doubled: in its own era, running alongside and occasionally intersecting with modernism, the proletarian is read as insufficiently sophisticated or self-conscious about its language. The elements of what make a text proletarian can often be used as criteria for excluding it from the literary realm: we see this tension in McKenzie and Birney's

evaluations, and we see it in the work of the critics that followed in the post-war generation. However, in the period of canon formation, the proletarian was read as dangerous or challenging, and as such was something to be segregated. The liberal order has maintained a strong influence over Canadian literary historiography, particularly since the Second World War; however, it would be a mistake to read it as a totalizing narrative. As a contributor to the 1965 *Literary History of Canada*, published just prior to the celebration of Canada's first centennial (the same volume containing Frye's influential essay), Frank Watt positions his history of protest literature against the "conservative act" of Confederation and the national narratives that followed. Instead, he traces a current of resistance that "was almost, but never entirely, stifled" by the practices of nation-building (457). Indeed, taking a dialectical view, Watt claims that Canadian cultural maturity could only be achieved by the collision of that conservative ideal with a counter-narrative of struggle (473). Watt traces the early reception of Marx and the circulation more generally of socialist ideals among Canadian writers, finding revolutionary expression among a set of late-Victorian "poetasters" and journalists who linked creative power to a "proletarian aesthetic" (461). Despite the limited literary value of this group of works, Watt insists "its existence is worth recording because it remained alive to a range of ideals and social experiences largely ignored by the respectable Canadian tradition of the period" (465). This current continued to find channels among a growing working class in Canada's economic boom during the early twentieth century, and

grew more forceful through the period of post-First World War disillusion, flowing beneath modernist expressions of moral and intellectual critique. However, it is with the crisis of the Great Depression in the 1930s that Watt asserts "what had been an insignificant proletarian minority swelled in numbers and power and became, for the first time, of major literary and cultural significance" (469). Watt primarily discusses little magazines and newspapers as the key outlets for proletarian writing—sources bound by periodicity and marked by an ephemerality that necessarily limits their long-term visibility. Watt's history does not extend beyond the end of the 1930s: arguably, the dialectical collision he depicts between national ideal and protest generates a kind of cultural synthesis, which can be neatly incorporated into postwar liberalism as the state comes to manage key institutions for funding, producing, disseminating, and critiquing Canadian literature. Still, by repositioning the appearance of expressions of rebellion and radicalism past the early days of Confederation, Watt makes the case for a Canadian proletarianism co-existing with the birth of Canada itself.

Liversedge's *Recollections*

The history of Ronald Liversedge's Depression memoir, *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek*, animates these narratives of canon formation and exclusion in interesting ways. In its original edition, the *Recollections* is a clear example of a proletarian text: written by a non-professional, framed by the rhetoric of Communist Party activists and labour agitators, presenting a personal narrative shot through with a clear political didacticism, produced cheaply and poorly in

small numbers, and forgotten to all but a few specialized collectors. However, Liversedge's text was taken up first by the academic sector and then by the apparatus of Canadian mass cultural institutions—both of which have effectively shaped liberal histories since the mid-twentieth century—and in the process it was pulled away from its proletarian origins.

Liversedge's *Recollections* narrates his experiences as a British immigrant turned itinerant labourer in western Canada during the 1930s. The memoir is particularly focused around the 1935 relief camp strikes, beginning in Vancouver, which broke out into the On-to-Ottawa Trek of May and June 1935 and ended in violent clashes with the RCMP and local police on Dominion Day in what quickly became known as the Regina Riot. The text itself offers little biographical information about the author. Liversedge describes himself as a veteran of the First World War and a trade unionist who emigrated from England in 1927, fleeing unemployment and widespread deprivation due to depressed conditions in the Lancashire cotton and Welsh mining industries, which gave rise to the UK's General Strike of 1926 (Recollections 1963, 3-4). Additional background material, particularly relating to Liversedge's work as a writer, is largely absent from this first edition and its later republication; for this, we must look to another scholarly recuperation. David Yorke's introduction to *Mac-Pap*, Liversedge's later memoir of the Spanish Civil War, fills in some of this authorial context. This biography traces a narrative common to two centuries of working-class autobiography: a labouring background, an early experience of war and conflict, self-education in the literary

classics, and a socialist initiation. This is followed by an emigrant's tale, taking Liversedge from England to Australia and back, and then to Canada following the 1926 General Strike, as Liversedge himself relates in the *Recollections*; Yorke, however, provides a historian's detail and sourcing. From there, Liversedge's story merges into the collective narrative of jobless men moving West during the Great Depression. The text is tersely narrated, following a loose and episodic structure. Indeed, Liversedge takes on the role of a wayward anti-hero, consciously or not falling into a pattern that recurs in other modernist and masculinist Canadian novels of the same period (especially Douglas Durkin's *The Magpie* and Frederick Grove's *Settlers of the March*), as well as later novels that draw on experiences of the Depression (such as Hugh Garner's *Cabbagetown* and Dyson Carter's *Fatherless Sons*). His writing process, too, is rooted in the experience of this upheaval. Liversedge began writing in the late 1950s while in recovery from alcoholism, setting down lengthy, descriptive memoirs of the Trek and the Spanish Civil War almost entirely from memory (Yorke 21). It is not clear how much of the early *Recollections* went through editing, if it did at all; the Hoar edition appended a great deal of material to surround the memoir, but did not alter the core narrative text.

The first publication of the *Recollections* is not entirely transparent in its presentation, however. The introduction to the memoir is written by Tom McEwen, who played a significant role in all of the key events concerning the Communist left during the 1930s. McEwen was an organizer for the Communist Party across the western provinces before becoming a founding member and

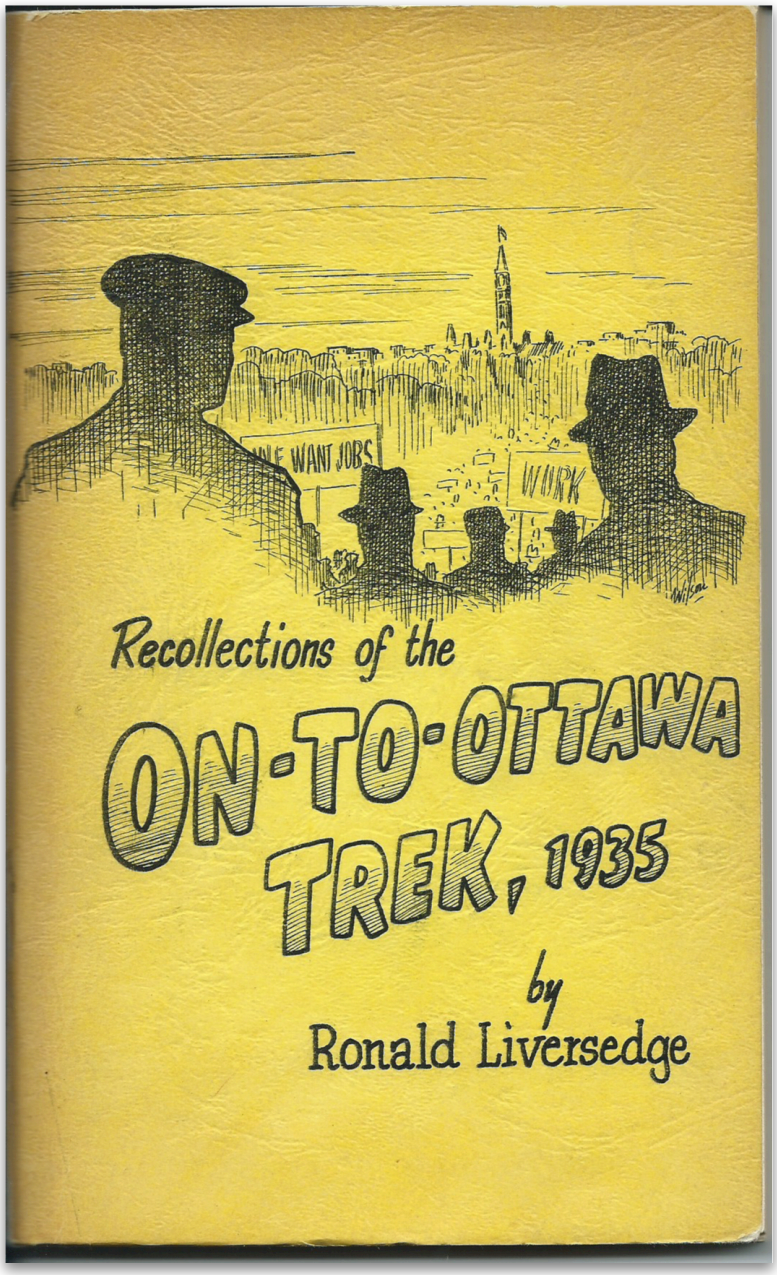

Figure 1.1. Liversedge, *Recollections of the On-to-Ottawa Trek, 1935*. 1963. Commonly known as the "yellow book."

general secretary for the party's "red union" arm, the Workers' Unity League. McEwen was among the eight Communist leaders arrested and tried under the Criminal Code's Section 98 provisions against unlawful assembly, the issue which

dominated proletarian protest through the first half of the decade.[7] Following the release of the so-called "Kingston Eight," McEwen was instrumental in organizing a series of relief camp strikes on the west coast, and was one of the leaders of the On-to-Ottawa Trek. At the time of the *Recollections*' original publication, McEwen continued to be active as a Communist (Labour-Progressive) politician and journalist in the Vancouver area. Accordingly, McEwen's introduction to Liversedge's text carries a great deal of weight: it establishes the author's proletarian bona fides, while also tying the *Recollections* to a particularly potent formation of west-coast radicalism, both at the time of the narrative's events, and enduring into the moment of publication.

The publication and printing of the first edition of the *Recollections* offers a window into the often ad-hoc methods of producing proletarian texts. It is a utilitarian piece of work.[8] The book is roughly octavo, measuring 140 mm by 215 mm, equivalent to letter-sized paper folded in half. It is 174 pp., staple-bound, and mimeographed. This edition is often referred to as "the yellow book" for its coated card stock cover, which features a sketch of marchers in silhouette with the Parliament buildings in the background and a hand-lettered title in the foreground. Inside, several documents contemporary to the Trek are reproduced: two photos, showing May Day 1935 demonstrations in Stanley Park, Vancouver, and a line of

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[7] See Chapter Three for a detailed discussion of the impact of Section 98 on Communist organizing.

[8] The bibliographic details that follow are based on my own copy of the 1963 *Recollections*, which I picked up for $50 at MacLeod's Books in Vancouver in October 2011 (see Figure 1.1).

marchers entering Calgary as part of the Trek (Liversedge, *Recollections* 1963, i); and a handbill calling for an assembly of marchers at Gore Avenue, Vancouver, June 3, 1935 (*Recollections* 1963, ii). The only publication detail given is a note at the end of the Introduction, indicating that "This Booklet [was] produced by Voluntary Labor" (*Recollections* 1963, 4). There is no date, no named organization, and no indication of the size of the original print run. Yorke notes that Liversedge initially submitted his manuscript to Progress Books, then the publishing arm of the Communist Party of Canada (Yorke 22); however, the memoir was rejected, ultimately placing it at a greater remove from the "official" purview of the CPC than many other Canadian proletarian texts. Instead, the memoir was produced by friends and in a small edition of 1,000 copies—entirely without Liversedge's knowledge (Yorke 22). The University of Alberta Library, which holds a copy in the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, gives the publication date as 1961, noting that the book is published by "a group of private citizens." Certainly, internal references to the experiences of boilermakers in Vancouver in 1960 indicate it cannot have been published before this date (Liversedge, *Recollections* 1963, 7). Bibliographer Peter Weinrich gives a publication date of 1963 (331), which corresponds to the date given in the Canadian National Catalogue.

With such limited publication information, it is difficult to trace either distribution or circulation. Catalogue searches show a few scattered copies, mostly held in special collections sections of university libraries across the country. An inscription in ink on the inside cover of my own copy, reading "D. Godfrey \ 4149

Sardis St \ Burnaby \ 161-6801" provides at least some evidence that the text did circulate in the Vancouver area before its re-publication. The readership and overall reception remain largely unknown, although Yorke claims that the memoir "was the first, and at the time the only full description of the Trek" (Yorke 22). This first edition of the text came to greater prominence—and ultimately entered the circuits of the larger academy—when it reached the attention of Victor Hoar, professor of English at the University of Western Ontario. Hoar used Liversedge's later memoir of the Spanish Civil War (which was not itself published until Yorke's 2013 edition) as a source text for his research into the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, and through that text came to the *Recollections*.

Hoar's editorial work in producing the *Recollections* for the Carleton Library series in 1973 diverts the original cycle of the text into one dominated by academic institutions and oriented around formal, state-centric narratives of history. Despite Hoar's position as a literary scholar, his introduction to the Carleton edition offers very little in the way of narrative analysis or biography of its author. Instead, it sets out a historical background for the relief camps and the On-to-Ottawa Trek itself. In this version, the memoir was published with a number of other governmental records and documents relating to the Trek, the Regina Riot, and the political aftermath, as a sort of Depression case study. Here, the *Recollections* become only one document among many—a colourful "memory book" (Hoar xi), but not an authoritative standalone account. When they are recovered in this way, however infrequently, proletarian texts are severed from their networks of origin, and much

of the context of circulation and readership is erased. Furthermore, the subsumption of the narrative elements of the text into a documentarian frame transforms a body of literature into the records of social movement and labour history. Without a doubt, publications in this form produce valuable and necessary scholarly work, to which studies of working-class life and culture in a number of fields are heavily indebted; however, this disciplinary practice also renders many proletarian texts invisible to the lens of literary history.

To the extent that it is referenced at all, Liversedge's *Recollections* appears in histories of radical politics and working-class movements, rather than in appraisals of narrative forms. Indeed, the work of making proletarian literature legible within a general Canadian literary history has necessarily been engaged with a particular kind of historiography that has opened the way for cultural studies and textual objects like Liversedge's text. Labour history in Canada, particularly since the 1970s, has responded on one hand to the work of E.P. Thompson and the questions of the Birmingham School, while on the other hand it has been built up and out from the practices of local history. Much of this work intersects with concurrent work in publishing and theatre, some at the local level, and some reaching larger national audiences. For example, the leftist publisher New Hogtown Press, which sprang out of the student movement in Toronto during the 1960s to publish radical pamphlets and later went on to re-publish collections of plays and short stories taken from the leftist periodicals of the 1930s,[9] was a

[9] See, for example, Wright and Endres, *Eight Men Speak*, and Philips, *Voices of Discord.*

significant resource through the 1970s for publishing the work of young Marxist historians (and former student radicals) (Diemer, n.p.). The products of this research—bibliographies, publication lists, connections among formations and groupings, oral histories, artifacts—are also foundational to reconstructing a more materially focused literary history.

In 1973, Russell Hann and collaborators Gregory Kealey, Linda Kealey, and Peter Warrian recorded a number of archival collections, newspapers, pamphlets, and government documents in their bibliography, *Primary Sources in Canadian Working-Class History 1860–1930*. The compilers position themselves as working to fill in "the blindspots created by the Laurentian approach to Canadian social history" (*Primary Sources* 10), as well as the union-centric focus of much contemporary labour history. Hann et al. reconfigure the "virgin territory" of Canadian geography as the uncharted historiography of the Canadian working class (13), disrupting the received narratives with their imagery. Following on this first attempt, Weinrich's massive 1982 bibliography, *Social Protest from the Left in Canada, 1870–1970*, decisively pushes scholarly consideration of proletarian print beyond the book and the little magazine, taking account of the pamphlet and periodical press as well as government documents and manuscript/archival collections across Canada. Significantly, Weinrich extends the view of this body of material well beyond the 1930s, right up into the moment of labour history's emergence in the 1970s (a formation in which Hann and his collaborators were central participants). In his commentary, Weinrich reflects on the ways in which the

limited survival of proletarian print, ephemeral and materially fragile, belies its actual prevalence; the "survival rate bears no relation whatsoever to its distribution and impact at the time of publication" (x), which has led to an underestimation of the amount of material, and hence a critical underestimation of the role played by particular groups, organizations, and institutions in the political and cultural currency of the 1930s. Bibliographic projects such as these provide an essential resource for recomposing these narratives, tracking the primary sources and material details vital to labour historians and literary historians alike. In particular, by acting as a point of reference as well as an archival directory, the bibliographies of Weinrich and Hann et al. have enabled those scholars engaged in print history to make a particularly generative contribution to re-evaluating the proletarian moment in Canadian literary history.

The labour historians emerging out of this materialist turn have advanced new considerations of class and culture as relevant to history; unsurprisingly, these scholars have also looked to literature as a contributor to this historiography. Bryan Palmer points to Watt's work as a breakthrough for the study of Canadian literary radicalism side-by-side with working-class cultural formations (100). With this new visibility for proletarianism in literature, Palmer identifies a valuable framework for working-class history, particularly in a moment when Canadian history was dominated by much more conservative narratives in the face of Innis's "blind spot" for the influence of labour. Conversely, with Marxist history gaining ground in the subsequent decade, Palmer sends a warning about the appearance of a more

nationalistic literary criticism; this, he says, crowded out class-oriented readings just as they began to appear and obscured the "left underside of the Canadian literary legacy" (104). This critique extends to literary histories as well, if not the body of texts that could conceivably be called a Canadian literature.

The liberal narrative of Canadian literary history has proved to be remarkably elastic, incorporating new forms of identity and hybridity with each successive decade. Liversedge's own memoir places the Trek within the recuperation of a liberal order, rather than as the surge and failure of a radical populist challenge. In this telling, the fact that the Conservatives were "swept into oblivion" (*Recollections* 1963, 174) in the 1935 election is enough of a victory, particularly as questions of unemployment were swept away by the advent of the Second World War, and as the welfare state offered a safety net against the worst impacts of the Depression in the postwar era. Just as Canadian political history after 1935 has been able to subsume the Trek within a narrative of citizenship and state-centric social support, literary history has largely subsumed the proletarian era as the stuttering of an immature Canadian cultural expression. In this, subsumption rather than dialectic, the liberal order and the proletarian challenge operate in entirely different modes. However, it would be a mistake to take subsumption as obliteration: within the liberal order, as McKay and Watt have outlined, a distinct organ of proletarian energy remains. It is my hope that by making the processes that have obscured it more transparent, it will thrive in the light.

Chapter Two

Reading Material as Method

I've often thought of the pamphlet as an emblem for the struggles of 1930s class politics. Much like newsreels of bread lines in the cities or photos of migrant families on parched prairie farms, successive pamphlets take on a sameness that subsumes any individual text into a kind of mass representation. Printed on low-quality pulp paper, with bad type and error-filled copy, the pamphlet physically manifests the poverty of the decade. However, pamphlets are not anachronistic relics: they are shot through with distinctly modern aesthetics in the angular, high-contrast linocut images that decorate their flimsy pages, and the sharp, street-slang language that permeate their screeds. Like workers tied to the conditions of an industrial capitalism that both sustained and crushed them, pamphlets of the 1930s are creatures of modernity even while repudiating its economic, political, and cultural failures.

This tension is key to reading pamphlets and other print objects from the decade, not just as historical remnants but as texts with their own systems of significance. As a form of print, the pamphlet was (and remains) in the domain of

the cheap and the popular, accessible to a wide array of consumers even when they were constrained by economic privation. As a genre of writing, pamphleteering draws upon the rhetoric and imagery of centuries of protest both obliquely and directly to generate a text that is both familiar in pattern and shockingly modern. As practical objects hastily produced and readily circulated, pamphlets were a valuable tool of organizers seeking to draw crowds into marches and rallies, and to link readers to the ongoing work of a political movement. And, as the material residue of the labour of many hands, marked by reflexive signifiers of that labour, pamphlets permit a uniquely proletarian analysis of print as it was produced, circulated, read, and used under a particular set of historical and cultural conditions.

As set out by Philip Gaskell (himself building on the work of W.W. Greg), bibliography offers an entry point for the study of books as material objects. Though my research focuses on non-book material, the "common language" of descriptive practice is especially valuable when situating radical pamphlets within a scholarly discourse on print (322). Certainly, the attention to the work of a book—the labour of paper-making, typesetting, printing, and binding—offers an entry point when considering proletarian texts, for which the labour of production is part of a campaign to reach other labourers (see Gaskell 289). Bibliography, however, maintains a split between book and text: it presumes a dualism of object and meaning as the basis for a unidirectional transmission from page to reader. Gaskell reveals this methodological bias:

> If a group of books is described analytically and in detail, the result may be an investigation of their manufacture and distribution, which can elucidate the transmission of their texts directly and can also increase our understanding of the transmission of other texts of their period. (321)

Although there may be many books, in bibliographical terms, there is only one text. Drawing on both book history and reader ethnographies, however, a proletarian print history is one that gives primacy to the ways in which an object may have been handled and circulated for insight into the ways a given text may have been read and used. This is a non-authoritative approach: each copy of each pamphlet bears signs of a different material trajectory, and each reader makes their own meaning.

Any attempt to record a taxonomy for 1930s pamphlet print is hampered by a serious gap in the history of twentieth-century printing. Most analyses tend to jump from the newspaper press of the late nineteenth century straight to the digital, occasionally stopping off at methods of small-batch duplication (mimeography, carbon copy, photostat, xerography) connected with clerical and office work. Even the small- and private-press printing central to the formal and material experimentation of modernist writers and craftspeople, such as the Kelmscott Press and the Hogarth Press, has been dismissed as irrelevant to considerations of trade printing: "The private-press books were in general idiosyncratic, uneconomical, and unreadable" (Gaskell 285). On the other end of the social scale. there are few records of the kinds of printing technology available

to amateurs, and particularly to groups producing materials on the edges of legality. Commenting on the state of post-war print in 1928, Aldous Huxley identified the gap between machine production and artistic craft, calling in modernist and revolutionary terms for machine-made beauty:

> Machines exist; let us then exploit them to create beauty—a modern beauty, while we are about it. For we live in the twentieth century; let us frankly admit it and not pretend that we live in the fifteenth. The work of the backward-looking hand-printers may be excellent in its way; but its way is not the contemporary way. Their books are often beautiful, but with a borrowed beauty expressive of nothing in the world in which we happen to live. They are also, as it happens, so expensive, that only the very rich can afford to buy them. The printer who makes a fetish of hand-work and medieval craftsmanship, who refuses to tolerate the machine or to make any effort to improve the quality of its output, thereby condemns the ordinary reader to a perpetuity of ugly printing. (Simon and Rodenburg 3)

Admittedly, I am primarily concerned with that "ugly printing," though I am interested in re-casting it as "make-do" work, with its own coherence and aesthetic, recognizable to its own readers and worthy of consideration alongside anything else in the period.

While providing a valuable framework for documenting books and other print as material objects within particular productive parameters, traditional bibliography can be alienated from the social contexts of print and reading. The most thorough model for recovering the movement of a text through its various stages of production, circulation, and reception remains Robert Darnton's

communications circuit. It is highly descriptive, connecting the stages in the life of a text by uncovering as much factual information about the figures, techniques, materials, objects, and places involved with each stage of production and circulation, giving preference to human relations rather than technical processes. The circuit moves through author, publisher, printer (and associated workers in conjunction with suppliers), shipper (and associated workers), bookseller (and associates), to reader, and back to author. The fluidity of Darnton's model enables the roles of various actors to be considered as part of one continuous process, rather than constrained by the imposition of artificial divisions. The model can, I think, be pushed toward a more explicitly class-based analysis by considering each point on the circuit as a collection of individuals organized in the performance of particular kinds of work within the print industry. Furthermore, although Darnton's model was developed to explicate the book as a commodity understandable within systems of capital, wage-labour, and exchange, I have found it equally applicable to print material produced under counter-political conditions. This research is invested in showing how the book's circuit as a commodity can be reinscribed by print produced anonymously or collectively, with machinery shared among organizations, for purposes quite apart from profit. Furthermore, these conditions of production are historically specific, with "history" having the inflection of struggle between oppressor and oppressed. Darnton emphasizes the historicity of the text object by setting within the circuit of a print object a

particular social, political, and legal context that influences the relationship of human actors with a given text as it passes through various stages.

This model works well when considering relationships of production and the various forms of textual work beneath a print object. Adams and Barker's bio-bibliographical approach extends the circuit further by considering the influence and survival of a text as additional key events in the "life of a book" (15). Survival of the text is the issue that has resonated most strongly in the course of this research; my attempt to reconstruct the "life" of any particular text has grappled with the influence of all points of the communications circuit on its survival, and the possibility (and historical fact) of its disappearance at any one of those points. However, each of the points on the cycle is a potential way in—through a person, a place, an institution, or an organization, each of which can often be traced back through multiple, intersecting networks. In tracking these ways and byways, I have made use of a wide range of sources that—while familiar to social and political historians—are not typical to students of literature: police reports and surveillance records, legal statutes, postal archives, data and correspondence relating to civic relief programs, land-use planning maps, oral history interviews, and photographs. In doing so, I am greatly indebted to the work of others for making these resources accessible, most notably historians such as Kealey and Whitaker, bibliographers such as Weinrich, archivists at the City of Edmonton, Provincial Archives of Alberta, and Library and Archives Canada, as well as special collection librarians in Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, and Ottawa. If, as E.P. Thompson has

argued, class is a process, so too is the reconstructed history of the working class as a set of movements and relationships, physical and political. These connections pass through particular places and accrue within particular institutions, while also, in some cases, evading documentation altogether. Accepting that such recovery does not promise a complete or even necessarily an accurate depiction of history, I choose instead to characterize my work with many of the texts discussed in this research as acts of speculative historiography.

D. F. McKenzie captures this sense of a print object as a site for continued negotiation: far from being fixed by its material form, the use and interpretation of the text-object is constantly being re-made. He identifies a stress point in how bibliographers and literary critics use the concept of *text*: on one side, is the "authorially sanctioned, contained, and historically definable" text, while on the other is the "always incomplete" text that exists in open relationship to its interpreters—readers, performers, or audiences (55). Certainly, this is a commentary on the discipline itself, marking the shift in bibliography from questions of authority to questions of social and technical relationships. However, it also captures some of the difficulty of placing proletarian texts into conversation with those considered to be more conventionally literary. As printed objects, materials such as pamphlets are distinctly unsanctioned: they are largely without authorial attribution, either as an act of concealment or a gesture to collectivity, conditions which are incompatible with establishing master texts or copyrights.

Furthermore, as these texts are assigned criminal status, they are censured by the state and made inaccessible to other institutions like libraries and classrooms.[10]

We see also in McKenzie's double-barrelled idea of text a shift from external critical judgments to more relational uses: historical bibliography here moves from things done *to* texts to things done *with* texts. As discursive objects, proletarian materials actively refuse the sanctions granted to literary texts, operating instead from a place of incompleteness that requires audience participation. This is in part ideological. The Marxist narrative of history is one of tending toward a yet-to-be-realized revolution: the job of the reader, directed by the pamphlet, is to bring it in to being. To that extent, the text is also organizational. Pamphlets, periodicals, handbills and other highly mobile forms of print are central tools in organizing political movements, particularly when access to other means of mass communication are limited. In this sense, print supplements oratory and assembly, capturing speeches for absent listeners, and permitting readers to imagine absent crowds both past and future.

The types of print produced by the various formations of the radical Canadian Left through the 1930s have proven to be tightly interwoven. Not only do the print materials I consider share authors (individual and organizational), places and methods of production, graphic elements, and general styles and formats, they often have intersecting paths of circulation as well. I would suggest

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[10] Not for nothing, some of my research into pamphlets and periodicals took place within the "restricted" rooms of national archives and repositories.

that pamphlets form the core of this exchange as more substantive texts that come to incorporate and refer back to other materials, both more periodical and more occasional. Laurel Brake zeroes in on some of these characteristics of the pamphlet as a form of print culture in circulation with other print formats as well as with forms of speech. Though her focus is on nineteenth century pamphleteering, she puts forward a number of propositions that I think are continuous into the twentieth century interwar period, at least in terms of format and bibliographical considerations. Brake distinguishes pamphlets from other print forms based on this dialogic quality, which manifests itself in what she calls their "revelation, disclosure, and evident participation in *networks*" (4). She works through the perpetual problem of definition by way of contrast: as she considers why a pamphlet is neither a book nor a periodical, Brake sets out some of the material and political conditions that govern its production. She notes questions around format and mediation which make pamphlets incompatible with newspaper publication (10), though many of the titles I consider were produced in the same shops as party newspapers. Further questions revolve more around points of access, including connections to local networks of writers and publishers as well as existing campaigns and issues of public concern (11), though anonymity and censorship are equally driving forces for choice in methods and venues of publication. Audience access, in terms of price, is a significant factor: a cheap pamphlet is more available to working-class readers than a book, and doesn't require the ongoing commitment of a subscription (11). Conversely, the ability to

produce pamphlets quickly and in large quantities could often mean more assured income to organizations than more time- and capital-intensive publications. Lastly, in terms of historical record, pamphlets are often separate from conventional markers of time. Lacking the precise date stamps of newspapers and other periodicals, they can be hard to place, either by simple omission, or by deliberate strategy (12-13). Often, the pamphlets can be dated only by internal evidence, requiring a familiarity with contemporary events and references that does lend the text a certain immersive immediacy. However, from the point of view of sale and circulation, the absence of a date also creates a perpetual immediacy. As pamphlets form the back catalogue of a party's material, or fill out the shelves of a newsstand, they do not become stale; and, more significantly, the cause they advance does not slip from view.

These factors distinguish and animate pamphlet circulation from other forms of print, but they are also notable challenges to tracing a complete or consistent history of particular texts. To further the study of pamphlets and other such ephemera, Brake emphasizes the importance of "[f]inding or creating the most complete texts of pamphlets, in order to accrue paratextual material from more than a single copy if necessary" (12). Certainly, the methods of bibliographical description I have applied to the pamphlets and other proletarian materials in this work take paratext as essential to documenting any individual text. As well, each text is illuminated more brightly when considered against others in a given network, just as the network becomes more complex and offers more

possibilities for discovery with every additional text connected to it. Because print history works best with concrete case studies, I will now turn to a set of pamphlets that illustrate the concerns highlighted above while also offering lively examples of the material available to Canadian proletarian readers.

The Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series

The Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series, produced haphazardly by the Communist Party of Canada through 1930-1931, offers an intriguing set of questions not fully answerable by any of the pamphlets in isolation. With its variant sizes, formats, authors, prices, and styles awkwardly crammed under one series heading, this group of texts illustrates some of the challenges to the study of pamphlets as both a form of print and a genre of text. The designation of "series" might suggest that the set of titles produced under that heading form a connected sequence, or, at the very least, that they share a common set of characteristics. However, this group seems to be united by series title alone: not only do the pamphlets lack any consistent format, appearance, or identification of basic bibliographic details (author, publisher, location, date), but the series of "Workers' Pamphlets" is not even consistently Canadian, as the texts show writers, graphics, and blocks of text imported from American and British sources. It is unclear how the pamphlets came to be labelled as a series, but the five pamphlets are internally identified as such, with each having the series title and a number printed as part of its paratext. Significantly, the series is also named institutionally, as the pamphlets appear as a group in a list of items seized for criminal investigation; the series label

is further enforced by libraries and archives using this seized list as a basis for finding aids and other documentation.

The first official record of the Workers' Pamphlet Series comes as part of a collection of documents deposited by the Attorney-General of Ontario at the Provincial Archives of Ontario. This collection is comprised of "all or most" of the documents seized by the RCMP in the August 1931 raids on the headquarters of the Communist Party of Canada (Angus 388), and it is publicly accessible as part of the file "Communist Party of Canada materials seized for the trial of Tim Buck" (RG 4-32, File 3188/1931). The AGO material was incorporated into the Communist Party Collection held at Library and Archives Canada. The finding aid to this fonds, dating to 1962, clearly identifies five pamphlets belonging to the Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series, without indicating their series numbers, dates, or any other bibliographic details (23). This does, however, indicate that the pamphlets were all published before the date of the raids. The series, as defined first by the AGO and then LAC, consists of: (1) "Steps to Power," by Tim Buck; (2) "The Triumph of Socialism in the Soviet Union"; (3) "Fight or Starve!," by Stewart Smith; (4) "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party" (Canada); and (5) "Bennett's Starvation Budget."

The first pamphlet, "Steps to Power," by Tim Buck, assuredly should not be a part of this series at all. Whereas the others in the list prominently display the series title on their covers, "Steps to Power" has no marks to indicate this whatsoever: there is no series title listed, and the pamphlet has a very different

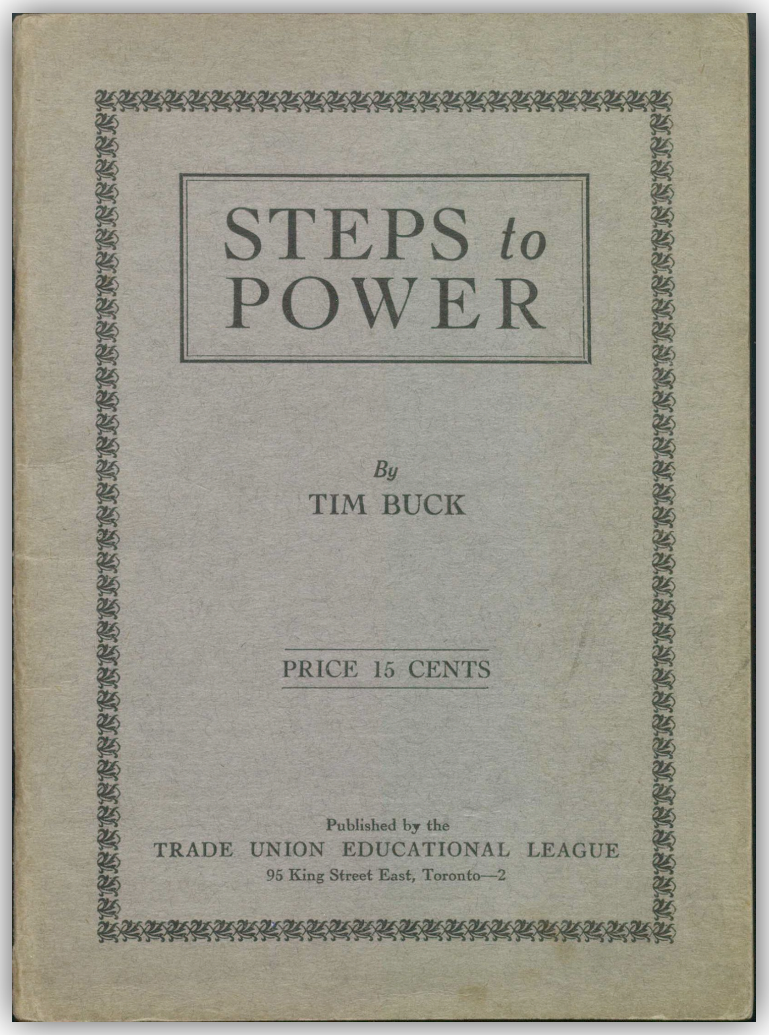

Figure 2.1. Tim Buck, "Steps to Power"

Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto

appearance than the rest (see Figure 2.1). It is much longer than the others, at 62 pages in duodecimo format. It is also more expensive, selling for 15 cents, while the rest are priced at 10 cents. It has no interstitial or cover illustrations; the only decoration is a narrow embellished border on its blue-grey card cover. The cover indicates that it was produced by the Canadian section of the Trade Union Educational League, based in Toronto, and the inside back cover further lists the

organization's "Program of Action." The TUEL was an American group seeking to advance the militant industrial union movement by educating and organizing activists within established unions (marxists.org). The organization developed ties to Canada through participation in mining strikes in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Most American TUEL pamphlets are authored by William Z. Foster, the TUEL's founder. AMICUS identifies "Steps to Power" as the only Canadian title, though a short-lived periodical, *Left Wing*, was produced by the TUEL in Toronto from 1924-26. Although Buck rose to prominence as the leader of the Communist Party of Canada through the 1920s to the 1940s, the pamphlet speaks of communism in the philosophic sense, and of radicalism, and the "left-wing," but not of the Communist Party directly; the other pamphlets in the series wear their Communist badges prominently. Though there is no publication date on the pamphlet itself, the timeline of the TUEL indicates that the organization changed its name by 1929 and folded early in the next decade. Weinrich gives a date of 1925, which seems reasonable in context (98). Given the comparatively early publication date, it is likely that this pamphlet was misidentified by AGO, police, or others, who may have grouped it with the rest of the seized material based on Buck's authorship.

The second pamphlet listed in the LAC records is "The Triumph of Socialism in the Soviet Union," which is identified on its cover as "Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series, No. 1" (see Figure 2.2). No author is given; rather, the cover states that the pamphlet is "Issued by the Communist Party of Canada." It is

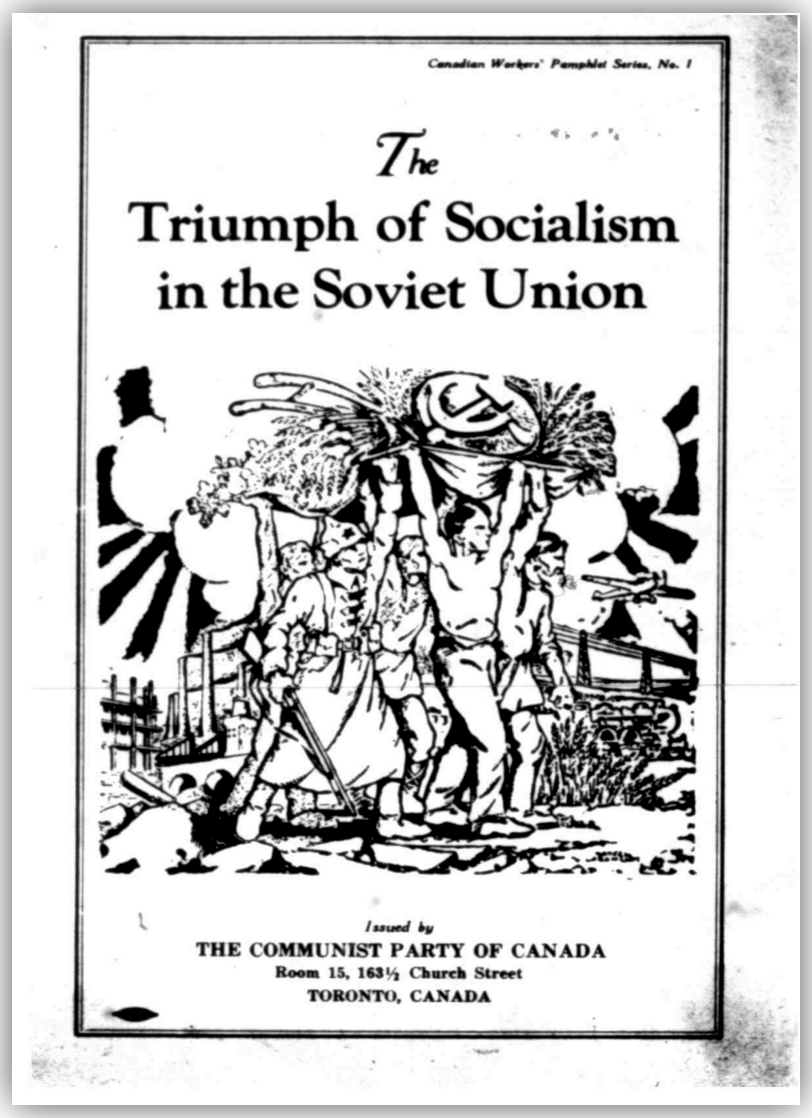

Figure 2.2. Communist Party of Canada, "The Triumph of Socialism in the Soviet Union"

Source: W.C. Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University

20 pages in octavo, staple-bound, and priced at 10 cents. It is comparatively well produced, with a union bug and a finely detailed engraved illustration on the cover and a photograph of Lenin reproduced as the frontispiece. The cover image shows a group of workers, including one figure wearing the uniform of the Red Army, holding aloft a sheaf of grain and a plow bearing the hammer-and-sickle insignia.

We can assume a publication date of 1930 based on the introduction, which is dated "Toronto, Ontario, January 5, 1930" (1). The back pages are printed with advertisements for *The Worker*, the CPC's weekly newspaper, and for another pamphlet, the "Programme of the Communist International," produced by Toronto's Worker Publishing Co. (inside back cover). These ads, which indicate that these three organizations share an address, mark out in paratext the shared material spaces of the Canadian Left, in a practice that is ubiquitous in proletarian publications of the period. Indeed, the publisher, located in Room 14, 163 1/2 Church Street (inside back cover), is directly next to CPC headquarters, in Room 15 (cover).

In terms of content, "The Triumph of Socialism in the Soviet Union" gives a highly propagandistic account of the Bolshevik Revolution while setting out in general the principles of Leninism. Other pamphlets in the series do not deal so explicitly with the Revolution as a historical event, or with the ongoing political factionalism of the USSR. I read this as an attempt to capture recent history for a Canadian audience, rather than speaking to or constituting a body of workers directly. The connection to Canada is very tenuous: only the introduction has any specific Canadian location, while the remaining six references to Canada in the body of the text are all descriptors in phrases like "the Canadian workers" (14) and "the Canadian boss class" (16). This may be an indicator that the pamphlet was produced, with minor substitutions, from another text. The use of boilerplate in such a manner will be further discussed below.

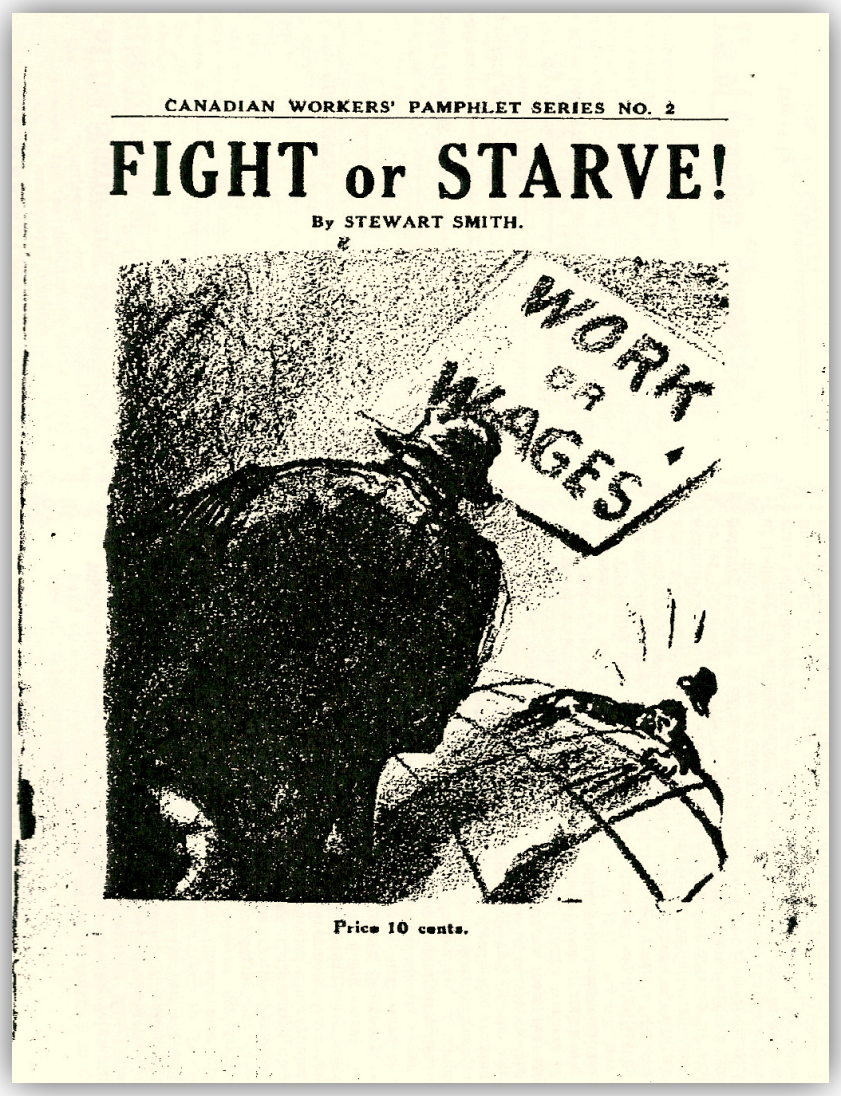

Figure 2.3. Stewart Smith, "Fight or Starve!" Cover.

Source: W.A.C. Bennett Library, Simon Fraser University

The third pamphlet, "Fight or Starve!" by Stewart Smith, is identified as "Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series, No. 2" on the cover (see Figure 2.3). It is 24 pages in octavo, priced at 10 cents. The series title is prominently set across the top of the cover above the title and a sketched illustration. Based on the "To the Reader" introduction, it can be dated to April, 1930 (3). Like the other pamphlets

produced by the CPC, the inside back cover is given over to ads for other Communist-affiliated publications. Under the slogan "Read As You Fight," the first ad lists two other titles from the Workers' Pamphlet Series (without indicating the series), as well as the Programme of the Communist International and an edition of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (23). These all share the same Toronto publisher, the Workers Publishing Association. Searches of both AMICUS and WorldCat return only the pamphlets in this series and *The Worker*, which suggests that the publishing arm of the CPC ceased to present itself as a distinct entity very early in the 1930s. Indeed, the second ad, which is an application form for membership in the Communist Party of Canada, shows that there was little separation even in this early period.

It is unusual among CPC pamphlets to have an attributed author other than top party leadership (i.e., Tim Buck); however, the identification of Stewart Smith permits us to add some biographical and formational details into the series's communications circuit at the producer end. Smith's name is highly significant, particularly at this stage of Canadian radicalism, which saw a schism between factions within the CPC. Smith, having been a student at the Lenin School in Moscow, returned to head the agitprop department of the Communist Party of Canada (Angus 255). From this position, Smith would have effectively also been head of its publishing arm: he is publishing his own works here. Ian Angus has suggested that Smith's official Party role, as well as the position of his father A.E. Smith at the head of the affiliated Canadian Labor Defense League, gave greater

status to his texts (170-1). Smith's connection to Moscow signals the emerging dominance of Third Period Comintern policy within Canadian radical publishing in the early part of the decade, especially before the founding of the Workers Arts Club in 1932, which produced more multidisciplinary works from a more diverse group of writers and artists. Notably, Third Period policy opposed cooperation with more moderate socialist parties like the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a move that was reversed by 1935 with the advent of a broader Popular Front strategy. In "Fight or Starve!" Smith maintains a militant tone against both the "slimy-tongued apostles of Canadian 'prosperity'" (4) and the "reformist 'laborites'" (3) alike, but the content of his text is throughly and unmistakably Canadian as he draws on national statistics, skewers politicians and labour organizations, and promotes emergent radical movements drawn from the immediate Canadian context.

The next pamphlet, "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party," is labelled as "Canadian Workers' Pamphlet Series, No. 3" on its cover (see Figure 2.4). It is smaller in format at 16 pages in duodecimo, and set in very small, tightly-spaced type broken up by larger and more distinctive section headings. It is staple-bound, with simple paper covers, and priced on the low end of the scale at 5 cents. The front cover is distinctively illustrated, with a burly worker in a cap and blacksmith's apron holding a hammer and sickle while leaning on a large star that hovers over an anvil with an industrial city just visible in the background. The image appears to be continuous with the hand-lettered title, rather than having two

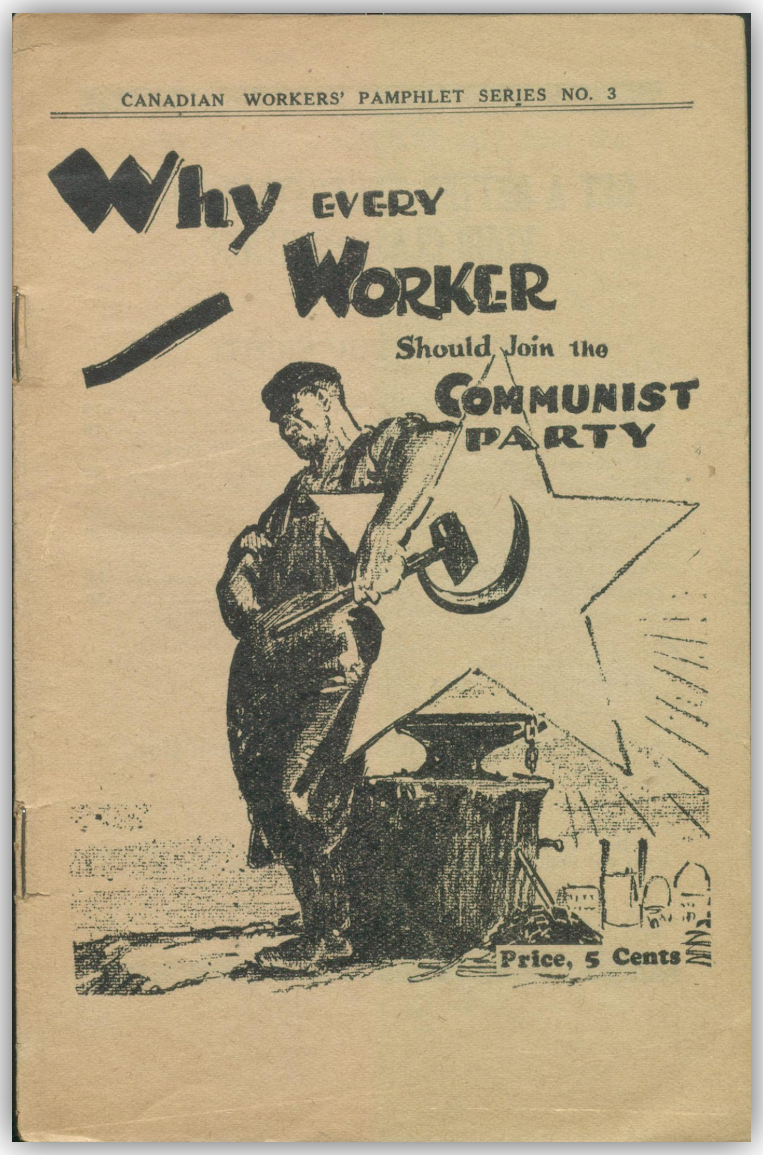

Figure 2.4. Communist Party of Canada, "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party." Cover.

Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto

separate elements for graphic and type. The inside cover indicates this pamphlet was published in June 1930 by the Workers' Publishing Association, now located at 650 Bay Street in Toronto. Like "Fight or Starve!" the inside cover lists a selection of titles to "Read As You Fight!" (2). The back cover shows two subscription

blanks, apparently intended to be detached and mailed in: one for membership in the Communist Party, and one for the CPC's weekly paper, *The Worker* (16). The latter publication pointedly emphasizes the necessity of the reader to "Do your bit!" as *The Worker* "is not subsidized by the banks and larger corporations like the reformist papers" (16). Baldly, the pamphlet is a recruiting tool, setting out the structures and commitments of the party as the text works up to directly hailing the reader, rhetorically turning "the worker" into a specific "you" (10). Most significantly, this pamphlet has a direct American analogue: a US version of "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party" also exists. Reading the two together offers a wealth of information about how such pamphlets were put together, as well as patterns of circulation and imagined reading practices.

I have been able to examine copies of both the US and Canadian versions of "Why You Should Join the Communist Party," both of which are held as part of the Robert S. Kenny Collection at the University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Library. Materially, they differ. The US pamphlet is even smaller than the Canadian, just under 18mo in size, with 32 pages on rough, thick paper (see Figure 2.5). Both are distinctive for their cover illustrations, which are linked by the style of drawing and especially by the title lettering, which match up. The similarity in lettering suggests that the word blocks are reproduced from the same originals, but aligned differently to fit each cover. Another clue to their connection is the list of other publications released by the Workers' Publishing Association printed inside the Canadian pamphlet: these are mainly American, with the exception of Stewart

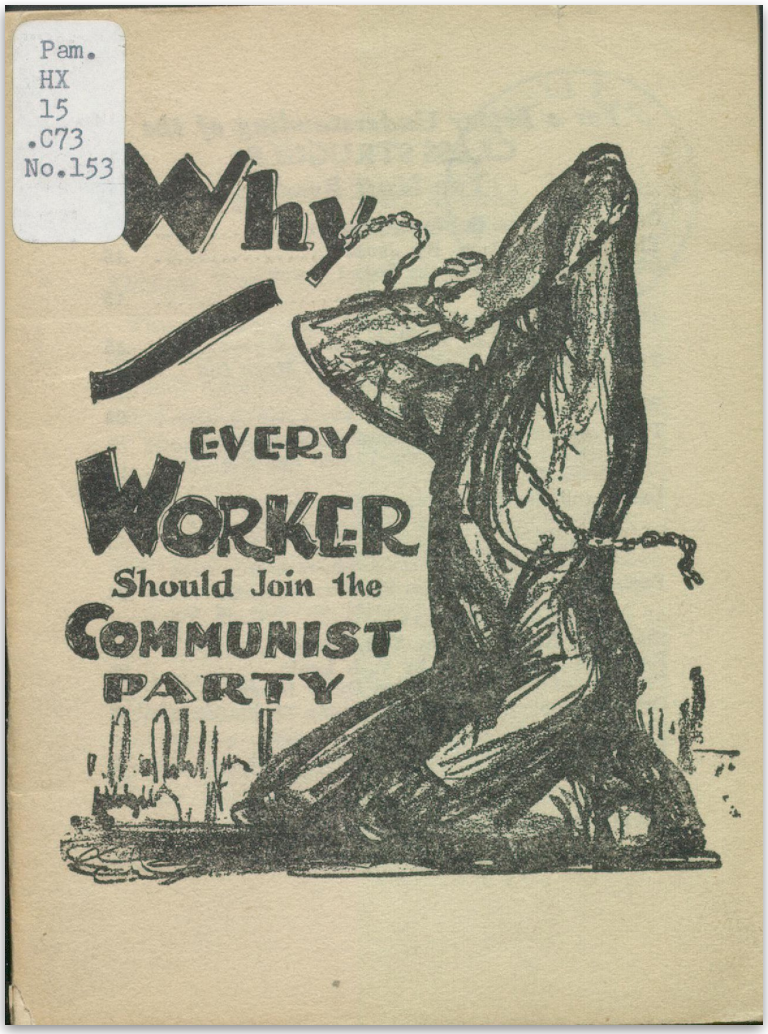

Figure 2.5. Communist Party of the U.SA., "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party." Cover.

Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto

Smith's "Fight or Starve!" whereas the other pamphlets in the Canadian series list other Canadian titles. Generally, I have found Canadian radical pamphlets represent and continually re-emphasize their own local networks and affiliates in such paratextual material.

The major point of convergence is in the text itself. The Canadian pamphlet contains much denser text, with twice as many words on the page as the US pamphlet, very closely set in small type. Conversely, the US pamphlet is much more readable: the text is larger, with wider line spacing and wider margins. Adding to its appeal, the US pamphlet also has six large illustrations (full- or half-page) distributed through the text to visually emphasize the recruitment effort (see Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6. Communist Party of the U.SA., "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party." Detail.

The Canadian content is almost identical to the US version, down to section headings, with examples and references swapped out for different national referents. The use of boilerplate in political materials such as these is certainly not

unique, especially in the Comintern era; however, the text's movement from American to Canadian parties, with an attendant change in references to and examples of current events, heroes and villains, court cases and legislation, is surprisingly fine-tuned. For example, the American strike at Gastonia, which is referenced throughout the US pamphlet, is replaced variously by references to strikes in Hamilton, Port Arthur, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Montreal. Political systems are exchanged, with Democrats and Republicans becoming Liberals and Conservatives. American prisons are switched for provincial relief camps, forcing comparisons between state power over criminality and the criminalization of aid.

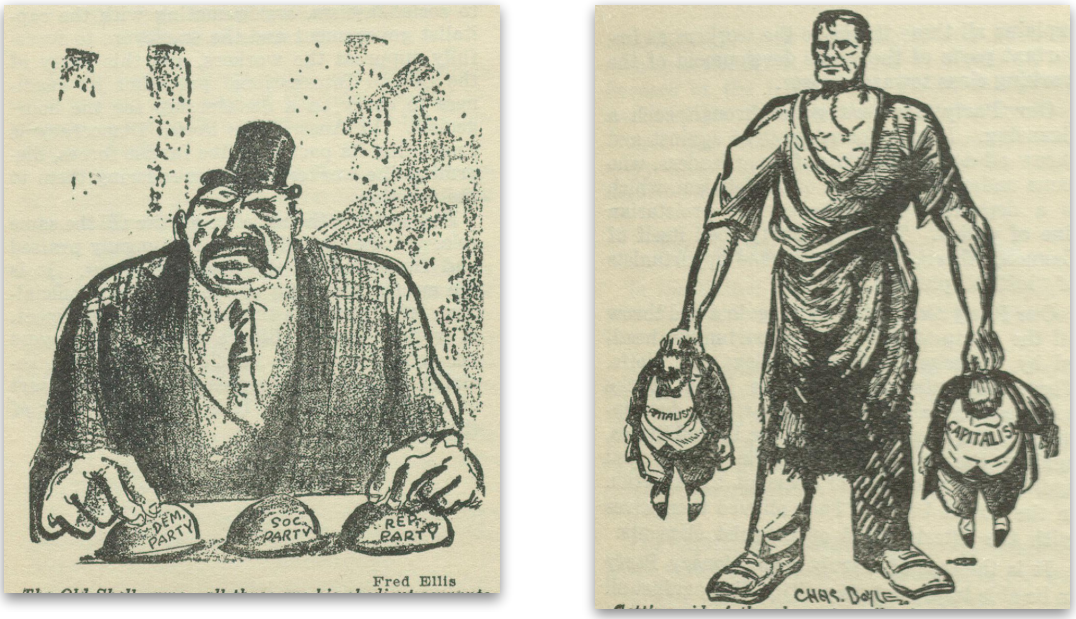

Figure 2.7. Communist Party of the U.SA., "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party." Detail. (Ellis - L, Boyle - R)

Given the greater size and reach of the American radical movement,[11] its pamphlets tend to be better documented, which can help to identify some aspects of the Canadian material as well. Bernard Johnpoll's 1994 annotated collection of over 100 facsimile reprints in eight volumes, *A Documentary History of the Communist*

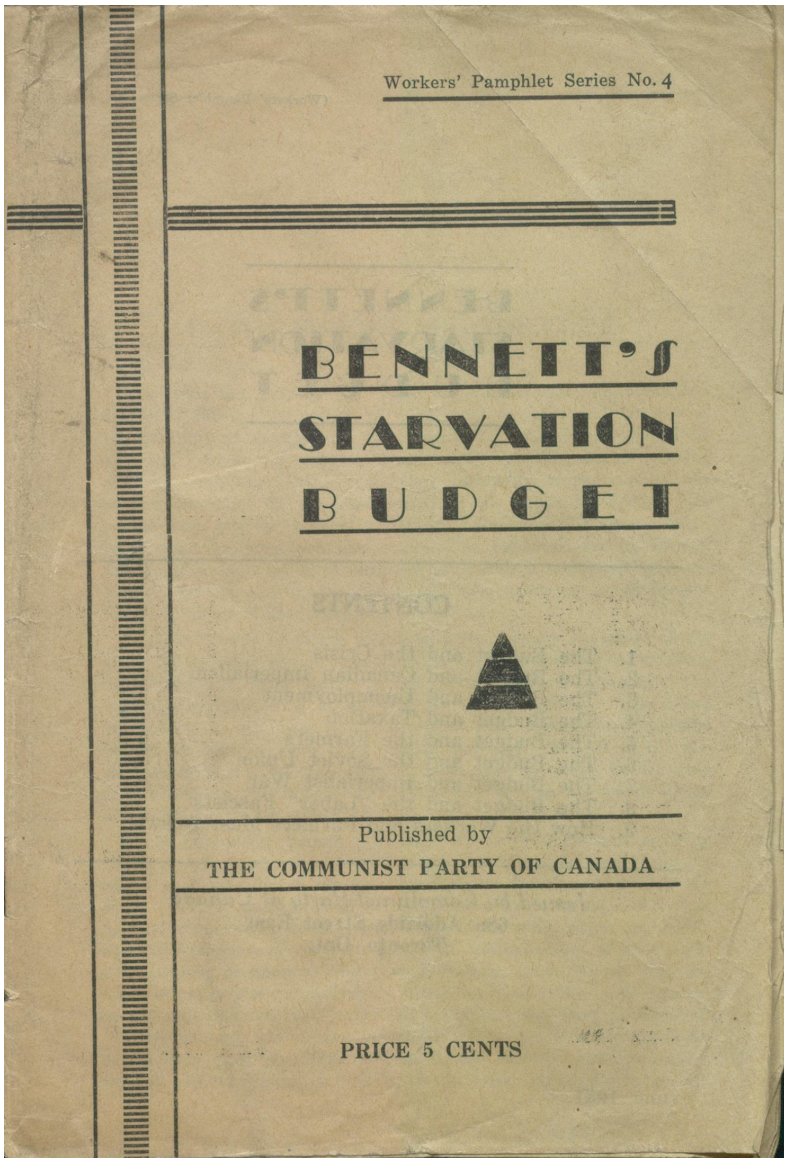

Figure 2.8. Communist Party of Canada, "Bennett's Starvation Budget." Cover.
Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto

[11] For in-depth accounts of radicalism and American writing during the 1930s, see Denning in *The Cultural Front,* and Wald.

Party of the United States, reproduces a number of Party documents and pamphlet publications. He dates the US version of "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party" to 1930, making it contemporaneous with the Canadian version. In describing this text, Johnpoll cites it as an example of the "new

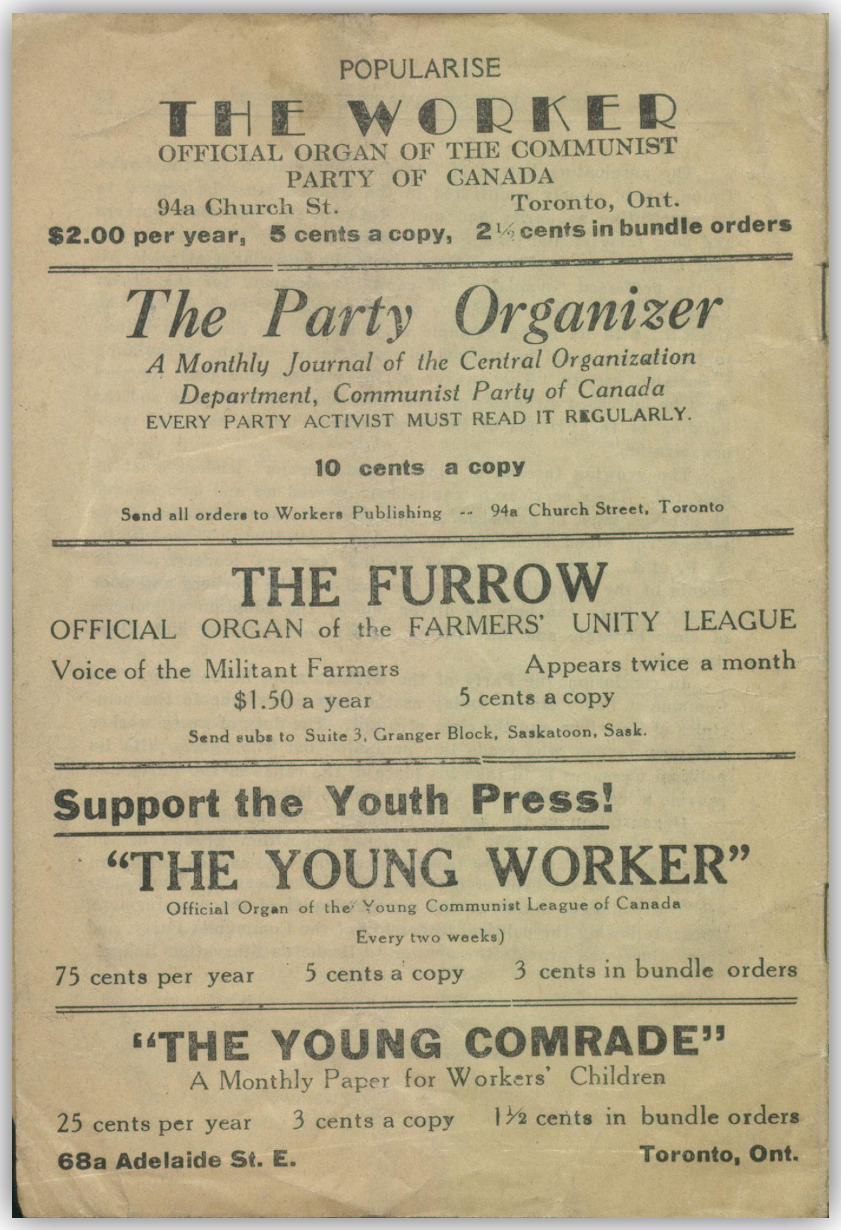

Figure 2.9. "Bennett's Starvation Budget." Back cover.

rhetorically militant line" of the Communist Party following the ejection of its "deviationist" majority and Trotskyist factions (295). Echoing the divisiveness represented by Stewart Smith's entry in the Workers' Pamphlet Series, the Communist Party of the USA saw the loss of members due to the denunciations of these splinter groups. As such, Johnpoll suggests that the American pamphlet was intended to win back these former members and to recruit new ones. In his notes, he identifies the illustrations in the US pamphlets as "classic examples of Communist polemic art" by "two of the most able Communist cartoonists," Fred Ellis and Charles (Chas) Boyle (295). Indeed, the images, reprinted for the Canadian pamphlet, were my own means of identifying the connection between the texts. The sketched style of the figures of the workers on each version of the pamphlet suggests the cover images are by Fred Ellis. Boyle's work features bolder lines and heightened visual contrast as compared to Ellis's more charcoal-like style (see Figure 2.7).

The last pamphlet identified in the official records as part of the series, "Bennett's Starvation Budget," is again a variant format wedged into the set. Although it is published by the CPC and labelled as "Workers' Pamphlet Series No. 4" on the cover, the "Canadian" has been dropped from the series title (see Figure 2.8). It is 16 pages in duodecimo format, selling for just 5 cents. This pamphlet has no illustrations, but does feature a modern aesthetic on its cover, which has linear decorations and stylish type. The back cover advertises five different Communist-affiliated periodical, suggesting that the Party's publication

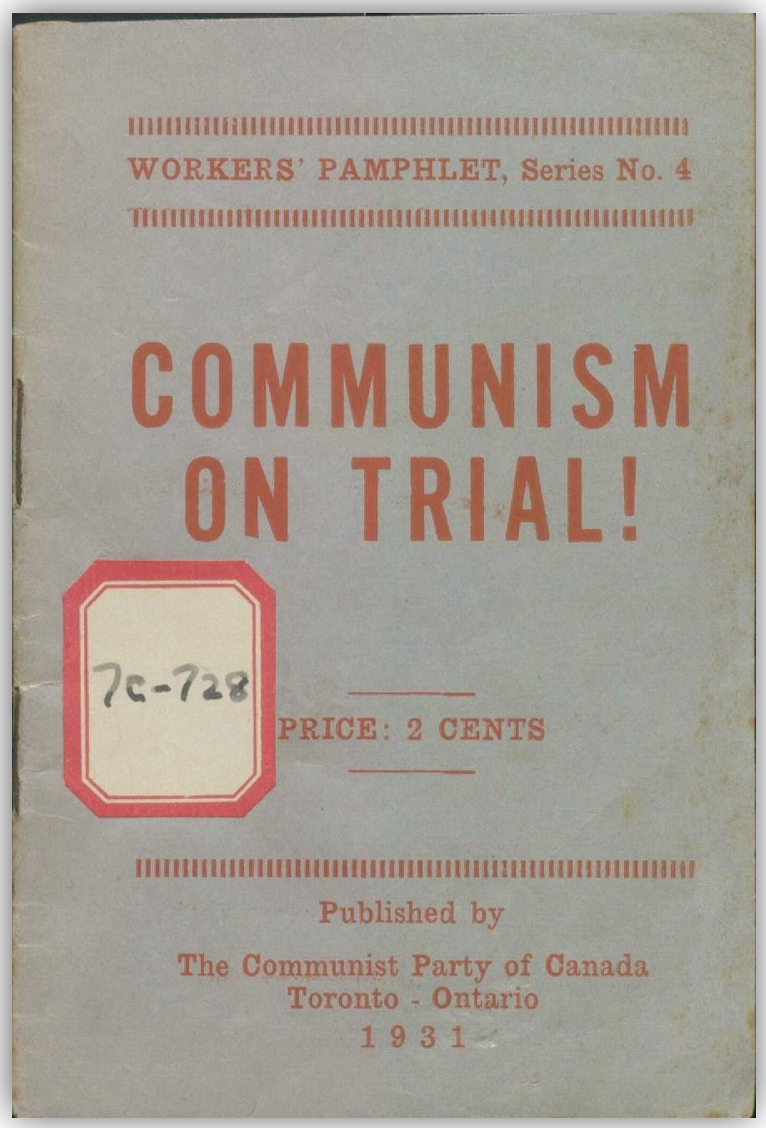

Figure 2.10. Communist Party of Canada, "Communism on Trial!" Cover.

Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto.

capacity was increasing (see Figure 2.9). As well, the titles and descriptions indicate that the intended audience was diversifying: in addition to the stalwart official organ *The Worke*r, there are now publications aimed at activists (*The Party Organizer*), farmers (*The Furrow*), youth (*The Young Worker*), and children (*The Young Comrade*). Furthermore, the geographical reach of the Party seems also to be increasing

outside of major urban centres; though the other periodicals are based in Toronto, *The Furrow* appears to be based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. With a publication date of June 1931 (2), "Bennett's Starvation Budget" is a specific and timely response to the federal budget released by R.B. Bennett's Conservative government on 1 June 1931. In its focus on the Depression's effects of hunger and starvation in the cities, as well as crop failures and decreased payments to farmers, the text makes an explicit attempt to unite the urban unemployed with rural agricultural workers—a struggle that would continue throughout the radical Left's organizing work throughout the decade.

"Communism on Trial!" another CPC-produced pamphlet dating from 1931, also identifies itself as "Workers' Pamphlet Series No. 4," though it is not listed as part of the series in either of the official records. Weinrich does note that both this text and "Bennett's Starvation Budget" are labelled with the same series number, but offers no additional reason for this (118). It again varies from the other pamphlets in the set, in that it is much smaller, only 32mo, and cheaper, priced at 2 cents (see Figure 2.10). The pagination is particularly odd: while none of the pamphlets in the set have a regular number of pages (i.e., 16 pages in octavo, 24 pages in duodecimo, etc.), "Communism on Trial!" at 32 pages is cut to half a sheet, but the last four of these are blank. In a period when other radical Canadian publications stretched their limited material resources to the greatest economy by stuffing every blank space with text and heavily advertising sister publications, this seems to be a wasted opportunity. While the body of the pamphlet is

unembellished text, it is distinguished by its cover of blue paper printed with red ink. In terms of content, "Communism on Trial!" marks a pivot away from arguments linking general Communist principles to an analysis of Canadian federal politics to a focused, issue-driven campaign. The pamphlet opens with a statement on the 11 August raid, an event notable for the seizures of property and arrests that followed. The careful explanation of Section 98, the relevant part of the Criminal Code of Canada, including its origins as an Order-in-Council first drafted during the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919 and later solidified as part of the War Measures Act in 1921 (3-4), suggests that this may be intended as an introduction to the law for readers. This pamphlet is one of the earliest CPC texts to take up Canadian law, and Section 98 in particular, so centrally. In the chapters that follow, I will consider the key role this law played in the organizing strategies of the party, and how it dominated the rhetoric and imagery of Canadian radical print until mid-decade. However, in this context, both the variant form and sharp shift in content, suggest to me that this pamphlet does not fit within the "Workers' Pamphlet Series," even as the apparent unit of the series was itself constituted by the CPC raid. Without any record of other titles in a possible parallel series, "Communism on Trial!" is an orphan, but also a forerunner of similar texts to come.

Typologies of Proletarian Print

The materials that I consider to be within the proletarian orbit can broadly be separated into three categories based on publication type and quality (though of

course there are overlaps, sometimes even within the same item): professional, amateur, and quasi-printed. Weinrich offers a very open definition of "publication" when documenting material from this period, focused primarily around circulation; I find it equally useful to assume "anything that appears to have found its way intentionally outside a restricted group" (xi) constitutes publication. By "professional," I mean material produced by the publishing arms of organizations such as the Communist Party (and other political parties), the Canadian Labor Defense League, or the Workers' Unity League, and material produced by established presses, such as the Pioneer Press in Edmonton. All of the pamphlets in the Workers' Pamphlet Series described above fall into this category, as denoted by paratextual elements—publishers' marks and addresses, publication lists, introductory notes, or union bugs.[12] The union bug, in particular, gives some indication of professional or craft printers' involvement. The elements of these pamphlets: differentiated headings and body text, regularity of page layouts, running headers, and inset illustrations, as well as the rather quick turnaround time between events and publication dates, suggests fairly sophisticated machinery was available to these organizations. Rotary presses and machine-set type are likely; as Gaskell indicates, "hot-metal composing machines were used everywhere" by the interwar period (288), and used Linotype machines would not be hard to come by.

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[12] A union bug is a small mark or emblem, usually displayed on the cover or inside cover of a publication, used to indicate that it was printed by unionized labour. Each union local or print shop had its own mark. To my knowledge, there is no reference list or database of union bugs: this would be immeasurably helpful in compiling and sharing information about the labour contained within print objects, much in the way that colophons and watermarks have been collected and used in traditional book history.

As indicated by the ubiquitous list of of publications on the back cover of the pamphlets (see, for example, "Bennett's Starvation Budget," which lists five), the CPC and its affiliated organizations also produced daily and weekly newspapers. This output suggests access to larger presses and more materials, which, in turn, would have enabled larger press runs for the pamphlet titles.

In the ways that pamphlet print in the 1930s is produced by organizations involved in multiple and rapidly-shifting textual endeavours, it has more in common with job printing than with the typical publishing trade. Neither book nor periodical press, Lisa Gitelman describes job printing as "a porous category used to designate commercial printing on contract," producing objects neither strictly textual nor graphic (24). Originally, jobbing was a necessary component of print houses, used to keep costly machinery running near-constantly; then, it became a sideline of newspaper offices, which had the ability to run larger formats cheaply. Increasingly, job printing became a distinct trade, utilizing technological developments that allowed for more nimble adaptation to a range of project types, such as smaller platen presses, more standardized block elements and type, reflecting the increasing specialization of print work (along with other industrial trades) into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As it developed, job printing was connected to networks of mercantile exchange and of state bureaucracy through the printing of materials essential to the functional flow of capital: accounting ledgers, lading bills, catalogues, and an endless succession of forms. However, job printing also manifests in less official—even counterpublic—channels

through the multitude of printed objects of everyday life: posters, handbills, tickets, membership cards. These ephemera produced by job printing, and the process of production itself, are a focal point for "the site of surplus meanings otherwise left out by the history of communication as well as by 'print culture studies' or 'the history of the book'" (Gitelman 25), a site which also must include proletarian materials.

The second type of proletarian print I have considered is what I will call "amateur," describing pamphlets, newspapers and other periodicals that are badly printed and haphazardly reproduced. These tend to be produced by smaller, more localized groups, operating with far fewer resources and certainly with far less extensive networks than an organization like the CPC, which had a national structure and membership. The format and appearance of these materials indicate the use of different production methods, such as mimeograph rather than typeset print, and letter-sized paper stapled together rather than full sheets that have been gathered and cut. Just as the smaller platen presses that enabled job printing to develop broke the dominance of large presses on the print industry (Gitelman 51-3), the emergence of duplication machines tied to clerical work, such as the mimeograph, at the end of the nineteenth century allowed amateur publishers to sidestep the print house to an ever-increasing degree. *The Leader*, a publication produced by the Edmonton section of the Communist Party in 1935 and 1936, exemplifies the distinction between professional and amateur proletarian print. There appear to be only two issues of this title, and both are badly written, badly

typed, and badly printed. Though issue no. 1 (April 1935) and issue no. 2 (May 1936) have a year between them, they maintain the same format: 10-12 pages of letter-sized paper, mimeographed, and stapled between coloured-paper covers. The copy appears in a single block, with no columns or distinct headings. The only illustration is hand drawn, "with apologies to Avrom" (1: 10).[13] Most significantly, the Edmonton section maintains a distance from the unnamed contributors, disavowing any editorial intervention: "Most of the contributors have a message for you and know how to present it (straight from the shoulder) without any intervention from us" (2: 11). By framing the text as a direct conduit from impassioned writer to the reader, *The Leader* plays into the critical trope of proletarian writing as unsophisticated—in this case, claiming lack of sophistry as a virtue. Claims of direct truth, however, obscure the many layers of labour that go into constructing a pamphlet, whether that obscurantism is deliberate or simply dismissive.

By referring to print of this type as "amateur," I do not intend to mark it out as being of lesser importance than the professional organizational print considered alongside it. To a certain extent, the committed labour of ordinary, non-specialist workers is part of the ethos of self-education and collective practice, turning a disadvantage into an asset, as well as an opportunity for grassroots

[13] Referring to Avrom Yanofsky, whose distinctive linocut graphics were heavily featured in the Toronto publications of the CPC, Canadian Labor Defense League, and Progressive Arts Club.

training and practice.[14] Indeed, the looseness of the groups producing this print, the unvarnished and heavily political language of the writing, and the material qualities of final outcome are just a more pronounced version of the features that define proletarian print overall. These markers of "badness" are indicative of the legal, economic, and cultural precarity of proletarian texts during the 1930s. *The Leader*, like other periodicals (*Masses*, *Canadian Labor Defender*, *The Worke*r) and the Workers' Pamphlet Series shows the unstable circumstances of its production through its paratextual elements, including ever-changing headers and mastheads, notices of changed addresses and personnel, and pages dominated by subscription blanks. The precarity of this body of print is reflective of the instability of the organizations that produced it, and especially of its readers, who were often transient, fearful, and not necessarily highly literate in English. Similarly, the very periodicity of the periodical or serial form is frequently interrupted by missing issues, missing dates, format shifts, and repeated content, signalling the difficulty of maintaining regular output. The apparent sloppiness of these materials is frequently applied by critics as a judgement of value—taking in one fell swoop the value of the materials, their producers, and their readers. However, it is important to read the error-filled pages of proletarian print as another set of material evidence, and by extension, textual signifiers. Reading precarity on the page allows us to recast error as a signal of realism and recognition; the radical periodicals of

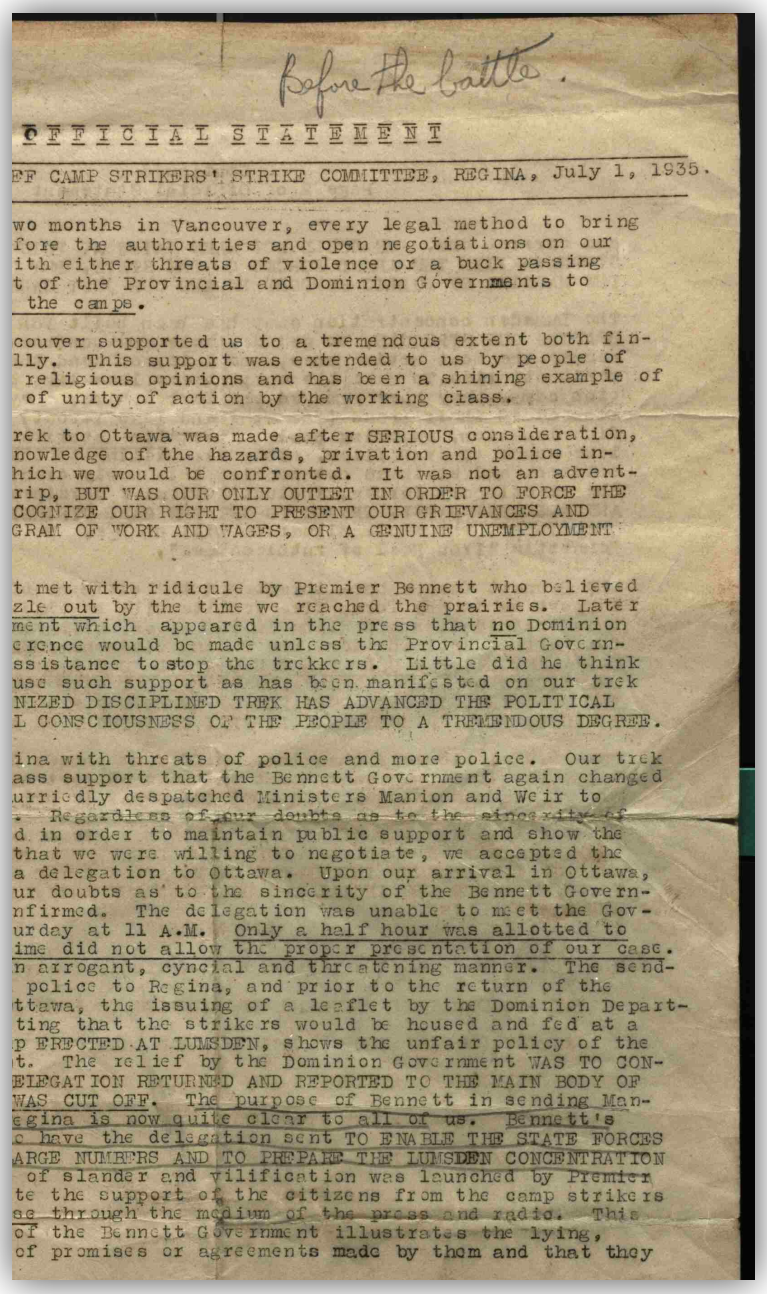
[14] This was certainly true for later radical social movements: see the Minority Press Group's account of workers' and women's underground presses during the 1970s in *Where Is The Other News?*

the 1930s capture the precarities of proletarian life and struggle not through artistic representation alone, but also in the mode of material documentary.

The third class of proletarian material produced alongside the texts described above is what I would term "quasi-printed." By this, I refer to objects somewhere between manuscript and print: these are frequently typed and/or mimeographed and circulated on a much smaller scale than even the amateur publications. Indeed, this group skirts the edge of what we might consider to be public texts; in making such a distinction, I have found Weinrich's guideline useful:

> It is also often difficult to say what constitutes publication. This is especially true of mimeographed documents, and on the odd occasion when I have been compelled to consult microfiche or microfilm there has never been any indication whether or not the document I am peering at is mimeographed or simply a typescript. In general I have assumed 'publication' of anything that appears to have found its way intentionally outside a restricted group. (xi)

These materials may include manifestos, handbills, posters, or speeches, in varying sizes and formats. The "Official Statement" of the Relief Camp Strikers' Committee, dating from the culmination of the On-to-Ottawa Trek on 1 July 1935, is an example of this kind of text. It is very brief, less than two pages, typed on both sides of a thin piece of legal-sized paper. I have only been able to identify one copy, though the rhetoric of the document, which repeatedly casts the strikers as a collective "we" in the style of a manifesto, indicates it was meant to be read or heard by a crowd. The document shows clear evidence of folding, suggesting it was



Before the battle.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

EF CAMP STRIKERS' STRIKE COMMITTEE, REGINA, July 1, 1935.

wo months in Vancouver, every legal method to bring
fore the authorities and open negotiations on our
ith either threats of violence or a buck passing
t of the Provincial and Dominion Governments to
the camps.

couver supported us to a tremendous extent both fin-
lly. This support was extended to us by people of
religious opinions and has been a shining example of
of unity of action by the working class.

rek to Ottawa was made after SERIOUS consideration,
nowledge of the hazards, privation and police in-
hich we would be confronted. It was not an advent-
rip, BUT WAS OUR ONLY OUTLET IN ORDER TO FORCE THE
COGNIZE OUR RIGHT TO PRESENT OUR GRIEVANCES AND
GRAM OF WORK AND WAGES, OR A GENUINE UNEMPLOYMENT

t met with ridicule by Premier Bennett who believed
zle out by the time we reached the prairies. Later
ment which appeared in the press that no Dominion
erence would be made unless the Provincial Govern-
ssistance to stop the trekkers. Little did he think
use such support as has been manifested on our trek
NIZED DISCIPLINED TREK HAS ADVANCED THE POLITICAL
L CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PEOPLE TO A TREMENDOUS DEGREE.

ina with threats of police and more police. Our trek
ass support that the Bennett Government again changed
urriedly despatched Ministers Manion and Weir to
. Regardless of our doubts as to the sincerity of
d in order to maintain public support and show the
that we were willing to negotiate, we accepted the
a delegation to Ottawa. Upon our arrival in Ottawa,
ur doubts as to the sincerity of the Bennett Govern-
nfirmed. The delegation was unable to meet the Gov-
urday at 11 A.M. Only a half hour was allotted to
ime did not allow the proper presentation of our case.
n arrogant, cyncial and threatening manner. The send-
police to Regina, and prior to the return of the
ttawa, the issuing of a leaflet by the Dominion Depart-
ting that the strikers would be housed and fed at a
p ERECTED AT LUMSDEN, shows the unfair policy of the
t. The relief by the Dominion Government WAS TO CON-
ELEGATION RETURNED AND REPORTED TO THE MAIN BODY OF
WAS CUT OFF. The purpose of Bennett in sending Man-
egina is now quite clear to all of us. Bennett's
e have the delegation sent TO ENABLE THE STATE FORCES
ARGE NUMBERS AND TO PREPARE THE LUMSDEN CONCENTRATION
of slander and vilification was launched by Premier
te the support of the citizens from the camp strikers
ae through the medium of the press and radio. This
of the Bennett Government illustrates the lying,
of promises or agreements made by them and that they

Figure 2.11. Relief Camp Strikers' Strike Committee, "Official Statement." Detail.

Source: Robert S. Kenny Collection, Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto.

carried in a pocket or circulated discreetly hand-to-hand (see Figure 2.11). Texts like the "Official Statement," with extra-print material markers like folds, or marks

of ownership, or other marginalia, can bring us closer to their actual readers and users as part of a more intimate communications circuit. Some specific examples of the highly localized circulation of such quasi-print objects will be considered further in Chapter Four.

Pamphlet-Consciousness

Contemporary critics of modern pamphlets in the 1930s and 1940s identify their object at the intersection of a historically specific form of print with an equally specific genre of political writing, an approach primarily linked to George Orwell's analysis of pamphleteering through both material and rhetorical lenses. As a keen observer of political language through the 1930s and into the Cold War era, Orwell remains a touchstone for the Left in general, as well as a specific reference point for those engaged in critiques of and resistance to state power and control. In a 1943 essay for the *New Statesman*, he remarks that "pamphleteering has revived upon an enormous scale since about 1935" (n.p.), particularly through the organs of political parties. Certainly, this turn toward pamphlet print on the Left overlaps with the increasingly polarized politics of fascism and the anti-fascist movement leading into the Spanish Civil War, but it was also prefigured by significant collecting work. Historians, librarians, and archivists showed a particular attentiveness to pamphlets through the 1920s and early 1930s, resulting in large collections of newly catalogued materials. In the United States, the Works Progress Administration sponsored a massive documenting of early American print and pamphleteering as part of the *American Imprints Inventory* project of the

Historical Records Survey, launched in 1935 (Carpenter 302). In Europe, the Gustav Freytag collection of early Reformation pamphlets was catalogued in 1925 at the City Library of Frankfurt (Ping 189-90). Although Canadian pamphlets were largely unremarked upon at this time, the 1930s did show a surge of interest and research into early Canadian printing.[15] Together, this work of preservation and criticism, as well as the outpouring of print in the interwar years, laid the ground for what Orwell later characterizes as a "pamphlet-conscious" (*British Pamphleteers* 13) reading public.

Orwell himself was a collector of British pamphlets spanning the time of the Diggers to that of the French Revolution, a collection of which he edited as *British Pamphleteers* in 1948. In his introductory essay to Volume One of this collection, he defines the pamphlet in detail, with a focus on materiality as well as formal structure. Orwell's functional definition of the pamphlet as a form, rather than a strict genre is often cited in print histories, and especially facilitates a book history approach to pamphlet production:

> A pamphlet is a short piece of polemical writing, printed in the form of a booklet and aimed at a large public. […] It is written because there is something that one wants to say now, and because one believes there is no other way of getting a hearing. (xx)

In Orwell's two essays on pamphlets, he presents a straight, technologically driven history of the format, entwined with the parallel development of a liberal Anglo-

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[15] See Fauteux, *The Introduction of Printing into Canada* (1930), Tremaine, *Early Printing in Canada* (1934), and Duff, *Journey of the Printing Press Across Canada* (1937).

American public life. This is a narrative that tends to end at the Enlightenment, and which leaves the pamphlet form frozen in time. Reflecting on the material surrounding him in wartime London, Orwell finds the pamphlets of his own age to be lacking in liveliness and passion; they flourish in number, but they are "practically all trash" ("Pamphlet Literature," n.p.).

Orwell's critique, though beginning with a formal, material description of pamphlets as objects quickly shifts to an evaluation of modern pamphleteering as a literary genre, with twentieth-century texts explicitly measured against Augustan-era exemplars. This is a very unstable argument: material description folds into rhetorical analysis without the guiding lines of historicization. In this, it falls into the same precepts by which pamphleteering is considered as a historical form connected to the rise of a liberal public sphere, rather than one responsive to its own reality. By referencing modern pamphlets alongside much older polemical texts and protest writing, Orwell's analysis opens up a space for considering the role of print in organizing resistance as an ongoing praxis. Nevertheless, that space is quickly closed off as Orwell ascribes only documentary value to the twentieth-century pamphlets: they may help write history, but their writing will never be literature.

Gitelman addresses the question of genre in her history of modern print, stating that "genres aren't artifacts," but rather "ongoing and changeable practices of expression" (2). Orwell's account is limited, giving emphasis to the writerly qualities of pamphlets above all else, whereas Gitelman asserts that recognition is

what makes a genre coherent, and that recognition owes as much—if not more—to reading and reception than to authorial craft. When taking up pamphlets or periodicals, I would argue that extra-textual markers are a significant part of readers recognizing particular objects *as* proletarian print, a necessary pre-condition for readers to recognize themselves and their conditions of being within the argument of the text. In this, accidents of print, such as bad type, cheap paper, or simple linocut illustrations, become recognizable as generic conventions, and as loci for highly politicized reading and self-reading. Gitelman cautions against treating written genres "as if they were equal to or coextensive with the sorts of textual artifacts that habitually them" (3), but formal elements and printed features do play a part in the social relationships of circulation and exchange. Here, the histories of genre and media intersect: Gitelman does the work of connecting the roles of political and economic aspects of print publication with social patterns and formations of intellectual history to draw out an account of particular genres (10). In relation to the material I am concerned with, this connection can be pushed further by engaging more deeply with acts of recognition and the practices of readers in the formation of proletarian publics.

Shifting attention away from authorship and literary production to the intensively social processes of circulation and use has allowed others to find a much more vibrant textual life—both in the 1930s and in earlier periods. Historicization remains the central approach: in his classification, librarian Lester Condit also begins with the slipperiness of definition, tracing from Elizabethan origins the

pamphlet's association with the popular, the libellous, and the ephemeral in a path later followed by scholars of pamphlet print like Joad Raymond, Alexandra Halazs, and Jason Peacey. However, he also turns to definitions from a range of contemporary (to the 1930s) sources to examine the pamphlet as it was used and circulated. Despite its long historical roots, it is clear that Condit regards the pamphlet as a living form: "Notwithstanding all effort to pronounce the doom of the pamphlet and to reduce it to a nonentity, it has refused to die" (7).

Like Orwell, Condit identifies a set of features common across considerations of the pamphlet, specifically tied to technological developments in text production and the growth of a popular reading public. At core, pamphlets are: small in size, with some definitions specifying five or fewer sheets of paper; ephemeral, appearing occasionally rather than periodically (i.e., series not serial); unbound; and, in terms of content, addressing issues of public and topical interest. I have dealt at length with the definition of the pamphlet form elsewhere, broadly hitting the same marks (see Hasenbank, "Unruly Texts," 14-20). Situating pamphlets within the context of a great shift in the technologies that facilitated the circulation of text and the solidification of capitalist modes of production and exchange continues to be a valuable starting point. In particular, Joad Raymond emphasizes the emergence of the pamphlet form in western Europe as concomitant with the spread of print in the late sixteenth century, which created new markets among popular readers (7). Addressing the same time period, Alexandra Halasz sees pamphlets as crucial to the new print market, particularly as

they skirted boundaries of authorial rights, state regulation, and moral rectitude (23-5). Significantly, the pamphlet acts as a supplement to the authoritative position of early books. Materially, the production of pamphlets in volume enabled printers to work continuously and offset the costs of printing elite texts. But, as a constantly circulating source of news, pamphlets were also a counter to books, which, tied to religious scripture or secular scholarship, represented accumulated and settled knowledge. By the 1930s, when elite and expert knowledge seemed to have failed the population at large, pamphlets might be seen as circulating counter-narratives that threatened existing authority by offering a more authoritative view from below.

Chapter Three

Circulation and Criminality

On 11 August 1931, the RCMP led a coordinated raid on the Toronto headquarters of the Communist Party of Canada and the private homes of several of the party's key members, seizing large numbers of files, books, and other publications. Party leader Tim Buck was arrested under Section 98 of the Criminal Code for intention to carry out the act of sedition, and over the next few days related raids in both Ontario and British Columbia resulted in a series of further arrests, with eight men (including Buck) eventually brought to trial.[16] The mass of print seized was never used at trial. It remained in the hands of the Attorney-General of Ontario,[17] eventually entering the Public Archives of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada) through the AGO's institutional fonds ("Preliminary Inventory" 1, 25).

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[16] See Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby for a detailed account of the surveillance that lead to the arrests and subsequent trial of the eight Communist leaders (119-123). Buck gives his account of the arrest and trial in his political memoir, *Thirty Years* (Ch. 6).

[17] Some of this seized text was referenced in a 1934 pamphlet produced by the Attorney-General of Ontario, "Agents of Revolution" (Price 8; see also Endicott 152).

Within this seized material was a collection of pamphlets and periodicals, including Canadian publications and those obtained from radical organizations and other groups. The Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL), a fledgling offshoot of the International Red Aid formed to support the legal defence of workers in Canadian courts, was certainly represented among these texts. Given the proximity of the group's headquarters to those of the Communist Party as well as references to correspondence with its leading members, it is likely that the CLDL's organ, the *Canadian Labor Defender*, as well as a number of its pamphlets were found among the raided stacks. In typical fashion, the *Defender*'s first response to the raids and arrests was rough but thorough. Though the cover for the September 1931 issue of the magazine is a thrice-repeated linocut image of a man pulling against a set of prison bars against a background of a massed crowd brandishing CLDL banners, nearly every page inside is given over to the story of the Communist leaders, including Buck's own account and responses from International Red groups in other countries (CLD 2.5: 5-6, 10). By the time of the October issue's release, which bears a cover photomontage depicting the so-called "Kingston Eight," the magazine is dominated by an intense scrutiny of the case. The images of the accused and the slogans accompanying them mark the swift solidification of the ways in which the radical left represented itself in the period following the Communist trial. Most significantly, a short article by R. Curtis entitled "Section 98 of the Criminal Code" (CLD 2.6: 10) formally introduces and explains the law that would become the dominant focus of the Canadian Labor

Defense League's publications and class organization as a whole in Canada for the next four years.

The publications of the Canadian Labor Defense League, as part of a network of pamphlets and periodicals circulating in Canada during the Depression years, comprise a fascinating and under-examined example of radical print. The dialogic connection between the pamphlets as texts with their own formal and rhetorical patterns and the assemblage found in the pages of the *Defender* and other proletarian periodicals throws into relief the dense network of writers, artists, organizations, and labourers who worked to produce these forms of print, and who hefted them as tools in an intensely focused agitational campaign. The *Defender* stands out as a location of intertextual and meta-textual critique on the role of pamphlet publishing in the campaigns mounted by the variously linked Canadian radical organizations in the 1930s. In this chapter, I am interested in the strategic connection between the CLDL's pamphlets and the *Defender* as they work to shape the field of proletarian print in which they partake while also reinforcing the CLDL's response to the criminalization of proletarian activity. This chapter will consider the *Defender* as a site for both bibliographic recuperation and network analysis of Canadian radical groups, which together work to support a new critical assessment of the Canadian pamphlets produced alongside the periodical. I will be looking specifically at a group of pamphlets produced by the CLDL following the arrest of the Kingston Eight, as well as at a set of reviews of co-circulating periodicals and pamphlets published in the *Defender* through 1932-3 which lay bare

the agitational concerns of the CLDL and the proletarian movement suggested in its pages. These pamphlets, individually and cumulatively, cast political strategy and the terms of class-based protest in the language of the law. The periodical run of the *Defender*, punctuated by the pamphlets, reinforces and promotes the strategy while also connecting the CLDL texts to a larger network of proletarian periodicals. However, the *Defender* reviews loop back to the CLDL itself as the paper explicitly examines the success of its agitprop and its practices of criticism and self-criticism, with something of a nationalist tone. Ultimately, the singular focus of the CLDL on protesting and repealing Section 98 became the undoing of the print-based network it projects: the end of the law forced the collapse of the organization and the expiration of its publications.

Against the Law

The activities of the Communist Party of Canada, or at least their public face, were radically transformed by Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's imposition of Section 98 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which outlawed the Communist Party as a terrorist organization for purporting to advocate revolution on Marxist economic principles.[18] Although Section 98 works on the principle of unlawful

[18] Section 98(1) states:

> Any association, organization, society or corporation, whose professed purpose or one of whose purposes is to bring about any governmental, industrial or economic change within Canada by use of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property, or by threats of such injury, or which teaches, advocates, advises or defends the use of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property, or threats of such injury, in order to accomplish such change, or for any other purpose, or which shall by any means prosecute or pursue such purpose or professed purpose, or shall so teach, advocate, advise or defend, shall be an unlawful association" (R.S., 1927, c.146, s. 98).

assembly, criminalizing any association with an outlawed group (Petryshyn, "Class Conflict" 48-9)—ranging from formal membership to mere possession of the group's material—it operates most pointedly on the circulation of ideas within the public sphere: ideological, not physical, association is the true locus of criminality. Subsections (8) through (10) specifically address the production, distribution, sale, and circulation of printed material. It is worth quoting these subsections in their entirety to emphasize the extreme specificity of the law:

> (8) Any person who prints, publishes, edits, issues, circulates, sells, or offers for sale or distribution any book, newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, picture, paper, circular, card, letter, writing, print, publication or document of any kind, in which is taught, advocated, advised or defended, or who shall in any manner teach, advocate, or advise or defend the use, without authority of law, of force, violence, terrorism or physical injury to person or property, or threats of such injury, as a means of accomplishing any governmental, industrial or economic change, or otherwise, shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.
>
> (9) Any person who circulates or attempts to circulate or distribute any book, newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, picture, paper, circular, card, letter, writing, print, publication, or document of any kind, as described in this section by mailing the same or causing the same to be mailed or posted in any post office, letter box, or other mail receptacle in Canada, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.
>
> (10) Any person who imports into Canada from any other country, or attempts to import by or through any means whatsoever, any book,

> newspaper, periodical, pamphlet, picture, paper, circular, card, letter, writing, print, publication or document of any kind as described in this section, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to imprisonment for not more than twenty years.
>
> (R.S., 1927, c.146, s. 98(8)-(10))

The careful delineation of roles related to the production and circulation of print (writer, editor, publisher, printer, bookseller, newspaper boy, subscription salesperson, etc.), as well as the enumeration of forbidden genres and formats of print, are striking. Effectively, the entirety of the communications circuit is moved within the law's searchlight. Furthermore, the extensive networks of communication and mobility represented by the postal service and intracontinental travel—frequently hailed as markers of Canadian nationhood and independence—are also set against the circulation of such material. The provisions against letting use of space to an unlawful association (Subsection (5)), as well as unbounded powers of search and seizure (Subsections (2) and (6)) further restrict the operation of a viable communications circuit. Clearly, Section 98 places enormous powers of censorship and physical control within the hands of the RCMP (as stated in Subsection (2)), crucially turning both symbolic and material markers of Canadian identity against the Canadian public.

In relation to the survival of this body of print, the role of booksellers (and those who would preserve these materials), was also compromised by Section 98. Robert S. Kenny, a Toronto bookseller, Communist fellow-traveller, and avid collector of proletarian material, is responsible for the largest single collection of

Canadian radical materials; this collection is now held at the Thomas Fisher Library at the University of Toronto. Kenny's bookshop was well known to the police:

> shortly after the party was declared illegal…a policeman turned up at his door to arrest him for purveying seditious literature. After only a few days in jail, [Kenny] managed to convince a judge to quash the charges on the grounds that the fact that he had only one or two copies of each item proved he was merely a consumer, rather than a retailer, of the forbidden materials. (Reid viii)

The distinction between consumer and retailer is blurry, especially with regard to the meanings of possession and use. Kenny's multiple roles as reader, distributor, and collector of leftist print are circumscribed by his existence on the periphery of the working class; it is however this position as a conduit between the worlds of the party office, the print shop, and the library that have enabled the preservation of these endangered materials.

Section 98 has often been regarded as a tool of suppression against working-class organization, and indeed it falls into a pattern by which Bennett's Conservative government manipulated a succession of existing federal laws during the Depression years to control unrest among the working and non-working

population.[19] It was first enacted as an Order-in-Council just two days after the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike in response to what was perceived as the opening shots of a class war in Canada. When introducing the proposed legal amendments, Solicitor-General Hugh Guthrie framed the strike, and particularly the role of labour organizers and radical groups, as

> an organized, concerted, and sustained effort to spread false and pernicious doctrines, designed in the first instance to cause dissatisfaction amongst His Majesty's subjects, to set class against class, to hamper, injure, or destroy the public service and designed in the ultimate end to subvert constituted authority and to overturn government itself. (qtd. in Fidler 8-9)

The law was not used to prosecute anyone involved in the Winnipeg strike; it was put on the books as what Richard Fidler terms "preventative, anticipatory legislation" (11). After a period of dormancy, the law was formally appended to the Criminal Code by Bennett's government in 1927, but was not put into action until July 1931, less than a month after a delegation of workers protesting for farm and unemployment emergency relief reached Ottawa (Buck, *Thirty Years* Ch.4).

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[19] The radical union paper *Workers' Unity* reports on Bennett's invocation of the little-used section 81 of the Criminal Code against "incitement to mutiny" (in fact an importation of the British Incitement to Mutiny Act of 1797) against a Workers Alliance group's appeal to Canadian military police "to refuse to shoot starving workers" (WU 1.1: 2). The article assets that the Mutiny Act was used "to send Chartists and rebels of the day to Penal Settlements and to death" (WU 1.1:2), linking the plight of Canadian workers to those of the English Chartists and implicitly recalling such rallying points as the Peterloo Massacre. Later issues of *Unity* comment on other "anti-working class laws" (*Unity* 5.7: 2) such as Sections 41 and 42 of the Immigration Act 1919, which gave the government increased powers to deport political activists ("Canada in the Making," n.p.) and vagrancy laws. The War Measures Act (1914) also had continued influence on the surveillance of immigrant groups falling into the category of "enemy aliens", many of whom were active in communist, socialist, and trade union movements.

Immediately following the reanimation of Section 98, it was used in the "mass arrest" of workers during a demonstration in Toronto on 1 August 1931 (WU 1.2: 2). The big payoff, however, came with the 11 August raid on the offices and the homes of Communist Party members, leading to perhaps the most significant Canadian political trial of the interwar period. Fidler characterizes the raid and Section 98 arrests as a "strategy…apparently [intended] to carry out what in contemporary terms would be called a 'surgical' assault on the Communists, limited in scope but with devastating effect" (32). Certainly, this show of state action sent a clear message to the public at large, but it also handed a propaganda coup to the Communist Party and its sub-groups that was perhaps more influential on potential radicals than open party activity could have been. Bart Vautour, commenting on the role of the law in the production and staging of the agitprop drama *Eight Men Speak*—itself a touchstone for radical culture in 1930s Canada[20]—zeroes in on the challenge to Section 98 as the driving force for both political and artistic response to the suppression of the public voice of working-class organizations (127 and passim). The CLDL, which led this challenge, initially sprung from similar work in the United States, where public campaigns were launched in support of supposed anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, as well as the Scottsboro Boys—eight black youths accused of raping two white women in Alabama. The trial and imprisonment of the "Kingston Eight," as presented in the CLDL's paper and pamphlets, stands as the galvanizing event of

[20] Complete with a female character personifying the CLDL (Ryan et. al 27).

the Canadian Left during the 1930s, while the use of Section 98 against workers' organization created an all-purpose villain out of "Millionaire" Bennett and fuelled a decade-long propaganda drive.

Protest in Print

The Communist Party continued to be active from the underground during its period of illegality through what Alan Filewod identifies as a "complex of roles and positions" tying together "an alliance of mass organizations" (*Committing Theatre* 106). Indeed, the paratextual elements of the *Defender*, as well as the pamphlets it reviews—such as notices, subscription blanks, lists of recommended reading, and other ads—show an epicentre of print coming from a group of radical organizations clustered within shouting distance of each other on the east side of Toronto's downtown. Ian McKay identifies this alliance of associated groups (among which the CLDL was probably the largest) as a significant extension of the party's influence into more "unofficial" quarters (158). This assessment is supported by a contemporary RCMP officer surveilling radical activity in Quebec, who commented that it would be "unwise" to measure the influence of revolutionary agitation by membership in the Communist Party alone, "as the majority of the sympathizers are members of affiliated organizations who are continuously carrying on revolutionary propaganda" (qtd in Kealey and Whitaker I: 47). Indeed, unofficially, Smith himself acknowledged the relationship between the CLDL and the Communist Party:

> It is noticeable that when A.E. Smith is speaking in public he denies indignantly that the Canadian Labour Defence League [sic] is controlled by the Communists. In private he is apparently less guarded and admits the association between the Canadian Labour Defence League [sic] and the Communist Party of Canada. (Kealey and Whitaker I: 185)

The interconnection of radical networks in 1930s Canada is perhaps best figured in the spatial dimension knowingly satirized in Earle Birney's novel *Down the Long Table*, in which the protagonist Gordon (a fictionalized stand-in for Birney's own young, Communist-affiliated self) enters the single building housing a dense hive of radical front organizations. However, the textual representation of the door's placard finds its enduring material trace in the frequent "greetings" sent between these same organizations and locals and in the boxed-off pleas for subscriptions and donations to other publications that littered the page of the various publications produced by these groups and clamouring for the same readers.

The CLDL first appears in the print record in 1927—the same year Section 98 was officially made part of Canadian criminal law—with the publication of its constitution, as noted by Weinrich (104). The organization remained relatively quiet until 1929, when it was taken under the auspices of the Communist Party and began a more direct recruitment campaign, as indicated by the pamphlet "Why there should be a defense league in Canada and why you should join it" (Weinrich 109). Indeed, the declared purpose of the CLDL was to unite a collective membership "for the defense and support of the agricultural

workers, regardless of their political and industrial affiliations, race, colour, or nationality, who were persecuted on account of their activity in class interests of the industrial and agricultural workers (CLDL, "Constitution" n.p.). The CLDL dramatically increased the number of its publications through the first half of the 1930s, as arrests and prosecutions of Communist Party associates as well as striking and protesting workers jumped under Section 98 (see Weinrich 113-43). Historian Jaroslav Petryshyn notes that between 1931 and 1933, the CLDL distributed five million pieces of literature, pamphlets, and manifestos ("A.E. Smith" 211), though Petryshyn bases his publication numbers on figures from a CLDL convention report in 1933, which may be inflated. McKay notes that the Communist Party "made truly amazing gains in influence through the Canadian Labor Defence [sic] League" (162); however, despite the power of this formation, the CLDL showed a decline in membership following the 1936 repeal of Section 98 as the Communist Party was restored to lawful status and moved toward a new focus on Popular Front strategizing (Petryshyn, "A.E. Smith" 248-9). Aside from a single wartime pamphlet against the War Measures Act, the CLDL ceased to publish after 1936 (Weinrich 151-2). Although Petryshyn acknowledges the CLDL as the CPC's "most successful 'front' organization" ("A.E. Smith" 88), whose print tactics reached a "sophisticated level of operation" ("A.E. Smith" 214), it is clear that the existence and work of the League is tied directly to the political and legal challenges to Section 98. The CLDL itself was under heavy state surveillance during this period; as RCMP Security Bulletins for the early Depression years show, CLDL meetings,

activities and members were a regular feature of field agents' reports.[21] Indeed, Vautour has suggested that Section 98 offers a way to bracket critical enquiry around leftist print in Canada during the interwar period that is not tied to the commitments of parties or cultural programmes such as the Third International or Popular Front (125). The organization reached its apex of influence in relation to the trial and subsequent public debates surrounding the Kingston Eight, references to which filled the pages of nearly every publication it produced.

The Language of the Law: Disruptive Forensics

A cluster of pamphlets released by the CLDL in the early 1930s ("Not Guilty!" (1932), "An Indictment of Capitalism" (1932), "Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts" (1933), and "The 'Sedition' of A.E. Smith" (1934)) exemplify the organization's style and output. Commenting on the state of modern (i.e. interwar) pamphleteering as compared to earlier periods of political writing, George Orwell finds material like this to be "rubbish," dismissing it as mere propaganda for its connection to Communist Party politics and for its deployment of both agitprop techniques and forensic discourse (23). These characteristics, I would argue, are not symptoms of debasement, but are definitive of Canadian pamphleteering in this period as it works rhetorically to re-orient legal and political subjectivity. The chosen discourse of this set of pamphlets is, in the first place, related to the circumstances of their production. Secondly, it is purposive, strategically employing the language of the law to build a public and mount a mass protest of legal

[21] See Kealey and Whitaker, volumes I and II.

repression by the state, using Section 98 of the Criminal Code of Canada as a central rallying point, and positioning the CLDL itself as a core organizer of the revolutionary Left. Lastly, it is stylistic, symbolically reversing the power structures of the law and court to re-create the courtroom, once the scene of a public authority inaccessible to the working class, as a theatre of protest. These texts work by seizing the pamphlet form to radically alter the meaning of public speech; a proper reconsideration of their worth should accordingly take place on formal, as well as rhetorical, grounds.

I have chosen to treat two texts with named authors, Tim Buck's "An Indictment of Capitalism" and Oscar Ryan's "The 'Sedition' of A.E. Smith" as part of the same group due to Buck's and Ryan's close association with the League. As leader of the Communist Party, Buck was the de facto director of the CLDL, while Ryan was its publicity director and took its chief organizer for his titular subject. Both of these pamphlets were published by the CLDL and entered into the same networks of distribution and circulation; certainly, they were included in the organization's figures. Most significantly, the two "authored" pamphlets share the same polyvocal assemblage structure as "Not Guilty!" and "Workers' Self-Defense," eschewing first-person argumentation, and may reasonably be considered on the same terms as collective works. Certainly the "authors" in no way resemble Orwell's Enlightenment pamphleteers.

It is difficult to date this cluster of CLDL pamphlets, making their exact chronology uncertain. None of the texts examined here bear a publication date;

dating must instead be inferred from internal and paratextual evidence, such as references to specific events, trials, and citations for republished articles within the pamphlets. Libraries and even bibliographers frequently place the pamphlets earlier or later than their actual release, shifting their discursive relationship to one another. For example, "Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts" is listed as 1930 in the University of Alberta Libraries catalogue, which would set it before Section 98 was effectively used to target working-class organization, while Weinrich lists it as 1934 (135), which would set it after Tim Buck's second trial and alongside A.E. Smith's sedition case. Based on its contents, this pamphlet can be more accurately dated to around April 1933, after Annie Buller's second trial on 9 March 1933 (recapped in the text)[22] but before the trial of the Kingston Penitentiary rioters in June-July 1933, as determined by the comment that "Mr. Sampson knows very well that Tim Buck's case regarding that "riot" has not come to trial yet" (CLDL, "Workers' Self-Defense" 34). The absence of date information is not merely an oversight. Rather, the way the CLDL and other radical organizations alternately disregard and manipulate dates in their pamphlets bears an important relation to political strategy. Furthermore, a publication without a date does not appear to be out-of-date: this is part of an attempt on the part of the CLDL to seem timely, and to keep major events, especially the trial of the Eight, current in the eyes of readers. Ordinarily, establishing a timeline might offer a sense of exchange, even if that exchange is being imposed retroactively. However, the presumption that

[22] For an account of Buller's activity, see Louise Watson, *She Never Was Afraid: The Biography of Annie Buller*, reposted in full on Ian Angus's *Socialist History Project* website.

pamphleteers participate in a displaced print conversation is bound to bourgeois figurations of the public sphere. Given the desire of the involved organizations to take control over language, this cluster of pamphlets may in fact represent more of a monologue, or a one-way broadcast.

The cluster of pamphlets, taken together, represents a developing strategy of agitation and propaganda deployed by the CLDL in the language of the law. This set of texts reveals a tension between the education and mobilization functions of agitprop, which can be located along a poetic axis. Here, I use *agitprop* more or less in the Leninist sense, which seems to be carried over into the *Defender*'s internal reflections. In *What Is to be Done?* Lenin quotes and approves the formulation of Aleksandr Martynov (who later turned against him):

> By *propaganda* we would understand the revolutionary explanation of the present social system, entire or in its partial manifestations, whether that be done in a form intelligible to individuals or to broad masses. By *agitation*, in the strict sense of the word, we would understand the call upon the masses to undertake definite, concrete actions and the promotion of the direct revolutionary intervention of the proletariat in social life. (Lenin n.p., emphasis mine)

The creative power of agitprop, which must remake past and current values into the enemies of the future, operates by invoking a collective imagination. In revolutionary terms, pamphlet readers should spontaneously achieve proletarian consciousness through the text, thus positioning themselves to heed its call to action. In practical terms, pamphleteers must first enact the potential of

revolution, making it intelligible to the masses by recasting the received historical narrative in the language of protest.

The CLDL, for all of its Communist-inflected rhetoric, has as its specific aim the repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code of Canada, in order to defuse the state's primary legal weapon against working-class organization. The mobilization of support on a mass scale, and on class-based terms, depends on constituting a resistant public. First, the pamphlets emphasize themselves as chroniclers of injustice; secondly, the texts work to familiarize readers with the language of the law, which is identified with public power; thirdly, the texts cede the authority of public speech to the readers, so that ultimately, the readers become actors speaking back to the law, or to the state, with a collective voice. By setting out the actions involved in constituting a proletarian public as a series of "steps," I do not mean to suggest that it is a strictly linear process. The functions of these pamphlets overlap, and they frequently repeat rhetorical moves and tread on each other's propagandistic ground. However, considering the various ways in which the texts are oriented toward the ultimate goal of legal protest is valuable for also thinking through the creative strategies by which a particular text might address a heterogeneous public of uneven attentiveness, disparate literacies, and of unequal readiness to engage with the pamphlet's political discourse.

The first stage of the CLDL's print strategy is to make the public, as Orwell puts it, "pamphlet-conscious" (British Pamphleteers 13). Although "The 'Sedition' of A.E. Smith" is chronologically the latest pamphlet in this cluster, it typifies the

role of publicity in building a public. Rather than focusing on the trial and defence of the A.E. Smith, the leader of the League, who was charged with sedition in January 1934 after publicly accusing the prime minister of giving "the order to shoot Buck in his cell in cold blood with intent to murder him" (qtd in Petryshyn, "Class Conflict" 54), the pamphlet places Smith's case among 13 others handled by the CLDL. In less than 20 pages, the pamphlet recounts a decade of conflict in short, telegraphic sentences forming accounts that are often fragmentary. The assumption seems to be that the reader can fill in the gaps: certainly, each of the major events—the 1925 Drumheller mining strike, the 1929 protest and shootings at Estevan, the 1931 arrest and trial of the eight communist leaders, the 1932 Kingston riot and its subsequent trial, the 1933 eviction and killing of Nick Zynchuk, the 1934 crackdown on the play *Eight Men Speak*, the 1934 sedition trial of A.E. Smith, and countless deportation orders—was detailed in the pages of prior CLDL pamphlets, as well as countless newspaper editorials, public addresses, stories, songs, poems, and plays. In its pages, "The 'Sedition' of A.E. Smith" presents a catalogue of offenses, connected intertextually to the wealth of CLDL print coming before it. Although there is some generic variation, including highly fanciful biographies of Smith and Bennett running in parallel (3-4) and an allegorical conceit linking "Iron Heel" Bennett to Achilles with his fatal flaw (19) the pamphlet overwhelmingly adopts an elliptical form. None of this material is revelatory: it is a retread of well-known history in the guise of marshalling evidence in opposition to the charges laid against Smith.

The second stage of building a protest lies in making the public legally conscious and familiar with the language of law, court, and civil rights. "Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts" is both polemic and instructional booklet as it walks readers—presumed either to be facing trial for protest activities, or likely to be arrested in the near future for the offence of being working-class—through the Canadian legal process with imperative specificity. This is the only one of the texts in this cluster to include a table of contents, suggesting it was intended for use as reference material. Each stage of the law, from arrest to appeal to possible deportation, is set out in highly adversarial terms, preparing the reader for a defence and interrogation on the scale of *R. v. Buck*. Following the guide, and comprising nearly half of the pamphlet, "Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts" includes the defence of Annie Buller, an organizer tried in 1931 for her role in the Estevan miners' protest (19). Petryshyn singles out Buller's case as exemplifying the strategic connection between the Communist Party's revolutionary politics and the CLDL's legal campaigning:

> Annie Buller and the Estevan trials personified the League's double-edged role in the thirties. Its 'defender role' was an integral component of the communists' 'agitator-instigator' role. One fed on the other. Taken in toto, it represented part of the C.P.C.'s overall strategy for 'revolution' in Canada. ("A.E. Smith" 162)

Buller's account, which is broken down by procedural subheadings, follows every instruction laid out in the first half of the pamphlet and can be read as an extended object-lesson of workers' legal self-defence.

Once the discourse and structures of the law has been made intelligible to their working-class readership, the pamphlets reverse the power relationships of existing public space within their texts, giving workers a claim to a public voice. Even as it empowers its readers to operate among them, "Workers' Self-Defense in the Courts" interrogates both the authority and truth-claims of the court, judge, and legal representatives. The text emphasizes the falseness of the court's "'objectivity'" and states that "Workers should not be deceived by the veneer of 'justice'" (3). In particular, the pamphlet addresses the soft forms of power codified apart from the law itself: the rituals of court procedure, the access to legal resources, and the formal etiquette of dress and custom are methods of denying access to justice and suppressing challenges to existing power as much as is targeted prosecution under Section 98. The law criminalizes working-class organization and assembly, both physical and imaginative; subsequently the court stamps out subversion by denying workers entrance into the public sphere, as represented by linguistic exchange: "[t]he 'dignity' and 'sanctity' of the courts are a means of paralyzing workers' struggles against capitalist institutions. Court language, pomp and ceremony are purposely complicated in order to confuse workers" (8). "An Indictment of Capitalism" takes this critique of exclusionary language and inverts it, ceding the power of definition to the workers. Tim Buck's failed self-defense in the courtroom is recreated as a textual performance, represented as an attempt to teach the "foreign language" of revolution to first the jury, and then to the working class at large (7). As it prepares them for this hitherto closed world, "Workers' Self-

Defense in the Courts" encourages representing oneself from an ideological (as well as practical) standpoint: "workers' self-defense plays an important role in exposing the nature of capitalist justice and in bringing out the class implications of the trial before the working class at large" (3). The raising of working-class voices in the courtroom transforms it into a site of revolutionary uprising, symbolically captured in the cover image of the pamphlet, which shows the giant body of a worker, dressed in ordinary clothes and with clenched fist, rising up in the courtroom and towering over the judge and jury. Rhetorically, this movement to occupy is replicated in the abstract public sphere through the publication of radical pamphlets like the CLDL cluster. The texts posit a reinscribing of public space and a rewriting of the institutional narrative of power through a new understanding of individual and class potential in legal and poetic terms. It is a re-framing of defence as counterpower: if Section 98 is deployed strategically by the state, then the courts can be seized in a strategic protest by criminalized workers.

Ultimately, the pamphlets address themselves to a politicized public, representing individual experiences before the law as a collective class experience. In pursuit of this strategic aim, the texts employ heavy symbolism and direct modes of address in an increasingly revolutionary stylizing of language. In the CLDL pamphlets, all cases are class-action suits. The accused, real or imagined, is always only a witness to an ongoing moral crime, while the court is always a stand-in for capital as a whole, both judge and perpetrator: "You are not speaking for yourself alone, but as a representative of your class" ("Workers' Self-Defense" 8).

Equally, this strategy encompasses a silent majority, whose entrance into the court to view the trial aligns them with the accused as additional metaphorical witnesses. The speech of one worker presenting his or her defence therefore permits the entrance of other "voices," metonymically connected to the real bodies of workers in the gallery, whose visible mass support turn the courtroom into a scene of mass protest ("Workers' Self-Defense" 4). This class-based reclaiming of public speech is not so much a labouring of cultural language (as in Michael Denning's well-phrased observation[23]) as it is a lawyering of the language of protest.

Periodical Reinforcements

While pamphlet readers formed the core public for the CLDL's campaigning, the ongoing repetition of key issues and events, as well as heavy promotion of standalone publications in the organization's periodicals, strove to extend the network of activism and affiliation rooted in this readership. The *Defender* highlights the CLDL's strategic use of periodical and newspaper print to build on its work for the defence of the rights of workers and to arm the disadvantaged with basic knowledge of the law and of court procedures, thereby sustaining an audience for its more tactical pamphlet campaigns against Section 98. The decision to begin publishing a monthly paper was made at an "emergency defense conference" of the CLDL organized in Hamilton in April 1930, soon after the League's relaunch as an arm of the Communist Party (Petryshyn, "A.E. Smith"

[23] See Denning, *The Cultural Front.*

121, referencing CLD 1.1:8). The *Canadian Labor Defender* launched in May 1930.[24] Based in Toronto, but with circulation in several major cities, the *Defender* was initially patterned after papers produced by the International Labor Defense (the US-based parent organization to the Canadian group). The periodical developed a more uniquely Canadian sensibility early in its run as it published (heavily biased) political, critical, literary, and artistic materials from key figures in the Canadian radical network, participating in the cultural nationalism observed by critics of the left and Canadian literary modernism.[25] Indeed, immediately following the August 1931 arrests and raids, the *Defender* flooded its pages with Canadian content, moving from a fairly even mix of Soviet-European-American-Canadian coverage to 100 percent Canadian material in its September and October issues (save one article in October).

The publication history of the *Canadian Labor Defender* shows at least five clear incarnations of the text. These various versions can be somewhat difficult to parse, as several numbers are missing from the record and the numbering itself can be inconsistent. In general, the successive phases can be identified as follows:

(1) May 1930 – March 1931. The first version of the *Defender* is a monthly mimeographed newsletter, printed single-sided on letter-sized paper (quarto), and stapled along the right edge (see Figure 3.1). The issues vary between 12 and 17

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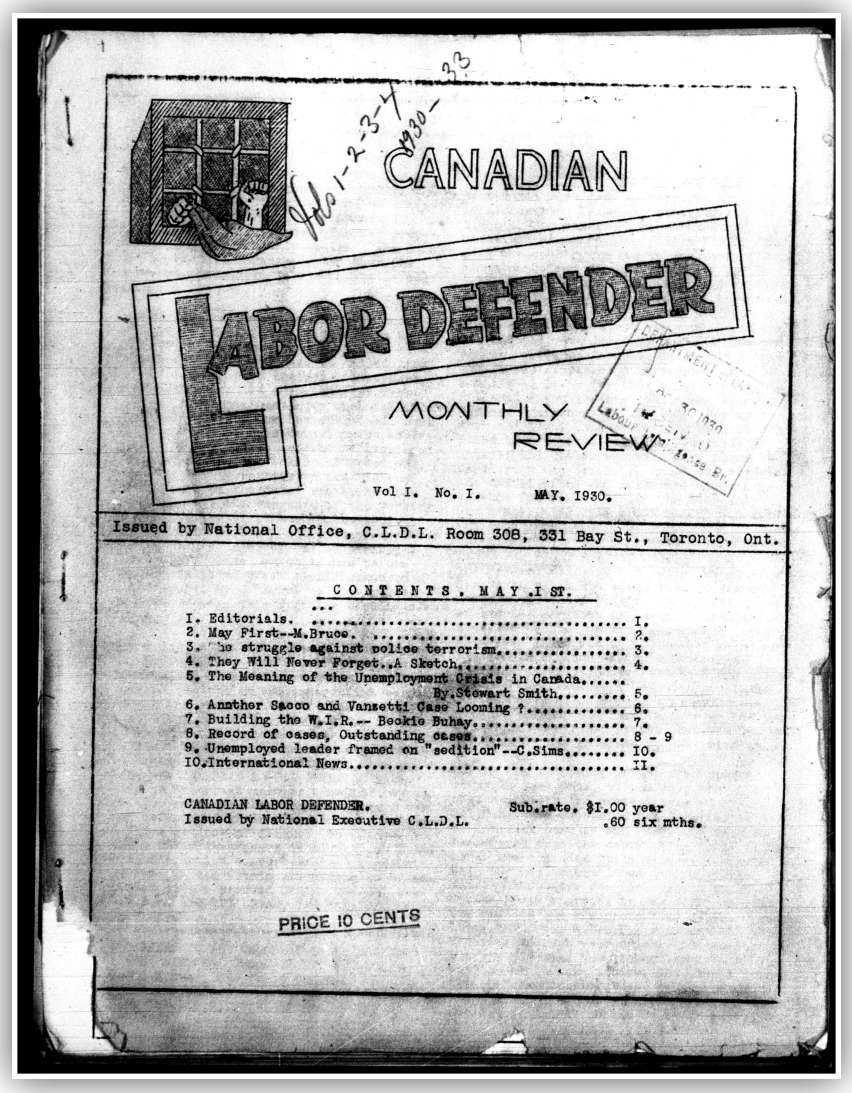
[24] Weinrich's bibliographic entry notes an earlier version of the *Defender*, also numbering 1.1 launching in February 1930, also in mimeo, before being re-started in May of that year (412). I have not been able to locate any copy of or further reference to this shadowy first periodical.

[25] See Irvine (33), Rifkind (81-3), and Mason (70-72).



CANADIAN

LABOR DEFENDER

MONTHLY REVIEW

Vol I. No. I. MAY. 1930.

Issued by National Office, C.L.D.L. Room 308, 331 Bay St., Toronto, Ont.

CONTENTS. MAY.1 ST.

CANADIAN LABOR DEFENDER. Sub.rate. $I.00 year
Issued by National Executive C.L.D.L. .60 six mths.

PRICE 10 CENTS

Figure 3.1. *Canadian Labor Defender* 1.1, May 1930. Cover.
Source: Library and Archives Canada

pages, priced at 10 cents. The front page features a typed list of contents and is illustrated with a hand-drawn masthead and a hand-drawn version of the US Labor Defense organization's logo (a hand waving a cloth from between prison bars).[26] This logo appears in some fashion on most of the CLDL publications, and

[26] This logo appears on the US organization's print material as early as 1925, the date of that group's founding conference (see "Labor Defense: Manifesto, Resolutions, Constitution" Chicago: International Labor Defense, 1925).

photographs of a later CLDL convention show it prominently.[27] The back page of the paper is a call for subscriptions, with a boxed-off section intended to be cut out and mailed in to CLDL offices in Toronto. By issue 1.2, full-page cartoons and sketches were included alongside text articles. Issue 1.7 (March 1931) is somewhat transitional, with a new cover design showing the masthead amid a full-page illustration and omitting the contents list.

(2) May 1931 - November 1931. After a month's absence, the *Defender* appears in a much more professional format, as a printed and illustrated monthly tabloid journal (roughly in quarto). Sharing a common—though not universal—practice with Communist-affiliated papers, the *Defender* frequently launches or debuts format changes in its May issues (cf. *Workers' Unity*, *The Worker*, *Workers' Bulletin*, *Daily Clarion*); in doing so, it emphasizes the ideological significance of May Day in its periodicity. In this version, the paper now bears a full-page cover illustration, with a separate contents page, and double-sided printing (see Figure 3.2). The pages now conform to printing sheet layout with consistent numbering (usually 16 pages.), running headers, and two-column text. There are a few other notable technical advances, including reproduction of photographs and rendering headlines, section heads, and body text all in distinct type. The price remains 10 cents, though advertising appears for the first time. Later issues in this period show

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[27] Frank Love gives an account of this convention in the August 1933 *Defender*, describing the image as "a picture, backed by electric lights, showing a prison window and a toil-worn hand waving a red handkerchief to the assembled delegates in revolutionary greeting" (CLD 4.6: 4). Given that most CLDL publications are strictly black and white, and as most of the *Defender*'s run is available on microfilm only, this is the only piece of evidence I have seen that confirms the waving cloth is meant to be red, clearly signifying Communistic ties.

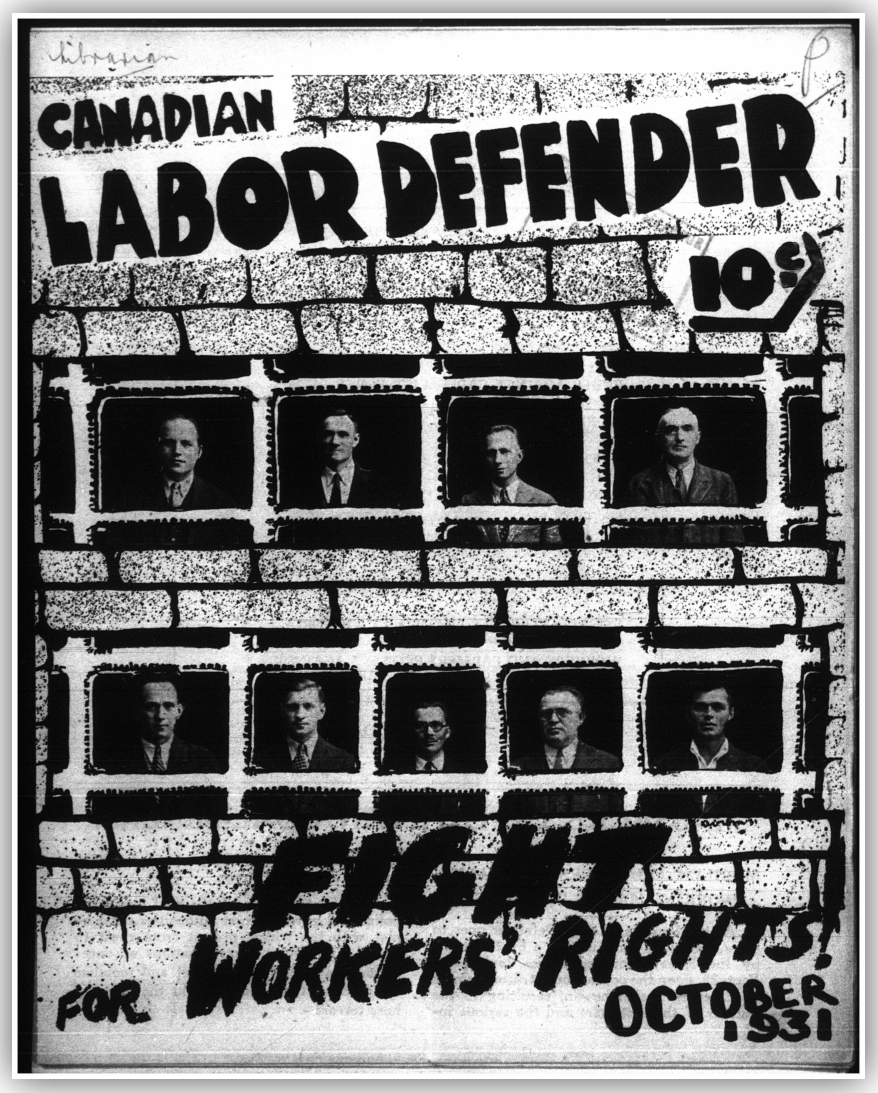


Figure 3.2. *Canadian Labor Defender* 2.6, October 1931. Cover.
Source: Library and Archives Canada

experimentation with forms such as photomontage, connecting the *Defender* to well-known radical magazines in other countries, such as the German *AIZ* (*Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*) with its frequent display of John Heartfield's distinctive photomontage work.

(3) December 1931 – May 1933. With growing circulation numbers and its new primary focus on Canadian material, the *Defender* switches to a broadsheet format, indicating the format change with a note on the front page (see Figure 3.3).

December 1931 Price: 5 Cents

Illustrated Defense Monthly - Subs: $1.00 per Year $0.60 Half Year Vol. 2. No. 8.

CANADIAN LABOR DEFENDER

Issued by Canadian Labor Defense League - Room 308 331 Bay Street Toronto - Ontario

Repeal Section 98! - Release the Eight!

By R. CURTIS

The Conviction of the eight Communists is of great significance to the working class of Canada. The result of the trial means not only that the Communist Party has been declared an "unlawful association," but that no LABOR ORGANIZATION is safe from attack;

That no group of striking workers is immune from prosecution;

That the trade unions of Canada, many of which have a recognition of the class struggle in their constitutions, stand in danger of suppression;

That mass organizations of foreign-born workers are threatened.

The Canadian Labor Defense League appeals to all workers, to all lovers of free speech to organize in the broadest united front conferences for the Repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code. This law which is an extension of the War Measures Act and which was placed on the Statute Books in its present form as a result of the Winnipeg Strike of 1919, being part of the infamous forty minute legislation of that time is being used to-day by the Bennett reactionary regime to stamp out all opposition to its policies. It must be remembered that even the House of Commons, in the last government sanctioned the Repeal of Section 98, but that it was upheld by the Senate. The demand for the Repeal of Section 98 was made by the Trades Congress of Canada and by a number of Trades and Labor Councils and other organizations.

The Conferences for the Repeal of Section 98 are urged to immediately start an agitation for: 5,000 endorsations of a "Repeal of Section 98" Resolution, 1,000 of these to be from Trade Union locals. The remainder should come from fraternal, cultural and other workers' and farmers' committees, locals and organizations.

200,000 signatures for the "Workers' Rights and Anti-Deportation Bill." A deputation of delegates representing various elements opposed to the present reaction who will present the endorsations and "Workers' Rights and Anti-Deportation Bill" is to be selected by the conferences. The C.L.D.L. calls upon all organizations, all conferences, all workers' meetings to send telegrams of protest to the Prime Minister, Ottawa, and the Attorney-General, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ont., demanding the release of the eight and the Repeal of Section 98.

Only the most energetic action on the part of the masses of Canada can prevent the present political reaction from suppressing the entire labor movement. There is no limit to which the present government will not and can not proceed in order to exercise a ruthless dictatorship and stamp out all opposition.

The Canadian workers are face to face with a ruthless attack upon their living conditions. Wage slashes, mass unemployment — this is the lot of the Canadian toilers.

Section 98 and the whole class terror against the workers is more than an attack upon the political activity of the workers. It is an attack that aims to prevent the workers from making the least resistance to a wage cut, from making the least complaint to a Relief Officer, from in any way organizing for food, clothes and shelter for himself and his family.

in short, this is not an attack on the Communists alone, but upon the whole working class of Canada.

The struggle for the Repeal of Section 98 and the release of the eight is the struggle for the elementary right of Free Speech, Press, Assembly and Organization.

See to it that your organization is represented in the Conferences for the Repeal of Section 98.

Notice!

With this issue of the "Labour Defender" our readers will find a change in form and in price. Copies will now cost 5c (instead of 10c as formerly). The form is altered with a view to giving our readers a more attractive paper. Write us your opinions on the change.

Do Your Bit for The Relief Fund Today!

8 Must Be Freed!

T. CACIC A. T. HILL J. BOYCHUK M. BRUCE TIM BUCK T. A. EWEN S. CARR M. POPOVICH

REPEAL SECTION 98

Figure 3.3. *Canadian Labor Defender* 2.8, December 1931. Cover. Source: Library and Archives Canada

The paper is now eight pages, and priced at five cents. This price is in line with other Communist-affiliated papers of the period, such as *Workers' Unity* and *The Worker*, though it is still more than mass-market dailies like the *Toronto Star*, which

was priced at two cents in 1932 (History of the Toronto Star, n.p.). This format shift shows a greater concern with intertextuality and promotion of other CLDL print materials: the December 1931 issue contains the first notice of forthcoming pamphlets (CLD 2.8: 6), and the regular "Reviews" column debuts in the following issue (CLD 3.9: 7). This version of the paper is also renumbered beginning with September 1932, which is marked 3.9 (repeating numbering from a few issues earlier, and complicating bibliographic referencing). This seems to be a deliberate move, asserting the regularity of the paper's appearance and replacing the old haphazard system of number designation, in which each year marked the start of a new volume, but issues continued in number regardless of date (or missed issues). This same September 1932 issue contains an editorial note that states "The *Canadian Labor Defender* is making every effort to become a more attractive defense paper" (CLD 3.9: 2).

(4) August 1933 – June 1934. Once again, the paper skips an issue and then reappears with a format change, showing a return to a magazine-style pulp tabloid. The masthead indicates that the August 1933 issue is meant to include the June-July issues as well. There is, however, no numbering for this version: the hard copy held at Library and Archives Canada is marked 4.6, though 4.8 is more correct, in line with the regularized numbering system. The paper is 12 pages, roughly in quarto (30 cm by 23 cm), and staple bound; it is priced at five cents. The front cover displays a linocut masthead above a captioned photograph, with a list of contents running down the left. This cover appearance is inconsistent through this

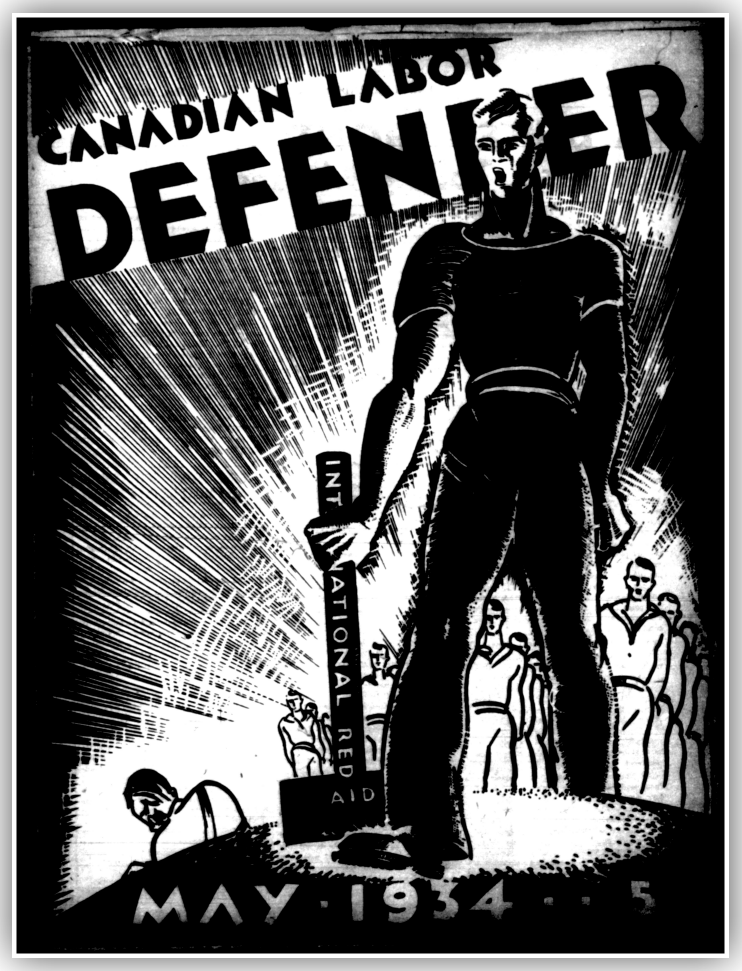


Figure 3.4. *Canadian Labor Defender* 5.4, May 1934. Cover.

Source: Library and Archives Canada

version of the paper: later issues keep the masthead and photos, but lose the contents in favour of more images or a cover article. The last two issues in this format have detailed and well-produced full-page linocut covers (the cover for the May 1934 issue is especially striking—see Figure 3.4). Inside, the paper continues to show high-level printing, with a mix of column layouts, multiple heading styles and typefaces (including pull quotes and block quotes), a running header, set-off

boxes and borders, and an abundance of photo images and other illustrations. There are, however, a number of errors and typos throughout the text. Advertising continues to be present, though ads are small and text-only and dispersed throughout the paper. Again, the paper is very self-conscious about its format changes and the conditions of its production. In a candid editorial, Oscar Ryan ("O.R.") comments:

> We have missed two issues of our paper, The Canadian Labor Defender. This has been a great hindrance to our defense work. Workers have been demanding for the past two months: "Where is the DEFENDER? When will it appear again?" Our paper has had a great struggle to meet ends, ever since it first appeared as a little mimeographed bulletin in May, 1930. During that time it has grown in popularity, and in circulation. But the financial response was inadequate. Perhaps some comradely criticism should be levelled at the management and our agents throughout the country for failing to realize the serious financial situation of the paper. (CLD 4.6: 2)

The editorial also suggests that the format changes were made by a decision of the CLDL convention, with delegates wishing to "'take a chance'" on increasing the amount of material, "in the belief that our readers will respond more enthusiastically to an improved and bigger magazine, with better pictures and more articles" (CLD 4.6: 2).

(5) March 1935 – October 1935. In its last stage, the *Defender* appears as a polished monthly magazine with strong graphic elements. Significantly, the "Canadian" is dropped from the periodical's title, though it styles itself "Canada's

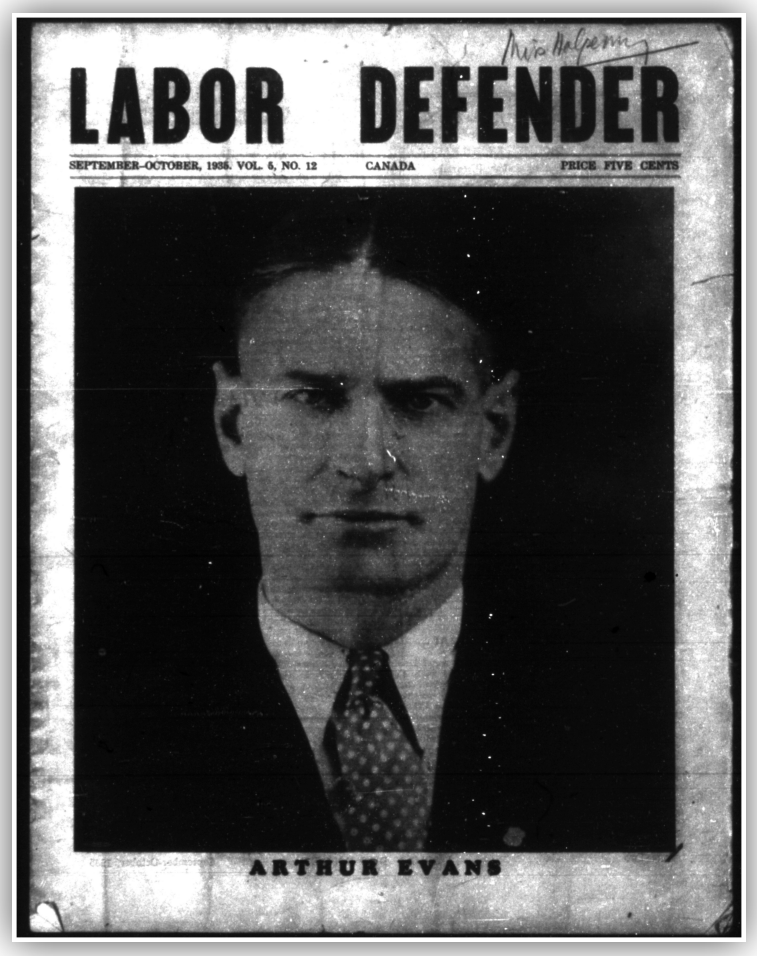


Figure 3.5. *Canadian Labor Defender* 5.12, September-October 1935. Cover.

Source: Library and Archives Canada

Leading Labor Pictorial" (CLD 5.9: 2). The paper is again in tabloid format (quarto: 31 cm x 23.8 cm), staple-bound, and generally 20 pages in length (though the "Anniversary Issue" for March 1935 contains an extra four pages of advertising and "Greetings" from other branches and organizations). It is priced at five cents, produced on smooth, almost glossy paper, contrasting its earlier use of pulp paper. (see Figure 3.5). It heavily features photos, including portraits of the Kingston Eight following their release and snapshots of other activities across Canada.

However, the magazine also contains pictorial layouts and content from other countries, presumably obtained through foreign branches of the International Red Aid. The March 1935 issue shows very graphic and disturbing images of Southern US lynching of African-Americans (CLD 5.9: 5), murdered Chinese Communist workers (CLD 5.9: 6), as well as pictures of beaten Canadian workers, injured in confrontations with the police (CLD 5.9: 9). These images, while connecting the *Defender* to its US antecedent, seem to be deliberately provocative, particularly in the brutal and dehumanized display of non-white bodies. The content is also far more international in scope, turning towards the fight against the spread of fascism in Europe and the apparent successes of the USSR.

At the height of its run, the *Defender* actively engaged with other periodical and pamphlet texts in its "Reviews" section. These reviews offer one of the only contemporary commentaries on Canadian radical print, and—along with lists of current and prospective publications—they have also been invaluable sources of bibliographic detail for the work of recuperating and recording this network of nearly-lost texts. The window offered by the *Defender* onto the Canadian radical publishing scene in the 1930s is, however, a small and murky one; very limited preservation and access to surviving texts remains a concern here, as it is for a number of texts from the period. As well, the centrality of the CLDL and the *Defender* itself offer an unusual insider view of the publication network. From 1930-1935, in line with the period of the *Defender*'s publication, the CLDL published 41 pamphlets out of the 510 catalogued by Peter Weinrich; the

organization's publication record slows greatly following the 1936 repeal of Section 98 and disappears by 1937. Pamphlet reviews begin appearing in the paper in January 1932 and ran regularly until May 1933; following a format change, they reappeared briefly in the March 1934 and April 1934 issues, after which they were permanently discontinued. I have noted 23 reviews, of which ten are for the CLDL's own publications. For comparison, whereas the CLDL published only eight percent of radical publications in this period, inside texts accounted for almost half of the reviews. Without question, the *Defender* was used by the CLDL as a mechanism of promotion and dissemination as well as a site for critical assessment. For 1932, out of 72 pamphlets recorded by Weinrich, the *Defender* reviews 13, with another six reviews of newspapers (both radical and reactionary, as in the review for *The Commonwealth*). With one exception, all reviews are of Canadian texts, all but two of which are published in Toronto.[28] Overall, this is not a bad range of coverage, especially considering problems with timeliness and the fuzzy legality of some of the potentially review-worthy publications, but it is certainly a selective sample. Notably missing are non-Anglo publications, particularly those in Yiddish and eastern European languages. Petryshyn notes that "ethnic organizations provided the major source of membership and financial support for the CLDL" (138); however, the publications surveyed by the organization's reviews do not reflect this audience, even though the fight against

[28] The only non-Canadian material reviewed is a Soviet film, *Road to Life,* showing in Toronto. It is not clear if the film, a "talkie," is dubbed or subtitled into English (CLD 5.2: 9). No other audio-visual or performance texts appear in the Reviews column.

deportation and the *Immigration Act* represents another major element in the CLDL's print campaign, tied in to Section 98 measures.

Periodical studies has lately taken a networked turn, though as Robert Scholes and Clifford Wulfman's appreciation of "Ezra Pound, Founder of Modern Periodical Studies" (1) makes clear, considerations of interconnected producers, venues, readers, commenters, and financial supporters have always been an integral part of the field. Scholes and Wulfman take Pound as the central node of a network of modernist little magazines; a consideration of radical print networks might do better to eschew such individualist orientations, though the modes of connection in terms of social relations and *mise-en-page* are still valid ways of tracing that network. Indeed, Scholes and Wulfman's prescribed method for "how to study a modern magazine," particularly the connection of implied readerships to actual circulation, and the detailed content analysis including advertising and other paratexts, suggests a plan for network analysis (144-8). In many ways, the Communist Party is the absent centre of the radical network suggested by the *Defender* and its co-circulating texts, with the CLDL only partially superimposed over it.

Critical (Re)Assessments: The *Defender* Reviews

Like the *Young Worker* and *Masses*, which it reviews in depth, the *Defender* circulated in what Candida Rifkind calls a "complementary circuit to political pamphlets, rather than periodicals," organizing "a different kind of

public" (Rifkind 46). However, whereas *Masses* itself is frequently cited—at least by writers, critics, and memoirists of Canada's literary Left—the *Defender* is rarely employed as a resource, even among labour historians. The *Defender* shares with its co-circulating publications a sense of immediacy, and presents itself as another direct alternative to the capitalist press and mass-market periodicals. Rifkind and Jody Mason discuss *Masses* (and Rifkind the *Young Worker* as well) in conjunction with middlebrow magazines, which they identify as seeking out overlapping readerships. Mason links the terms "mass-market," "mass-consumer," and "popular," but leaves out another potential competitor to leftist periodicals: pulp magazines (54-5). Mason does include more ephemeral labour and jobless papers among the "small press," even stretching to include the *Daily Clarion* as more than a party organ of the Communist Party of Canada based on its inclusion of cultural issues and literary works (56). Rifkind and Mason both draw a distinction between the left-leaning *Canadian Forum* and the radical *Masses* using material markers such as price, format, circulation numbers and length of publication period as indicators. On that count, the *Defender*, like *Masses*, is certainly among the small press, but its cultural concerns are entwined with its ideological concerns and political strategies. *Masses* itself critiques the *Canadian Forum* on the grounds of its false cultural dialogue and conciliatory reformism, as noted by Rifkind: style is a marker of political affiliation, such that "a manifestary rhetoric distinguishes the position of the revolutionary left from the social democratic left" (51). This polemical style carries over into the *Defender* as well, unsurprisingly as it shared a

number of writers with *Masses*, including Oscar Ryan, Joe Wallace, Stanley Ryerson, and Frank Love. Looking at the periodicals as performing mirrored critical functions, "*Masses* sets itself up as both a cultural dialogue within a Communist framework and an authentic counterpublic sphere, a true forum for the masses, because it dares to take positions once the debate has ended" (Rifkind 51), while the *Defender* addresses *Masses* as a co-locuter in a campaign of cultural and legalistic agitprop.

The intersection of writers, artists, organizations, and campaigns in the *Defender*'s Reviews section seems to me to illustrate what Michael Denning terms "movement culture;" undercutting depictions of leftist movements as inward-focusing echo chambers, he claims that the power of any movement "lies in its ability to sustain, inspire, and console its adherents" (*Cultural Front* 67). Denning identifies the interconnected networks of the leftist cultural front of the United States, which comprised the Communist Party, industrial unions, craft unions, fraternal benefit groups such as the International Workers Order, workers' schools, recreation programs, John Reed societies, and artistic groups, as a source of "solidarity and self-affirmation" for both workers and artists (67). The network of publications—both magazines and papers—aid societies, ethnic associations, unions, unemployed groups, and women's auxiliaries indicated by the contents and paratext of the *Defender* and its co-circulating texts suggest an attempt to foster a Canadian version of such a movement culture. The reviews of *Masses* in the *Defender*—three in a year—represent an appeal for a cultural movement to rise

among the proletariat in tandem with the political and legal movements fostered by the Communist Party and the CLDL.

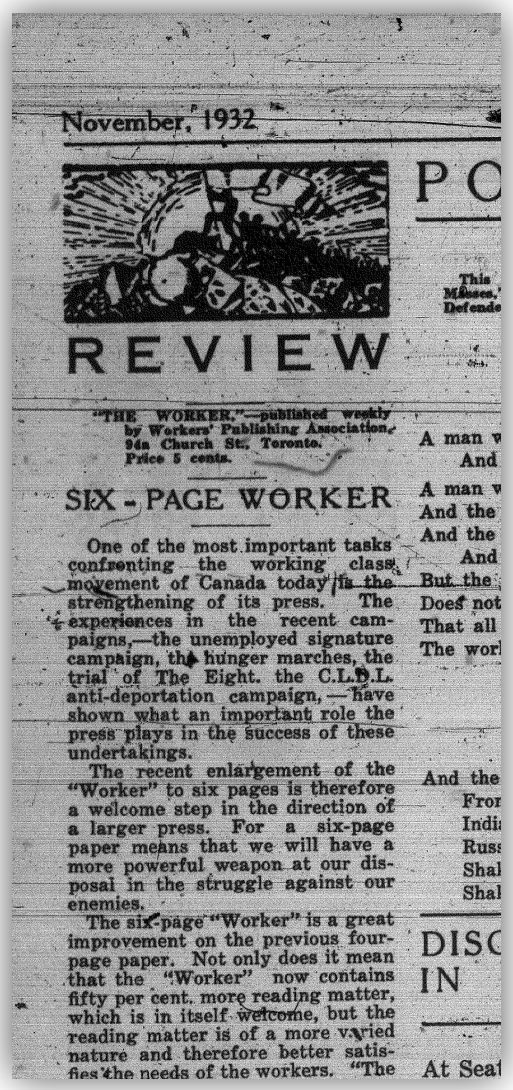
The first coverage of *Masses* appears in April 1932 with a review by 'E.C.S.' This is, I suspect, Ed Cecil-Smith, a key figure in the Progressive Arts Club and one of the editors of *Masses* itself. (The reviews in the *Defender* are generally signed only with initials, and in a couple of instances, pseudonymous last names; I have not yet been able to link most of them to identifiable figures.) As such, this is less of a critical review than a restatement of the necessary position of art in the proletarian struggle: "For many years the Canadian working class have continued their struggle without any great aid from intellectuals, artists and writers" (CLD 3.12: 7). Further comments on pricing and audience confirm the target readership as one of low-waged workers (or non-workers). *Masses* is emphasized as a rallying point for working artists, as opposed to bourgeois patronage or other forms of paid work: the review posits an ideologically cloaked mark against selling out. More pointedly, the review reflects on the intersection the two periodicals, stating "Some of the names of participating artists are already well known to readers of the *Defender* and other working-class papers," (CLD 3.12: 7), suggesting that the audience for both periodicals is one and the same.

The second review of *Masses* comes in the *Defender*'s July 1932 issue. The review by 'J.S.' (possibly John Slate, a regular byline in the paper through 1932) marks a second stage of publication for *Masses*, showing "a considerable improvement in both content and make-up" in its third issue (June 1932), with

praise especially for artwork and range of artists (CLD 3.15: 7). Woodcuts and linocuts are apparently to be taken as markers of ideological significance, as "The magazine is undoubtedly approaching much closer to the requirements of a militant cultural magazine" (CLD 3.15: 7). The reviewer notes the new feature "Criticism and Self-Criticism," where readers of *Masses* and writers from the Progressive Arts Club review the magazine's contents—following the *Defender*'s own pattern in this same column. Graphic arts now in place, J.S. calls for more stories, especially those featuring Canadian workers and farmers, perhaps sensitive to the perceived lack of a Canadian proletarian literature expressed by academic and middlebrow commenters in other print venues.

The final consideration of *Masses* is in the one-year review of its March-April issue, again by J.S., in the May 1933 number of the *Defender* (CLD 4.5: 7). The lag time between issue and review raises the question of availability: it is not clear how long pamphlets and especially periodicals would be available for sale before or after their cover dates. The *Defender*'s reviews here are often at least a month after publication date, suggesting that they are not focused on promoting sale of current issues, but directing attention toward future, ongoing circulation; at the very least, timeliness and novelty are not the core concerns of these proletarian periodicals, though back copies would likely be available from newsstands and directly from the affiliated organizations. One year in and at the height of its production run, J.S. commends *Masses* for "becoming an important cultural expression for the revolutionary movement in Canada" (CLD 4.5: 7). The review

also acts as a call for contributions, transmitted here by two layers of editors. In its contents, *Masses* is deemed to be a "well-balanced production," perhaps coming to be seen by *Defender* reviewers as a key supplement to the drier working-class papers also reviewed as well as an outlet for those "dissatisfied with decaying bourgeois culture" (CLD 4.5: 7).



November, 1932

REVIEW

"THE WORKER."—published weekly by Workers' Publishing Association, 94a Church St., Toronto. Price 5 cents.

SIX - PAGE WORKER

One of the most important tasks confronting the working class movement of Canada today is the strengthening of its press. The experiences in the recent campaigns,—the unemployed signature campaign, the hunger marches, the trial of The Eight. the C.L.D.L. anti-deportation campaign,—have shown what an important role the press plays in the success of these undertakings.

The recent enlargement of the "Worker" to six pages is therefore a welcome step in the direction of a larger press. For a six-page paper means that we will have a more powerful weapon at our disposai in the struggle against our enemies.

The six-page "Worker" is a great improvement on the previous four-page paper. Not only does it mean that the "Worker" now contains fifty per cent. more reading matter, which is in itself welcome, but the reading matter is of a more varied nature and therefore better satisfies the needs of the workers. "The

Figure 3.6. Detail, Review of "Six-Page Worker," *Canadian Labor Defender,* November 1932 (7).

Source: Library and Archives Canada

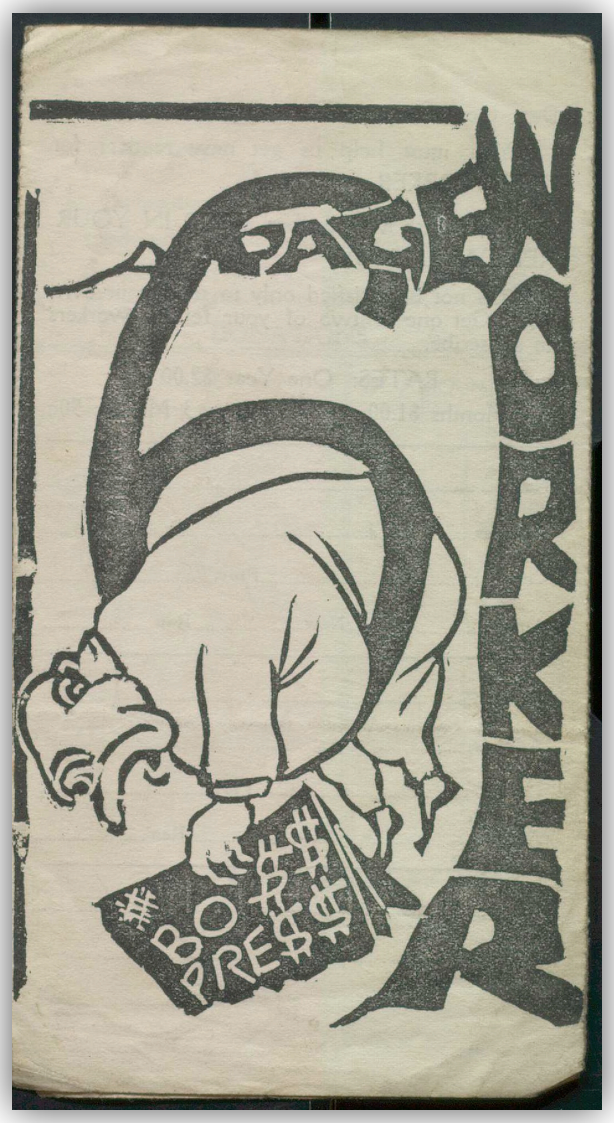


Figure 3.7. Communist Party of Canada, "6-Page Worker" (1932). Detail, linocut by Avrom Yanofsky.

Source: Thomas Fisher Library, University of Toronto

The successful trajectory of *Masses* as portrayed in the *Defender* is somewhat disingenuous: certainly the magazine aspired to speak for and to the so-called masses, and was promoted as doing so in these reviews, but it never reached beyond 'little' status in terms of circulation, readership, and legacy among

Canadian print as a whole. Mason notes with some skepticism *Masses*' own claim that it stood as "the leading cultural magazine in Canada" (*Masses* March/April 1934: 3) on surpassing the *Canadian Forum*'s circulation (around 1,900 in 1929) (Mason 55). Certainly, that this report on the magazine's supposed pinnacle came in what turned out to be its last issue is an indicator of *Masses'* enduring precarity. Nonetheless, the bias of this puffed-up success story does not extend so smoothly to the *Defender*'s self-criticism. In perhaps the slyest example of its reinvention of the review as a site of ideological justification, the *Defender* reviews itself in a June 1932 piece by 'R.C.' The article reflects on different stages of publication history, "from a mimeographed magazine, then a small printed magazine, to its present form" as "an attractive illustrated monthly journal," which follows the pattern of successive formats I laid out above (CLD 3.14: 7). The reviewer's preferred terms —"magazine" and "journal" rather than "paper"—demonstrate the claims on cultural status the *Defender* makes for itself and its companion publications. The shortcomings R.C. notes include the limited coverage of CLDL organizational matters (I think this is a plus) and a lack of news correspondents. In truth, the paper is largely made up of editorials and reprinted material, much like the other Canadian working-class papers it circulated among. More difficult to justify is the ideological/artistic criticism levelled at the *Defender*: "Some workers have made the criticism, in the west, that the drawings are too sketchy and fantastic, not bold or serious enough" (CLD 3.14: 7). There is an implicit value system governing the appropriateness of artistic forms to a proletarian movement, though this is not

spelled out in the reviews themselves. This is as well the second oblique reference to regional tensions in the reviews, though here the west is figured as more militant, whereas in the later review of the "Alberta Hunger-March" pamphlet, the western branches of the CLDL are seen as less focused on core message and less well-organized.

This review and others of CLDL pamphlets show a central concern with circulation numbers, which are perceived by the reviewers and editors as a tangible measure of the campaigns' reach. There is, however, no sense of secondary circulation routes or the ways in which the texts might be read and shared: numbers are directly connected to impact. This is made very clear in another internally-focused review published in the May 1933 issue of the *Defender*, again by the initialled J.S. The reviewed pamphlet, "14,000,000 Fighters Aginst Terror," is authored by A.E. Smith and Beckie Buhay, leading organizers of the CLDL and published by the CLDL itself. The text reflects on growth and emergence of the CLDL within Canada, as well as on the international stage (this pamphlet is a report from World Congress), while the review praises it for the "popular style" of its writing (CLD 4.5: 7). Taken together, the pamphlet and review serve to telescope between these levels, from top-level direction to the general reader. However, the attentiveness of the reader, and as such the limited power of the CLDL's campaigns, is much more strongly questioned in an article printed directly next to this review. "Agitation and Education," also by Buhay, identifies educational and agitational work as a key weakness of the CLDL:

> As a rule (and this applies very aptly to Canada) the agitation was very general in its character. All strata of the working masses are approached in the same manner: the language used is often complicated and above the heads of the workers: we have not developed the ability to concentrate upon small, daily events of interest to the workers and to connect these with the general struggle. (CLD 4.5:7)

As well as showing zero self-awareness around the use of both "strata" and "masses" to describe Canadian workers, this is particularly damning self-criticism as legal education and agitational campaigns against legal repression are the very reasons for the CLDL's functioning. We might take this as a signal of the organization's overall anxieties. There is some evidence, based on RCMP surveillance, that the CLDL was not doing well in terms of finances or attendance: a field bulletin from September 1933 baldly states "C.L.D.L. Hard Up" (Kealey and Whitaker I: 33). Even during this period, which arguably marks its greatest influence, the distance between the organization projected status and its actual impact remains suspect.

The CLDL's concern with its agitprop strategy is made clearer by comparison of its self-criticism with reviews of two Communist Party organs, *The Worker* and the *Young Worker*. *The Worker*'s format shift from four to six pages was the basis of a major subscription drive through most of 1932; the fruits of that campaign are reviewed in the November 1932 issue of the *Defender* in W. Sydney's assessment of the "Six-Page Worker" (CLD 3.11: 7) (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7). The review emphasizes the symbolic status of a six-page paper, which is put forth as

indicative of a particular cultural capital and the strength of the radical movement. However, the endurance of the paper, which was in circulation from 1922—making it venerable by radical print standards—is not remarked upon as part of its status. I admit this seems a bit strange from a printing point of view, though, as a six-page paper is 1.5 sheets: why not go to a full eight pages? The reviewer seems to suggest that *The Worker*'s press strategy is one of progressive increase, going from a four-page weekly to a six-page weekly, with a six-page bi-weekly on the horizon, leading to the ultimate goal of a six-page daily. This would not in fact be achieved by *The Worker* until its 1936 relaunch as the *Daily Clarion*, when the Communist Party regained its legality (Weinrich 421). These material questions do not merit review, though the inclusion of "lighter features" lacking in "our press," including serialized stories and illustrations is of particular note (CLD 3.11: 7). In its expansion, Sydney claims that "'The Worker' is assuming its rightful role to be not only a propagandist, but a leader of the working class" (CLD 3.11: 7), suggesting the need for both cultural and polemical elements in a true proletarian press.

The *Defender*'s review of the *Young Worker* further reveals the implicit criteria for valuable proletarian periodicals. The review by 'R.K.G.' in the January/ February 1933 issue indicates that the *Young Worker* is the only paper aimed at working-class youth (although some of the others have attempted to include pages for children and youth, as in *Unity* and in later volumes of the *Defender*). Like the *Worker,* this is another long-running periodical (the *Young Worker* was launched in

1924, and carried on as the *Young Communist* after 1936 (Weinrich 408, 422)), and as such the review is less about the paper's current incarnation and more of an opportunity to highlight the intervention of the Young Communist League as a whole. Indeed, most of these reviews are really platforms for editorializing or gesturing toward other radical organizations: the columns, taken in total, ultimately function as a network survey. The reviewer focuses on the issue of jailed protestors covered in the issue at hand, and critiques other working-class papers for failing to adequately cover the youth problems and struggle: "As the lone expression of the working class youth, far greater attention should be paid to its life and development" (CLD 4.1-2:7) Though, in turn, the review also critiques the *Young Worker* for its lack of attention to defence issues, which is of course the CLDL's pet cause, as well as the absence of "lighter material"—i.e. artistic and cultural content. Altogether, the reviews posit a print strategy in the form of a distributed network of periodicals, each with particular functions and cultural commitments, both complementary and mutually reinforcing, leading toward the creation of a total proletarian movement.

Reviews were dropped by the *Defender*'s August 1933 issue (which I have had the opportunity to examine in full hard copy at Library and Archives Canada). At this point, the paper was a 12-page magazine and took full advantage of its larger size and more polished format. Like other tabloid-style proletarian papers (notably *Unity*), the centre spread at pages 6-7 was given greater prominence as a space for dominant and immediate campaign issues: as such, the Reviews column's typical

spot on page 7 was displaced. The new format debuted in this issue after two months' absence marks a change in presentation as decided by CLDL convention and relayed in a signed editorial by Oscar Ryan: the *Defender* defends itself as "'tak[ing] a chance'" on increasing the amount of material, "in the belief that our readers will respond more enthusiastically to an improved and bigger magazine, with better pictures and more articles" (CLD 4.6: 2). Ryan claims the publication is basing these changes on "letters of advice and criticism received from our readers in many parts of the country," striving "to provide more colorful articles, to avoid duplicating what appears in other working-class papers, and to approach our subjects in a more lively manner, always bearing in mind the defense angle of our paper" (CLD 4.6: 2). However, the perennial conflict between reader desire for "lighter" cultural material, and the organization's push for "serious material" remains unresolved. The reviews resurfaced for two issues in March and April 1934, with a significantly different format and style, and then disappeared completely for the rest of the paper's run.

Apertures and Shutters

Denning links the lasting success of the American cultural front of the 1930s to that movement culture's relationship to federal government agencies and projects as well as mass cultural industries; through these channels, it helped to reshape the culture of the United States beyond the scope of avant-garde artists and labour movement organizers. By drawing out the shape of a potentially similar movement culture in Canada based on the publication network suggested in both

the content and paratext of materials such as the *Canadian Labor Defender* as well as the CLDL's pamphlet output, it is possible to extend the reach of periodical studies. Certainly, the magazine has proved to be an invaluable resource for solving bibliographical problems by indirect means, verifying details of otherwise unrecorded texts and unsettling received knowledge about others. Further, by creating the possibility of constructing a non-linear narrative about these texts with unexpected reinforcements between them, the CLDL's body of publications presents itself as a tool for reassembling the organizational and critical relationships embedded in the *Defender*, as well as other associated pamphlets, periodicals and non-book texts. However, the network so suggested also marks the limits of its own influence. While Denning projects a long legacy for American radical movement culture, the hostility of the Canadian state to such forms of textual production, and the consequent focusing of the public debate on the issue of its criminalization under Section 98, was a significant barrier to the widespread infiltration of the proletarian movement in this crucial period of dissatisfaction. When the public may have been most receptive to ideas of radical refusal and social change, the aperture of the CLDL's work was shuttered.

Looking at the *Defender* in relation to the CLDL's overall strategic campaign, it is hard not to see the later format changes as a response to Buhay's criticism and other commentary like it. Certainly, the earlier version of the *Defender* is more lively and interesting than issues that follow; although more clearly and graphically organized, the latter run of the paper reads much more like a functionary bulletin

than a readerly magazine. In many ways, this shift prefigures the CLDL's demise after the repeal of Section 98: having built itself rigidly on a single-issue campaign, it was unable to move from a position of legal antagonism to a broader set of concerns: both pamphlet print and periodical publication meet the same end. The network envisioned by the Reviews column may more accurately be considered as a pseudo-network, invested in representing itself as a larger, more influential network of organizations and publications. The *Defender*'s assessment of the CLDL's publications and co-circulating texts operates from a position of revolutionary idealism, projecting a public and a movement before it could properly be said to exist, and in this hailing attempting to create the necessary conditions for it to exist. So remains the value and the problem of the Section 98 campaign as a central issue overall: the 1936 repeal of the law can be framed as a victory for the CLDL, but it is also the boundary for a movement drawn so completely around a single issue. For a more lasting impression of working-class culture and desires, I suspect we may have to turn to other genres of print, and other assemblages of styles and voices than agitprop: there is another movement gathering in the spaces it excludes.

Chapter Four

Readers and Surveillers

On 20 December 1932, a crowd of ten thousand unemployed men and women, ex-servicemen, families, and citizens converged on Edmonton's Market Square in what quickly became known as the Edmonton Hunger March. The march prefigured the organization of the unemployed into local demonstrations and relief camp strikes throughout the 1930s, as well as the On-to-Ottawa trek of 1935. It has remained a touchstone for historians of both labour and the left in Alberta, if not the general public. The print record of the event is scanty: just a few photos and newspaper stories, and a single propagandistic pamphlet produced after the event by the Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL). The accounts of different individuals closely linked to the march show a preoccupation with these remnants suggesting that their use as organizing tools had a lasting effect on how the event was framed and remembered. Roy Berlando, one of those arrested following the march and later named in the CLDL pamphlet, describes a mass action with violent repercussions. In a 1978 interview, Berlando recalls:

> …just as it got started, the 75 Mounted Police that was there drove into this crowd and clubbed dozens and dozens of them over the head[;] of course many of them went to the hospital…But anyway, in spite of the smash-up and the massacre at the hands of the Mounted Police, they marched and I have pictures here, marching down towards [the] Parliament Buildings. (Caragata, Interview 9)

Berlando's account is unstable. Through the interview he contradicts himself; he leaves speakers, locations, and timelines unclear; he gives incorrect facts; and he becomes increasingly at odds with Caragata. The account is also highly intertextual. Berlando makes reference throughout to photographs and other documents—including the CLDL pamphlet—that he has present with him during the interview, as well as to particular news articles, speeches, and books in order to validate his narrative. In its inflammatory rhetoric, the account conveys an intensely personal story, while also reproducing the same tropes and elements seen in the larger campaigns of the Communist-affiliated Left in other Canadian cities. Like Berlando's, many of the narratives attached to the march show the influence of a wide range of other texts, both contemporary to the 1930s and interwoven with the event in the years between re-tellings. At core, these narratives are the work of readers: textual readers and situational readers—observers, documenters, and surveillers. This chapter considers how acts of reading shape the narratives surrounding the 1932 Edmonton Hunger March as they are held in tension between the event itself, the texts that inform its print record, and its readers.

The March

The Edmonton Hunger March was one of a wave of mass demonstrations by working-class people through the first half of the 1930s that gave voice to the growing deprivation and widening inequality of the Great Depression. Though descending from populist uprisings of centuries past, dating back to the Levellers, the hunger march is a distinctly modern form of protest. James Vernon identifies Britain's 1908 *Unemployment Bill* as the focal point of the first hunger marches (56). Indeed, the term "hunger-march" specifically denotes a march by the unemployed, separating it out from a strike (OED)[29]—though, in practice, the movements became ideologically united by the 1930s. In the 1908 march, unemployed workers from industrial cities like Liverpool, Leicester, and Manchester converged on London to draw attention to their cause, and, by massed action, to protest common stereotypes of "the unemployed [as] morally and physically degenerate" (57). These early marches are notable for the participation of war veterans, a savvy courting of the press through the use of embedded reporters, and for their repeated failure to achieve political attention from government authorities or representatives—conditions which remained consistent through the marches of the 1930s.

Vernon links the development of the hunger march with the tactic of the hunger strike, which was employed in subsequent decades by political dissidents,

[29] The hyphen in "hunger-march" seems to be a British usage, though it also pops up inconsistently in Canadian sources.

including suffragettes, Irish Republicans, and anti-colonial activists in British India (62-3). He argues that, once humanitarian efforts in the early twentieth century had established hunger as an immoral and inhumane condition, the hunger strike was a tool for mobilizing sympathy for those left hungry as a political critique against systems of rule that permitted hunger to occur unabated (64). In this way, hunger strikes offered a highly visible protest against the implicit violence of immoral and unequal rule of law, and the very real violence of force-feeding, beatings, and torture used to terminate the protest. The moral weight of hunger, and by extension, the apparent natural right of a worker to earn a living sufficient enough to feed his family,[30] continued to animate the marches of the 1930s. However, following the First World War, the cause of the unemployed merged with the more widespread organization of industrial labour in the UK, and across North America. Events such as Britain's 1926 General Strike and the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, both of which saw participation by returning war veterans and unemployed workers' unions alongside the Trade Unions Congress and the Industrial Workers of the World, set the pattern for the hunger marches of the Great Depression. And, as seen across jurisdictions in strikes and marches alike, in the shadow of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the slightest tint of red among massed protestors brought swift reprisal from official authorities.

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[30] As described, reported, and debated in this time period, the language of wages and work most assuredly refer to "his" family. The role of women workers in the Depression, as breadwinners or as supplemental earners, was treated with suspicion at best. For example, a letter from the organization of Single Girls Unemployed to Edmonton Mayor Daniel Knott protests the employment of married women in a time of limited prospects (Mumcey et al.).

The Edmonton Hunger March fits comfortably within the larger pattern of worker-driven movements, while also responding to local circumstances. By 1932, Alberta was at the nadir of economic collapse, compounded by years of drought and then flood that ravaged agricultural production (Ulmer 70-71). The province was deeply in debt, and deeply at odds with the non-interventionist policies of R.B. Bennett's federal government. That summer, at Bennett's behest, social worker Charlotte Whitton, toured the western provinces, gathering a firsthand view of the impact of the depression and the desperate privation in both rural and urban locales. Based on her observations, she produced an as-yet unpublished "Report re: Unemployment and Relief in Western Canada" with recommendations to Bennett, strongly coloured by socially and fiscally conservative ideals (Ulmer 79-80). At this time, relief was still in the hands of local civic authorities, though provinces were beginning to organize labour relief camps for unemployed single men for the purpose of moving them outside of urban centres.[31] Indeed, the records of Edmonton's City Commissioner, which included the Special Relief Department, show swelling lists of those in need of relief and other supports, and an increasingly desperate administration trying to keep up with the level of need.

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[31] A letter from T.S. Magee, the Superintendent for the Civic Relief Department to Mayor Knott outlines the logic of the relief camps:

> As a review of next winter's activities is to take place it appears to me that if it be decided single men should be cared for during coming winter, a good plan might be to keep them housed far removed from the Cities, as thereby many will provide for themselves rather than live in isolated localities during the winter. So long as single men are housed in Cities they are apt to remain public charges, but if placed far removed from the City environment the ranks will become depleted very rapidly. (Magee, 7 May 1932)

A telegram from Mayor Knott to the Minister of Labour in Ottawa captures this pressure. Upon being informed that federal camps in Jasper and Elk Island National Parks were about to be disbanded, sending a further influx of unemployed workers into Edmonton, Knott telegraphed "ALREADY TAKING CARE OF TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SINGLE MEN STOP CANNOT POSSIBLY UNDERTAKE TO SUPPORT FURTHER ACCESSIONS TO THESE NUMBERS" (Knott, 30 December 1931). Through these records, we see a relief scheme for unemployed single men loosely devised around literal meal tickets for food and board in nearby cafés and rooming houses, coupled with direct relief in the form of food, clothing, and fuel for married men and families. At the time of Whitton's visit, the City was further discussing plans for mass housing and feeding by converting buildings on the old Exhibition Grounds at the Rossdale Flats (a site also considered for a penitentiary),[32] as well as a highly confidential proposal for setting up a public relief hospital at the Immigration Hall.[33] The dispensation of relief was meticulously documented, with weekly enumerations of the locations providing support to the unemployed, rates and expenses, grocery orders, and, by 1932, the nationalities of origin for all recipients. This administrative surveillance coincides neatly with other forms of policing by the state.

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[32] See correspondence in RG-11-7.4, Box 2, File 13. Commissioner's Papers: Correspondence Relating to the Special Relief Department. City of Edmonton Archives. Edmonton, AB, Canada.

[33] See McKee, 27 July 1932, and Jenkins, 28 July 1932, wherein Jenkins, a government medical officer, states "it would be a desirable move provided - that there is no publicity whatsoever."

Although the march is not unknown to general Canadian histories, accounts of the event largely appear in histories of labour and trade union organization in Alberta. These come with distinct institutional biases that minimize the impact of radical left organizing, and sever the Edmonton march from contemporary analogues. The march did not arise spontaneously: it was inspired by similar actions elsewhere; it was planned; it was recorded; and print accounts were used strategically for further organization. In this context, Caragata notes that "the unemployed often found their best allies were the Communists," who "marshalled the forces of the jobless on the streets" (*Alberta Labour,* 102) with a historical and political narrative that accounted for their position in ways that more established trade unions could not. Planning for the march began as early as the fall of 1932, by the Workers' Unity League and the Farmers' Unity League (*Alberta Labour,* 105), who sought to draw in farmers from the outlying towns as well as workers and the unemployed in Edmonton itself. Ben Swankey, then an organizer for the Young Communist League, details the planning in his 2008 memoir. He notes the multiple organizations involved and preparatory meetings across the province months before the march itself, as well as RCMP blockades on the highways attempting to turn back travellers from coal mining and farming districts as they entered the city (58-9). Indeed, the city police were in conversation with the RCMP and planning for the stationing of police constables and "twenty-five special men" paid out of a

secret service budget as early as 6 December.[34] Preliminary meetings were held in locations frequented by the unemployed, and working-class Edmontonians generally, such as the Gem Theatre and the Ukrainian Labour Temple.[35] These featured, according to a police informant, "extreme communistic address[es]," as well as discussion of practical matters around food and lodging for the incoming marchers (Wilchinski, 19 December 1932). The informant was especially fixated on the "foreign" influences, noting speeches given in Ukrainian, Polish, and Hungarian with alarm (Wilchinski, 17 December 1932). This opinion was shared by civic authorities. Following the march, Chief Shute wrote to Mayor Knott:

> I am of the opinion that most of the disturbances staged of a militant nature which have caused so much trouble to Civic authorities (sic) throughout Canada are the direct result of Communist agitators, and that such men, if aliens, should be deported at the earliest possible moment... (Shute, 28 December 1932)

However, the actual organization seems to have been in the hands of Canadian-born agitators, and those arrested and ultimately brought to trial mainly had Anglo names.

The day of the march showed an exuberant gathering in Market Square, with a parallel marshalling of police forces. The gathering itself was

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[34] See Shute, 6 December 1932.

[35] See Chapter Five for a detailed mapping of downtown Edmonton at the time of the march.

Figure 4.1. Market Square, Edmonton, 20 December 1932

Source: Provincial Archives of Alberta (Berlando A9215)

Figure 4.2. Police advancing on marchers, Edmonton Hunger March, 20 December 1932.

Source: Provincial Archives of Alberta (Berlando A9214)

wholly permitted; however, the planned march to the Parliament buildings[36] was restricted, due to Mayor Knott's refusal of a parade permit. This denial was strategic, based on early advice from the commanding officer of the RCMP, who was of the opinion that

> the Provincial Government was definitely opposed to the holding of any parades, as such parades were entirely unnecessary and uncalled for, and the Premier was willing at all times to meet any delegations from the men to discuss matters with them. (Shute, 6 December 1932)

This assurance proved to be misleading, as a delegation of the unemployed was turned away by Premier Brownlee at the same time as the police moved on the crowd.[37] As planned, RCMP and city police were stationed within a block of Market Square, and machine guns were placed on the roof of the post office, facing the square where a large crowd was gathered.[38] Following a series of speeches, the crowd began to move on to the streets, where they were immediately met by police force (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The resulting clash on the street was followed the next day by a raid on the Ukrainian Labour Temple. For their roles in organizing the march, 33 people were arrested, with seven men ultimately coming

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[36] As the Alberta Legislature was referred to at the time.

[37] The circumstances of this meeting are difficult to outline based on subsequent narratives. Berlando, in his interview, claims to have been part of the delegation, going so far as to recount Brownlee's comments about his apparent youthful age (Caragata, Interview 8). Swankey, however, claims that "the premier and the mayor would not budge" regarding their attempt to get a hearing (60). Strikwerda and Finkel support this version, stating that "the premier had refused even to see the delegation" (98).

[38] The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported 2000 demonstrators ("New 'Hunger' Disturbance Nipped Here,"), while police and witness accounts put the crowd at eight to ten thousand (Shute, 21 December 1932). This is a significant size, given that the population of Edmonton at the time was about 79,000 (City of Edmonton).

to trial. However, they were soon released, and the police actions were seized as a propagandistic coup for both the Communists and CLDL.

Accounts of the march differ widely in their depiction of the violence against the crowd and its aftermath. The police account is very distanced: Chief Shute found it "regrettable that one or two citizens report having been struck by officers." However, his narrative of the event works to minimize both police involvement and its outcome:

> Only the necessary force to prevent this parade taking place was used, the City and Mounted Police used nothing but batons, and no one being struck so as to cause permanent injury. So far as I know, no permanent injuries were inflicted, and the crowd was dispersed in the most orderly manner possible. (Shute, 21 December 1932)

Conversely, the account published in the *Edmonton Bulletin* seems to relish in the details of violence. The headline of the paper's lead story for 21 December emphasizes the police role, proclaiming in large type "Police Crush 'Hunger' March Here," while the subheading describes the crowd as an "Angry Mob… Incited by 'Red' Chiefs." The story that follows is as sensationalized and dramatic as any dime novel, casting the police and the RCMP in the heroic Sam Steele-esque role against a depersonalized mass of agitators:

> Police batons rose and fell, shells were cracked, men and women were trampled underfoot, and the hoarse roars of an angry mob echoed for two hours in downtown streets on Tuesday afternoon when so-called "Hunger-Marchers," incited by known Communist leaders, came to grips with a combined force of R.C.M.P. constables and city policemen

> in Edmonton's first major "Red" clash with the forces of law and order. (1)

In their own narratives, participant accounts respond strongly to the distorted version of events published in the *Bulletin*. Swankey, in an otherwise measured recounting of events, describes a "momentary panic" (61) among the crowd giving way to anger and self-defence against the "well-organized police attack" (62). Any so-called riot, he states "was a riot instigated by the police" (62). With characteristic flair, Berlando refers directly to the news story and describes the clash between police and protestors as "the smash-up and the massacre at the hands of the Mounted Police" (9). However, the story presented by the *Bulletin* presented the dominant public narrative, going unchallenged by the left until the later publication of a broadsheet by the the Hunger March Committee and the subsequent pamphlet by the CLDL.

The Pamphlet

My starting place for thinking about the ways in which proletarian engagements are structured by their texts was the pamphlet itself. "The Alberta Hunger-March and the Victims of Brownlee's Police Terror" was issued by the Canadian Labor Defense League in early 1933, following the march, the police raids, and the subsequent trial. Like much other proletarian print, there is no publication date specified in the pamphlet itself, but Weinrich confirms a date of 1933 (121), which corroborates the internal evidence, and is supported by the review of the pamphlet in the March-April 1933 edition of the *Canadian Labor*

Defender (7). It is 40 pages, including its blue-green paper cover and three pages of photo illustrations bracketing the main text (CLDL, "Hunger-March" 2, 37, 38). It is printed on low-quality pulp paper in octavo format, and priced at 10 cents. This is midrange on the standard 5-25 cent scale typical of 1930s Canadian radical publications, including pamphlets, broadsheets, newspapers, and magazines.

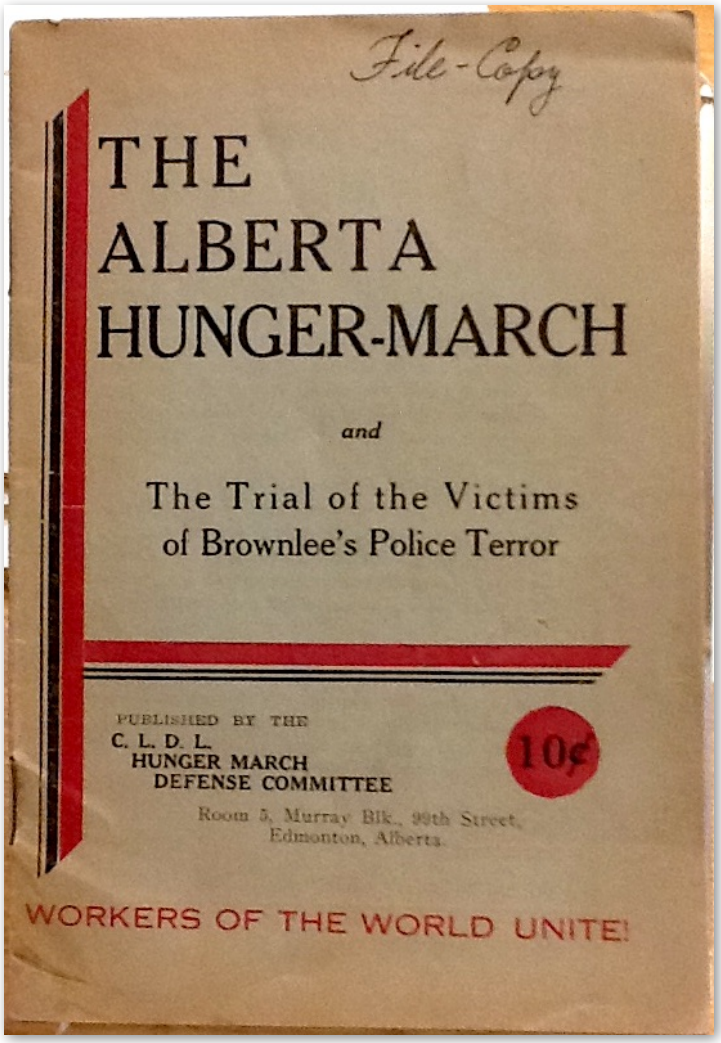

Figure 4.3. CLDL, "The Alberta Hunger-March." Cover.

Source: Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta.

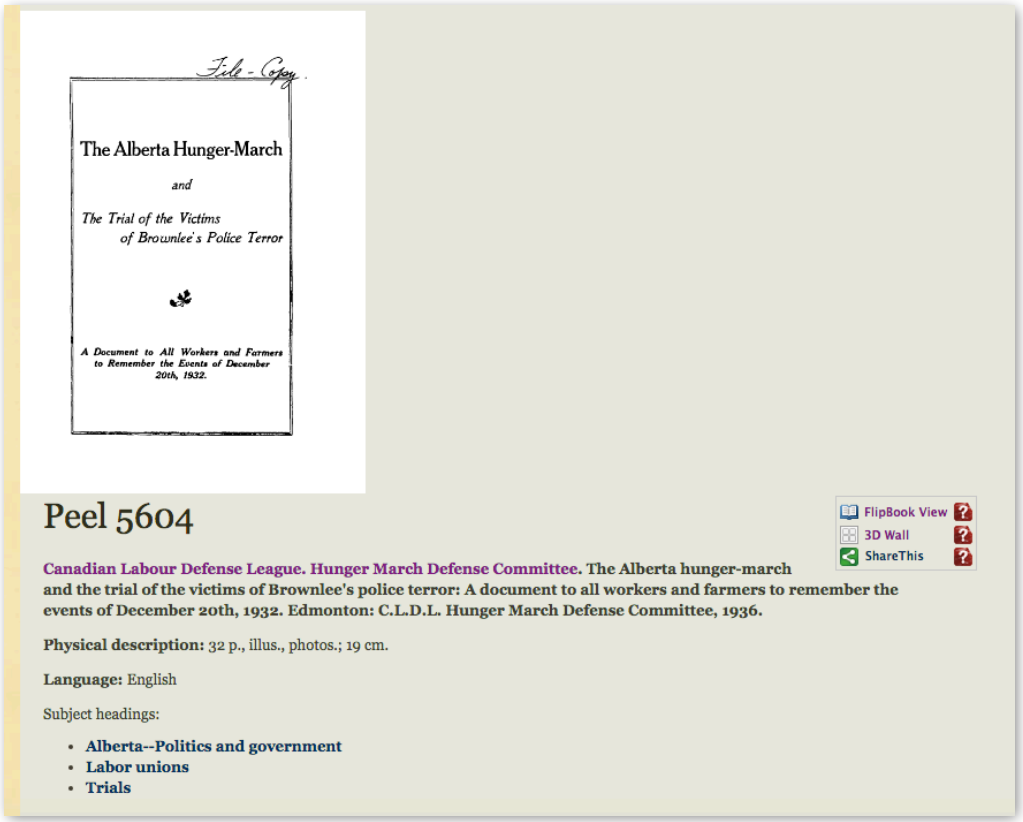

Figure 4.4. Entry for "The Alberta Hunger-March" in the *Peel's Prairie Provinces* online database. Note the similar handwriting on both this entry and the copy in Figure 4.3.

I have been able directly examine five or so copies[39] of "The Alberta Hunger-March," which together form the basis for my analysis: (a) one copy held in the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library at the University of Alberta (Figure 4.3) and a scanned version in the *Peel's Prairie Provinces* database collection (Figure 4.4); (b) a second copy held in the Canadian Labor Defense League Fonds at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA); (c) a third copy held in the library of the PAA; (d) a fourth copy held in the Robert S. Kenny collection at the Thomas

[39] Unless otherwise indicated, citations of the text will refer to the physical copy held in the Bruce Peel Library.

Fisher Library, University of Toronto; (e) and a set of photographs of the pamphlet held in the Warren Caragata fonds at the PAA, which is distinct from both the copies held in the CLDL fonds and in the PAA library. Each version has its own bibliographic oddities.

Copy (a) shows some of the difficulties that can arise when cataloguing and examining digitized versions of pamphlet materials. Although the scanned version begins with the pamphlet's title page rather than its paper cover, and as such has a different pagination listed on *Peel's Prairie Provinces* (32 pages), it is definitively a scan of the copy held in the Bruce Peel Library. The scan shows the library's bookplate on page 36, as well as identical notations on the title page. Both the original print copy and the scan also have the same incorrect publication date in the library's record and in the Peel collection's metadata. The pamphlet is misdated to 1936, likely due to a comment in the preface that "It took almost three years of misery and privation before a lot of us saw things in their true light" (CLDL, "Hunger-March" 5). Whereas this statement seems to refer to the three years that had passed since the 1929 stock market crash, the cataloguer may have taken this to mean that the date of publication came three years after the date of the march. As above, a more precise date can be fixed with reference to the *Canadian Labor Defender*'s review.

Unfortunately, the *Peel's Prairie Provinces* site does not include an overview of its methods of digitization, nor does it record who is responsible for digitizing the object or entering metadata. This information should be clearly and publicly

available as part of any digital project in order to uphold transparency for both editing practices and the labour involved. My practice is to include the cover pages of a pamphlet in the page count, as well as any imaging. As pamphlets are by definition unbound, the distinction from cover to inside body is less rigid than it is for print objects like books, and many pamphlets do include the covers as page 1 in their own numbering (when there are page numbers, that is). Furthermore, the cover is a particularly important part of the text. Following Gerard Genette's analysis of the paratextual elements of a print object as the "zone not only of transition but also of transaction" (2), the cover of a pamphlet is key both commercially and strategically to connecting with potential readers. Of the elements composing the "peritext," Genette's category for materials wrapping around the text both spatially and conceptually (4-5), the cover—including inside and back covers—has been a focal point of my analysis. If we consider ways that a potential reader might encounter a pamphlet, maybe on a newsstand rack or handed out by a speaker on the square, the cover is a method of signalling. It must be eye-catching, using "dramatic" means such as "a garish illustration" or bolder typographic elements (Genette 28).[40] Like other such pamphlets, the cover of "The Alberta Hunger-March" is the only spot of colour, while the inside covers and title page contain the only illustrations (here, photographic) as well as subscription

[40] In this descriptor, Genette is primarily describing the role of a paper jacket or wrapper around a hardcover book. For non-book print like pamphlets, the wrapper and cover are effectively the same element, performing dual functions. As valuable as Genette's analysis is in establishing a vocabulary for analyzing elements of a book beyond the content-text itself, it has real limitations when considering non-book print.

forms intended to be detached, lists of other publications, and locations of organizational offices. These are necessary for building out the context of the pamphlet, as well as connecting it to other proletarian print and groups.

Copy (b) makes up the entirety of the CLDL fonds at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. According to the custodial history for the fonds, the pamphlet was donated to the PAA by Julie Hrapko, whose "relationship to the CLDL is unknown" (PAA). It is in good condition, with no markings, although there is some discolouration and watermarks on the cover. The printing on this copy is comparatively faint, both on the cover decorations and the inside text—page 23, for example, is barely legible. This fading print, often an indication of poor inking, or worn-down plates near the end of a print run, is a signifier of that "badness" that marks out proletarian print. Copy (c), the PAA library copy, bears considerably more signs of use. It shows more damage, including water, stains, grease marks, and rusted staples—more typical of surviving pamphlets than special collections copies tend to be. The text is marked up in both pencil and ink, potentially showing at least two readers. Most interestingly, we can surmise about who those readers were, as there are two names written on the cover in ink: Wasyl Greckul of Glendon, Alberta, and George Lacousta/Lakusta of Hairy Hill, Alberta (who has repeated his signature in pencil). Both of these are distinctly Ukrainian surnames, hailing from farming communities east of Edmonton. To that extent, the identifiable readership correlates with those addressed by the pamphlet's text, as well as those anticipated with some alarm by the city officials. Copy (d), which

comes from the Robert S. Kenny pamphlet collection at the Thomas Fisher Library, is one of the two copies cited by Weinrich in his bibliography (127). This is an exceptionally clean copy, suggesting that it was saved rather than circulated; it is otherwise unremarkable.

Copy (e) perhaps stretches the idea of what constitutes a "copy;" however, it is very revealing of the relationships of some of the hunger march participants to the event and its documentation, and the contradictory narratives they have generated. This version of the pamphlet is contained within a series of photos in the Caragata fonds at the PAA. To the best of my knowledge, this is a part of the same printing as the others, but there is also the possibility that a later reprint was produced, as suggested by a pencilled note on the back of the photos stating "reprint."[41] The original was Roy Berlando's copy of the pamphlet, to which he directly refers during his interview with Caragata: "This copy here is a copy of a pamphlet that went from coast to coast, and the whole Canadian Labour Movement raised such a stink that they turned us loose [from jail] after seven weeks" (10). Berlando refers repeatedly to photos of the event as well as the pamphlet, which he seems to have in hand, giving evidentiary weight to his account by gesturing to the artifacts. Following the interview, an epistolary battle broke out between the two men, focusing particularly on the archival/historical value of these texts, which continued to carry an affective charge for Berlando. Given the acrimony between them, Caragata's interview with Berlando ultimately

[41] Just as likely, the photos themselves could be reprints from negatives.

did not make it into his official history of Alberta's labour movement.[42] While Berlando's photos were later donated to the Provincial Archives (as the Berlando fonds), it seems his copy of the pamphlet was not. The photos of the pamphlet were enclosed in a letter to Caragata, about a month following the interview, in which Berlando baldly states: "I don't owe the archives or anybody else anything" (Berlando, 7 March 1978).

Though the five copies of "The Alberta Hunger-March" I have examined were likely produced as part of the same edition, each one has unique markers (such as written names, newsagent stamps, post office stamps, and manuscript notations) that give a fuller sense of the pamphlet's readership. As such, "the pamphlet" as I describe it here is really an aggregate of these unique objects. Furthermore, the paratextual markers of the pamphlet as produced, drawn from advertisements, subscription lists, references, and notices for allied organizations produced as part of the publication, as well as those individual markers added in the process of circulation between producers, distributors, sellers, and readers, are significant connections to real-world locations and human occupation. These can be valuable for analyzing the pamphlet through the lens of book history, and for better understanding the context of its readership and the circumstances of their readings. In the following chapter, I will experiment with mapping data from these paratextual elements, as well as from other primary sources, onto the urban space

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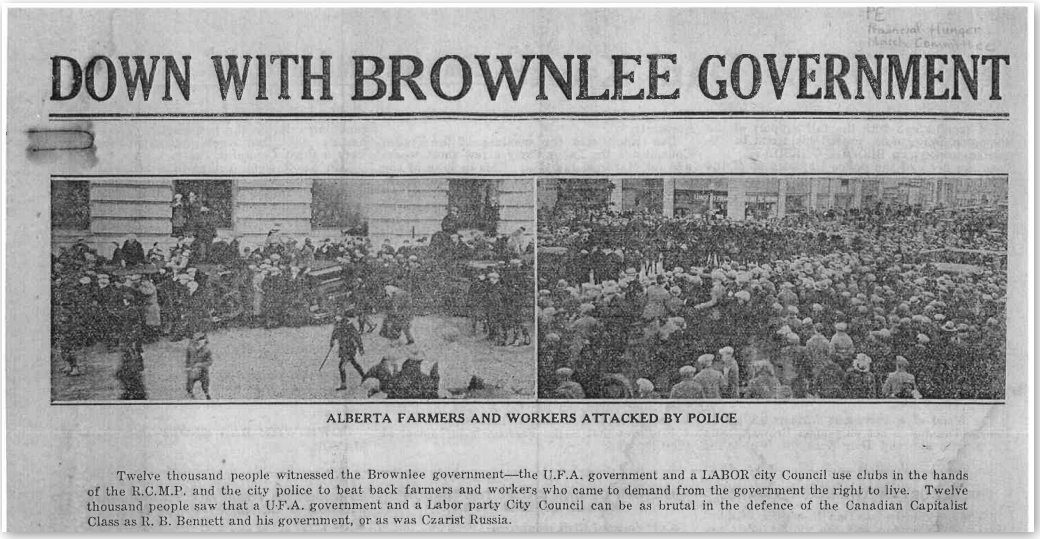
[42] See Caragata, *Alberta Labour: A Heritage Untold*.

of 1932 Edmonton to explore ways of situating the reading and protesting publics associated with the hunger march.

With respect to content, "The Alberta Hunger-March" clearly draws on and replicates material from other CPC and CLDL publications. The pamphlet's most direct cognate is an earlier broadsheet, "Down With Brownlee Government." This object was also produced by the Provincial Hunger March Committee, in Edmonton, in early 1933. The text does not provide any details that allow the date to be pinpointed any more specifically: it contains photos of the march, so it must be later than 20 December, but it also has elements that are replicated in the pamphlet, which appeared by March 1933. It is ledger size, printed front and back, on now-browning pulp paper. The broadsheet is listed in Peel's *Bibliography*, but I have only been able to locate one physical copy, held in the (uncatalogued) pamphlet collection of the Glenbow Museum. The recto side is dominated by the titular article, which is given prominence of placement and layout as a single, wide column topped by a large-point headline and two photos of the march (see Figure 4.5). However, this is not a straightforward account of the march, but an excoriation of the "Canadian Capitalist Class." The unnamed writer dubs the march "Bloody Tuesday," specifically focusing on police violence against the peaceful assembly. This is not a call for class unity, however. The writer pivots from the national CLDL materials by repudiating the moderate leftists in the Alberta and Edmonton governments as "enemies among us." Where the pamphlets produced by the central organization take aim at the diametrically opposed



DOWN WITH BROWNLEE GOVERNMENT

ALBERTA FARMERS AND WORKERS ATTACKED BY POLICE

Twelve thousand people witnessed the Brownlee government—the U.F.A. government and a LABOR city Council use clubs in the hands of the R.C.M.P. and the city police to beat back farmers and workers who came to demand from the government the right to live. Twelve thousand people saw that a U.F.A. government and a Labor party City Council can be as brutal in the defence of the Canadian Capitalist Class as R. B. Bennett and his government, or as was Czarist Russia.

Figure 4.5. Provincial Hunger March Committee, "Down With Brownlee Government." Detail.

Source: Glenbow Museum and Archives

Conservative government of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, Brownlee was leader of the moderately left United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), and Knott was elected mayor on a Labour slate. By emphasizing the "United Front of Workers and Farmers against the bloody regime of the Brownlee Socialist Government," the writer specifically invokes a "Revolutionary" opposition to the moderates, placing it equal to actions against the hard right. The theme continues throughout, as the two sides of the broadsheet are written in nearly identical language, with heavy use of the imagery of dissembling, masquerading, and hidden enemies, as well as direct invective towards those elected officials deemed to be "Labor FAKER[S]" and agents of "Social Fascism" (1).

Whereas much of the broadsheet seems to be written in a voice of collective outrage, there is one piece that shifts the tone. "The Feelings of a

Bystander on Bloody Tuesday," written by "G.C." appears at the bottom-right of the verso side, as the last piece someone reading the entire broadsheet would encounter. Briefly, this account offers a dramatized narrative of the march, colourfully written in the first person. The opening paragraph directly addresses the reader with a series of questions, setting the scene for the clash between marchers and police with increasing intensity:

> Have you ever been confronted by a rearing, maddened horse? Have you ever been attacked by shouting policemen? Have you ever tried to force your way through a roaring, booing, crowd of people, with panic pressing in on you from every side, and the sound of descending police billies pounding on your ear drums? (CLDL, "Down With Brownlee" 2)

The account is highly embodied, recounting the physical experience of the crowd. The speaker is "hemmed in," "jammed" with other marchers, "squeezed" between cars, unable to "breath[e] easier" until the horses pass. The emotional response of the speaker is equally part of the narrative: he has "an awful feeling" as the mounted police appear, feeling "utterly helpless" at their advance, and is clubbed in "one sickening second." However, this is also a depersonalized kind of body: there are no identifying details about the speaker, no Edmonton-local specificity, and nothing that references the march directly. The narrative stands out from the rest of the broadsheet material by centring the experience of an individual among the crowd, rather than the collective force of the marchers, or the protests and demands of an entire class. Yet, the "individual" represented by the speaker is a

blank, as are the location and the event, leaving ample space for a reader to project him or herself, and permitting the endless repurposing of the account for other marches and other publications. For these reasons, I would argue this narrative is the most effective element of the broadsheet text, both as pure propaganda, and as a potential organizing tool.

It should not be surprising that "The Feelings of a Bystander on Bloody Tuesday" is reproduced word-for-word in "The Alberta Hunger-March," forming the clearest link between the broadsheet and the CLDL pamphlet. The only edit between the texts is the change from the initials G.C. to the more allegorical attribution of "A. Worker" (15), in keeping with the telescoping between the local and the total that occurs throughout the text. The pamphlet as a whole is something of an assemblage, mixing reprinted elements such as this one with other accounts of the march and the subsequent trial of several of the organizers, as well as a variety of other forms of printed material. Beginning with the preface, the pamphlet is structured around an attempt to re-frame the march as a successful protest, and to mark out an alternative narrative of the recent history of the Depression as it impacted western Canada. It opens with a declaration:

> The Alberta Hunger March marks a turning point in the history of working class struggle in Canada. It marks a goal achieved. Never before in the history of this country have Farmers and Industrial Workers shown such a united front as was shown in Edmonton on December 20th, 1932. (5)

Certainly the mainstream press did not regard the march as a success for those gathered in Market Square, and the earlier broadsheet focuses on the violence of the police rather than the tactical outcome of the event. Presenting itself as simple reportage, "…the object of this little booklet [is] to put all the facts of the Hunger March before the reader, and let him be the judge. Let us hope that it is read by every Worker and Farmer in the Dominion" (6). The preface, like the version of the bystander account contained in the pamphlet, is signed by "A. Worker," linking the two texts.

The signed texts have a greater measure of authority within the collection of materials in the pamphlet. The glow of veracity generated by the apparent eyewitness testimony is stretched over the pamphlet as a whole by using the same figure to set up the contents as telling the "true light" (5) of both the march and the conditions underlying it. This gives the account even more power; though the witness account primarily works in the mode of impression, the preface makes claims of fact and purpose through the supposed words of an ordinary worker. Building on this strategy, the pamphlet contains a third attributed text, "A Worker Looks at the Trial," signed by "An Onlooker" (27-8). Compared to the other account, the language here is less sophisticated: it lacks the imagery and descriptiveness of the scene presented by "A. Worker." Instead, it is composed paratactically, with short, punchy sentences, and heavily inflected by slang pulled from the streets and popular culture. The narrator treats the police "stool-pigeons" (27) with disdain, finally concluding sarcastically that "The whole trial was a

scream" (28). Again, the mode of narration shifts, this time from past-tense reporting to a present-tense summation. Not only does this make the piece stand out from the surrounding text, but it also guides the reader from events now several months in the past into a mode of continuous action. Rather than a discrete instance, the Edmonton march and subsequent trial are presented as one more episode where "Justice is collecting its toll" from the working class (27).

An unstable sense of time is characteristic of pamphlets such as these. In part, this is a consequence of assemblage: multiple texts by different writers, with different formal structures, some reprinted from different sources, are put together alongside graphic elements in different mediums, advertisements, and blank subscription and membership forms without a coherent throughline. In the context of the pamphlet, this multiplicity of contents may appear to be synchronous when sources, authors, and fixed dating points are elided. However haphazard the assembly, though, there is a valid ideological principle behind this instability. Following in the mode of the manifesto, proletarian texts—including pamphlets—involve a re-negotiation of history as a set of oppressive material conditions endured by hitherto forgotten people.[43] The goal of proletarian texts is to re-centre the story on those who have been left out. Janet Lyon has commented that by "assuming control of the language of history" (60), the manifesto as a genre works by offering an alternative narrative, creating the new in the same moment as it re-tells the past. As such, the text is spoken in a "historical present tense" (Lyon 9), in

[43] See Hasenbank, "Canadian Manifestos: Between Poetics and Polemics" for a full discussion of the manifesto as a genre in Canadian modernist writing.

which oppression and liberation co-exist. As we have seen repeatedly through the CLDL pamphlets, one injustice is all injustices, and all trials are the same trial. Here, the Edmonton march is emblematic of the dozens of other marches occurring across the globe, and the pamphlet's call to action is at once local and universal. The following chapter will consider the significance of such synchronic and diachronic readings to the organization of a proletarian public in more detail.

The Readers

If the legal defence materials produced by the CLDL tend to coalesce around the patterns of a courtroom drama, "The Alberta Hunger-March" is somewhat unique in its invocation of an additional genre: the crime story. Drawing heavily on tropes common to gangster films and pulp magazines, the centrepiece of the pamphlet is a lengthy recounting of the testimony of a police spy, Detective Andrew Wilchinski,[44] at the trial of the marchers. In this text, which also replicates similar narratives seen in pamphlets about the trial of the Kingston Eight, we see the event and its lead-up made legible to the authorities through the "reading" of the police observer. Similarly, the pamphlet text appeals to its working-class readers by filtering its real-life story through language and narrative patterns pervasive in the popular culture of the 1930s. What is most interesting, however, is the reflexiveness of these readings: it becomes apparent in the testimony of Wilchinski

[44] The detective's name is spelled variously in the pamphlet and other correspondence; I have chosen the spelling "Wilchinski" based on his own signature on reports to Chief Shute. Based on sources including census data, voters' lists, and the *Henderson's Directory* for Edmonton, there seems to be some evidence that he was using the name Andrew Wilkie between 1932 and 1945, reappearing as Wilchinski post-1945.

and in the later accounts of other participants in the march that they, too, are reading their own experiences and actions as if they are taking part in a stylized crime drama.

Pamphlets should not be considered in isolation from the other texts—both popular and more elite—circulating in the same spaces and among the same readers. This polyvalent approach to criticism has gained some traction among magazine and periodical scholars, particularly in the Victorian and modernist periods which each saw a surge in the range of print forms and size of audiences accessible through new technologies and new commercial interests.[45] Pamphlets and other proletarian texts have much in common with the pulps, the "popular, all-fiction wood-pulp magazines, usually dedicated to a specific genre or subject of fiction" (Earle 200). They shared a general working-class readership, distributed in the same locales: newsstands, drugstores, and lending libraries (Earle 202). Like the pamphlets we have seen, pulp magazines tended to be made of poor materials, assembled out of multiple disparate texts, and produced and discarded in equally quick measure. Further, the pulps, like pamphlets, were responsive to their readership and its lived experience, as David Earle notes:

> The magazines adapted to changing reading trends and the public's craving for specific types of fiction. Publishers would quickly start pulp lines based upon topical issues or settings, such as *Pirate Stories*, *Courtroom Stories*, *Gangster Stories*, and *Ranchland Romances*, often taking their ideas from news events or popular films. (201)

[45] See, among others, Scholes, McGill, Irvine, Rifkind, and Hammil.

The adaptability of the pulps was a consequence of high-speed, high-volume publication, which allowed publishers to churn out titles filled with stories closely hewing to a formulaic set of tropes and plots that would maximize sales. Pulp print was centred on an American locus of publication at this time, with a clear cross-border flow of materials, including pamphlets and periodicals produced by left-wing American publishers and organizations.[46] It appears as though some American titles also had Canadian buyers in mind, as evidenced by differential cover pricing.

Figure 5.6 shows two 1932 issues of *Gangster Stories*, one of the more successful titles produced by renowned pulp publisher Harold Hersey. Phil Stephenson-Payne's online pulp index identifies this magazine as having been published in New York between Nov 1929-Nov 1932 (n.p.), but given the Canadian price of 40 cents indicated on the covers, we can assume Hersey's distribution network stretched beyond the United States. Post-1940, restrictions on paper and cultural imports under the *War Exchange Conservation Act* spurred the development of a domestic Canadian pulp industry.

Film is another factor in this audience feedback loop. Through the 1930s, popular film in Canada, much like popular fiction, showed the dominance of American titles as well as the widespread appeal of crime narratives in both

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[46] For example, socialist titles published by Charles H. Kerr in Chicago show up in large numbers alongside Canadian pamphlets in the Robert S. Kenny Collection. The Communist Party of the USA pamphlet, "Why Every Worker Should Join the Communist Party," discussed alongside its Canadian counterpart in Chapter Two, is another example of this cross-circulation.

Figure 4.6. *Gangster Stories*, April and August 1932 covers.

Source: Stephenson-Payne, *Galactic Central* website archive.

prestige and B-movies. Then, as now, "in no foreign country did the US film industry achieve more complete commercial and cultural domination and penetration than it did in Canada" (Jarvie 25).[47] On both sides of the border, two of the most popular pictures for 1932 were Mervyn LeRoy's *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* and Howard Hawks's *Scarface* (IMDB), both of which dramatize criminal life with varying degrees of sensationalism.[48]

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[47] At the time of the Hunger March, all of the films showing in Edmonton were major Hollywood productions, including another Mervyn LeRoy movie, *Big City Blues* (*Edmonton Bulletin* 5).

[48] The National Board of Review, tracking the top-grossing productions of 1932, even selected *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* as "not only the best feature film of the year, but one of the best ever made in this country" (Alicoate 49).

Michelle Smith notes the prevalence of crime titles among Canadian pulp magazines: in the Pulp Magazine Collection at the National Library of Canada, "there [are] more true crime and crime fiction magazine titles than all of the other titles combined, and the true crime titles often had longer print runs than many of the other magazines" (105). Smith suggests that part of the appeal to popular audiences may have been in the reflection of familiar events in the plots (106). Certainly, salacious crime stories were encountered every day by Edmontonians in their local media. The same issue of the *Edmonton Bulletin* reporting on the Hunger March and its violent aftermath includes stories about prison life ("Jail is Just One Art Class After Another" (3)) and stories of the mob active during American Prohibition ("37 Criminals Slain in Chicago" (3)). As they incorporated and interpreted news events alongside pulp tales, Smith further posits that readers may have found value in the reassurance of order presented by the narratives: "true crime tales presented events that showcased the power of the legal and judicial systems to maintain social order and security" (106). Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo further suggest that the subgenre of police procedurals, typically written in the third person, give "readers a sense of being there, seeing the scene alongside the police," strongly encouraging the readers' identification with the police (35). This may be true among civically-minded readers; however, the proletarian reading is inverted. As the accounts in "The Alberta Hunger-March" suggest, among the unemployed and leftist political activists, the same authorities were shown to be

unjust in their abuses of power, such that social order comes at the cost of violence against the working class.

These popular influences have left a clear mark on the pamphlet texts as well. In the section headed "The Preliminary Hearing Before Magistrate Primrose," the authors of "The Alberta Hunger-March" compile an account of the preliminary hearing and trial of the marchers based on news reports and transcripts. Much of the account is presented as a question-and-answer exchange between the judge and witnesses, including Wilchinski, interspersed with editorial commentary. This formal structure, resembling the lines of a script on the page, follows the pattern set out in Tim Buck's "An Indictment of Capitalism," a record of Buck's testimony and exchange with the judge at the 1931 trial that found him guilty of sedition. Wilchinski's testimony is introduced in the harshest terms:

> The following evidence which was also taken from the capitalist press reveals the filth employed by the 'Socialist' Government to spy upon members of the U.F.A. and upon workers who speak at meetings. Here is a chunk of meat, who was a preacher, an ex-poker shark and then became a stool-pigeon who draws his wages from the people of this province. (20)

Switching between cross-examinations, the narrative veers between the polemic and the procedural, occasionally hitting the pathetic. Much of the exchanges set out evidence for the preparations for the march, but hilarity breaks out when Wilchinski is called upon to identify of the alleged organizers in the courtroom. Like a Keystone Cop, he grows more agitated, circling the group of accused until

finally "giv[ing] voice to the perplexed ejaculation: 'He's changed his face!'" (21). The CLDL itself makes an appearance, as materials produced by the organization and the CPC are presented by one witness, who describes them as "advocat[ing] various things and the use of violence if necessary to get them" (16). Three different witnesses are cited, each of whom was a member of a police force or the court, and each of whom spent time posing as a Communist in order to infiltrate the many overlapping organizations present in Edmonton to gather evidence of sedition and other crimes. The most prominent of these is Wilchinski; however, other spies included Constable A.H. Keeler of the Alberta Provincial Police and later RCMP, who gave testimony on the Canadian Labor Defense League and the Young Pioneers, and Jacob Tatko of the RCMP.

The figure of the police informant, a stock trope of gang stories in the pulps and in the movies, has a real-world significance among the Canadian Left during the 1930s. Throughout the decade, surveillance records by the RCMP, local police, and corporate entities document so-called 'suspicious' organizations and persons, as well as conditions of labour, strikes, foreign influence, and agitation with the potential for subversion or unrest. These address the same issues and populations as does the print suppressed by the criminal strictures of Section 98. This discourse sets radical print within a criminal realm, creating the legal and political conditions by which it was erased from print collections of the period and concealed from the eyes of later scholars and bibliographers. However, it is this entangled regime that has also enabled detailed information about radical

materials, and materials perceived to be radical. In many cases, seized materials held in government archives are the only surviving copies, and the only means into their nearly-lost communication networks. Accordingly, records of surveillance such as RCMP Security Bulletins and local police files are an important supplement to more conventional bibliographic channels for uncovering working-class and radical print. Certainly, these records and analyses retain a strong state-and-security bias and should not be treated as wholly reliable, but as Reg Whitaker and Greg Kealey remark in their collection of RCMP Bulletins, "it can be asserted, however, that no other Canadian observers spent as much time and money on intensive surveillance of every aspect of the Canadian left" (Bulletins I: 17). Indeed, in a more recent publication, the authors strengthen their statement, going so far as to say that the Canadian government apparatus had a "lengthy obsession with the political left" (*Secret Service* 12), to the exclusion of any other political threats through the decade, including hints of growing fascist sympathy. Moreover, these surveillers can be recast as readers of radical texts—neither ideal nor intended, but actual and concrete.

The work of Whitaker, Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby in making accessible the records of state policing in this country cannot be overstated: these documents are only now beginning to reshape placid conceptions of national identity and liberal social order in Canada. Additionally, with their pointed focus on the production and circulation of radical print—both domestic and imported—these documents emphasize reading as subversive activity. Under criminal law and in the

eyes of the police, the mere possession of radical texts was taken as evidence of revolutionary alliance. The Bulletins represent the confidential monthly reports filed by each District Commanding Officer in the field, based on the raw intelligence data collected in an ongoing manner by agents embedded within local radical networks and regularly sent to Ottawa (Bulletins I: 10-11). These bulletins were circulated within Cabinet, among senior civil servants, and inside the RCMP —audiences with an interest in accuracy and factual bases for action. Throughout the 1930s, the Bulletins frame print as the radical left's primary means of influence. As Whitaker, Kealey and Parnaby state, "From the Mounties' perspective, it was precisely this sort of combination—a Marxist, an ordinary reader, and 'stuff to read'—that produced trouble" (107). There is great potential in using these documents at the convergence of historical formations and literary history as a resource for understanding the circumstances under which radical texts were produced and circulated, as well as for building new narratives of proletarian Canadian reading publics in this period and beyond.

Surveillers are significant in this discussion because they are also readers. Records of surveillance illustrate how the interpretive communities of proletarian or radical print are not limited to believers: the fellow-traveller exists in tension with the watchful operative, and this opposition shapes the meanings that are made out of the text, as well as the conditions under which it circulates and survives. Suppression and censorship do not cleanly cut off the path of a text; rather, they divert it into the realm of new readers and alternate uses. Despite the avid

commitment of labour groups and agitators to campaigning through print, the impact of that print on the formation of a proletarian movement in Canada is difficult to track: response remains the major gap in laying out the proletarian communications cycle. Even with limited but measurable data on circulation and membership in groups such as the Canadian Labor Defense League, the Workers' Unity League, or the Ukrainian Labor-Farmers Temple, the restrictive legal context of the period and ephemeral material nature of pamphlets, broadsheets, and newsprint have made records of readership scarce. However, piecing together the bibliographical record from archival sources leaves us access to unexpected, but concrete readers: unidentified RCMP agents tracking the activities of leftist organizations through field bulletins, local-level police informants, and postal agents and translators. None of these matches up with the intended or ideal readers suggested by the print strategies of their originating organizations. However, what information exists about this body of print and its material survival is indebted to the watchful eye of the police state and its recorded readings and misreadings of subversive texts.

The most enduring example of an embedded RCMP operative during the interwar period is likely Sergeant John Leopold, known by his contacts in Communist and other radical circles as Jack Esselwein. Leopold, whose witness testimony was given centre stage at the 1931 trial of Tim Buck and the seven other Communist leaders became "the Mounties' key resource on Communism" more than any philosophical text (*Secret Service* 125). Following the trial, a caricature of

Leopold as turncoat and stool-pigeon circulated widely in CLDL and CPC publications, while the role of the RCMP in suppressing worker activities was vehemently criticized in pamphlets such as John Martin's "Canadian Cossacks" (1935) and Fred Rose's "Spying on Labor" (1938). However, Leopold became a figure of fascination in the mainstream press as well, where reporters wrote luridly of his exploits.[49] Leopold's testimony at the CPC trial was reported at length in major Canadian papers, particularly the *Toronto Star* and the *Montreal Gazette*. Showing the international appeal of the police procedural-slash-spy story, some coverage also extended to American papers, including the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.[50]

In "Canadian Cossacks," John Martin addresses the romantic image of the RCMP in the Canadian imagination, linking it to popular fiction, and its dissembling effect on the public:

> We read from time to time about the exploits of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In terms of praise we are told of how by deeds of daring and persistent decoy methods, they have "got their man." They have been the theme of romance in press and moving pictures to the extent that the admiration of an unsuspecting public has been worked up to the boiling point. However, those who have encountered these

[49] One clipping in an LAC file (original source unknown) recounted a scene of Leopold as Esselwein encountering undercover Soviet operatives as "Two Agents in One Bed. Two secret agents, buddies under the bed clothes! There was grim humor. One knew. The other did not. Both slept well."

[50] The cross-border appeal extended to the man himself: following the trial that made him a media sensation, Leopold attempted to work undercover in Detroit to infiltrate a drug operation running between Canada and the US (Hewitt 156).

> alleged heroes in violent industrial strikes and unemployed disturbances, fail to observe much of the romanticism in their achievements. They do not have to read of them in fiction—they see them in action. (3)

Strange and Loo describe the Mounties of the pulps as "Fine specimens of Anglo-Canadian manhood" (30): large, able-bodied, chaste, free of vice and indulgence, resolutely straight, possessed of superior intelligence and discipline. Canadian pulps presented a "singularly positive" view of the RCMP, unlike American and British magazines, which "often portrayed individual officers and the practice of law enforcement in a more complex way, casting them in a darker light" (41). Martin's pamphlet aims specifically to undo the stories about the RCMP, particularly in relation to members of the working class. He names the undercover agents as a special "species of rodent" planted among labourers and the unemployed in camps and elsewhere (6). Taking a much more research-focused argument than many of the pamphleteers we have encountered, Martin tracks the growing influence of RCMP special agents following the First World War and the subsequent period of labour strife through government expenditures and parliamentary debate. In this context, he explicitly links the adoption of embedded agents to the growth of the Communist Party in Canada (14-15), and recounts the story of Leopold/Esselwein as the key informant on the radical left. Martin directly likens the use of the RCMP to put down protests by labour and the unemployed alike to "the same brutality as perpetuated on the squares of St. Petersburg by the Russian Cossacks in 1905" (19). He is far from the first to use the

term to characterize the RCMP,[51] but his analysis connects the state and its police to revolution and repression in the Canadian context more cogently than the propagandistic works we have seen.

Underlying the state's observance of Canadian workers was a xenophobic anxiety regarding enemy aliens. The Communist threat was explicitly linked to the influx of immigrants from former Russian territories following the revolution and establishment of the USSR; accordingly, people of Slavic, Finnish, and Jewish backgrounds were particular targets for surveillance (Hewitt 147). Indeed, Hewitt points out that Leopold's immigrant origins were his primary qualification; being of Jewish Czech background, he could pass among the eastern European workers under watch (144). In an environment of generalized economic unrest, government authorities became inclined to link local conflicts with trade unions and the unemployed to an international Communist uprising. Others were simply more opportunistic. As Whitaker, Kealey, and Parnaby comment,

> While some in positions of political authority believed in their heart of hearts, that the "Red Menace" in Canada was actually capable of such destruction if left unchecked, others saw in the nightmarish discourse of Communist subversion an opportunity to quash a threat that was comparatively more benign: the drive to expand trade unionism into sectors of the economy where workers' organizations had either collapsed after 1919 or had never existed in the first place. (*Secret Service* 143)

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[51] Indeed, the term appears in the "Down with Brownlee Government" broadsheet, and it is used liberally throughout the CPC and CLDL materials.

For all of his heroic portrait, Leopold had in fact ceased to be an undercover agent in 1928, when his cover was blown (Whitaker et al. 127); since that time the RCMP came to rely more on plainclothes officers "whose surveillance of radical activity… was rudimentary at best" (127). However, Leopold's actions were read as deepest class betrayal by CPC members and those on the left, compounded by personal hurt among those who knew him intimately. Accounts by CPC members "after Esselwein's treachery was revealed, paint their former colleague in the worst possible light," emphasizing his slip-ups, his drinking, and casting aspersions on his sexuality (Hewitt 154). The currency in the pulps and the pamphlets of the figure of the turncoat, encapsulated in the term "stool-pigeon" (OED), seems to me to stem on the left from genuine outrage at the perceived betrayal of comrade and cause—by informants in general, and Leopold in particular. However, there seems to be an acute anxiety surrounding contacts' misreading of Leopold's true self and alliances playing out in these pages as well.

Anxiety about misreading has particular salience for observers of immigrant activity in this period as well. A relevant set of examples of anxious surveillant reading that I would like to touch on comes from the records of the Postmaster-General, who under the auspices of Section 98 was empowered to intercept and seize subversive material (labelled as "objectionable literature") passing through the mails. Certainly, some of these publications were directly connected to Communist organizing. A letter sent from a District Superintendent

in Toronto enclosing "a circular issued by the Canadian Labor Defense League."[52] The writer comments:

> While I know the attitude of the Department in regard to these abusive broadsides this is a particularly vicious one and contains a statement to the effect that the Government is framing Tim Buck and asks those interested in the party to mobolize [sic] for his defence. I can understand that to interfere with these people would merely give them a lot of publicity they would like to get, I thought in view of the assertions contained in this pamphlet that it should be forwarded to you for your examination and comment. (Gibson, 15 April 1935)

The response, however, indicates that the pamphlet should be ignored by the superintendent. Enclosed with another letter, a bundle of material, all in Ukrainian, was forwarded from a postal agent in Smoky Lake, Alberta to the District Superintendent for a ruling (Stale, 11 March 1933). The postal agent was unable to remark on the contents, and it seems that intelligence services in the RCMP were called upon to translate where necessary. This set of periodicals, all of which were produced in western Canada, include a journal titled *Working Woman*, and a paper called *Farmer's Life*,[53] neither of which seems to merit the flurry of letters and inquiries among Department heads in Ottawa, who deemed them to be "very alarming." In a further instance, *The Death of Franko* by Wasyl Bobinski, a book of poems published in Ukrainian by a Montreal publisher, was seized. In this case, the mere appearance of Ukrainian text, and the collection's reference to Ivan

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[52] The pamphlet, included in the file is "This is a Frame-Up," which features an image of Tim Buck and his jailers on the cover.

[53] Title translations mine.

Franko, a radical nationalist Ukrainian poet, were enough to trigger concern. Although the book remains within the seized collection, the poems were deemed unobjectionable in a return letter, with the charming inclusion of some brief poetic translations by the RCMP agent reviewing them. The misreading and misunderstanding of foreign languages demonstrated in these exchanges is emblematic of greater distress among the authorities about their inability to read the changing character of the Canadian public, and especially the Canadian worker—immigrant, non-Anglo, and self-organized beyond the purview of established Canadian institutions. The potential for subversive elements hiding among these inscrutable masses was wholly destabilizing, even as it formed the core target of the state's surveillant reading practices.

The records and correspondence of the City of Edmonton show that at a local level, concerns about immigrants in relation to relief traced the same pattern set out at the highest levels of the Canadian government. Martin comments on the established use of informants and spies by municipal and provincial governments, following in the mode of the RCMP:

> Whenever public protest, over some social injustice tends toward the breaking point, the authorities themselves in attempting to justify drastic action, often provide us with information otherwise unintended. Should a strike occur or the unemployed assemble to demonstrate their protest, the public are often deluded into thinking such occurrences are the machinations of the Communists, or 'paid agent from Moscow.' That is the smoke-screen often set up to conceal the actual conspiracies of the forces of government themselves. That there are paid agents, is

> conceded by the testimony of blue-books and the statements of public men. But such agents receive more from Ottawa than from Moscow—if any. (17)

Whereas Section 98 of the Criminal Code is the animating force behind much of the protest and print on the left in this period, the *Immigration Act* was a powerful tool equally available to the state. A letter from Superintendent Magee to Edmonton's City Commissioner Mitchell states that as the unemployment problem worsens, "the attitude of those belonging to the extreme party is becoming rather defiant. We are inclined to recommend under Section 3 of the Immigration Act dealing with the prohibitive classes that the leaders of the 'Red' element should be deported" (Magee, 10 June 1931). In the same letter, Magee notes preferential treatment of some unemployed: "…we are being asked to take care of Canadian

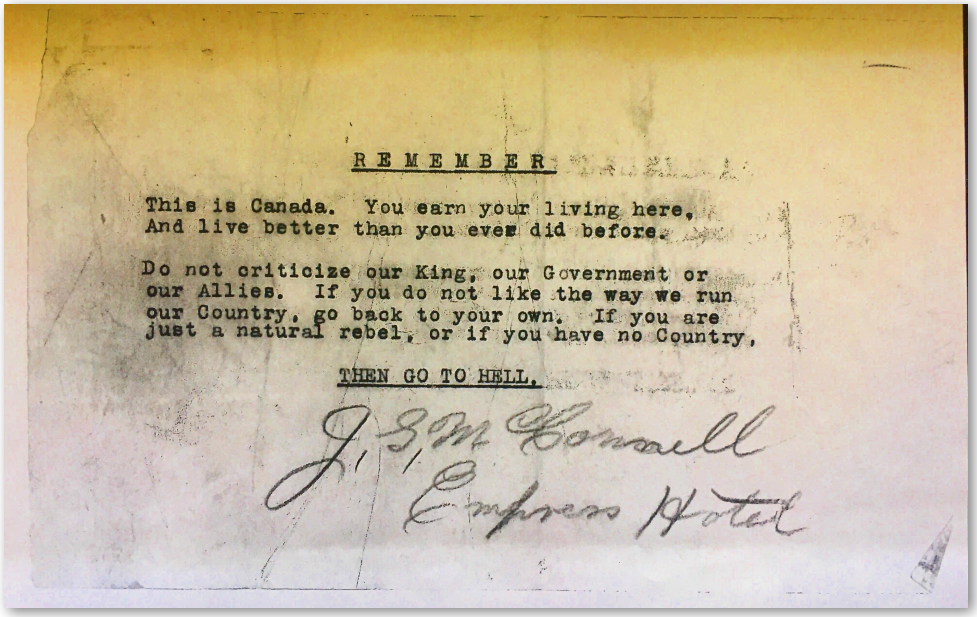

Figure 4.7. Handbill posted at Empress Hotel, Edmonton, December 1932. Source: City of Edmonton Archives

and Empire Loyalists who now number 300 members. We are beginning to feel that this subdivision of the unemployed will possibly continue to grow, and each will expect special or favoured treatment." The attitude was not limited to the authorities, either. A notice from around the same time period posted at the Empress Hotel, one of the rooming houses accessible to men on relief, baldly draws the line between immigrants and "our Country" (see Figure 4.7).

Over time, the focus of the data collected through surveillance seems to have intensified: the city officials move from speaking in generalities to tracking individuals. A report from the years following the hunger march cryptically describes "the situation of last Monday and Tuesday in respect to the strike and the occurrence at the potato plot at 95th Street and 94th Avenue" (McKee, 1 June 1934).[54] The report includes the names and addresses of participants, as well as comments on their behaviour, character, and relief situation, including who is "Red." Noting the number of Slavic and eastern European surnames, McKee is very clear about his preferred response: "Some of these people are subject to deportation and it seems to me that this is one time when definite steps should be taken to send them back to their own country."

Following the trial of the eight Communist leaders in Toronto, the trope of the police spy became highly transferrable, anchoring a narrative of repression and exposure that was used to frame any number of labour demonstrations and protest

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[54] This strike, as well as other demonstrations forced a new scale for relief in Edmonton in June 1934.

actions as the decade progressed. At the time of the publication of "The Alberta-Hunger March," habitual readers of Canadian pamphlet print would have been very familiar with the story of the trial, and of the figure of Leopold/Esselwein as a key player.[55] This pamphlet and its attendant texts attempt to invest this surveillant figure with local resonance in the figure of Wilchinski. However, as a mere parody of Leopold, Wilchinski is a bumbling witness and an ineffective reader. Wilchinski's misreadings of the radicals extends to his documentation of the march and its preparations. In a series of reports made to Police Chief Schute, Wilchinski submits a poster covered with shorthand notation that he cannot decipher, as well as reports of speeches given in foreign languages that he cannot understand, or at least does not translate (Wilchinski, 17 December 1932). As opposed to the role of traitorous villain played by Leopold, Wilchinski is a comic figure, played for satire. The trial of the hunger marchers, like the trial of the Kingston Eight, resulted in defeat in the courtroom; however, in the pages of the pamphlet, at least a rhetorical victory is possible over the forces of repression.

While following in the courtroom model of other CLDL texts, "The Alberta Hunger-March" draws heavily on tropes from other popular culture genres: cops, criminals, and spies jump out of the pulps and into the experiences of everyday people. The erstwhile readers of these texts find themselves as participants, and we find the language of the pamphlets and the pulps following

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[55] See, for example, "The Story of the Trial of the Eight Communist Leaders," published by the CLDL shortly after the trial in November 1931, and Oscar Ryan's "Not Guilty!" which features an "Open Letter to Sgt. Leopold, R.C.M.P. Spy" (26).

them. This is clear in the bystander accounts manufactured for the pamphlet; however, I was surprised to see how enduring the language was in the memoirs of participants like Berlando and Swankey, decades later. In an otherwise straightforward account in *What's New*, Swankey refers to an Edmonton police constable as a "stool pigeon" previously sent in to track the Communist Party (63). The slang usage only emerges when he is discussing the police or the trial; later, he speaks of hearing "the police and their stool pigeons tell one lie after another" on the witness stand (64). He describes Wilchinski's testimony without naming him, but in a scene out of the grimiest of the pulps, he describes

> a personal experience with one of the stool pigeons during the course of the trial. He was a young one-armed guy and a particularly odious liar. As I passed him in the lobby outside the courtroom, I said, "You son of a bitch!" (64)

An earlier version of the story, told by Swankey to interviewers with the Alberta Labour History Institute,[56] is even more frank. He speaks of being taken to the police station "black moriah"[57] and then to a "real hell hole" of a provincial jail (Gereluk 6). In his 1978 interview with Caragata, Berlando speaks with highly charged language about the "smash-up" at Market Square (7) and his role among the "dirty rotten Communist agitators" (8).[58] He repeats the phrasing to characterize the violence as "the smash-up and the massacre at the hands of the

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[56] I am currently a director on the ALHI Board.

[57] Meaning a "black maria," slang for a police van used to transport prisoners.

[58] Berlando puts these words in the mouth of the Premier, "Johnny Brownlee," which seems unlikely.

Mounted Police" (8). Drawing on slang and idiom that surged during the 1930s over 70 years later suggests a close and lasting tie between the participant narratives and the narratives of popular culture.

As readers, the participants (both marchers and police) read the memory of the Edmonton Hunger March alongside the slanted account of the pamphlet text, while also reading it through the other narrative texts familiar to them at the time of the event. In keeping with the burlesque portrayal of Wilchinski in the witness box, however, the terms of triumph are reversed. Throughout "The Alberta Hunger-March," readers are encouraged to identify with the so-called criminal elements, finding a proletarian victory of resistance even amid an authoritarian crackdown. In these pages, cops become readers, and readers come to revile cops. What we will consider next is how these readings are enacted in public space, and how we might posit a proletarian public emerging from the collision between print and the city streets.

Chapter Five

Mapping Print Publics

At the start of 1933, the City of Edmonton was preparing quite literally to re-draw the map. Despite surging growth in the first decades of the century, driven by amalgamating surrounding towns and villages, as well as cycles of boom-and-bust building that continue today, the city remained an unregulated jumble of activity. The *1933 Zoning By-law* was the City's first attempt to formally designate building and use zones, effectively defining public space and very clearly demarcating the boundaries of who belonged where. In a period when tax revenues had dropped by nearly 20 percent, and expenditures on public relief works pushed the city heavily into debt (Bettison 56-7), the desire to assert some kind of order is palpable throughout the bylaw's text. However, despite thoroughly listing the permissible uses of industrial and business zones, as well as the details of approved residential structures, the law is curiously silent on the uses of public space. In subsequent decades, Edmonton has made its parkland, green spaces, and shared plazas a key element of civic identity, but in this moment immediately after violent reprisals

against workers gathered in a public square, there is no attempt to define what "public" might mean.

This chapter will consider how we might project a proletarian reading public as a constituent element of public space by mapping the locations of pamphlet production and circulation. To begin thinking about how to plot reading on a map, we might consider locations of reading, as well as information relating to the imagined audiences of the texts. The previous chapter considered surveillant reading through the eyes of a state apparatus that was tracking and recording proletarian print, as well as the activities of proletarian organizations and affiliated individuals. The same sources also provide us information about the kinds of people addressed by the pamphlets and newspapers—struggling workers and the unemployed. Relief data collected by the City of Edmonton offers a way of placing an imagined audience with unusual specificity. I have combined this with information about locations more conventionally associated with the communications circuit—printers, publishers, booksellers, reading rooms and libraries—and recorded them in a database that can be accessed by Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software to map downtown Edmonton for the period of 1931-33. The resulting maps help to spatialize the actors and interactions related to the Edmonton Hunger March and its related print, which may in turn suggest other points of connection, and offer insights into reading practices associated with this event and this material.

As a tool for historical inquiry, mapping has particular advantages for addressing the spatial component of social relationships; that is, the relationships that make up class formations and the circulation of print are embedded into material structures and arrangements of both public and private space. Exchange happens somewhere, and imaginings of community are done by real people in real places. This, according to Ian Gregory and Paul Ell, two of GIS's early proponents, is the domain of geography. Gregory and Ell describe the geographer's interpretation of space as the arrangement of how people interact with each other and their environments, finding this to be the common path in the extension of GIS from geography to wider application across the humanities (Historical GIS 5). The terminology surrounding GIS is a bit slippery: "GIS" refers primarily to software tools used to map locations based on a database structure, using coordinate data. However, as the use of these tools has broadened, GIS is also variously used to refer to a methodology for analytical research, and, increasingly, to a distinctive field of study (Knowles 206). In this work, I consider GIS primarily as a tool for harnessing archival and paratextual data to build on the methodologies of book history; this data, and the maps generated from them, inform an approach to analyzing social relationships in spatial terms.

Gregory and Ell identify three key ways in which GIS can benefit historical research, all of which are relevant here: "the organisation of historical sources, the ability to visualise these sources and the results gained from analysing them, and the ability to perform spatial analysis on the data" (9-10). Further, they describe

three components of historical data, all of which GIS is particularly adept at handling: attribute (qualities), space, and time (7). Notably, the language of "attributes" indicates the architecture of a database, which supports the operations of GIS software. For an effective analysis, typically one of these variables is "fixed;" one is "controlled" by specifying certain parameters of interest; and one is measured against the map. Taking mapping as a process rather than a static output, the classification of these variables can also be shifted to open up potential lines of discussion for the data at hand. As described below, I have organized my own data around the question of how to represent the relationships between the locations of potential readers and the locations of print sources in downtown Edmonton in order to denote a zone of public space that might be labelled "proletarian." As such, space is what I am measuring. Time is fixed, as I have identified data that fits within the period of 1931-1933. The attributes of the data I have collected are what shape the discussion as one based in the details of print production and circulation. Each of the points on the map is an address (with defined geographic coordinates): however, the attributes of these points identify them as printers, booksellers, newsstands, proletarian-linked organizations, meeting spaces associated with the Hunger March, and spaces where unemployed men receiving relief support were housed and fed. A discussion of civic history more broadly might consider the space as a controlled variable (i.e. downtown Edmonton, bounded by a given set of streets), while still fixing the time to the 1931-1933 period, but measure the attributes of a vast range of points by

inventorying all of the buildings, people, activities occurring within that space for that time. Similarly, a discussion of changes to Edmonton's downtown over time might consider the space to be fixed and the time to be controlled (i.e. by sampling the inhabitants at defined intervals), while again measuring the attributes of everything in that space. More recent work using GIS has examined questions like these at more local levels, while also taking up more qualitative information. For example, Andrew Beveridge has challenged assumptions about the long-term effects of redlining as a tool of racial segregation within American cities by mapping out several decades' worth of census data describing race, occupation, income, and neighbourhood. More evocatively, Julia Hallam and Les Roberts have introduced GIS into media studies in their discussion of the "sense of place" created by local film cultures in the city of Liverpool and Merseyside in film by mapping thousands of depictions of the city across genres and time periods against the real-life spaces connected to them. By looking at communities of readers, we may put emphasis less on manufacturing knowledge than on receiving and understanding the knowledge of those who belong to those places.

Although GIS can effectively meld geography, history, and database work, mapping tools such as these are relatively new in application to literary studies. However, book history seems to me to be a field well-suited to GIS, linked by an emphasis on the case study[59] and by the collection of paratextual data linking print

[59] Some critics have suggested that the case study is a weak link of historical GIS. Knowles comments that the "extreme diversity of HGIS, with heterodox subjects and an almost infinite range of sources, works against its coherence as a field of research" (208).

objects to particular times and places. Bertrum Macdonald and Fiona Black have outlined their pilot study of the nineteenth-century book trade in Warwickshire, England, situating the collection and use of GIS data in a specific book-history context. As they situate it, GIS can be used to extend the work of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, who mapped the "geographies of the book" in *The Coming of the Book*: "Febvre and Martin make clear that the spread of printing was no isolated proceeding; it depended on, and interacted with, the physical, political, and socioeconomic world" (508). GIS permits scholars to move from relatively static geographies to "investigating the dynamic 'spatial history' of the multifaceted concept of print culture" (509). MacDonald and Black identify three potential applications of GIS for print culture studies, particularly in relation to large-scale projects at the national level:[60]

> the "simple" mapping of individual factors; the analysis and subsequent mapping of interrelationships between and among several factors from a single database; and the analysis and report generation (with or without mapping) of information drawn from disparate source databases. (517)

Whereas some researchers have suggested that users of GIS are overly focused on the case study (Knowles 208), MacDonald and Black argue that the range of

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[60] MacDonald and Black report on their work with HGIS data in connection with the *History of the Book in Canada* project (of which Black is a volume editor) as part of a 2005 survey of national book history projects in the journal *Social Science History*. A set of databases covering the bibliography of the *History of the Book in Canada*, Canadian book catalogues, the Canadian book trade, Canadian imprints, and Canadian textbooks produced by MacDonald and Black as well as other project editors were transferred to Library and Archives Canada in 2009. However, at the time of writing, I can locate no specific GIS project drawing on this work, though certainly the compiled data offer vast potential for research of this kind.

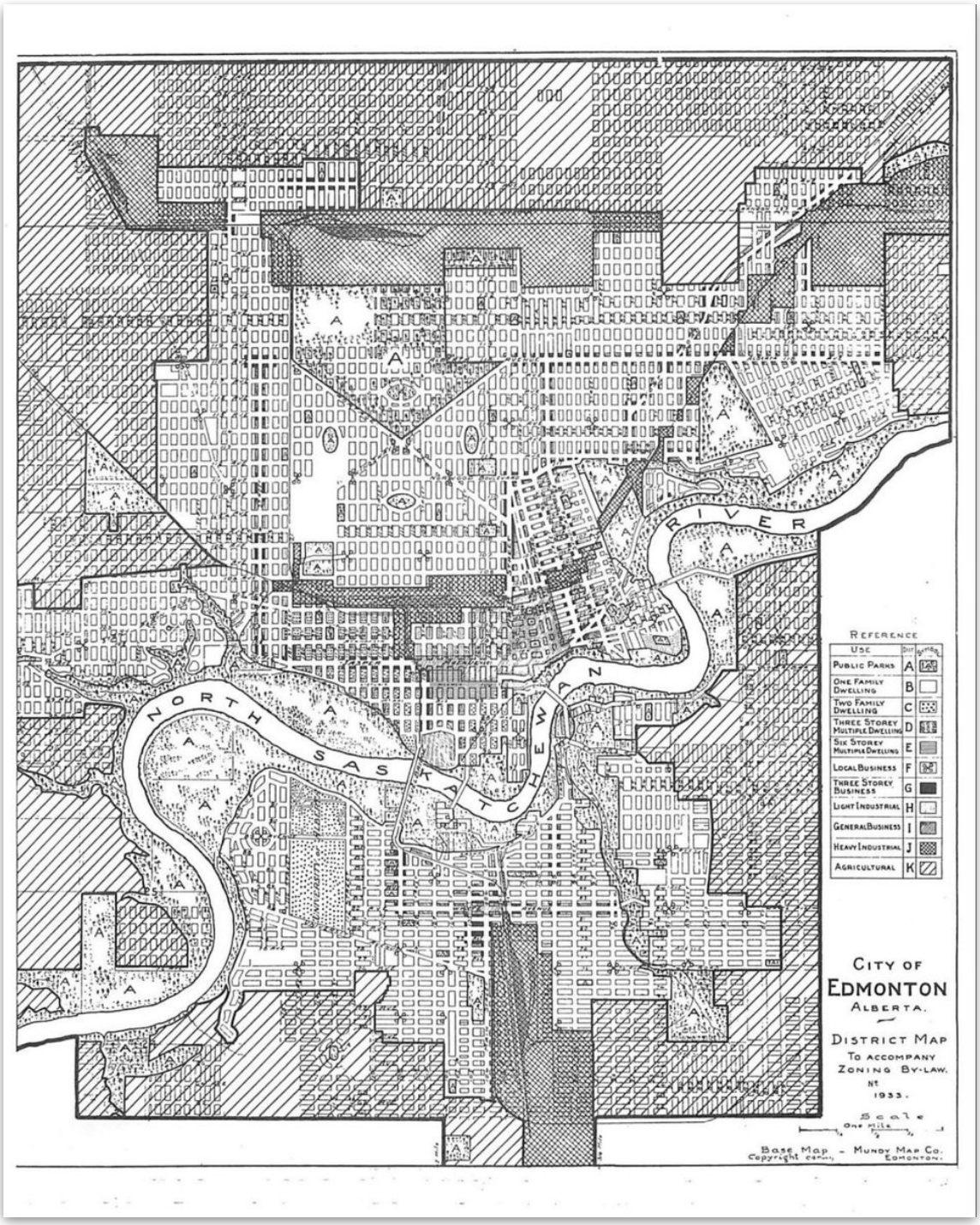

Figure 5.1 City of Edmonton, Alberta: District Map to Accompany Zoning Bylaw of 1933

Source: City of Edmonton Archives

queries that can be brought together from multiple datasets enable book historians to build a more "comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships of print culture factors and elements in the socioeconomic environment" (515). In this, GIS can push book history beyond the single case study into larger patterns of macrohistory, offering not a definitive account of a given print object, but a way of reconfiguring sets of known information to tell different kinds of stories.

Edmonton, 1931-1933

The material that I have used as the basis for my GIS mapping comes from local archival sources, and from individual copies of pamphlets. As the frame for a closer look at both print and proletarian activities. I have used a district map of Edmonton produced to accompany the *1933 Zoning By-law*. Figure 5.1 shows the map, with its designation of 11 use zones.[61] When reviewing the City Commissioner's papers for materials related to the Edmonton Hunger March, I encountered a significant number of records relating to public relief in the city in the early years of the Depression. In both descriptive and quantitative terms, these reports, letters, and surveys document the experiences of the men, women, and children suffering from economic and social catastrophe, giving us an image of the people addressed by the pamphlets and periodicals produced by proletarian organizers. Furthermore, these records enable us to pinpoint where these people

[61] This image is of the copy held in the City of Edmonton Archives (RG-11-3 Development and Planning, EAM-114). The University of Alberta's cartographic collection also has a copy of the map, of which I was able to obtain a higher-resolution image, though the map itself is in worse repair. Accordingly, I have overlaid the plot points over both base maps for purposes of both illustration and analysis: the close-ups use the UofA map.

were, with an address-level specificity. Beginning in 1931, relief workers compiled weekly lists of single unemployed men, noting where they were being housed and fed, using vouchers for rooming houses and meal tickets for cafés. These lists (see, for example, Magee, "Report") provided the data for the first three sets of points I have plotted: rooming houses, meals, and combination room-and-meal. A letter from the Superintendent of the Relief Department to the city Commissioner details the methods by which additional information was collected:

> As instructed, these lists were prepared from information given by applicants who were haphazardly taken from among the hundreds of registrations so that no question could arise to their having been specially selected.
>
> We feel that this is a very fair index governing all registrations of this class in the City. (Magee, 24 February 1931)

The next set of points I plotted, identifying organizations, newspapers, and newsstands, came from pamphlets published in, sold in, or otherwise marked with an indication of their association with Edmonton between 1931 and 1933. This includes publication data from the cover and title page of the Edmonton branch of the Canadian Labor Defense League's pamphlet "The Alberta Hunger March" and newsagent stamps, such as the stamp of the Labor Newsstand inside the cover of a copy of Tim Buck's "Steps to Power" held at the Provincial Archives of Alberta.[62] Thirdly, I plotted locations of meeting places mentioned in the letters and surveillance reports regarding preparations for the march, such as the Gem

[62] See Chapters Two and Three for a discussion of paratextual details relating to these publications.

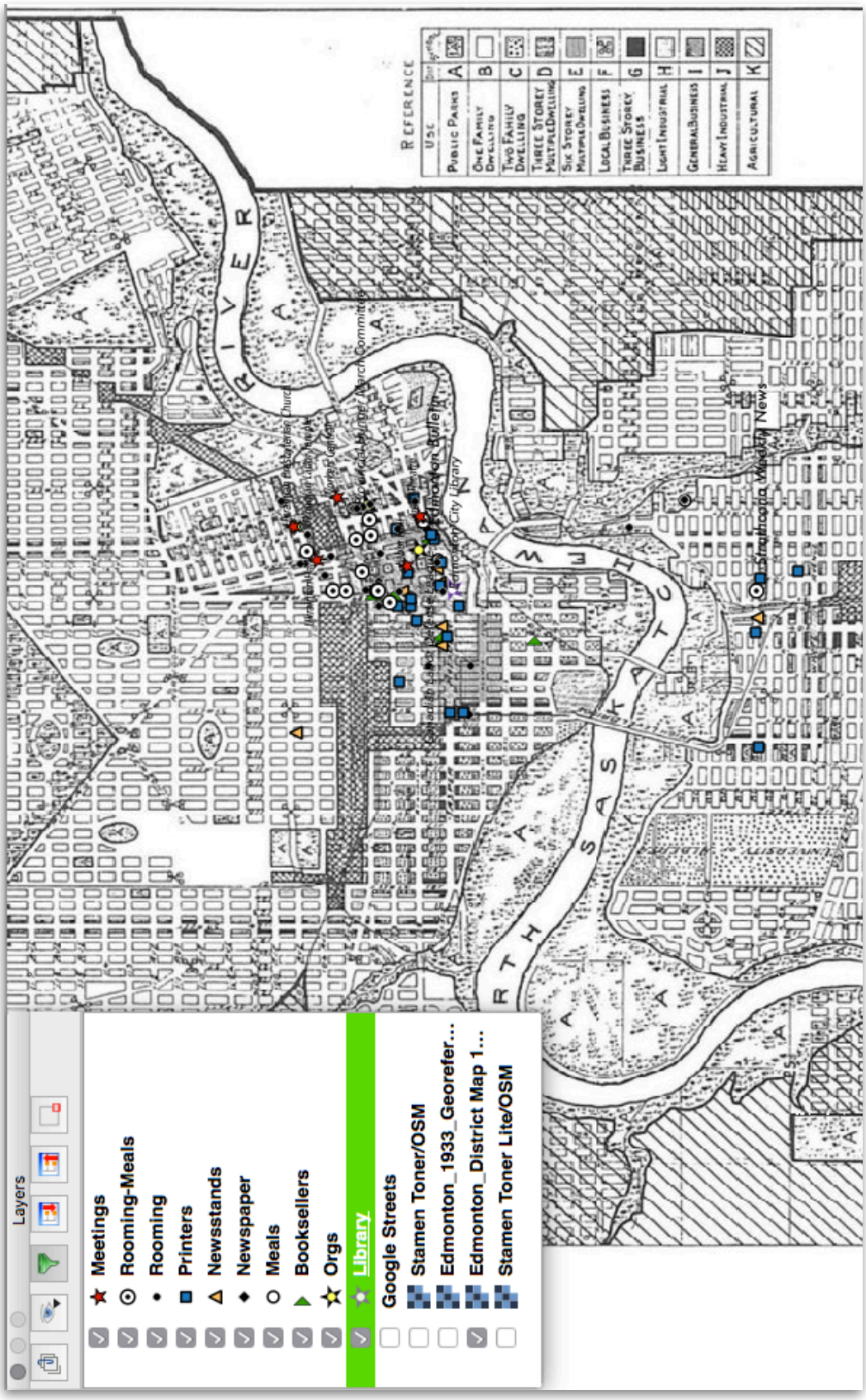

Figure 5.2 Overview of map with location categories

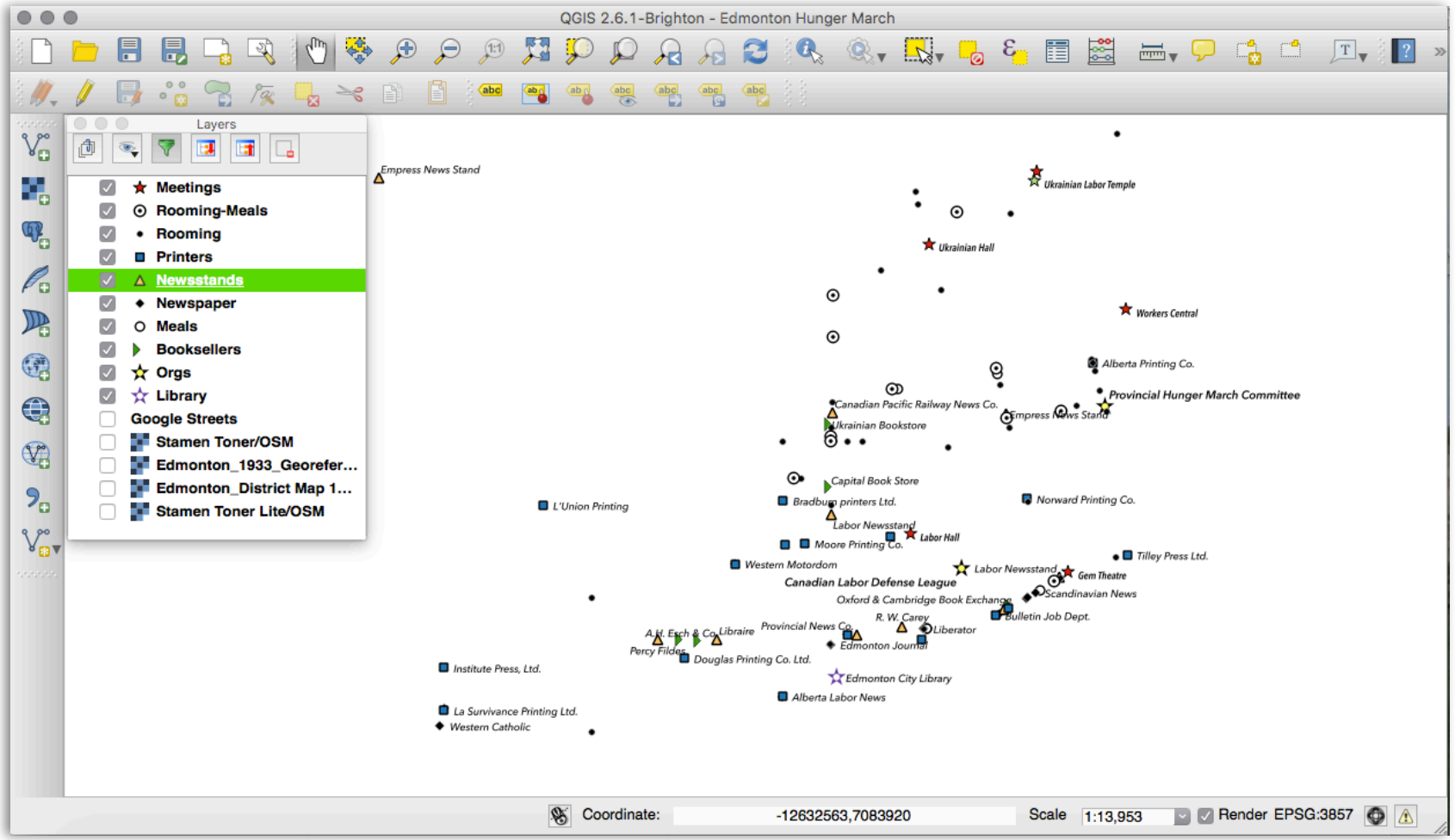

Figure 5.3 Detail of plot points with location categories

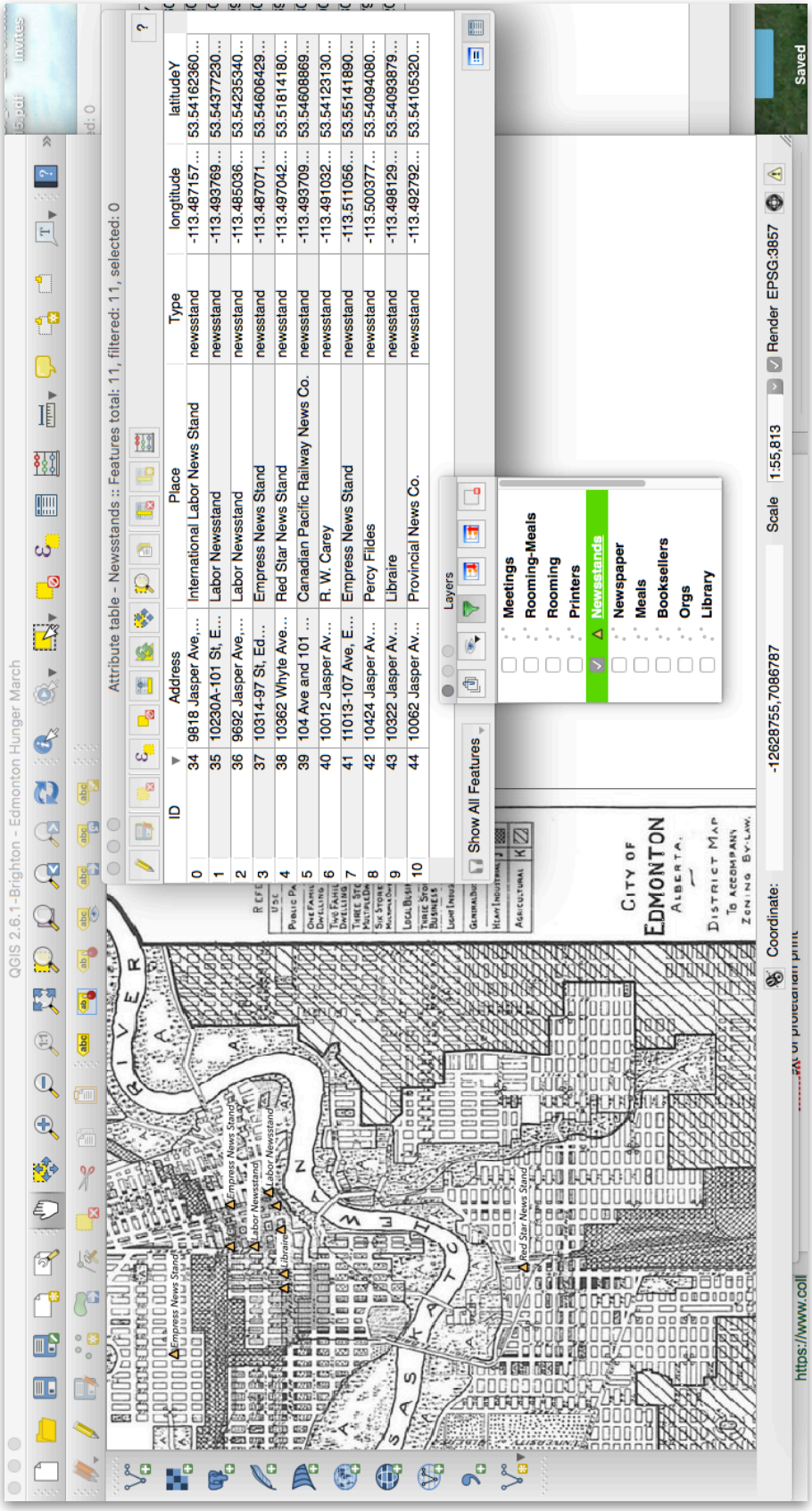

Figure 5.4 Attribute table and plotted points for newsstands

Theatre and the Ukrainian Labor Temple. Lastly, I filled in some contextual gaps for related agents, such as printers, booksellers, libraries, and additional newspapers, using the *1932 Henderson's Directory* for Edmonton. I noted and plotted all locations available to me without selecting for any particular geographical zone other than "Edmonton." Figure 5.2 shows each of these points plotted on the 1933 map of Edmonton, and Figure 5.3 shows the type and distribution of the points in greater detail.

I created these maps using QGIS software, which is a desktop platform freely available to download online. After inputting all of my collected location data, including specific latitude and longitude coordinates, into an Excel spreadsheet, I created separate comma-separated variable tables for each data type. QGIS uses these to create shapefiles, which can then be layered over a base map. Figure 5.4 shows the points for newsstands layered over the 1933 map, as well as the back-end attributes table, which contains the data for each of the points. Each of the location categories has a similar table. By default, QGIS can access base maps from a number of different linked databases, including Google Streetmaps. However, it is also possible to add historical maps into the software, permitting the data to be visualized within their context of origin, or to allow for comparison of different periods. As mentioned, I imported the 1933 zoning map after geo-referencing it using a set of randomly-chosen landmarks to "pin" the archival map to present-day maps by matching up longitude and latitude of the reference points. Although most of the buildings have changed in downtown

Edmonton since 1933, the layout of the streets largely has not, so the visualization of the historical data is quite uncanny to a contemporary resident of the city.

The most immediate observation from the map is the concentration of locations related to both proletarian print and the recipients of unemployed relief in the downtown core, particularly in the area bounded east-to-west by 105 Street and 95 Street, and north-to-south by 104 Avenue and 99 Avenue. This is counter to information given by city officials of the period, who insisted that "so far a fairly equal distribution of the services has been extended throughout the City" (Magee, 20 January 1931). This concentration is more or less what I was expecting to find in mapping the data; nevertheless, the narrow span of the points and the close intermingling of types is striking. The 1933 district map indicates that this space is to be zoned for commercial purposes, and closely hemmed in by heavy industrial areas: it is not the space of domestic or family life. This placement was deliberate on the part of City authorities. Primarily, they intended to separate unemployed men from residential areas, and from each other by preventing "large numbers of men congregating at a given place, as we realize that segregation, as far as possible, is beneficial to Department in handling our problems" (Magee, 20 January 1931). However, there were additional economic factors, as there was money to be made by struggling businesses: "people in business, who like others, are passing through a period of depression, while having to take care of rent, license, etc., are entitled to participate" (Magee, 20 January 1931). This is not characterized as relief, though it is a transfer of public funds to business owners, albeit through the hands of

unemployed men. Notably, this area of Edmonton in 2018 continues to be one of the most impoverished areas of the city, with a concentration of social service agencies directly to the east of office buildings and massive new arts and recreational structures that have displaced low-income residents.

Although it is not mentioned in any of the archival documents, or the pamphlets themselves, the close proximity of the railway to this area is also significant. The train was instrumental to the network of protests that sprung up across Canada through the 1930s, and to the organization of unemployed men into mass movements like the On-to-Ottawa Trek. Now banished to the industrial corridor running through the north-east portion of Edmonton, here, the railway enters right into the centre of the city, bringing with it an unequal politics of mobility. Jody Mason, working with a critical concept named by Doreen Massey and framed by Mark Simpson, uses the lens of mobility to read the overlap of white settler narratives of conquest with images of disenfranchised labourers as a collision between myth and real, material conditions in Canadian literature in the first decades of the twentieth century (21). Movement, in this figuration, does not neatly map onto class divisions, but corresponds to differentials in power that allow some (white, Anglo, settlers) to move freely and then to establish claims to land and private property that both deny the movement of others in these spaces, while also forcing their transience in search of work, welfare relief, or community. Mason identifies this conflict as a constituent part of Canadian national mythmaking: "Central to the mythology of settlement is the process of forgetting—forgetting not

just…the indigenous presence on the land, but also…the emerging technological-industrial economy that depended on the mobile labour" of immigrants and other proletarianized workers (31). As we consider the ways in which the map of Edmonton has been overwritten in the decades since the Depression, wiping out the stories of mass worker action—themselves wiping out earlier stories of land claims before colonization—these acts of forgetting have especial political salience.

Looking at some of the organizations directly involved with the Hunger March, the map also shows a close proximity among them, and to other potential points of contact and communication. Figure 5.5 details the relation of these points to one another, and to the central staging point of the march at Market Square (red outline). Note that the square is designated Zone A, for public park. The Canadian Labor Defense League offices are located on the south end of the square (black and yellow star). The Provincial Hunger March Committee is not co-located with the CLDL; it is situated among a cluster of rooming houses on 96th Street. The Post Office is in the block directly south of Market Square; to see how close that is to where the crowd was gathered, and to know that there was a machine gun on the roof, prepared to fire, chillingly impresses the spatial power of the police over the situation. The Labor Hall, at the north-west corner of the square, marks the point of engagement between the police and the marchers. Just two blocks away is the Gem Theatre, which features so notoriously in the Commissioner's letters as a site of subversive organizing and police raids, right next door to the Labor Newsstand. The Ukrainian Labor Temple (red star), site of

Figure 5.5 Detail of plotted 1933 District map

another raid following the street conflict, is just steps away from the pamphlet's print site (green star). These points denote a very close spatial relationship that suggests a material connection between print pamphlets, exchange, and mass organization.

Printers are largely clustered in this area, as are most newspapers, as illustrated by the overview in Figure 5.2. This corresponds to what Lisa Gitelman has observed regarding the localized geographies of printing in other North

American cities. Referring to *Harpel's Typograph*, a catalogue of job printing in Cincinnati circa 1870, Gitelman notes a concentration of printers within the downtown of the city, creating the conditions for market interactions and class and trade formations that ring true for Edmonton in the 1930s. In commercial terms, she describes the tension between the growing power of large-scale corporations and the intensely local economies of trade and circulation upon which they depended:

> A job printer's billheads, checks, bookkeeping forms, envelopes, and labels may typically have borne (that is, expressed) local street addresses, but they were intended as instruments within the broader commercial economy in which local concerns participated, to be filled in with far-flung transactions (in the case of bookkeeping forms) or circulated to enact them (in the case of checks, bills, envelopes, tags, and labels). (44)

The pamphlets and periodicals of the Canadian left navigated a similar tidal pull between the local and the global. "The Alberta Hunger March" is a clear example of a text tied to a specific, local event and local conditions of production, but it is also deliberately incorporated into national networks of distribution and circulation, while it further invokes solidarity with international movements. Similar to the "intricate geographies" of newspapers, it is "emphatically local, yet each marked and...differently marked by the extralocal" (Gitelman 45). The cluster of printers and newspapers in the downtown area shows a remarkable variety for what was then a small city of less than 80,000 people: note the French-language press La Survivance, as well as the newspapers specific to cultural groups, such as

the *Ukrainian News* and the *Scandinavian News*. The proximity of these presses to organizations like the CLDL would enable a sharing of capital: it is unlikely that the small, isolated Alberta branch of the group would have its own machinery, but it would be able to hire out newspaper or jobbing printer. The back cover of "The Alberta Hunger-March" identifies the printer of the pamphlet as the Alberta Printing Company, which can be seen on the map directly across the street from the location of the Provincial Hunger March Committee. By contrast, the main Toronto branch of the CLDL saw its publications share an in-house production site with the Communist Party, enabling the allied groups to churn out materials at a much larger scale. This may be some small indication of why there are no other Alberta CLDL pamphlets; certainly, based on its review in the *Labor Defender*, the central Toronto organization was not overly impressed with the output of the western branch.[63]

There is scope for a great deal more work with this kind of mapping and analysis, both for print circuits in 1930s Edmonton, and especially for proletarian print across Canada. Exploring the variations and interactions of proletarian print networks on a regional level, both across Canada, and across the US border, would add significant richness to the discussion, as MacDonald and Black have suggested in relation to studies of print in regional and colonial contexts (522). For future

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[63] The reviewer, J.S., comments:

> There is much evidence of carelessness in the preparation. Some of the material is of an irrelevant character, with reprints from previous publications and from the capitalist press. The pamphlet does not read smoothly, but is rather disjointed and has obviously not been very carefully edited. (4.3-4: 7)

study, I intend to expand the database of pamphlets and periodicals that I have been using to track the details of physical copies of texts I have consulted. As with any project using digital tools, the larger the dataset, the better the outputs. Accordingly, it would make sense to build on longstanding bibliographies, such as Weinrich's catalogue of Canadian social protest print. As state records such as census data, literacy rates, taxation records, voter registrations, arrest records, and immigration records becoming increasingly available for the pre-Second World War period, compiling these along textual information can give us an ever more granular view of potential readers and their lives. However, this process risks reifying structures built around state, nation and the individual subject: in this, mapping runs up against the same limitations as conventional literary studies when approaching proletarian texts and readers. To that end, we must reconsider what we mean by reading, and how such an interrogation might have particular relevance in a proletarian context.

Conclusion: Reading in Public

The type of reading most familiar to literary studies is that described by Alec McHoul as "reading-in-the-classroom;" that is, the activity of looking at a printed page and making meaning from textual and graphic content (64). Where this approach assumes that a reading and its context are distinct things—"Here the reading, there the context. Here the real mental process, there the mere material space and time 'in' which it takes place" (66)—McHoul collapses the reading and the classroom into a single intertwined performance. The idea that context is

merely the theatre for a reading underlies the way literary studies as a discipline often addresses non-literary texts as mere supplemental documents, or the way a liberal canon regards popular and working-class texts. These methods of excluding de-legitimize both the objects and the practices of proletarian reading. However, reading describes forms of meaning-making far more diverse than this singular act: engaging with those forms involves more than simply taking the pages from the classroom desk to the street corner newsstand.

When thinking about mapping readers of proletarian texts in this chapter, my default has been to focus on location, or surrounding circumstances, without necessarily considering how the actual activities that make up reading might change within the community. What McHoul terms a "community" is the core agent of semiosis, itself constructed because of the specific and historic ways the group produces, reproduces, and replaces the conditions of its acts of interpretation (15). So, to posit a community of proletarian print readers, we must be able to consider how the community produces, reproduces, and replaces both the print and the readers, in a given time and place. This work has much in common with what Lyle Dick calls microhistory, or local history. The goal of microhistory is "the reconstitution of so-called 'real life'" (4) using oral history and other forms of dialogue with residents within their own communities as method and practice. This is framed as an ethical practice, as well as an interrogation of "who holds knowledge of the past, and which forms of knowledge have value" (2). Local history uses "knowledge put into action and applied in day-to-day living and

problem solving" (13), often demonstrating the persistence of past forms into the present. As I take up selections of proletarian print, I am engaging in similarly diachronic acts of historical/critical/analytical reading to connect this print to broader movements in both print technology and working-class politics. At the same time, by tracking individual texts as part of local histories of Edmonton, Toronto, Vancouver, and elsewhere, I am trying to uncover synchronic acts of reading regarding any given print object. However, in these activities, I am acting as a member of a community of researchers, print historians, and scholarly readers —I am not a proletarian reader in the 1930s, and any historicization of a given text can only approximate what such a reader might do with it. At core, for a literary scholar, doing away with the classroom is not enough to undo the paradigm of classroom reading. Instead we must look at McHoul's broader idea of interpretive communities to find proletarian reading in practice.

Branching away from the Foucauldian mode of discourse analysis as a manifestation of biopolitics, which is focused on the constraints of subjects through the law and other structures of power, McHoul identifies the "lived interactional specifics of local forms of semiosis" (xi) as the locus of meaning. In that I am interested in the law and criminality, and how workers encounter the state as proletarians, or are made proletarian by it, a biopolitical analysis is present in my work. However, I am equally interested in the space of encounter, and how the forces of the law and the state shape and are shaped by variant readings. By emphasizing the local work of interpretation, this approach contributes to the

dismantling of grand critical narratives built around opaque concepts like "economy" or "culture," and replaces these with specific, local, social and material practices (43). This form of meaning-making extends to forms of protest: resistance is not generated by the friction of an individual against the ways they are controlled both materially and ideologically but is built collectively from whatever materials, concepts, and practices are available.

Reading, in McHoul's formulation, is intensely concerned with the thick layers of meaning made at any given moment, in any specific locality (synchrony), as well as how these meanings connect to those accrued within the community over time (diachrony). Just as the concern with vertical and horizontal orientations of space and use within geography underlie the use of mapping as a tool of analysis, reading practices can be configured along these same axes. Meaning-making is a hyperlocal activity for McHoul, produced by "local technology—methods or ways of doing things that are relatively peculiar to those who do them" (15). In these activities, communities are bounded—and limited—by the ability of their members to engage in shared practices and to reach shared understanding. Different communities of readers will make different uses of a sign, which may or may not be intelligible to those outside of the interpretive community. Placing use at the centre of a text's value is, I think, where the proletarian evades the view of both the liberal and the literary: what might look like passive reception can be a complex negotiation of material needs, policed spaces, and code-switching. It is also where McHoul's interpretive communities can align with the idea of a public

as a self-identifying group of readers, diachronically fluid, but made identifiable by shared practices drawn together under the name of "reading."

Michael Warner posits a public beyond the "public sphere," in which the meaning and use of the text are in the hands of an attentive readership for whom self-identification with a rhetorical address is in itself a meaningful act. In doing so, he points to the potential of unbounded readings to constitute and re-constitute publics of readers as long as a particular text circulates among them; by privileging the reader as the source of a public, rather than the space of reading, or the technologies of print that permit it, Warner breaks with more classically liberal conceptions of the public as defined by Jürgen Habermas and Benedict Anderson. The pamphlets and periodicals of the 1930s represent a network of social relations that is always-already public, in that the labour of publication, the commercial exchange of the print trade, and the political questions raised by the writers operate outside of the private individual. On the very local level, this formation has a geographic epicentre. Gitelman, referencing David Henkin, elaborates on how

> everyday reading in public helped to rearticulate the [North] American cityscape as a public sphere, a zone "in which subjects could be addressed anonymously, impersonally, and without reference to particularities of status." He argues persuasively that nineteenth-century reading in public helped generate an "impersonal public discourse" partly out of cacophonous commercial messages addressed indiscriminately to all. (47-8)

Equally, proletarian texts are addressed to the masses, but they are not at all indiscriminate. As we have seen, the formal and rhetorical conventions of these materials are readily identifiable, linking the individual reader into the larger political networks of the radical left. This operation, however, transcends the personal: the narrative of history recounted by proletarian texts deliberately subsumes the singular subject, while their mode of address imagines a vast public on the verge of being re-made as a collective force. Warner articulates the revolutionary transformation unleashed in the transition from a public sphere occupied by individual subjects to an open public:

> The peculiar dynamic of postulation and address by which public speech projects the social worlds has mainly been understood as ideology, domination, exclusion. […] The projection of a public is a new, creative, and distinctively modern mode of power. (108)

Both the potential and enduring power of proletarian texts lie in the way they continue to construct and invoke new publics, in Warner's terms. However, it is difficult to declare these publics as continuous with the interpretive communities of the 1930s readers of proletarian pamphlets and periodicals. The temptation is there, to link Warner's unbounded publics with the revolutionary openness suggested by McHoul's reading practices, and to go out, pamphlets in hand, to find twenty-first century proletarians. In every sense, this is impossible.

Much of the work of this research is to counter the acts of exclusion that have been performed on proletarian print, as well as its writers and readers. The 1930s in Canada is frequently cast as a period of transience, defined by wageless

men on the move and recorded in cheap print easily discarded. Likewise, it is regarded as a time of transition: rather than an important formation in itself, the decade is blurred in the rush from world war to world war; a flat, dead space between spikes of action. If Canada's national narratives are built around the liberal ideals of ever-expanding settlement and ever-more rational governance, transience is an aberration. It is what happens before, or between, the real stories, and is excised in the telling. By contrast, a proletarian understanding encompasses transience and precariousness as an attendant feature of the liberal-capital order. It is ever-recurring, but not fixed; as such, it is hard to memorialize.

More than recognizably literary forms like the novel or the little magazine, the characteristic forms of proletarian print—the pamphlet, the manifesto, the newspaper—enact what James Mussell has called the "double role" of ephemera as a provocation to memory and as a sign of all that is forgotten (81). By engaging with these objects, I hope to pull to the surface whole networks of materials, and readers who knew what they were and how they fit into the conditions of their actual lives. Equally, these materials fit into the broader ecosystem of Canadian publishing and print: they are conscious of the more celebrated texts, even as they are passed over by them. However, they did not disappear, just as the needs and demands of working people did not disappear into post-war prosperity. The texts I have examined, and the local spaces in which they circulated suggest that the force of a proletarian public, if not its objects, is far less transient than has been presumed. As bits of 1930s slang colour the reminiscences of trekkers and

marchers, as slogans calling for work and wages permeate today's anti-poverty movements, and as the buildings of Edmonton still mark out the sites of violence brought down on ordinary people, we can see the ways in which what recurs in language also lasts in public space. We do not memorialize what is not yet finished.

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