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[See table of contents](#)

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CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN THE HALIFAX BAKING AND CONFECTIONERY INDUSTRY DURING THE LAST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY *

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I Introduction

Industrial capitalism developed in three stages. In the handicraft stage, associated in Europe with guilds and in both Europe and North America with small workshops, production was carried out by small groups of journeymen working under a master, or by small masters in isolation. At a certain stage, "where the minimum sum advanced for production greatly exceeds the maximum of the middle ages", the increase in the size of the workshop and its labour force effected a dramatic change in the conditions of the labour-process. This second stage, "manufacture", came about in two ways: by the gathering together of workers belonging to various independent handicrafts, who each contributed to the completion of the product, and by the bringing together of a number of craftsmen who each did the same thing, but whose craft was broken down into its successive manual operations. The third stage in the development of industrial capitalism was that of "modern industry," which in its primitive form meant the replacement of the tool of the craftsman

* I should like to thank Judith Fingard, David Frank, Craig Heron, Greg Kealey, Larry McCann, Del Muise, Bryan Palmer, Nolan Reilly and David Sutherland for comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Newspapers mentioned in the notes were published in Halifax, except where otherwise noted. This paper was first presented at the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference, 1978.

by the machine, and in its more developed form involved the evolution of the "collective machine," an organised system of many machines. The endpoint of the process was the performance by the machine of the same operations which had been done by the workman with his tools.¹

Although these ideas from *Capital* have long formed the basis of critical study of the logic of capitalist development, they have suffered a curious neglect from labour historians. Part of the reason for this may be the inherent conservatism of a "labour" history which contents itself with the study of the *results*, but not the *process*, of capitalist development. Another reason why this model has had little apparent resonance is the misconception that each stage in the development of capitalism corresponds to a chronological period. As Raphael Samuel has recently demonstrated, a "mainly hand technology" dominated many sectors of the nineteenth-century British economy. Moreover, he points out that even in those sectors dominated by machinery, the machine itself might create more skills than it destroyed. He proposes that the stages be seen as concurrent phases of production, and that the classical antithesis of labour-power and machinery be qualified by a recognition of the complementary roles of both. It would be difficult to accept the view that no periodisation can be elaborated from Marx's analysis, for it should be possible to say that in certain periods the workshop unquestionably dominates, or that in others mass-production has relegated prior phases of production to the periphery. But Samuel's notion of "concurrent phases of capitalist growth," is a useful corrective to the chronological approach, in that it leads one to analyse the precise configuration of combined and uneven development within the capitalist mode. One effect of such analysis must be the questioning of the well-rooted theory that 'artisans' were generally confronted by the 'factory'. It would rather appear, given the acknowledgement of concurrent phases, that industry both created and destroyed crafts; that many craftsmen responded not to factories but to manufactories; and that the ideological orientation of class struggles of craftsmen was determined by their precise position vis-à-vis the workshop, manufactory and factory.²

In the Canadian setting further distinctions must be made between those industrial establishments imposed by mercantile or industrial capital with the purpose of substituting Canadian for British or American manufactured goods, and those factories which emerged from workshops and manufactories. In the first instance, one might conjecture, the absence of native craftsmen would have a deadening effect on the workplace struggles which could emerge. Another distinction that must be made is not between phases of industrial capitalism, but between modes of production themselves: the pro-

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York, Modern Library, n.d.), p. 338, and Ch. 14, 15.

² Raphael Samuel, "The Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in mid-Victorian Britain", *History Workshop Journal*, 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 6-72.

duction of use-values within households remained an important feature of many nineteenth-century communities. Thus we have a complex period of concurrent modes of production in certain sectors and places, and concurrent phases of industrial production.³

The inner logic of the period was, to be sure, the emergence of industrial capitalism as the dominant mode, and many craftsmen did confront manufactories and factories as threats to their livelihood. This confrontation took place in at least five ways. Outright proletarianization forced craftsmen into advanced industrial production: the individual craftsman was brought to the machine. This would seem to be the situation of many North American shoemakers.⁴ The second way involved a period of uneasy coexistence of the handicraft, manufactory and the factory, each within the same category of production (as was the case of bakers). Third, the handicraft might be slowly made irrelevant to the wider economy without any significant transfer of craftsmen to industry. Here one thinks of sailmakers and shipwrights. Fourth, the craft might remain dominant in its field, primarily within manufactories, and thus be in a strong position to create monopolies of skill and job control. This would seem to be the case of the printers, machinists, and patternmakers. Finally, the craft might easily adapt itself to the industrial age, or even to factory production directly, without any significant alteration of skills. This may have been the case of barbers, who seem to have been largely unaffected by industry, and of plumbers, who both in workshops and factories continued to enjoy the privileges of craftsmen.⁵

Historians have been slow to develop the theoretical framework which would permit us to evaluate the relative importance of each of these paths, and the effects of each on class struggle and class consciousness. It does not appear unlikely that the second path of "concurrent phases" was of critical im-

³ In some of these industries the workforce itself was largely imported. In Halifax cotton, imported skilled workers were organized, the increasingly native unskilled workforce was not.

⁴ See Gregory S. Kealey, "Artisans Respond to Industrialism: Shoemakers, Shoe Factories and the Knights of St. Crispin in Toronto", Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* (1973), pp. 137-157. In Lynn, Massachusetts, the transition was stretched out over a long period, and involved the borderline case of the manufacturer hiring labour and working alongside his employees with his family. Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn, Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976).

⁵ This highly schematic outline draws from Wayne Roberts, "Artisans, Aristocrats and Handymen: Politics and Unionism among Toronto Skilled Building Trades Workers, 1896-1914", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 1 (1976), pp. 92-121; Joanne Burgess, "L'industrie de la chaussure à Montréal: 1840-1870 — le passage de l'artisanat à la fabrique", *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française*, 31 (September 1977), pp. 187-210; Gregory S. Kealey, "The Honest Workingman' and Workers' Control: The Experience of Toronto Skilled Workers, 1860-1892", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 1 (1976), pp. 32-68, among other studies.

portance. Whatever the most important type of craft evolution, the sheer diversity of craft experience renders somewhat questionable any fixation on either primitive rebellion against the factory or elementary job controls as *the* key to working-class experience. Crafts were spawned and died in diverse ways, and each generated its own discrete history. Perhaps this sheer diversity, the absence of any common "massifying" experience, allows one to begin to explore the curious stability of the Victorian class structure.⁶

This essay on the Halifax baking and confectionery industry concerns the second path, in which craft production coexisted with the manufactory and the factory. Journeymen in this situation confronted the factory and manufactory either directly from within, or indirectly by suffering from the effects of competition. From this conception of the ensemble of productive forces one may derive a hypothesis about class struggle: that the permeability of the line between small master and journeyman created an ambivalent sense of class consciousness in both groups, which turned both sides into allies against the emergent factory. A related hypothesis would suggest that journeymen were unable, for objective and subjective reasons, to unite with the permanent factory labour force, and that the manufactory and factory thus divided the mass of workers in the industry. Thus the factory produced a stratified labour force whose unity both within and outside the factory was highly vulnerable. In presenting this analysis, I shall first attempt to demonstrate why craft persisted alongside industry in this sector, both in Halifax and generally. I shall then analyse the history of small workshops, manufactories and factories in this industry to show that these were indeed concurrent, although increasingly unequal, stages. Third, I shall discuss the effect of the evolution of the productive forces on the workers in the industry, and fourth, I shall attempt to demonstrate some of the consequences for labour struggles of the "second path" and present some tentative conclusions about the more general problems of class formation and class consciousness which this account raises.

II Portrait of an Industry

The baking and confectionery industry in Halifax was composed of four separate elements: candy production, fancy or pastry baking, bread baking, and the manufacture of crackers, ship's biscuit and pilot bread. These separate activities were often combined within one establishment.

In Halifax confectionery production was favoured by the historic connections of the city with the West Indies trade. Of the four activities, candy production was the most susceptible to mechanization, particularly after the

⁶ It seems self-evident that at no time during "the making of the Canadian working class" (1850-1914) was there a serious possibility of generalized class conflict, and that this is the central problem of labour history that must be explored. Such an absence of national class conflict made Canada unusual among the industrializing countries.

discovery of the Van Houten process which made it possible to use cocoa-butter for manufacturing chocolate in solid form. However, until Moirs turned to confectionery in the late 1870s, candy manufacture was an outpost of domestic production and retained strong links to retailing.⁷

Confectionery shaded into pastry-making, which was far less susceptible to mechanization. Many bread bakers produced fancy goods on the side, and fancy bakers as a category showed few signs of going beyond the stage of handicraft. The production of crackers, ship's and pilot bread, and related products was a quite different proposition. Because of its importance to the commercial economy and the greater ease with which the product could be preserved, the cracker industry was more technologically developed than any other sector of the industry. The product had never been made at home to any significant extent before the emergence of the bakery, which left wide scope for product innovation and the early emergence of the brand name. The National Biscuit Company in the United States typified the early and successful domination of the industry by large corporations. Since the manufacture of such articles depended from the beginning on specialised wholesale distribution through ship chandlers' shops, jobbers, and commission merchants, it is not surprising that cracker and related products were marketed on an international scale by the end of the nineteenth century.⁸

Of the four activities, the baking of bread was unquestionably the most important. Of all the urban crafts, it had the closest links to the vital issues of working-class subsistence. Fragmentary evidence gathered by Canadian social historians (and the parallel researches of British historians) buttresses the thesis that bread and potatoes played a vital role in the diet of nineteenth-century workers. This is why bread prices were so often drawn into the debate on the tariff, which was an important class issue in Victorian Canada.⁹

The most important feature of bread-baking was its strong links with household production. The bakery had only just emerged in Canada by 1850, and throughout the last half of the nineteenth century it felt the unseen

⁷ J. Othick, "The cocoa and chocolate industry in the nineteenth century", in D.J. Oddy and D.S. Miller, eds., *The Making of the Modern British Diet* (London 1976), pp. 77-90.

⁸ See William G. Panscher, *Baking in America. I. Economic Development* (Evanston, 1956), pp. 81-83 for a discussion of the biscuit and cracker trade. Biscuits originated more as medicinal goods than as articles for pleasurable consumption: See T.A.B. Corley, "Nutrition, technology and the growth of the British biscuit industry, 1820-1900," in Oddy and Miller, eds., *Modern British Diet*, pp. 13-25.

⁹ Gregory S. Kealey, *Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century* (Toronto 1973), p. 22, shows a diet for a working-class girl, her mother and two sisters, with an expenditure of \$.85 on bread and \$.15 on potatoes, as against \$.25 on meat, per week. See also Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929* (Toronto 1974), Appendix A. Bread in relation to the tariff is discussed in the *Acadian Recorder*, 11 October 1895; 10 October 1893; 29 March 1890.

competition of the kitchen. In Nova Scotia in 1871 there were no bakeries in such rural census districts as King's, Annapolis, Digby, Shelburne, Queen's, Colchester, Guysborough, Inverness, and Victoria; one bakery in Richmond, Cape Breton, Antigonish, Cumberland, Halifax East and Hants; and only two in all of the census district of Yarmouth. Only Halifax and Pictou could claim a larger number (14 in Halifax, 6 in Pictou). This pattern confirms that previously noted in Britain and the United States.¹⁰

The implantation of the bakery was so gradual that it provoked little commentary in the press, although complaints about the quality of bread provided by the bakeries often led to comparisons between domestic and craft production. One writer complained, "To be sure there is one remedy left us, that is, to have our bread made at home, but all cannot well do this, and such fall into the hands of the baker, (we almost said poisoner.)" A rare commentary on the coming of the bakery was provided by the regular city columnist of the *Acadian Recorder* in 1893: "I am told that in the city the home baking of bread has fallen off very greatly within a few years. Time was when there was a regular distinction between home-made and bakers' bread; and a piece of the latter was considered by the average juvenile as something in the nature of a treat. . . ." He concluded by lamenting the death of "many pleasant home industries" which he thought constituted "a healthy occupation and fillip for both mind and body."¹¹

Because of its great social importance, the production of bread was subject to a wide range of traditional controls in many western countries. Although the repeal of the Assize of Bread in England marked the formal termination of a traditional economy that had already been undermined, vestiges of pre-capitalist control lived on. According to the Halifax *Charter* (and this was in line with many other North American cities) bread had to be sold at a certain weight and strict penalties were prescribed for violations. There were also provisions for the marking of bread so that the baker could be identified, and bread sold underweight was to be dispensed by the Stipendiary Magistrate to poor people. Although this ordinance was often not observed, it was sufficiently important to bring the occasional baker into police court and to spark a full-scale debate on the subject of bread controls in 1897. As a consequence of this debate, fancy bread was excluded from the ordinance, and master bakers were thereby given free rein to violate the spirit if not the letter of the law. Less scope was provided, apparently, for the adulteration of the product, which in Britain was an essential aspect of the growth of capitalism in the trade. There is little hard Halifax evidence to suggest

¹⁰ Canada, *Census*, Table III, 1871; R. F. Banks, "Labour Relations in the Baking Industry Since 1860: With Special Reference to the Impact of Technical and Economic Change on Union Administration and Bargaining Procedure", PhD Thesis, University of London, 1965, Ch. 1; Panschar, *Baking in America*, Ch. 2, 3.

¹¹ *Morning Journal and Commercial Advertiser*, 26 October 1860; *Acadian Recorder*, 23 September 1893.

adulteration as a means of allowing bakeries to survive in an intensely competitive business. Coupled, then, with the formal traditional constraints of the ordinance, was the limit placed on product innovation, both by legislation and by the inherent conservatism of diet.¹⁸

Three limitations to a fully industrialized bakery emerge from this discussion of "traditional" controls. First, the baker was confined to the city and its immediate hinterland both by the survival of baking within the household and by consumer resistance to products which might have overcome the problem of perishability; second, he was similarly confined to the production of a customary loaf within socially defined limits of profitability; and finally, his proximity to and competition with household production ensured that the predominant form would be the small neighbourhood bakery with low requirements for fixed capital and a limited market. We must add to this "traditional" structure of controls, the more prosaic obstacles to industrialization presented by perishability, technological bottlenecks, and competition. Perishability obviously confined the baker to his immediate area; Halifax bread bakers seem to have expanded no further than neighbouring Dartmouth. Distribution was confined to the bread-cart (which sometime in mid-century supplanted the hawking of bread by the master himself), regularized bread routes for home delivery, and retailing through corner groceries. Technological bottlenecks took many forms, from the uncertainty of local flour supplies which forced bakeries to carry large stocks of flour, to the uncertainty of barm or ferment which (compared to compressed yeast) was unsuited to large-production schedules, to the design of the baker's oven, although the early deficiencies of the peel oven were resolutely attacked by a small army of designers who by the turn of the century had popularized the revolving reel oven (with trays for hearths pivoted between vertical discs revolving in a large baking chamber). This invention largely eliminated the problem of "hot spots" which had so plagued the bakers using peel ovens, but it was a long way from a design which would ensure continual process and

¹⁸ For the traditional bread economy, see Sidney and Beatrice Webb, "The Assize of Bread", *The Economic Journal*, 14 (June 1904), pp. 196-218; for Halifax bread controls, see *The Halifax City Charter with Ordinances and By-Laws* (Halifax, revised edition, 1914), Part XIV, Section 948, "Inspection and Measuring". For discussion of the application of these controls, see *Acadian Recorder*, 16 February 1885; *Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour*, Evidence — Nova Scotia (Ottawa, 1889) [Hereafter *R.C.R.C.L.*], Evidence of J. W. Moir, p. 14; Evidence of Lewis Archibald, p. 180; *Acadian Recorder*, 28 November 1896; 14 December 1894; 30 January 1897; Halifax City Council Minutes, Mss., Microfilm at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia [Hereafter *P.A.N.S.J.*, Reel 10, 29 January 1897. An interesting trial of a baker for selling light-weight bread is to be found in the *Morning Chronicle*, 14 August 1875. For adulteration, see John Burnett, "The History of Food Adulteration in Great Britain in the Nineteenth Century, With Special Reference to Bread, Tea and Beer", PhD Thesis, University of London, 1958. Canadian legislation may be consulted in the *Statutes of Canada*, 37 Vic., Cap. 3, 1874.

a fully mechanised system of loading and unloading. Finally, there was little progress in any country on the question of packaging and marketing the product. Advertising in Halifax emphasized cleanliness, wholesomeness, and tastiness, but failed to produce a popular brand name. Packaging meant, by and large, wrapping the product in anonymous waxed paper, and product identification involved little more than the legal requirement that the baker stamp the loaf. Perhaps the most important obstacle to full mechanisation was competition itself. Although there is fragmentary evidence in Halifax of collective price-setting and organization (especially the Halifax and Dartmouth Master Bakers' Association), such manifestations of the protective impulse pale beside the evidence of bread wars in 1884 and 1897 and the high number of bankruptcies. So pronounced was this tendency to competition in Britain that one notable master baker (who was fond of putting manifestoes between recipes for pastries and cookies) wrote of the "white haggard faces" of the small masters, "a haunting memory to those who gave us the last push over the edge and saw us smash below." Such was the savagery of competition in the trade that he welcomed the advent of machinery which would put small masters out of business.¹³

These general constraints to industrialization applied to all countries with a free market in bread. Only in the area of mixing machinery could one draw some comfort. Traditional craft baking involved the baker adding yeast to a pailful of water, and after straining it through a seasoning sieve, emptying it into a hole in a mass of prepared flour. After the dry flour was poured over the top, the mixture (of the consistency of thick batter) was left for three or four hours until swelling began. After the pouring of additional water, came the hard labour of kneading. The whole of the flour was worked up into one mass, blocked by a pin board to one end of the kneading trough, and left for an hour to prove. Then the dough was scaled off, cut into masses to be weighed, moulded, and set into the oven. There were countless variations on this pattern: the use of potatoes for ferment, for example, was common by the mid-nineteenth century and we have at least circumstantial evidence of their use in Halifax. Innovation in the mixing process came primarily in the form of mechanical dough-kneaders, which by the end of the nineteenth century had spread to all but the smallest bakeries in England. The most important of the machines was the Stevens Patent Dough Making Machine, which consisted of

¹³ John Blandy, *The Baker's Guide and Cook's Assistant to the Art of Bread-Making in All its Branches* (London 1886), p. 82. See also his novel on the baking trade, *The Tax Earner* (London 1897). Details of the distribution of local bread come from J. L. Martin, *The Story of Dartmouth* (Dartmouth 1957), p. 347; *Acadian Recorder*, 2 July 1898; Moirs Papers, P.A.N.S., M.G.3, Vol. 1866, Nos. 72 and 74 (licences to sell bread in Dartmouth). A useful discussion of oven design is presented in J. R. Seville, "The Bakers' Oven", *Arkady Review* (1955), pp. 18-20, 30-34, 63-68. Information on the Halifax and Dartmouth Master Bakers' Association is drawn from *Acadian Recorder*, 19 June 1891.

a mixer, feeder and duster, and a scoop. Fitted out with a double bottom for containing hot and cold water, the machine allowed the regulation of the speed of the process of fermentation. The machine either came "attached" with the motive power supplied, or "detached," with a separate cast-iron framework to which steam or water power could be applied.¹⁴

Of all mechanical inventions associated with the trade, it was this machine that made the most impression on Halifax. Although only perfected in 1858, it was present in the city as early as 1864, when W. C. Moir adopted it for his bakery. Across North America the machine was taken up enthusiastically, and became increasingly sophisticated. This was a genuine achievement, but it must be weighed against the small amount of dough that the machines could use at one time and the differences in the quality of bread which were said to result.¹⁵

This set of factors — "traditional" constraints, perishability, technological bottlenecks, and competition — explain the wide disparity in the size and sophistication of bakeries in many countries. When bread baking is taken in conjunction with the other three elements of the trade, it is apparent that we are dealing with a complex structure of relationships of production which necessarily had a distinctive articulation in each locality.

Halifax produced a baking and confectionery industry of unusual importance. Census data reveal that in 1871 the city ranked below all other major Canadian cities save Montreal and Saint John in terms of the ratio of bakery and confectionery workers to population; in 1881 and 1891, however, the city was second in Canada, and it was third in 1901.

These ratios are not unambiguous, for a large proportion of Halifax production went to the military, and this may have been the most important factor in accounting for this relatively high ratio. Moreover, a technologically advanced bakery or confectionery factory would create the same impact as a primitive resistance to the bread bakery, and the spread between large and small firms could only be traced through complete runs of the manuscript census. Perhaps the most important qualification that one must attach to these statistics is that they underestimate the number of bakery and confectionery establishments. The 1871 census and the manuscript for that census neglect a large number of establishments, probably as many as twelve. Such reserva-

¹⁴ This description of traditional craft mixing is drawn from George Read, *The Baker. Including Bread and Fancy Baking with Numerous Receipts* (London, n.d. [c. 1850]). For Ebenezer Stevens, father of the Stevens Patent Dough Making Machine, see his *A Voice from the Bakehouse* (London 1861); John Burnett, "The Baking Industry in the Nineteenth Century", *Business History* 5 (June 1962), pp. 106-107. Samuel, "The Workshop of the World," is unduly sceptical of the impact of this machine, which became very common in both Britain and North America.

¹⁵ See the ad of W. C. Moir explicitly mentioning the machine: *British Colonist*, 26 March 1864.

tions must also be made about the statistics on raw materials and value of production. (Table 1)

	1871	1881	1891*
No. of bakeries and confectionery establishments	14	17	18
Value of raw materials	\$260,250	\$388,712	\$286,025
Total value of articles produced	\$327,500	\$564,674	\$455,410

*combines separate baking and confectionery census categories

Source: *Canada, Census, 1871, 1881, 1891, Table III.*

Table II gives eloquent testimony to the effect of the change of census definition on the statistics of the trade. By changing the census definition to employers of more than five workers, the census removed at a stroke some ten bakery and confectionery establishments.

No. of establishments	3
Capital	\$267,350
Cost of Materials	\$340,500
Value of Products	\$508,000

Source: *Canada, Census, 1901, Table III*

Lists establishments with five employees or more.

These aggregate statistics do not tell much about the internal differentiation of handicraft, manufacture, and factory production within the industry. A slightly more penetrating source is the city directory. Table III is compiled from a reading of Halifax city directories for the period 1871-1900. The unrevised data reflect directory listings year by year; the revised data incorporate evidence from probate records, newspapers, and an allowance made for disappearances from the directory of three years or less provided that the firm reappeared at the same address. Both listings probably underestimate the number of establishments in Halifax, since many masters are incorrectly listed as journeymen in the directories, but there is no reliable way of assessing whether or how widespread this is. On the other hand, the number of proprietors incorporates successions within one family, transitions to partnerships, and changes of name.¹⁶

¹⁶ The method used in scanning directories was to rely on business directories for years in which these were available, and general listings for years in which no business directory appeared. It was impossible to include confectioners in this research because

Table III
Number of Bakeries and Type in Halifax Per Year, 1871-1901

Year	Unrevised Data			Revised Data		
	Plain	Fancy	Mixed	Plain	Fancy	Mixed
1871	12	4	1	17	8	1
1872	19	5	1	21	11	1
1873	12	3	1	13	9	1
1874	15	5	1	16	9	1
1875	21	4	1	24	7	1
1876	14	9	1	17	10	1
1877	16	8	1	18	8	1
1878	12	4	1	14	7	1
1879	10	4	1	13	5	1
1880	8	6	1	9	8	1
1881	9	5	1	9	8	1
1882	11	4	1	12	6	1
1883	14	6	1	14	7	1
1884	10	3	1	10	5	1
1885	11	3	1	11	5	1
1886	10	5	1	11	5	1
1887	10	5	1	12	6	1
1888	9	3	1	11	6	1
1889	12	4	2	14	5	2
1890	14	2	1	15	3	2
1891	16	3	2	17	5	2
1892	14	3	2	16	4	2
1893	13	3	2	18	4	2
1894	17	5	2	20	6	2
1895	23	4	2	25	4	2
1896	18	5	1	18	5	1
1897	13	4	1	14	5	1
1898	7	3	1	8	5	1
1899	6	2	2	6	4	2
1900	7	4	2	7	4	2

Number of Proprietors: 134. Plain Bakers: 101. Fancy Bakers: 29. Mixed: 4.

Total Raw Years for all bakers: 576.

Total Revised Years for all bakers: 690.

Total Revised Years for plain bakers: 466.

Total Revised Years for fancy bakers: 185.

Total Revised Years for mixed bakers: 39.

Average Years for Plain Baker: 4.61

Average Years for Fancy Baker: 6.37

Average Years for Mixed Baker: 9.75

Source: *Directories*

they could not be sorted out from the proprietors of corner candy shops. Bakers were taken to be petty proprietors when two addresses were given: the frequent "h do" notation [house ditto] was taken to indicate a small master operating out of his own

This table is eloquent testimony to the harrowing precariousness of the lives of many master bakers, particularly those who had no confectionery or fancy trade to fall back on. Yet despite this precarious existence, the ranks of the small masters were replenished. Only in 1898 do we see a diminution in the numbers of proprietors, and this is probably an effect of the bread war of the previous year. The little bakery was a permanent fixture, but the little proprietor was not. A study of the locations of bakeries yields the same conclusion. Of 102 bakery locations in Halifax in this period, 41 were on what one might consider major business streets (Barrington, Gottingen, Argyle and Upper Water), but the remainder were spread throughout the city, many on streets that were impeccably residential. The bakery belonged as much to the north-end neighbourhoods as it did to business thoroughfares.

A final point must be made about the aggregate portrait of the Halifax industry: the number of women who acted as proprietors. From 1863 to 1900 we have data on 24 female proprietors (9.6% of the 1860s proprietors, 14.9% of the proprietors from 1871 to 1901). Of the women in the 1860s, four were plain bakers, and these were all married to male bakers. In some cases this involved the woman taking charge of the firm from her husband, and in other instances it reflected a sharing of responsibility between husband and wife. Of the 20 female proprietors of the later period (one of whom was present in the 1860s as well), 13 were fancy bakers and seven were plain bakers. Nine of these women were definitely connected by marriage or other family ties to a male proprietor; in four cases the linkage to a male proprietor is probable but not certain; and in seven cases the woman was clearly on her own. This is again eloquent testimony to the domestic origins of the trade and the importance of small family workshops — for it is difficult to find examples of women in other sectors (except brewing) who headed establishments within crafts.¹⁷

III Handicraft, Manufactory and Factory

All three stages of production coexisted in the Halifax baking and confectionery industry. The handicraft bakeries (which may be defined for the purposes of our analysis as those which employed fewer than five people) were, as the previous analysis has shown, a continuing feature in the landscape of the industry. The manufactories, employing five or more employees,

home, whereas one address indicated a journeyman. Directories consulted: McAlpine's *Halifax City Directories* for 1871-2 through to 1900-1, and *O'Flaherty and Walsh's Halifax and Dartmouth Business Directory* for 1876-88. Data from the 1860s are treated separately because those directories are less frequent and of uneven quality. Those consulted were Hutchinson's *Halifax Business Directory* for 1863, Hutchinson's *Nova Scotia Directory* for 1866-7, and McAlpine's *Nova Scotia Directory* for 1868-9.

¹⁷ See Keith Johnston, "The Halifax Drink Trade, 1870-1895", Honours Thesis, History Department, Dalhousie University, 1977, pp. 10, 12, for instances of women managing breweries.

utilizing mechanical improvements to a greater extent, and with access to steam power, may be distinguished from the handicraft bakeries by their aggregate output, but it is difficult to draw a hard and fast line. I have included as manufactories those establishments which in 1871 had an output valued at more than \$25,000, which establishes two firms as manufactories. On largely circumstantial evidence I have also included four other firms as manufactories, which emerged at the end of the century when documentation is less available. Finally this categorization leaves us with one factory, whose 1871 output was over \$100,000, Moirs.¹⁶ Although arbitrary, our operational definitions conform to Marx's own insistence on the manufactory as an expanded workshop, and also seem to conform to the distinctions made by contemporaries.

(a) The Handicraft Firms

Fugitive, primitive, harried by competition from manufactories and from other small establishments, the handicraft bakery and confectionery establishments were marginal in every way except in social importance. The extremely crude and impressionistic figures of the 1871 census present a portrait of this sector already outproduced by larger firms: handicraft bakeries produced under half the aggregate value of production of the factory and manufactory. This result must be treated with caution, as the manuscript census neglects so many small bakeries (including some well-known and well-established ones), but at the least one is left with the impression of a sector whose share of output was being severely threatened. In confectionery, the balance of output was rather more even, largely because the National Policy had not yet turned Moirs toward candy production. Nonetheless this parity itself was an interesting indication of the balance of the forces of production. This outdistancing of the workshop by the manufactories should not lead us to suppose, however, that the handicraft had lost its social importance or had become irrelevant. Those bakeries which remained handicrafts were without exception restricted to the production of bread ("Soft bread for families," wrote the census-taker), while those which had grown larger had expanded into biscuits, cakes, and "bread of all descriptions." Similarly, the confectioners were differentiated along the lines of mere production of cakes and sweetmeats (the handicraft shops) and the production of candy and syrups (the manufactory).

What can be said of the lives of the small masters? From the 1871 manuscript census we gain important insights into the precariousness of their lives especially when we look at the extremely low profit margins reported, and the high amounts which had to be invested in that most volatile of commodities, flour. In all cases the amount reported for the aggregate value of raw materials (notably flour, occasionally butter, sugar, and meal) sur-

¹⁶ I call it Moirs throughout this paper, for reasons of simplicity: it was variously called Moir & Co.; Moir, Son and Company; and Moirs, Limited.

passed the total of fixed and floating capital. Indeed, the difference was almost always double, and in one instance the aggregate value of raw materials exceeded the total of fixed and floating capital by a factor of seventeen. Similarly, the profit margins (excepting one aberrant case of \$10,000 which is difficult to credit) ranged from \$600 to \$5000. Nothing from the manuscript census qualifies our impression of the uncertain livelihood of the small masters.¹⁹

The manuscript census gives us only a hazy impression of levels of fixed capital, although we may obtain a figure of \$1357 as a rough estimate of the average in handicraft bakeries. Yet it is clearly important to know whether or not machinery came into this sector. Table IV provides a rough idea of the types of production in handicraft bakeries.²⁰

What is interesting about this table — with all the obvious problems of typicality acknowledged — is the evidence it provides for the view that even the handicraft stage was far from static. Although clearly a small master, John Mahar had invested \$10.00 in a rudimentary biscuit machine. Ten years later, the inventory of Charles Sullivan shows his investment in a much more sophisticated biscuit machine (\$300) and dough mixer (\$50). It may be conjectured from such details that mixers and some machines were entering and altering the workplace even at the level of the handicraft bakery. The impression that flour played a key role in the costs of the bakery is amply sustained by these probate records.

It will not do to romanticize the life of the small master baker. He was independent, employing at the most himself, his family and perhaps an apprentice and a journeyman; his work might be rather varied, with responsibility for distribution as well as baking; and the familial context would have softened the harshness of the craft. But all in all, he led a life perched on the abyss of financial collapse.

(b) The Manufactories

From the handicraft bakery came the manufactory. Some struggled to make the transition and failed. The prerequisite for success was a heroic degree of self-exploitation, necessary to accumulate the capital for the first investment in machines. It was not something that occurred suddenly, but rather took place in establishments which had been in existence for three or four decades. Bakeries which made the transition were those which had had decades of prior accumulation, and which took advantage of a favourable economic conjuncture in the 1860s and early 1870s.

Three structural aspects of the city's economy aided the establishment of manufactories. First, the presence of the garrison ensured a large demand for

¹⁹ 1871 Manuscript Census, Halifax West and Halifax East, Schedule 6, Return of Industrial Establishments (Public Archives of Canada, microfilm).

²⁰ This represents all the probate records of handicraft bakeries which included reasonably complete inventories, located by searching each listing in the directories.

THE HALIFAX BAKING INDUSTRY 77

Table IV
Inventories of Small Bakeries Contained in Halifax County Probate Records

Year	Proprietor	Description of Equipment	Raw Materials	Total value (inc. real estate)
1854	James Brucher	64 Bake Pans, 34 Bread Pans, Beam and Scales, 1 Lot Bread Shovels, 1 Iron Shovel, Waggon, Bread Carts, 2 Sets Horses: £57.2.0.	116 bbl. flour £290	£1096.9.3
1861	Wells Boardwell [sold off to pay creditors]	4 Bread Boxes, 10 empty butter containers, 1 stove and pipe, 2 bread troughs, 25 bread pans, 1 set scales and weights, 4 biscuit dockers, 1 barrell and potato pounder, 3 peel handles, 1 set wagon harness: £68.15.2 ¹ / ₂	n.a.	£817.12.1
1862	John Mahar [sold off to pay creditors]	2 troughs, 22 bread pans, 10 cake pans, 6 bread boxes, sundries, scales, pans, sieves, biscuit machine (\$10.00), empty barrels: \$277.45.	13 barrels flour (\$91.00): 11 cord soft wood (\$17.60).	\$8169.05
1872	Charles Sullivan	1 biscuit machine (\$300), 1 small ditto (\$80), 1 dough mixer (\$50), bread pans, 1 box cake pans, 40 biscuit boxes: \$585	n.a.	\$6585.10
1890	Hugh Montgomerie	Stock in shop and fixtures (\$30.00), 1 portable iron oven (\$75.00): \$115.	\$302.00	

Source: *Halifax County Probate Court, Warrants of Appraisement.*

bakers' bread: the baker who won the military contract could invest heavily in fixed capital and expand into biscuit manufacture and confectionery. The existence of a guaranteed mass market assured by the garrison both incited intense competition among small masters to get the contract, and eased the effects of competition once the contract was secured. This, of course, was not the sure route for success for the small master. When James Miller, holder of the contracts for supplying both the commissariat and the navy with bread in 1888, fled from his creditors, the *Acadian Recorder* remarked,

Miller, it appears, was another of the aspiring individuals who were not content till they became "contractors" with the Imperial authorities. These contracts are generally taken at lower figures than ordinary trade prices: and it is rather a curious fact that dozens have held such contracts, particularly in the beef line, but few have escaped a scorching.²¹

²¹ *Acadian Recorder*, 7 August 1888.

Despite this pessimistic analysis, one cannot avoid the conclusion that both in the history of Scriven's (a manufactory) and Moirs, the military contract was of great importance.²² A second feature of Halifax that favoured the growth of the manufactory was its role as a port. The new manufactories replaced the specialized ship bakeries which had existed on the waterfront in the 1850s, and, as we have seen, production of biscuit and ship's bread was more susceptible to mechanization than that of bread. Finally, Halifax's rise as the leading city, and one of the leading industrial communities, of the Maritimes increased the size of the local market for both bread and confectionery products.

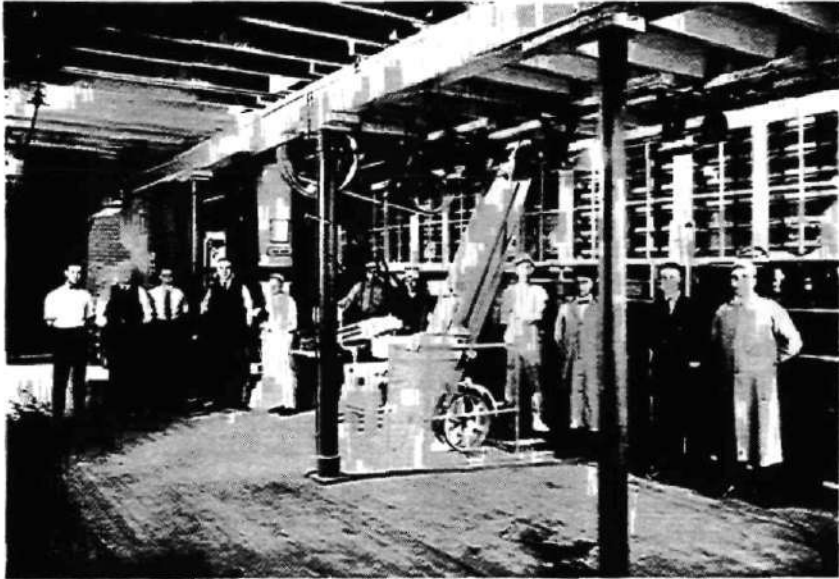
In confectionery four manufactories were established, two in the 1860s, one in 1889, and one in the 1890s. G. J. Hamilton came to Halifax from Pictou, where he had built up his firm through decades of accumulation. O'Brien and Adams were relative newcomers, by comparison; in their establishment in 1889 one found a range of machinery that would appear to put them beyond the workshop stage. The Allen Brothers (the largest producers in 1871) founded the Halifax Steam Confectionery in 1868. They were responsible for introducing the large-scale pulverizer to Halifax, and lasted until c. 1877. The case of M. J. O'Brien indicated a more common transition from fancy baker to candy manufacturer. Established as early as 1864 in a little establishment, the firm by 1888 had a modest inventory of manufactured stock (\$887.25) but a much larger sum invested in machinery, boilers, and engines (\$4491).²³

In bread baking, two manufactories were established in the nineteenth century. The Scriven bakery followed the classic pattern of evolution from handicraft. Founded in 1821 by Joseph Scriven, inherited by J. J. Scriven in 1852, and by George Scriven in 1876, it was a well-rooted Halifax family business. In 1830 it was assessed (real estate and all else included) at a mere £250. In the 1860s it turned to steam technology, with the importation of "some of the latest improvements in the apparatus of biscuit-making now in use in the United States." By 1875 the firm was advertising three separate locations and produced biscuits, crackers, bread, fruit cake, and pastries.

²² An analysis of the impact of the military on the city's economy may be found in C.S. Mackinnon, "The Imperial Fortresses in Canada: Halifax and Esquimaux, 1871-1906", PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1965. When Moirs asked the Colonial Office to allow the free importation of flour, a puzzled official commented, "I should have thought that taking 2,000 barrels of flour to Canada was like carrying coals to Newcastle" (p. 160).

²³ For Allen see Manuscript Records, R. G. Dun and Company, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Vol 11 (Halifax), p. 568; *Halifax Citizen*, 7 January 1868; 4 April 1868. For O'Brien see Halifax County Probate Court, Estate of M.J. O'Brien, Warrant of Appraisement, 1888, No. 3668. O'Brien was not included in the manuscript census of 1871.

When J. J. Scriven died in 1876, stock on hand, shop furniture and bakery machinery was valued at \$3171.73.²⁴



Scriven's, a bakery which went back to 1821, had clearly become a manufactory by the twentieth century, as this view of the bakery's interior c. 1921 clearly shows. (From Scriven's commemorative volume, 1921).

If some sort of transition to the manufactory is evidenced in the 1860s, only in 1891 was dramatic progress visible. The firm moved to a new bakehouse, equipped with two ovens from a well-known Toronto firm, a dough mixer, a moulding machine, rounding off machinery, a mechanical divider, an overhead prover, a steam proof box, and a tempering tank which weighed and measured water automatically. In 1896 a modern reel oven was installed. By the end of the century this firm employed 20 men.²⁵

The other manufactory grew out of the oldest Halifax bakery, Liswell's. If by 1881 some progress towards becoming a manufactory had been made (the inventory of that year mentions two iron biscuit machines worth \$800), the bakery was nonetheless little more than an important and prosperous workshop. Only in 1899, after the business had been acquired and moved by

²⁴ Assessment Book, City of Halifax, 1830, p.5, P.A.N.S., R.G. 35, Series "A", Vol. 2, No. 7; *British Colonist*, 24 March 1868; *Halifax Citizen*, 18 April 1868; *Herald*, 23 September 1875; Halifax County Probate Court, Estate of J. J. Scriven, Warrant of Appraisal, 1876, No. 2349.

²⁵ [Scriven's Ltd.], *Over a Century in the Bread Baking Business. Scriven's of Halifax, Canada, 1821-1921* (N.p. [Halifax], n.d. [1921]); *Acadian Recorder*, 29 December 1897.

Thomas O'Malley, did the bakery become a full-fledged manufactory. It is the one instance in the nineteenth century of an outsider bursting into the trade and establishing himself as a small manufacturer — and it occurred within the context of the most traditional bakery in the city.²⁶

The small manufactory, while a heady sign of progress to contemporaries, seems to have been a minor affair. Yet it was not unimportant. Work in such a situation might be in small groups and in a paternalistic setting, but it involved less manual labour, more machine-tending, and less independence than the labour of the small master. Investment in fixed capital gave the manufactories stability — of the three bakeries which endured throughout the period, all three were manufactories or factories. Yet the door to such stability was not wide open, and after 1871 only one establishment managed the transition.

(c) The Factory

Moirs alone of the Halifax baking and confectionery establishments became a factory. With the ropeworks, sugar refineries, and cotton factory, Moirs was evidence of Halifax's growth as an industrial city. In at least one sense Moirs was more important than the other industries: it remained in the city as a flagship of indigenous capital and survived the initial onslaught of the merger movement.²⁷



A lithograph on the end of a Moirs biscuit box shows the size of the factory c. 1890. (P.A.N.S., Moirs Papers).

²⁶ *Acadian Recorder*, 10 August 1881; 29 December 1897; Assessment Book, City of Halifax, 1823, p. 31, P.A.N.S., RG 35, Series "A", Vol. 1, No. 5; Halifax County Probate Court, Estate of John Liswell, Warrant of Appraisal, No. 2910. O'Malley's bakery is the subject of a historical sketch in the *Chronicle-Herald*, 3 February 1959. This is a borderline case: although the bakery became an important manufactory in the twentieth century, it is difficult to say when the transition occurred, and at any rate it was certainly after the labour developments discussed later in this essay.

²⁷ General accounts of the firm include G. A. White, *Halifax and Its Business* (Halifax 1876), pp. 79-80; Elizabeth Hiscott, "Moirs: A Pot of Gold and a Giant", *Atlantic Advocate* (August 1976), pp. 59-63.

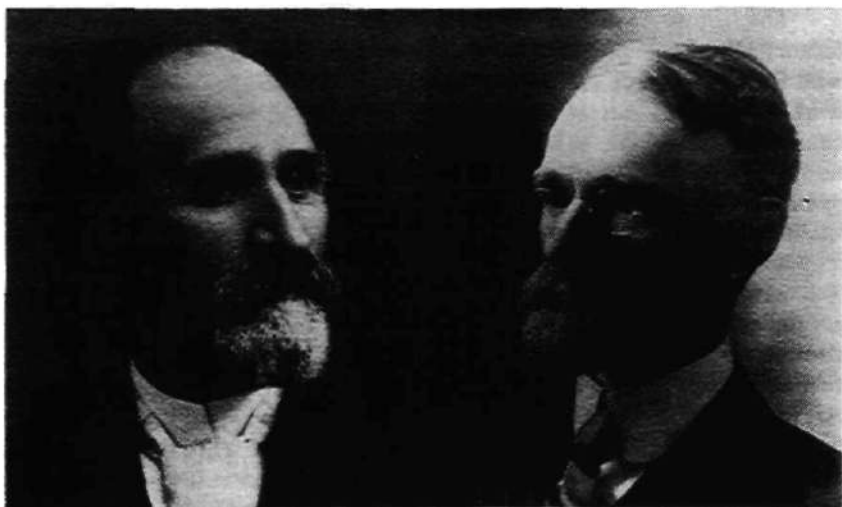
The factory evolved in the classic pattern, from a modest bakery established by Benjamin Moir in 1815 to a joint-stock company working in tandem with Eastern Trust in 1903. The bakery from 1815 to 1864 was a prosperous workshop. When Benjamin Moir died in 1845, he had built up a modest competence: the value of real estate was £530, with an additional £617.7.6 tied up in the bakery itself. Compared to the amounts invested in flour (£220) or cash on hand (£270) the sum given for the bakehouse apparatus (£2) was small indeed. The total value of the estate was £1234.15.7¹/₂, a solid basis on which a new proprietor could build.²⁸

Benjamin's son, William Church Moir, took control immediately after his father's death. His most important act was the winning of the garrison contract in 1858, after which he held it most of the time. The growth of the firm after this point was remarkable. After moving to a new location on Argyle Street in 1862, Moir introduced steam technology. In 1865, an informant for R. G. Dun thought him a well-respected entrepreneur and described him as "making money rapidly, enlarging premises and employing Steam." In 1866 Moir went into partnership with E. C. Twining, but this partnership was dissolved in 1871, perhaps because Twining brought little additional strength to the business. With profits rolling in, Moir turned to the wholesale distribution of grain, flour milling, and speculation in mining stocks and real estate. In 1876 the R. G. Dun informant described him as "... the principal of the firm. He owns a great deal of R[eal] E[state] in this City and fine Mills that he is building 8 miles from the City. Owns val[uable] farm." By 1876 Moir was building a little industrial complex in Bedford near Halifax, complete with large flour mill and elevator, spool factory, a sawmill, and a woodworking establishment. Having expanded too quickly, Moir and his son, James W., suspended payment in 1881, saddled with capital that was plentiful but frozen in real estate and the Bedford enterprises, but the firm survived both this and a fire in 1891. By the time of his death in 1896, William Moir could pride himself on having founded a major industrial enterprise. James W. Moir then steered the business into incorporation as a joint-stock company in 1903 and the issuance of bonds with the Eastern Trust Company as trustee.²⁹

Moirs was unique in the Halifax baking and confectionery industry because it achieved a great measure of vertical and horizontal integration. The decision to go into flour production was a classic case of vertical integration.

²⁸ Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Vertical Mss. File, Cook Collection, Power of Administration of Bara Moir, widow of Alexander Moir, 1819; Cook Family Genealogical Chart, Stack 15, No. 101. Benjamin Moir was the son of a Scottish armourer in the Dockyard who came to Halifax in the 1780s. For the size of the business in 1845, see Halifax County Probate Court, Estate of Benjamin Moir, Warrant of Appraisal, 1845, No. 132.

²⁹ G. A. White, *Halifax*, pp. 79-80; Manuscript Records, R. G. Dun and Company, Vol. 12, p. 694.



William Church Moir (left) took over his father's handicraft bakery in 1845 and transformed it into one of the largest Halifax industries. James W. Moir, (right) who seems to have been the architect of the firm's expansion into confectionery production, was head of Moirs after 1896. (P.A.N.S., Moirs Papers).

The flour mill, built in 1865 as an adjunct to the main bakery, relied on Ontario and American wheat. Flour milling was the centrepiece of the expansion at Bedford, which took place under the aegis of the Bedford Grain Importation, Milling and Manufacturing Company, incorporated in 1878.³⁰ It would appear that this scheme was adversely affected by the National Policy, which eliminated the use of American breadstuffs and forced Moir to rely on unreliable shipments of the domestic article.³¹ Other forms of vertical integration worked far better. The expansion into box-making was highly successful, for instance, and Moirs in the early twentieth century was said to use over 200,000 feet of boards annually for making boxes for biscuits.³²

³⁰ The history of the Bedford enterprises is very complicated and cannot be fully discussed here. See "An Act to incorporate the Bedford Grain Importation, Milling and Manufacturing Company, Limited", *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 40 Vic., Cap. 81, 1877; "An Act to amend the Act to incorporate the Bedford Grain Importation, Milling and Manufacturing Company (limited)", *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 43 Vic., Cap. 52, 1880; "An Act to revive and continue the Act to incorporate the Bedford Grain Importation, Milling and Manufacturing Company, limited", *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 44 Vic., Cap. 54, 1881.

³¹ [Edward Willis], "Report of Edward Willis, on the Manufacturing Industries of Certain Sections of the Maritime Provinces", Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 48 Vic., No. 37, 1885, pp. 40-41.

³² White, Halifax, p. 80; Moirs Papers, Vol. 1865, Nos. 57-9, 62; Vol. 1866, Nos. 103-8; Vol. 1867, No. 2; Vol. 1866, Nos. 5-6 [transactions with Halifax Co.

Horizontal integration was typified by the critical expansion of the bakery into the confectionery trade. By the early 1860s the bakery was already specializing in biscuits and hard bread, but it does not appear that it turned to confectionery manufacture until the mid-1870s at the earliest. Certainly confectionery had become important by 1881. Part of this shift can be accounted for by the National Policy, for this established a 35 per cent *ad valorem* duty in addition to a 1¢/lb. special tariff.³³ By the 1890s Moirs turned out over 500 different varieties of confectionery. Possibly this shift in emphasis may be explained by the interests of James W. Moir, who certainly approached the problem of quality control and innovation with enthusiasm and skill.³⁴ It was this integration within the boundaries of a single company of so many diverse activities that made Moirs unique. In some ways, it was a highly sophisticated example of economies of scale: the diverse operations in Halifax, for example, could be powered by the same source. In other ways, the effect was rather the reverse: even within the factory itself one could argue that there existed such a wide range of activities that it almost resembled a series of little workshops.

Moirs devoured new technology. In bread-baking, the decisive step was the importation in the early 1860s of "a Steam Engine, Boiler, etc. with a large lot of machinery of the latest and most approved kind" for baking hard bread and crackers, and also a Stevens Mixer for dough for soft bread.³⁵ The new machinery required construction of a new brick three-story factory in 1865. This mechanization allowed Moir to dominate both the cracker and bread trade by 1871: he turned out \$118,000 worth of biscuits, cakes and bread of all descriptions, \$48,000 more than his nearest competitor, J.J. Scriven. By 1876 Moir had "two Side Furnace Ovens of the largest capacity, and one very large Reel Oven." Servicing the huge military contract was a

lumbermen.) See also [Halifax Board of Trade]. *The City of Halifax. The Capital of Nova Scotia, Canada* (Halifax, 1908), p. 66.

³³ The traditional date given for the shift to confectionery is 1873. However, White does not mention confectionery in his account of 1876, and the firm did not advertise confectionery products to any great extent in the 1870s. Thus there would seem to be a case for locating the shift some time at the end of the 1870s. Moir's comments to Edward Willis also support the contention that the National Policy was more favourable to confectionery than flour milling or bread baking.

³⁴ See Kenneth Leslie's poem to James Moir for an appreciation of Moir's concern for high quality controls and innovation: "I used to love to watch his inward mind/ rove, as he slowly chewed a grain of cacao./ to Java, Venezuela, or Ceylon./ tasting at once its source, appraising it. . . I never knew that purity was passion/ until I saw this gaunt and gray-beard man." Kenneth Leslie, "The Candy Maker", in *The Poems of Kenneth Leslie* (Ladysmith 1971), p. 24. A good description of the firm in 1898 may be found in the *Acadian Recorder*, 22 December 1898.

³⁵ Petition of W.C. Moir, 1865, in P.A.N.S., Petitions of Trade and Commerce. Moir wanted to have duties returned to him which he had paid on the imported machinery.

prime motive in this restless drive for fixed capital. In 1891, it was claimed that 3000 lbs. were required daily for the troops. At the end of the century, the ovens of Moirs stretched several storeys high, and each of his two reel ovens had the capacity of turning out two thousand town loaves. This restless technological drive was carried into biscuit manufacture, but in confectionery the firm relied more on unskilled manual labour than on extensive mechanisation.³⁶

The financing of the company also set it apart from other establishments, both in its scope and complexity. In its early years the firm relied on short-term credit from banks, but had no long-standing relationship with any one financial institution. The bulk of indebtedness in the financial crisis of 1881 was to other businessmen. In the 1890s, this relationship with banks changed. An entry in the financial statement of 1895 shows the People's Bank of Halifax holding collateral on the bakery building of \$30,000. When, after complex legal battles, the company was incorporated, the Directors were empowered to borrow upon the credit of the Company to the extent of \$100,000, to issue two hundred bonds of \$500.00 each, all maturing in twenty years after bearing 6% annual interest. Eastern Trust Company was designated the trustee. So the firm which had grown out of the accumulation of capital in the handicraft phase entered the period of finance capital.³⁷

Moirs differed from other establishments in the industry in a fourth respect: the acquisition of a regional market. From Schedule A of the Deed of Assignment, drawn up in the crisis of 1881, we can infer the geographical pattern of Moirs' trade. Out of a total of \$93,571.12 in debts listed in this deed, Halifax customers account for \$41,282.69, and those outside the city \$16,460.09. (Excluded from the analysis, and accounting for the remainder, are the real estate and other fixed assets owned by the company.) Of the customers outside Halifax, 67.8% were in Nova Scotia, 6.1% were in New Brunswick, and slightly under 1% were in Prince Edward Island. Substantial totals appear for St. Pierre (2.1%) and St. John's (1.6%). The range of Moirs' penetration of the provincial market is interesting. The largest percentage was

³⁶ *Reporter*, 2 January 1864; White, *Halifax*, p. 80; *Acadian Recorder*, 16 June 1891; 5 October 1892. See also the references to James W. Tester and Co. of Montreal (Moirs Papers, Vol. 1866, p. 33). It is also possible that Moir was in contact with Smith & Hand of New York, "manufacturers of Confectioners machinery," or so we may assume from a stray letterhead in the Moirs papers (Vol. 1866, No. 43).

³⁷ Moirs Papers, Vol. 1866, No. 4, Memo to Close Account, Moir & Co., 30 March 1872; *Morning Chronicle*, 6 August 1881; *Acadian Recorder*, 13 August 1881; *Herald*, 13 August 1881; *Acadian Recorder*, 20 August 1881; Deed of Assignment, W.C. Moir and Wife and Jas. W. Moir to James R. Graham, 14 September 1881. Moirs Papers, Vol. 1865, No. 67. For Moirs and banks, see Moirs Papers, Vol. 1867, No. 7 and No. 12, and Moirs Papers, Vol. 1864, No. 25. Memorandum of Agreement, 30 April 1903; Moirs Limited to Eastern Trust, Mortgage to Secure Bonds, Moirs Papers, Vol. 1866, No number [45], and Vol. 1864, Nos. 63-65, resolutions concerning agreement with Eastern Trust.

accounted for by Sydney (7.2%), followed by North Sydney (5.9%), Liverpool (3.4%), Lunenburg (3.1%), Antigonish (2.2%), and New Glasgow (1.7%). It is also interesting that the absence of rail links with communities did not hinder Moirs doing business with them, and this may explain the references to shares in steamship companies which surface in the Moir papers. Every major community, and a large number of hamlets, comprised the 108 Nova Scotia communities with which Moirs did business, almost entirely through general dealers.³⁸ Yet this table almost certainly understates the case. In 1898, Moirs was reported to have acquired a large market for biscuit and other provisions in Puerto Rico and Cuba, and with the opening of the Canadian west, Moirs made a determined and successful bid for a share in that market.³⁹

The city itself captured the lion's share of Moirs' attention, and the firm remained the city's largest bread producer. A reporter counted 11,280 loaves delivered throughout the city on one Saturday in 1896. By the 1890s Moirs was buying up other bread routes and bakeries.⁴⁰ Perhaps because of the industry's obvious importance as a bread-supplier and employer, the city relented to the company's demand for special consideration on water rates, and exempted the firm from taxes by special legislation passed in 1903 to enable it to recover from a damaging fire.⁴¹

These five aspects — vertical and horizontal integration, technological sophistication, incorporation as a joint-stock company under the aegis of a trust company, a regional market, and civic prominence — set Moirs apart from any other competitor in the industry. It never monopolized the trade; but

³⁸ Deed of Assignment, W.C. Moir and Wife and Jas. W. Moir to James R. Graham, 14 September 1881, Schedule A.

³⁹ *Acadian Recorder*, 30 June 1898; 22 December 1896. In a letter from Moirs to the Mayor and City Council, asking for the continuation of tax concessions, Moir argued that "The great development of the Canadian North West has naturally created a big market for all classes of manufactured goods. We are now shipping the products of our factories throughout the whole of the Dominion as far as the Pacific Coast." However, Moir noted that the firm was handicapped by high freight rates and the slow delivery of products. Moirs Papers, Vol. 1864, No. 48, Letter of 3 March 1911.

⁴⁰ *Acadian Recorder*, 22 December 1896; G.W. Mackinlay sold his bread route in the south end to Moirs in 1896 (Moirs Papers, Vol. 1864, No. 17), and Richard Pearce sold his Star Bakery to Moirs in the same year.

⁴¹ On the subject of municipal bonussing in Halifax, see Larry McCann, "Staples, Urban Growth and the Heartland-Hinterland Paradigm: Halifax as an Imperial Outpost, 1867-1914," Unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Urban History Conference, Guelph, 1977, p. 35; "An Act relating to the assessment of Manufacturing Industries in the City of Halifax," *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 2 Edwd. VII, Cap. 49, 1902. For Moirs' relationship with the city, see "An Act to amend Chapter 76, Acts of 1903, entitled 'An Act to enable the City of Halifax to exempt Moir, Son and Company from certain taxes,'" *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 3 & 4 Edwd. VII, Cap. 58, 1904. On water rates (important for a firm that consumed 4,235,375 gallons in 1907)

the logic of its evolution prefigured the growth of monopoly. It did not eliminate the primitive small bakeries, but it surely must have cut into their markets and rendered their existence even more precarious.

We may now arrive at conclusions about the configuration of capital in this sector. On the one hand, there was a proliferation of small masters, most perched on the edge of collapse. In bread and fancy baking, there were 132 such small masters in the period from 1863 to 1900. By contrast, only seven small masters on either side of the industry managed to set up manufactories. Only one of these managed to attain the status of a factory. The stages of industrial capitalism coexisted over an extended period. At the base one had craftsmen who would have felt at home in the medieval city; at the top was one firm which exploited the national market and anticipated the emergence of monopoly capital. It is within the determinant context of this complex portrait of the mode of production that the working-class struggles in the industry must be seen.

IV Workers and Working Conditions

Stratification within the mode of production produced stratification within the workforce. Moirs employed skilled journeymen, unskilled women, and children in the factory; the manufactories gradually expanded from their basic workforce of journeymen to incorporate women employees; and the small masters generally employed at the most one or two journeymen or children. As the manufactories and factory expanded, the effect on the labour force was profound. The largest change, as Table V indicates, was in the 1870s: child employees who had comprised 8.9% of the labour force in 1871, made up 21.6% of the workers in 1881. The number of women employees also increased, from 11.2% of the labour force in 1871, to 16.2% in 1881. This figure dropped to 14.2% in 1891. If the statistics for 1901 were available, they would probably indicate a far higher proportion of female labour.

Table V
The Labour Force, 1871-1901

	Average Number of People Employed				Total
	Over 16		Under 16		
	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	
1871	71	10	6	2	89
1881	127	33	44	—	204
1891: Bakeries	46	7	7	1	61
1891: Confectionery	138	30	19	12	199
1891: Totals	184	37	26	13	260
1901	Wage earners: 273. Salaried: 41				

* 1901 Statistics for firms of five employees and more

Source: Canada, Census, 1871-1901, Table III

These aggregate statistics do not allow us to assess the impact on the work force of various phases of industrial capitalism. Unfortunately, only two sources will shed further light on this critical question. The evidence of the manuscript census in 1871 (presented in Table VI) suggests that the bakeries of 1871 were the bastions of the adult journeyman, but that there was an even balance of men and women in confectionery.

Table VI
The Labour Force, 1871

Confectionery Proprietor	Average Number of People Employed			
	Over 16			Under 16
	Men	Women	Boys	Girls
Allen Bros.	5	4	2	2
Henry Wilson	1	2	—	—
Jane Robinson	2	—	—	—
Maria Crook	—	3	—	—
F.M. Phelan	2	1	—	—
<i>Bakeries</i>				
Moir & Co. Flour Mill	9	—	2	—
Moir & Co. Bakeries	25	—	3	—
John Scriven Biscuit Manufactory	14	—	—	—
Mary Scott	3	—	—	—
James Mitchell	2	—	—	—
J.R. Wilson	2	—	—	—
Thomas Kent	6	—	1	—
James Ellis	4	—	—	—
William Smith	3	—	—	—
Patrick Joyce	2	—	—	—
Thomas Gentles	3	—	—	—

Source: 1871 Manuscript Census, Halifax West and Halifax East. Schedule No. 6. Return of Industrial Establishments.

A published list of the employees of Moirs in 1891 confirms the impression that women were more extensively employed in confectionery than in baking. It lists 30 "girls" working in the factory, out of a workforce of 143 people. The factory therefore had a higher percentage of female employees (21%) than the workforce as a whole, and employed three-fifths of the female labour force. Out of 19 divisions, women or "girls" were the majority in the syrups department (five out of seven), lozenges department (six out of seven), the box factory (six out of six), and a sizeable minority in the retail store (five or six out of eleven). Women did not work in the factory's soft-bread, hard-bread, or fancy bakery departments. Women, then, were largely concentrated

see P.A.N.S. [Warehouse]. City of Halifax Papers, RG 35-102, Series 40. City Engineer's Papers, 1880-1909. Moir to Board of Works, 4 August 1884; Reports of City Engineer, 30 August 1899-28 April 1907, No. 633. Reports re Moir's Limited Water Rate.

in confectionery.⁴²

This concentration of women in confectionery did not mean complete segregation from other parts of the workforce. Moirs did not provide separate washroom facilities for women. On the other hand, a woman was appointed as head of the new chocolate-rolling department established in the 1890s, and some evidence of segregation emerges from Moirs' practice of allowing females employed in the candy-wrapping department to leave a few minutes before the men.⁴³ In general then the impact of the factory on the workforce was not as one might have expected. Far from being a "massifying" experience, factory labour entailed groups of no more than 12 workers in each department.

The effects of industry on industrial health and safety were far greater. Mixing machines reduced the problem of dust in the air, so potent a factor in the respiratory ailments of bakers. Chronic overwork also contributed to such occupational diseases as consumption. Fumes from the ovens could overpower bakers, and complaints in the factory about ventilation were so many that even Moir felt he had to do something about them. Of the primary hazards in the industry, biscuit-making machinery was the greatest: there is documentation of scores of amputations and lacerations from this machinery. Some of the more persistent workers might obtain some compensation, but most were forced out of productive life.⁴⁴

The primary issue in the baking trade, however, was low pay combined with long hours. Throughout the nineteenth century bakers compared their lot unfavourably with other trades. Few bakers' campaigns did not involve the slogan, "White Slavery."⁴⁵ In truth the craft was rapidly becoming a

⁴² The list was published in the *Acadian Recorder*, 16 June 1891, in connection with the fire at the factory.

⁴³ *Acadian Recorder*, 22 May 1897; 23 November 1896.

⁴⁴ Occupational diseases included phthisis, bronchitis and pneumonia. For an early discussion, see W. A. Guy, *The Case of the Journeymen Bakers* (London 1860). Fumes in Halifax: R. C. R. C. L., Evidence of S. McCarthy, p. 166; Joseph Connors, p. 169; Philip Shears, p. 172; John Hogan, p. 173; Lewis Archibald, p. 180; John Cudihée, p. 182; J. W. Moir, p. 13. Industrial accidents: *Unionist*, 11 September 1868; *Evening Express*, 11 September 1868; 18 February 1874; *Acadian Recorder*, 31 October 1889; 14 June 1900. Moirs paid Walter Daly \$200 and Robert Walker \$100 in compensation for accidents and as a release from further obligation. Moirs Papers, Vol. 1866, No. 89, "Release — Walter Daly to James W. and W. C. Moir, 15 October 1892", and Moirs Papers, Vol. 1864, No. 22, "Release — Robert Walker to Moir Son & Co. and James W. Moir", 1901.

⁴⁵ See Robert Storey, "Industrialization in Canada: The Emergence of the Hamilton Working Class, 1870-1870s," M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1975, pp. 115-120, and Bryan D. Palmer, "Most Uncommon Common Men: Craft Culture and Conflict in a Canadian Community, 1860-1914," PhD Thesis, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1977, pp. 376-381, for details of bakers' struggles in Hamilton. The theme of "white slavery" was raised in Hamilton as an insult to striking journeymen. It was more commonly evoked by journeymen themselves to

forerunner of sweated labour. The contradiction posed in this situation was that the journeymen saw themselves as the equals of other craftsmen, and compared themselves to other trades incessantly. "Why do bakers lay behind/ In Labor's ranks, can we not find/ An opening to advance?" asked Peter Connolly in a poem on the bakers. The answer would appear to have been "No", because of the inability of the bakers to enforce a standard rate. Not only were there differences among the wages of the foreman, first and second hands, but there were discrepancies among shops. The evidence of the Royal Commission gathered in 1888 suggests that the average pay of a journeyman was \$8 per week, and lower in winter. Wage rates at Moirs varied from a high of \$12 to \$6 for journeymen. A new male child employee earned \$1 to \$1.50 per week until he gained experience, and young girls earned from \$1.25 to \$4.00 per week.⁴⁶

Long hours worked at night were the biggest thing which set bakers apart from their fellow workers. When the free market in labour was allowed to run its course, bakers worked 15 and 16 hours a day. Halifax bakers were said to work from 11¹/₂ to 16 hours a day, according to various witnesses at the Labour Commission hearings in 1888; the lower figure was the one provided by J.W. Moir. One shop was reported by the leader of the union to have effected a 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. day; all the rest were said to vary.⁴⁷ What made matters worse was the fact that bakers had to work at night. This was a general problem in the international trade, and became a recurring theme of the deliberations of the International Labour Organization. Night work was necessary because of the need for hot bread in the morning, both to meet consumer tastes and to overcome the problem of perishability. Because of the night work, the bakers were regarded as a special case, and came to enjoy the minimal protection of bakehouse laws in Britain and in parts of the United

describe their working conditions, as in this poem in the union newspaper:

'Tis six at night, — see! who goes there
 With faltering steps and looks of care,
 His eyes half closed and visage wan —
 An object of pity to gaze upon?
 Who is he, and what can his calling be,
 He looks so haggard and pale to see!
 'Tis the Baker, who toils both night and day
 In heat and steam, for his humble pay.
 . . . United be, and spare no pains, —
 The white slave yet shall break his chains.

Bakers' Journal (New York), 1 September 1894.

⁴⁶ *R.C.R.C.L.*, Evidence of James Moir, p. 12; S. McCarthy, p. 166; Charles Beamish, p. 168; and Richard Hogan, p. 171. The poem of Peter Connolly is in the *Bakers' Journal*, 29 August 1891.

⁴⁷ *R.C.R.C.L.*, Evidence of James Moir, pp. 12-14; S. McCarthy, pp. 166-7; Charles Beamish, pp. 168-9; Richard Hogan, p. 171; John Hogan, p. 173; Henry Naylor, p. 174; Lewis Archibald, p. 179.

States and Canada. Although there was general support for the bakers in their struggle to end night work (which was regarded as an unnatural thing), the problem lay in trying to achieve the abolition of night work in the context of a highly competitive trade. As the *Canadian Baker and Confectioner* argued, after generally condemning night work as a "menace, not merely to health but bodily and mental development," the one thing standing in the way of the end of night work was the lack of an understanding among master bakers.⁴⁸

The problem of industrial discipline must be posed in terms of the collapse of almost all trade-union controls on the level of exploitation. The most serious aspect presented by the issue of discipline was the difficulty involved in inculcating industrial habits in the minds of children. Within the candy departments of Moirs, children stole nuts and bread.⁴⁹ They also entangled themselves in the machinery. J.C. Moir was apt to place the blame for this vexing inconvenience on the moral failings of the children themselves. (In speaking of an accident to a child in 1888, for example, he used the phrase, "... wholly due to carelessness.") Union members stressed the absence of any protection from the moving parts of the machines, and the lack of any system of industrial training in lieu of the defunct apprenticeship system. The real problem lay in teaching children the rudiments of industrial discipline, namely curbing their natural playfulness and replacing it with those qualities of attentiveness and concentration so important for detailed manual labour.⁵⁰

One of the more interesting accounts comes from the earliest stage of the mechanisation of Moirs. Charles Brunt was a fourteen-year-old boy hired by Moir to pick up biscuits after they had been cut, pack cakes, and cut a little firewood. At an inquest into his death the theme of natural playfulness emerged directly.

Henry Grace, sworn, said — I have been with . . . Mr. Moir about 5 weeks — I was at

⁴⁸ Recognition of the bakers as a special case dates back to the English Bakehouse Regulation Act in 1863. A report on bakehouse legislation in Canada can be found in the *Labour Gazette* 1 (January 1901), pp. 247-248. The emphasis of all such legislation was the curbing of night-work by juveniles. The international situation (with reports on virtually every industrial country) is documented in the International Labour Conference, Sixth Session, Geneva, June 1924. *Report IV, Report on Night Work in Bakeries*; Item IV on the Agenda (Geneva 1924). Nova Scotia told the International Labour Office that "Inasmuch as, with one exception, there are no large bakeries in this Province, it is doubtful if there is any necessity for legislation on this matter." The citation from the *Canadian Baker and Confectioner* is taken from the *Baker's Journal* 11 February 1893. I have been unable to locate a good nineteenth-century run of this Canadian trade periodical.

⁴⁹ A boy was sentenced to St. Patrick's home for three years for stealing nuts from the firm; another was arrested in 1890 for stealing two loaves of bread valued at 15¢ (he testified that he gave part of the bread, which was stale anyway, to the horses). *Acadian Recorder*, 5 October 1889; *Morning Chronicle*, 27 August 1890.

⁵⁰ *R.C.R.C.L.*, Evidence of J.W. Moir, p. 14; Evidence of Lewis Archibald, p. 180.

work in the upstairs room. . . . I was not busy some time before breakfast. — I was some distance from the deceased[.] I saw him playing with a bit of doe [sic] at the rollers — I saw him pick up a bit of doe [sic] into the rollers: it struck on the side of the hopper: and fell over on the cog wheels, he reached over to get it out [.] I then heard him call out, his face being from me — I ran out of the room, as I passed him I saw his arm in the cogwheel. . . .

Christopher McQuinn, sworn, said — I am forman [sic] to the department where the deceased worked — I was at the oven on Tuesday morning about eight o'clock, when I heard the deceased call out. . . . I got up and stopped the belt on the down pulley[.] I then saw the arms of the boy in the cog wheel — We had to take one of the cogs off before we got the arms off. . . .

The child died, according to the doctor, from the shock to the nervous system caused by the injury. The jury asked Moir to cover the wheel with a box.⁵¹

In the case of Joseph Larkins, the difficulty of employing child labour was more an aspect of inexperience than playfulness.

Q. How old are you? A. I am 11 years.

Q. What is the matter with your hand? A. It got hurt in the machinery.

Q. How? A. It got caught in the rollers.

Q. What rollers? A. The rollers of a cracker machine, — a biscuit machine.

Q. How long were you working in the biscuit factory? A. About seven weeks.

Q. Was it part of your work to look after the machinery? A. No: I was taken in as a packer and was then put to work on the machinery . . .

Q. Did you lose any fingers? A. I lost one.

Q. Did you lose any of the joints of the others? A. I think I will lose a second finger.

The Morning Chronicle reported that "The commissioners were so affected by the recital of this story that they immediately made up a subscription for him which he received with tears of gratitude."⁵²

V Working-class Struggle

This variety of working-class experiences within one industry suggests that the responses of workers would be similarly diverse. There were two systems of stratification at work, one which divided workers vertically by differential pay and authority (typified by the distance between male journeyman and female factory worker), and one which divided workers according to their speciality (bread bakers, biscuit bakers, confectionery workers). Out of this dual system of stratification only the journeymen bread bakers were able to sustain an organization and fight for reforms — reforms which applied only to themselves.

The border between journeymen and small masters was permeable, and this may have had an impact on the ideology of the labour struggles in the

⁵¹ Coroner's Inquests, Inquisition on the Body of Charles Brunt, P.A.N.S., R.G. 41, Box 37 (1864), 19 May 1864.

⁵² R.C.R.C.L., Evidence of Joseph Larkins, pp. 176-177: *Morning Chronicle*, 10 April 1888.

industry. There is no great body of union records on which to draw, but newspaper lists of executive members of the union indicate that of 49 known executive members from 1868 to 1894, at least 15 became small masters after holding a union executive post, and an additional four journeymen had been small masters before joining the union executive. There is good reason to suppose (although no direct evidence to prove) that two executive members were small masters while still in the union.⁵³ Thus throughout the nineteenth century there existed a feasible alternative to wage labour for the most articulate and active journeymen bakers.

This theme of petty proprietorship was important in each of the three periods of trade unionism in the industry. From 1868 to 1879 the first Journeymen Bakers' Friendly Society established itself in the industry, waged a struggle against the master bakers in 1868, and revealed itself to be a union of craftsmen in battle against the emergent factory. From 1882 to 1888, following the collapse of the union in the recession, the bakers reorganized, fought a remarkable boycott campaign in 1884, and were defeated in their attempt to reform the long hours of the factory. This was again a union of craftsmen, whose battle was now confined exclusively to Moirs and the damaging impact the firm had on the solidarity of trade. In this period there is some evidence to indicate a merging of the interests of journeymen and small masters, as well as a growing gulf between factory workers and the journeymen bakers. From 1889 to 1896, the bakers formed the first Canadian local of the Journeymen Bakers' and Confectioners' International Union of America. This local won a great victory against the employers in 1890, but this was reversed by Moirs' actions in 1891, and the union dwindled to nothing. This was not a step to an expanded militancy of the Halifax bakers, but their final defeat. The pattern throughout demonstrates the divisiveness engendered by the "second path," of capitalist development, and the extraordinary tenacity of craft consciousness.

(a) The First Period, 1868-1879

The emergence of the factory and manufactory in the baking trade in the 1860s meant that class polarization, the basis of all trade unionism, was the inevitable byproduct of expanding fixed capital and larger numbers of employees. The institution of the Journeymen Bakers' Friendly Society of Halifax and Vicinity on 1 January 1868, indicated that the industry had developed sufficiently to create a pool of journeymen. Our earlier analyses of the labour force and of the means of production also suggested this. This process of *class articulation* was an important aspect of the history of Halifax and marked

⁵³ These estimates are drawn from lists of the executive members in the *Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Journeymen Bakers' Friendly Society, of Halifax and Vicinity* (Halifax, 1869); *Acadian Recorder*, 24 April 1882; 26 March 1883; 4 January 1886; 16 January 1889; 29 January 1890; *Morning Chronicle*, 30 January 1890; *Acadian Recorder*, 15 July 1890; 13 January 1891; 16 January 1893.

the emergence of the manufactory in many sectors.⁸⁴

The founding document of the trade union is the most impressive of any of the constitutions left by the Halifax crafts. The purposes of the Society were said to include enabling the journeymen bakers "... to increase their wages to a reasonable rate, and to limit their hours of labour to twelve per day; likewise to assist each other in sickness and distress, to defray funeral expenses at death, to promote brotherly affection and fellowship, and to elevate themselves socially and morally among the trades of the city." Both the name of the Society and its elaborate provisions for auditing of accounts and payment of dues might lead to the conclusion that it was a mere coffin club, but such was not the case. From the constitution emerges an impression of sophistication and careful thought on the subjects of craft defence against employers, and craft discipline within the union. An extraordinary seven-man committee, for instance, was deputed to "decide in all cases of dispute between members, or in any case of ambiguity or oversight in the Rules, or any subject to which the existing Rules do not apply." The union was to maintain a list of out-of-work members and strict rules governed both those members who wished to vacate positions and those who wished to fill them. While the Society was composed of journeymen bakers who could afford the membership fee of \$4, and could secure the support of two-thirds of the members, "boys" were admitted half-price, although they were without vote until they were eighteen years old.

The constitution not only elaborated a sophisticated set of mechanisms for dealing with conflicts within the trade, but also a strategy for its reform. Implicit in Rule XIX of the Constitution, for example, was the notion of the closed shop:

... no member of this society [may] work beside a non-member, without the consent of the Committee; and any member employing non-members to work, while a member is unemployed capable of filling the place, or giving information to a non-member where he can find employment, or recommending a non-member to an employer, shall be dealt with as the Committee shall determine.

Members were also to be disciplined if they took employment on terms unsatisfactory to other union members. Together with the internal structure of the Society, such regulations for the discipline of members suggest that under the benign title of "friendly society" lurked a fully operational craft union.⁸⁵

The first strike was launched three months after the birth of the union. The demands were for a slight increase of wages and a reduction of hours from 15-16 to 12, to start at 5 or 6 a.m. and to go until 5 or 6 p.m., inclusive of meal

⁸⁴ See Kenneth G. Pryke, "Labour and Politics: Nova Scotia at Confederation," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 4 (November 1970), pp. 33-55, for a discussion of the emergence of the Halifax craft unions in the 1860s and early 1870s.

⁸⁵ *Constitution and Bye-Laws*, *passim*.

and sponge time. The journeymen bakers issued a manifesto outlining their grievances in language that was clearly intended to appeal to the widest possible base of support. Claiming that the present system of early and long hours had been the cause of "untold suffering, ill-health, premature old age, and death," the bakers went beyond specific results of overwork to a discussion of its moral and social ramifications.

In a moral and intellectual point of view it is nearly as bad, as we have no time for recreation, no moral improvement, no time to spend in the social or family circle. We have no time for the public meeting, lecture, concert or religious duty; the Sun shines in vain for us, the trees and plants may grow, and the flowers may bloom, but not for us. To us the delights of the country are a sealed book; to prepare for our early toil we have to go to bed, (those that have one), while the rest of the world is awake, and work while the rest of the world asleep, thus reversing the laws of nature. No wonder that some of us have recourse to stimulants in order to give a spur to our overworked and failing nature, and for the time to bury in oblivion our degraded position.

While no doubt a sincere statement of the craftsmen's dilemma, this was also a shrewd bid for support from the temperance and Early Closing advocates. To further broaden the appeal, the journeymen bakers went on to argue that the demanded reforms were neither harmful to the trade nor (and this was a piece of inspired inaccuracy) inconsistent with British experience.

It is not our wish to reduce your [the masters'] Trade or profits, as you will find that when all adopt day work, it will meet all the requirements of the Trade. It has been adopted, and proved a perfect success, in all the large cities of England, Ireland and Scotland. . . .

The only slip the bakers made in this document was to suggest that the slight increase in wages demanded could easily be passed on to the consumer with a price hike of 1¢ per loaf. Apart from this, the document was a perfect appeal to the public conscience in the age of earnest self-improvement.⁸⁶

Because of the importance of the trade to working-class life, newspapers were quick to point out the implications of the strike. The *British Colonist* noted that the marked fluctuations in the price of flour made for "great caution on the part of proprietors of baking establishments to protect themselves from loss, and at the same time give to the public bread at the lowest figure." The demand for the abolition of night-work rested on the public giving up fresh rolls for breakfast, but the newspaper thought that this was a matter that could be amicably negotiated between the parties. The most important response came from the master bakers themselves, who claimed that the demands would lead to increased expenditure in oven accommodation and higher prices. They went on to reject the very idea that journeymen

⁸⁶ P.A.N.S., MG 1. John R. Willis Papers, "To the Master Bakers of Halifax," Printed petition of the Journeymen Bakers' Friendly Society (1868). The surviving copy of this document reveals how keen the bakers were to gain public support: it was sent to John Willis, alderman, from John Kew, the union president, with the inscription: "To John R. Willis, The Mechanics friend . . ."

should have a say in setting wages.

... we consider their demands too unreasonable to comply with, nor are we disposed to allow any association to force upon us any positive scale of wages, believing that we are able to discriminate the value of labour we employ, fully as well, if not better than they are enabled to do...

Not only did the master bakers reject the journeymen's demands, but they vowed that in the event of a dispute they would not employ any members of the association "as it at present exists, in any way whatever."⁵⁷

The intransigence of the master bakers lends weight to the thesis that the 1860s saw a widening gulf between employer and employee. The strike became a test of power between two rights, the right of journeymen to improve their position in a collective struggle, and the right of masters to hire labour-power at whatever price suited them. Yet it is apparent that the master bakers did not form a monolithic bloc. The larger manufacturers became the backbone of resistance to the strike; in the end, W.C. Moir was its most hardened opponent. He ran his bakery with strikebreakers imported from the country, as well as a "number of strong, able women and boys," and perhaps even with inmates from the Deaf and Dumb asylum. While small masters all conceded the journeymen's demands, Moir held firm.⁵⁸

The journeymen advanced the debate about the respective rights of employee and employer by setting up a co-operative bakery in premises previously occupied by a small master baker. By mid-April they were reported to have gained a considerable patronage from the public. Other craft societies helped found the co-operative, and there is strong circumstantial evidence to link it with the Halifax Co-operative Society. This co-operative bakery absorbed the trade unionists dismissed by Moir.⁵⁹

Most employers were reported to have taken back their employees by 23 April, and by 2 May the strike was counted as over. The outcome was revealing. The bakers had won a clear victory over the small masters and many of these had indeed given in almost immediately; the factory, reinforced by the need for production for the military and high expenditure on fixed capital, held out. The bakers would long remember Moirs' intransigence.

The union stayed alive for 11 years, organized social activities for its members, and maintained a certain rate in the bakeries apart from Moirs. Faced with the long recession, the union collapsed in 1879; many of its leaders had become petty proprietors themselves. One analysis that remains of the union's collapse claimed that the union failed

... not from outside influences but from the men's carelessness, and what is now the

⁵⁷ *British Colonist*, 4, 8 April 1868.

⁵⁸ *Halifax Reporter*, 9 April 1868; *Presbyterian Witness*, 11 April 1868.

⁵⁹ *Halifax Citizen*, 16 April 1868; *Halifax Reporter*, 23 April 1868; *Christian Messenger*, 15 April 1868; *Acadian Recorder*, 18 April, 2 May 1868.

consequence: why, instead of men working from 10 to 12 hours per day, as they should, in five of our six bakehouses in the City they [work] from 15 to 18. And there is no remedy [but] of Union, for the deplorable state of affairs, for the Masters know, that we have no sufficient backbone to demand the hours of labour should be curtailed.⁶⁰

The gains of the 1860s were thus wiped out by the collapse of the union in 1879, which brought back the problem of overwork in its rawest form.

What can we infer about the consciousness of the journeymen who organized the union of 1868-1879 and the strike of 1868? It is here that we must be prepared to create "tissues of inference" and presume to go beyond a strictly empirical analysis. It is possible to advance three claims: first, that the bakers were preoccupied with becoming fully identified with other craftsmen, and saw their role as being the elevation of their craft to the level of other crafts; second, that inherent in this concept of the elevation of the craft was the adoption of the values of respectability and independence; and third, this adoption of the values and language of respectability was a matter of advancing a claim for general recognition of status, and involved the elaboration within the working class of a "negotiated version" of ruling-class values. Each of these claims depends, of course, on inferences from the documents and actions of the journeymen bakers.

The claim that bakers identified themselves with other craftsmen is of great moment, for in their objective conditions of exploitation the journeymen bakers were not like other craftsmen (especially in regard to the problems of a residual craft tradition, overwork, and job control). This difference between journeymen bakers and their fellow craftsmen did not create a separate articulation of ideals and values, but rather drove the bakers to announce their intentions again and again of becoming craftsmen as others were.

The constitution of the union announced that the intention of the bakers was to elevate themselves "socially and morally among the trades of the city." Further, the constitution argued that the Rules would "prove to the world that the Baker is not inferior to his fellow working-men of the province, in point of intelligence and true manly worth." Lest members think this road an easy one, the constitution reminded them that "To gain success we must deserve it. . . ." The constitution also specified that only the baker who was capable of "discharging his duty in his *profession*" was to be admitted. A final note of craft consciousness is struck in the provision of the constitution that no member of the union be allowed "to boast of his own, or depreciate the workmanship of another member in the Club room," under a penalty of 25¢.⁶¹ In the strike of 1868 the bakers were aided by other craft societies, and they toasted "Our Sister Societies" at their annual banquets.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Trades Journal* (Stellarton), 28 July 1880.

⁶¹ *Constitution and Bye-Laws*, *passim*.

⁶² *Acadian Recorder*, 6 January 1873.

It would appear legitimate to infer from these bits of evidence that the bakers saw themselves as craftsmen fighting against the degradation of their craft. The 1868 debate was sharpened by this tension between the self-ascription of craftsmen status by the journeymen bakers, and the difficulty of obtaining general recognition of this status.

If it was indeed the case that bakers identified themselves as craftsmen, it is not surprising to find a heavy emphasis in all their documents on respectability. The document issued in the 1868 strike was, of course, for public consumption, and is therefore somewhat suspect as a genuine reflection of the journeymen's thoughts, although the *expression of anguish at missing the whole range of voluntary activities of mid-Victorian Halifax may have been genuine*. More striking is the extent of the emphasis on respectability in the union's constitution and social activities. The constitution lays down that only journeymen of "good moral character" were to be admitted. The by-laws of the union were particularly adamant on the subject of respectable behaviour. Members who entered the club room in a state of intoxication were to be fined, and further fines were imposed on those making use of profane or obscene language. Any member found guilty of a felony before a Magistrate was to be expelled from the Society, although should he "regain his character," he might be readmitted by the consent of two-thirds of the members.⁶³ The social activities of the union also reflect a concern for respectability. The bakers organized a series of balls and the union even offered instruction for journeymen in ballroom dancing. John Kew and his wife entertained the assembled guests with their singing. The bakers' taste for respectable entertainment recalls the similar activities of the Halifax printers, whose suppers contained the same series of toasts and speeches about the elevation of the mechanic.⁶⁴

Third, the bakers' search for parity with other crafts and their respectable behaviour were unified phenomena, and did not merely represent the absorption of "middle-class" values by mechanics. For the issue was never the *individual advancement of bakers from the ranks of journeymen* (although this was an important objective factor) but the collective advancement of the craft and the trade generally. If we identify respectability with mid-Victorian bourgeois preoccupations, it is clear that the journeymen offer evidence of a "negotiated version" of hegemonic ideology, one which could be used as a weapon in trade disputes as well as a demand for the recognition of status and position.

(b) The Second Period 1882-1888

The leading feature of the first period of the collective struggles of the journeymen bakers was the emergence of the factory as their most determined opponent. In the 1880s this theme became more evident with the growth of

⁶³ *Constitution and Bye-Laws, passim.*

⁶⁴ *Acadian Recorder*, 6 January 1873.

Moirs as a major industry and the drift of many former journeymen into petty proprietorship.

Like its predecessor of the 1860s, the new journeymen bakers' union (often referred to as the Journeymen Bakers' Friendly Union) was organized in a period of substantial working-class agitation in the province. Both the Halifax unions and the P.W.A. became stable and important organizations; the bakers were clearly inspired by the success of the Provincial Miners' Association and it was a Halifax baker who suggested that the miners' union change its name to the Provincial Workmen's Association to signify its intention of broadening its base.⁶⁵ The bakers organized their union in 1882 and affiliated with the Amalgamated Trades Union, the labour council of Halifax.⁶⁶ There were many new names on the executive of the reorganized union, but some measure of continuity as well. Lewis Archibald, for example, had such vivid memories of 1868 that it appears likely he was involved in the strike. Archibald, a vigorous man and one of the key founders of the revived Halifax labour movement, had worked in Boston and Green Bay, and quite possibly his experiences in such cities had brought him new ideas on organizing.⁶⁷ The union also was awake to events in the United States, where throughout the 1880s the boycott became an increasingly popular method of collective struggle.⁶⁸ Halifax workingmen had learned from P. J. McGuire that the boycott could be an effective weapon.⁶⁹ Whatever the direct impact of such developments, the boycott idea was clearly in the air, and in 1884 the bakers brought the idea into practice by organizing the first province-wide labour boycott in Nova Scotia.

In August 1884, the journeymen bakers appealed to the Amalgamated

⁶⁵ *Trades Journal*, 28 July 1880.

⁶⁶ The A.T.U. was founded in 1882, with its primary base in the building trades, although the bakers were among the earliest unions to affiliate. Its early functions seem to have been confined to securing a hall for workingmen's meetings, but it later expanded its activities, both by serving as a support group for crafts on strike, and by entering municipal politics.

⁶⁷ See the obituary in *Acadian Recorder*, 8 October 1913. Archibald was born in Country Harbour, Guysborough County. He was often president of the A.T.U., and died in dire poverty. His directory address is given in 1892-3 as 202 Barrington, the same address as Mechanic's Hall, the A.T.U. headquarters. He became a small master baker c. 1895, and in 1899 entered the employ of Scriven's. *Directories*, 1892-1913.

⁶⁸ See Michael A. Gordon, "The Labor Boycott in New York City, 1880-1886," *Labor History*, 16 (Spring 1975), pp. 185-229, for an able discussion of the evolution of this tactic, and Sidney G. Tarrow, "Lochner versus New York: A Political Analysis," *Labor History*, 3 (Fall 1964), pp. 277-312, for a discussion of the social and legal framework of both bakers' boycotts and the demand for protective legislation.

⁶⁹ P.J. McGuire visited the city in 1884 and recommended the boycott to Halifax trade unionists. *Morning Chronicle*, 24 January 1884.

Trades Union for support in a united action against Moirs. The bakers (rather surprisingly) reported that a four a.m. starting time was general in the city, except at Moirs, where the firm kept bakers at work "just as long as they please, not infrequently until eleven o'clock at night, and always until long after the men in other shops are away from their work." The officers of the A.T.U. waited on Moir, who told them that he declined "to be dictated to by any one."⁷⁰

On 12 September 1884, at a largely-attended meeting, the A.T.U. resolved to boycott Moirs and "vowed a vow that every man of them will prefer to walk a mile to buy a loaf of bread or a pound of flour or the staff of life in any other form from any other bakery than patronize Moir." Included in the boycott were any parties who might have business connections with Moirs or purchased from the firm.⁷¹

This quickly became the one Halifax trade-union struggle to have an impact across the province. The alliance with the miners, established in 1880, blossomed forth in an editorial by Grand Secretary Robert Drummond, who urged P.W.A. locals not to allow their members to buy candies, crackers, or other products from Moirs. This must have had some impact, for Moirs took the trouble of circulating counter-propaganda among the merchants of Stellarton who had been asked to boycott the company. The struggle was also discussed widely across the province: the editor of a Hants County paper was taken severely to task by Drummond for his attitude to the boycott.⁷²

Equally important were the signs that this was a turning point for Halifax labour in terms of the bitterness of the conflict and the wide range of support given to the bakers. There were claims of union intimidation of soft-bread bakers at Moirs unsympathetic to the boycott, and the union put up inflammatory posters near the factory.⁷³ The support given to the bakers by other craftsmen may be inferred from the sorts of workers who were invited to the 25 September boycott meeting: masons, bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, bakers, printers, painters, plasterers, truckmen, labourers, caulkers, shipwrights, shoemakers, and coopers.⁷⁴ There is good reason to suppose that this labour unity made Moirs pay a heavy price for its intransigence.

The best evidence of this comes from the action of the company itself. On 16 October the company's bookkeeper, W. J. Richardson, assembled the employees of the factory in the soft-bread department, appropriately bedecked with flags, and presented an address from the workmen to W. C. Moir. Signed by 91 employees (out of a reported workforce of 112), the address denied the legitimacy of the boycott movement.

⁷⁰ *Acadian Recorder*, 13 August 1884.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 13 September 1884.

⁷² *Trades Journal*, 24 September; 22, 29 October, 1884.

⁷³ *Morning Chronicle*, 23 October 1884.

⁷⁴ *Acadian Recorder*, 23 September 1884.

We feel the time has now arrived when we should place ourselves right before the public and would say we have no sympathy with the few irresponsible parties who are vainly endeavoring to inflict injury on a private firm where the number employed and amount disbursed in wages are second to none in this city. . . . We would say the onus of this movement should not be laid at the door of the few working men who have lent their aid in this [farce?], but to a certain combination of men who, ashamed to openly appear and take part in this movement, vainly endeavor to shield themselves behind the trades union, and who in legitimate competition have neither the experience or the business ability therefor.

This touching display of loyalty was capped with the presentation of a silver epergne to Moir. Moir replied to the address by noting with satisfaction that the dissatisfaction in the trade had evidently not emanated from his establishment.⁷⁵

We are immediately presented with an insoluble problem: did this document reflect the employees' sentiments? The *Trades Journal* promptly termed it a bogus presentation, and given the financial state of Moirs one can well imagine the sort of threats that might have been brought to bear on employees.⁷⁶ Lewis Archibald's reply to the address, however, was not primarily an attack on the way it had been drawn up, although he certainly alluded to this, but to its substance. Indeed he implicitly accepted it as a genuine demonstration of the spinelessness of the factory workers.

Of the weight to be attached to the address we have this to say, that it is entitled to as much consideration as would be due to anything said by men who are willing to work 16 to 18 hours per day, for, in some cases, less than 10 hours' pay, rather than assert their rights and insist upon fair remuneration for their labours.⁷⁷

Archibald denied vigorously the allegation that the boycott was a movement of small masters.

It is quite suggestive that the Moirs workers did not go on strike in order to back up the boycott. And it is equally suggestive that their address killed the boycott movement. There was one last great public meeting on 13 November which drew close to 200 workmen to the Lyceum, and which gave the boycott's leaders one last opportunity to denounce Moirs, but after this the movement disappeared.⁷⁸

This defeat apparently did not dislodge the union from the other bakeries of the city, but it did drive it to seek alternatives, first in the Knights of Labor,⁷⁹ and next in the fledgling Journeymen Bakers' and Confectioners'

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1884.

⁷⁶ *Trades Journal*, 29 October 1884.

⁷⁷ *Acadian Recorder*, 20 October 1884.

⁷⁸ *Trades Journal*, 19 November 1884.

⁷⁹ The information on Knights of Labor affiliation is courtesy of Senator Eugene Forsey, whose source is *The Tailor*. I have been unable to locate this local assembly, either in the *Journal of United Labour* (1886-1890), or in Jonathan Ezra Garlock, "A Structural Analysis of the Knights of Labor: A Prolegomenon to the History of the

International Union of America, whose first Canadian local was founded in Halifax in 1889.⁶⁰ This was hardly a case of "labour imperialism," for the new union was dominated by the same men who had led the old. Although the bakers saw the new union as a great source of strength, it was probably more important for moral support and as a source of ideas. The period of the greatest conflict in the trade thus ended with the establishment of a new and quite different union.⁶¹

What conceptions of themselves and society did the 1884 boycotters have? The question is immensely complex, but three points may be established. The first is that the bakers saw the factory as *the enemy*, not only in immediate terms, but as a danger to the independence and respectability of the craftsman. A second point is that the journeymen bakers were separated by a wide gulf from the factory workers, including the journeymen bakers in the soft-bread bakery of Moirs, whose hours they sought to reduce. Finally, it may be claimed that the journeymen were influenced by the petty proprietors, and it was the question of their continued existence which provided much of the fire of the debate. In short, the bakers built on the earlier impulse to parity with other crafts, to incorporate the interests of the threatened trade as a whole.

This dispute was the crystallizing moment of opposition to the factory. It was somewhat accidental that the factory emerged as the prime enemy, for the key issue was not the displacement of craftsmen by technology but the continued reliance of the firm on sweated manual labour. Moirs' financial crisis and its military connections were greater factors than a displacement of traditional privileges and controls.

In the bakers' analysis, the factory's policies were "degrading to honest labour," "destroying the independence of the working man."⁶² These themes were brought out by Archibald in a masterful speech at the 13 November meeting. In a play on the phrase "arts and mysteries" associated

Producing Classes," PhD Thesis, University of Rochester, 1974. It may be concluded that if the bakers indeed affiliated with the Knights, this affiliation was of very short duration and of no practical importance to labour struggles.

⁶⁰ The first local notice I have found for the union is *Acadian Recorder*, 29 January 1890, but this story says the union had been in existence for at least a year.

⁶¹ Founded in New York City in 1884, the union had from its earliest days stressed legislative action as a remedy for the ills of the craft. By 1887 the union contained over 80 locals. It had a large number of socialists in leadership positions, and under the editorship of Henry Weisman, its newspaper carried an overtly Marxist line. Low dues and the inherent difficulty of organizing sweated labour put the union in decline in the 1890s. See Tarrow, "Lochner versus New York"; John Laslett, "Reflections on the Failure of Socialism in the American Federation of Labor", *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 50 (March 1964), pp. 634-651; John Laslett, "Socialism and the American Labor Movement: Some New Reflections", *Labor History*, 8 (Spring 1967), pp. 136-155.

⁶² *Acadian Recorder*, 13 August 1884.

with medieval apprenticeship, Archibald indicted not just Moirs but the large bakery:

He believed that Moir didn't recognize journeymen bakers as whitemen. He wasn't gentleman enough to answer the letter of the committee. Moir told them that he would not be dictated to. . . . The speaker gave his experiences of learning the arts and mysteries of baking. He learned the 'arts' all right in a small shop, but the 'mysteries' were all confined to the large establishments — and they were 'mysteries' that the men had not yet been able to solve.

The system of Moirs, Archibald continued, was a species of "white slavery," "a crime against the man, the family, the home, the state, and nature." And what could become of boys who worked in such a factory? "They could not develop. They could not improve. They could not become good citizens in the highest meaning of that word."⁸³

Such comments have obvious links to respectability, and the involvement of leading figures of other Halifax crafts (particularly the painters, printers, masons and plasterers) indicated the general craft orientation of the struggle. But the specificity of the Moirs' boycott meant that in it the factory, for the first time in the Halifax labour movement, was made the general symbol of exploitation. Distinctly related to this issue was the highly ambivalent tone of the boycott movement toward the factory workers. This was the response of craftsmen toward an external force, not a movement generated from within the factory. From Archibald, a former employee of Moirs, one heard general statements of concern about the welfare of juvenile workers, echoed in his testimony before the Labor Commission in 1888.⁸⁴ But towards his fellow journeymen bakers at Moirs, Archibald voiced a certain impatience, if not contempt. Speaking of the address of the employees, he suggested that it was

entitled to the weight to be given to the utterances of men who in private curse their employers, not only deeply but loudly, but before them fawn and cringe and lick the hand that smites them.⁸⁵

This may have been the outraged response of a man let down by those who had encouraged him, yet the pattern of events in 1884 clearly shows a workforce split along the lines of the factory and non-factory workforce. It was revealing and significant that one of the speakers at the great November meeting was P.F. Martin, who related at great length the painters' experience in fighting the incursions of the unskilled into the trade.⁸⁶ The issue in baking and confectionery was more complex than this, for it was not yet a matter of replacing journeymen with unskilled workers. But it nonetheless involved the same split in the consciousness of the workforce, between those who, with

⁸³ *Herald*, 14 November 1884.

⁸⁴ *R.C.R.C.L.*, Evidence of Lewis Archibald, pp. 179-181.

⁸⁵ *Acadian Recorder*, 20 October 1884.

⁸⁶ *Herald*, 14 November 1884.

Archibald, defined themselves in terms of independence, and those who had signed the address and had not protested with the journeymen.

Our third point emerges from the first two. The unstated theme of the boycott was the role of the petty proprietors. It is brought out in the presence of Hugh Montgomerie as secretary of the union — the same man whose little bakery is recorded in the probate records, and who either in 1884 or 1885 established himself as a petty proprietor. It was also brought out in the address to Moir from his employees, who thought that the movement had originated among the petty proprietors. It is impossible to say whether or not the small handicraft masters had a role in the movement. The most one can say is that the absence of any collective defence of Moirs by other master bakers is suggestive. When Moirs burned down in 1891, the master bakers' organization passed a resolution of condolence and Moirs had the use of his competitors' ovens. Employers also took a collective position in negotiations in 1890, and their organization had a role in recreational activities. It is not impossible that other small masters, recovering from a destructive price war earlier in the year, may have given their support to an action against an undercutting competitor, although no evidence can be brought to bear directly on this point.⁸⁷

What is certain is that the journeymen took the needs of the small masters into account, and made them a major focus of their agitation. The edifice that was founded on the slogan "respectability" now incorporated the phrase "legitimate trade": Moir was said to be "gradually but surely sapping the foundation of legitimate trade" when the bakers first presented their case to the A. T. U.⁸⁸ In another account of the same presentation (it is not clear if the wording is that used by the bakers themselves) the theme of legitimate trade was sounded again when it was pointed out that "... all the other bakehouses have to follow their [Moirs'] lead in getting the most labor possible from their workmen in order to compete with the larger establishments, the action of one firm injuring all the bakers in the city."⁸⁹ Archibald in his reply to the Moirs' address also focussed on the theme of unfair competition:

Our action was taken to prevent others from following in the footsteps of the heartless and mercenary proprietors whose unfair manner of doing business we have opposed and have not dared to come before the public and deny any one of the charges preferred.⁹⁰

Again in his great speech in November, Archibald pointed out that Moir had monopolized "all the fat contracts... because other bakers can't begin to compete with him. They haven't the conscience to ask their men to work 18 hours a day." At the thought of Moirs becoming the city's sole bakery, which

⁸⁷ Hugh Montgomerie's probate record is given in Table IV.

⁸⁸ *Acadian Recorder*, 13 August 1884.

⁸⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, 13 September 1884.

⁹⁰ *Acadian Recorder*, 20 October 1884.

Moir was reported to have advocated, Archibald cried out, "God help Halifax when Moirs shall be the only bakery in it!"⁸¹ Rather than the domination of the market by one factory, Archibald held out the alternative of price regulation by masters and journeymen: "I would think," he told the Labor Commission in 1888, "if the employers formed an association, if they all agreed to that, that the journeymen and the employers could regulate the price if they could only come together and do it. They are acting independently on their own resources, and one man comes out with cheap bread and of course the other man has to compete with that cheap bread or else the cheap labor and long hours makes [sic] him handicapped."⁸²

These indications that journeymen shared the small masters' interest in restraining competition, and hence in restraining the factory, must be located within the economy of the trade. As we have seen, the analysis was an entirely logical and correct appraisal of the balance of productive forces. But the consequences of such analysis were that the journeymen in the agitation of 1884 obviously did not marshal the support of the factory workforce, nor even the soft-bread bakers on whose interest they fought, while they often spoke in support of the small masters being threatened by the factory. Indeed, they often spoke on behalf of the petty proprietorship which many of them would one day achieve.

The consciousness of the journeymen in the 1880s was complex, but it would not be entirely wrong to say that the lines of cleavage within the industry had shifted. In the 1860s the journeymen and masters were polarized; in the 1880s, the journeymen approximated the outlook of the small proprietors on the question of competition and unfair practice, but were far distant from the outlook of the factory workers.

(c) The Third Period, 1890-1896

The formation of the first Canadian local of the Journeymen Bakers' and Confectioners' International Union of America at Halifax in 1889 was a step of major importance for the bakers. It coincided with a period of rapid expansion in the union, which was quite characteristic of Halifax labour from 1889-1891.

Rumours that the bakers were going to participate in the city's nine-hour movement were afloat in April 1890, but only in early May did the bakers issue a set of demands. Gone were the rhetorical flourishes and appeals for support. Numbers of men in the union had surged; 60 men marched in the bakers contingent to the 1890 Labour Day Parade, which (if we assume that women and children were largely excluded) was roughly a third of the total workforce. If, however, we make the assumption that organization was centred on the bread-baking, then we may conclude that bread-bakers were

⁸¹ *Herald*, 14 November 1884.

⁸² *R.C.R.C.L.*, Evidence of Lewis Archibald, p. 180.

almost entirely organized.⁸³ The union was acting with confidence, and put forth demands for a complete reform of the trade:

That the hours be 10 per day to commence at 6 A.M., and end at 6 P.M., with two meal hours for breakfast and dinner.

That the wages for a journeyman be \$10 per week, for foremen \$12 per week.

That the pay for overtime be 25 cents per hour, overtime to be allowed only when no men are idle, or in case of emergency.

We also claim pay for holidays and for time employed in setting sponge.

That the pay for a jobber be \$2 per day except in case he should work a full week, then he is to receive the same as a steady hand.⁸⁴

All but three of the master bakers capitulated immediately — Moirs included — and another gave in after a few days. This was a major victory, both in the reforms it had achieved in working conditions, but also in the very fact that at long last a standard rate had been established. Part of the explanation of the success may lie in the masters' organization, for in this case collective organization on the employers' side was far tighter than it had been before.⁸⁵

The victory was short-lived. Moir, notwithstanding his agreement to the conditions imposed by the union in May, fired all his unionized employees in January 1891.⁸⁶ No sources explain this precipitate action, although the choice of January as a month for such a mass lockout suggests a well-conceived, anti-union drive. Boys and drivers replaced the journeymen in the bakehouse. Although various craft societies pledged not to buy Moirs' products, and the printers even gave the bakers' union \$30 for support of the discharged men, it was all to no avail.⁸⁷ Moirs had triumphed after all. Soon the local was failing, losing both members and its good reputation in the international union.⁸⁸ The union's listing in the trade-union newspaper was dropped in 1896, probably two years after the local had become defunct.

⁸³ *Acadian Recorder*, 23 July 1889; *Morning Chronicle*, 24 July 1890; *Acadian Recorder*, 21 July 1891; *Morning Chronicle*, 21 July 1892.

⁸⁴ *Bakers' Journal*, 24 May 1890.

⁸⁵ Small bakers in this negotiation said they were willing to concede but agreed to follow the lead of the larger employers, who dominated the Master Bakers' Association. *Morning Chronicle*, 10 May 1890.

⁸⁶ *Acadian Recorder*, 28 January 1891.

⁸⁷ P.A.N.S., MG 20, Box 332, Minutes of the Halifax Typographical Union, Book 1. Meeting of 7 February 1891 and meeting of 7 March 1891; *Acadian Recorder*, 28 January, 10, 11 February; 22 January, 1891.

⁸⁸ In the Labour Day Parade of 1892 only thirty members marched; in 1894 the union did not appear at all, but there were separate floats for baking and confectionery firms. The union failed to acknowledge receipt of \$50 sent by the international union in 1891. At the meeting of local 89 in November 1892, the union appointed a committee to "meet and find out the correct number of members in good standing." The listing disappears from the union newspaper with the 14 October 1896 issue. *Bakers' Journal*, 9 May 1891; 16 May 1891; 26 November 1892; 31 December 1892; *Bakers' Journal and Deutsche-Amerikanische Backer-Zeitung*, 14 October 1896.

Our notions of consciousness of the bakers in this period of decline and defeat are far more tentative than the earlier discussion because of the paucity of sources. Certainly the communications from Local 89, which often began "Dear comrades," and contained references to "scab shops", indicate a certain evolution on the part of the language of trade unionism. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that the bakers became socialists, or made any impact on local politics. The international union was largely peripheral to the history of the industry.

From 1896 to 1920, the industry was not disturbed by agitations, and when in 1920 a strike was organized, it was by those who saw themselves as factory labourers, not craftsmen. The effects of disorganization were felt throughout the industry; in 1904 the *Herald* reported that long hours and low pay were again the leading features of the Halifax trade.⁹⁹ In 1896 ended a long history which was formed in the matrix of the evolution of the factory; and it was the lesson of this history that, in the long term, the factory could always defeat craftsmen who confronted it as an external threat to their livelihood.

VI Conclusion

The factory produced a stratified labour force whose unity both within and outside its walls was highly vulnerable. Because handicraft bakeries persisted alongside the factory, the option of petty proprietorship remained open to journeymen throughout our period. While this did not create a passive workforce — indeed the theme of petty proprietorship inflamed the boycott movement of 1884 — it limited the wider resonance of the journeymen's struggle. This is not a question of skilled workers rejecting factory workers because of selfishness, craft narrowness, or moral failing. It was rather a case of cleavages within the workforce following the boundaries dictated by production itself.

How typical was this case? If outright proletarianization of the craftsman was an unusual path, as it would appear to have been in Halifax, and if the formulation of "concurrent phases" accurately captures the general evolution of capitalist production, the case of the Halifax bakers may be taken as a moment of a far more general phenomenon. As British historians have developed the theory of the labour aristocracy, the primary emphasis has swung from the alleged consequences of imperialism and high wages, towards an understanding of the impact of authority within the workplace and the effects on workers of hegemonic ideology. Geoffrey Crossick has argued that in the mid-Victorian period, working-class values did not constitute what Parkin has called a "class-differentiated model of the moral order." Yet this fact did not entail "embourgeoisement" in the full sense of the word.

Basic elements of the structure of values were accepted by both a middle-class and a labour-aristocrat consensus. That was fundamental to the genuine calming of class

⁹⁹ *Herald*, 1 October 1904.

relations during mid-Victorian decades. Yet the meaning of these beliefs could differ in varying degrees, leading merely to confusion, or sometimes to conflict. The behaviour of these artisans and their articulated values diverged from the established middle-class normative system too much to be called simply "bourgeois."

Crossick has advanced the claim that the downward flow of language and values was "transformed by the realities of the working class situation, and by the long tradition of working-class culture with which it made contact, especially the traditions of mutuality, collective strength, dignity, and freedom."¹⁰⁰ R.Q. Gray has located this perception within the analysis of hegemony launched by Antonio Gramsci. Insisting that the labour aristocracy must not be confused with mere craft sectionalism, Gray has urged that the term be applied only within a specific historical setting. His analysis of Victorian skilled workers suggests that the creation of a distinct upper stratum within the working class had a twofold significance:

The upper stratum created relatively autonomous class institutions and had a distinctive cultural life, articulating a sense of class identity. The typical aspirations of the "superior artisan" were for improvement in the position of his social group, and recognition of its corporate claim to moral and political equality, rather than for purely personal advancement. . . . On the other hand, the aspirations of the stratum were often enough expressed in a language "adopted" from the dominant class, so that the institutions and modes of behaviour of the artisan world were contained within a larger local society dominated by the "hegemonic" bourgeoisie.¹⁰¹

This conception of craft values thus identifies them as highly ambivalent, incorporating both accommodative and radical elements. Within a heterogeneous capitalist system, characterized by a high level of uneven development, the craftsman was able to build defensive institutions and a distinctive cultural life, but this could not be the basis of a critique of the capitalist order itself.

Such analyses derive from study of the whole range of working-class political and economic institutions in given localities, and to sustain such an approach to the Halifax working class would require a far broader range of cases than the Halifax bakers. Nor is it clear that the Canadian setting is suited to the full application of the theory, given that labour aristocratic values emerged during the period of working-class development and not, as in Britain, within a developed working class. It is also not clear what uneven regional development of classes would mean in any general application of the

¹⁰⁰ Frank Parkin, *Class Inequality and Political Order* (London 1972), p. 80; Geoffrey Crossick, "The Labour Aristocracy and its Values: A Study of Mid-Victorian Kentish London," *Victorian Studies*, 19 (December 1975), p. 20. The range of theories concerning this stratum is critically surveyed by H.F. Moorhouse, "The Marxist theory of the labour aristocracy," *Social History*, 3 (January 1978), pp. 61-82, whose approach is more epistemological than empirical.

¹⁰¹ R.Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford 1976), p. 144.

theory, for during the period of class formation there were various Canadian working classes, but hardly a Canadian working class. Yet our examination of the values of the journeymen bakers has shown both an emerging sense of unity with other craftsmen and a widening gulf between factory workers in manufactories and workshops. It has shown the importance of the concepts of respectability and independence, and the effects of such concepts in working-class struggle. The journeymen bakers did not constitute a privileged stratum in a simple sense — no set of sweated workers will ever qualify — but they did assimilate themselves to the labour aristocracy, and identified themselves with, and often became, the small masters of the trade. The organization of the mode of production precluded any effective class alliance with the unskilled factory workers. Could it be that implicit in the uneasy coexistence of the handicraft, manufactory, and factory was the development of working-class strata whose defensive struggles unified craftsmen but not the working class as a whole? And could this be the beginning of an explanation of the stability of nineteenth-century Canadian capitalism?