

Labour's Cold War: The Story of a Union That Was Not Purged

Gary Marcuse

Volume 22, 1988

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/llt22rr02>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN

0700-3862 (imprimé)

1911-4842 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Marcuse, G. (1988). Labour's Cold War: The Story of a Union That Was Not Purged. *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 22, 199–210.

Labour's Cold War:

The Story of a Union That Was Not Purged.

Gary Marcuse

I

Introduction

THE COLD WAR IN CANADA had a profound impact on the Canadian trade union movement. The anti-communist purges of the 1940s and 1950s resulted in the expulsions of many of the communists and radical union leaders who had played instrumental roles in organizing and leading many of Canada's largest and most successful unions. The anti-communist campaign in the trade unions was also significant because the unions were the principal battleground for the anti-communists in Canada. Unlike the United States, Canada never passed federal laws penalizing membership in the Communist Party or its "front" organizations or forbidding communists from holding union office. Instead, the government stood aside and applauded both the efforts of the international unions who applied American anti-communist regulations to Canadian members, and the union congresses who purged communists and fellow travellers from their ranks in a prolonged series of purges that continued for ten years after the end of World War II.

The anti-communist campaign in Canada, as Irving Abella and others have noted, was largely driven by the powerful combination of the anti-communist ideology and the anti-Canadian nationalist interests of the American-based international unions. Most American unions, especially the more conservative American Federation of Labor craft unions, easily adapted to the new anti-communist ethos of the Cold War, and readily subscribed to state and federal requirements outlawing the election of communists to union office. About a third of American unions went even further and denied communists the right even to hold membership in the union.¹

¹"Anti-Communist Provisions in Union Constitutions," *Monthly Labour Review* 67 (1954), 1097-1100.

Gary Marcuse, "Labour's Cold War: The Story of a Union That Was Not Purged," *Labour/Le Travail*, 22 (Fall 1988), 199-210.

In Canada, where membership in the Labour Progressive Party remained legal, the international unions were the leaders in the anti-communist purges in both the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) and the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC).² At times the purges were motivated by sincere (if exaggerated) fears of the power wielded by the communists and their capacity to create industrial sabotage in the event of a third world war. Frequently, however, the purges were motivated by factional fights as senior officers in the international unions took advantage of a smoke screen of anti-communism to attack left-wing rivals in the congresses and in their own unions. In a pattern that still persists in many unions today, the union dissidents frequently represented demands for greater union democracy, more services for dues paid, and greater autonomy for the locals, for the regions or -- in Canada -- for the entire Canadian district of the union. The purges of the left in the name of anti-communism had the effect of suppressing such demands. In Canada, the rebellious dissidents in the unions often voiced the emergent demands for greater national autonomy, and the purge of the dissidents was intimately linked with the suppression of that nationalism.

There were, of course, many willing supporters for the purges among Canadian social democrats who were anxious to displace the influential communist leaders and demonstrate that the labour movement and the left in general was free of the taint of communism. There was a measure of irony in this: in the vacuum created by the purge of the communists the CCF radicals frequently became the spokesmen for the diverse populist and nationalist demands of the local unions. When they expressed such demands, the CCFers, however, in turn, became targets of red-baiting campaigns by conservatives.

Most studies of McCarthyism in the unions have concentrated on the unions that were purged. This short essay examines the other side of the coin by giving a brief account of a union that was not purged. While the evidence is not conclusive, it supports the contention that the anti-communist purges were instrumental in suppressing Canadian nationalism in the union movement for two generations.³

Dissent and democracy in the pulp mills.

²From 1938 to 1956 the international unions in Canada were divided between the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL-CIO) and the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC-AFL), which were then merged into the Canadian Congress of Labour (CLC).

³A full-length study, *The Cold War in Canada*, co-authored with Professor Reg Whitaker, will include an extended study of the purges in the TLC as well as sections on the influence of the Cold War on Canadian public opinion, foreign policy, immigration, the Gouzenko spy affair, the peace movement, and the development of the security and intelligence system.

BY THE SPECIAL LOGIC of the Cold War, the delegates from the international pulp and paper union on the west coast should have been expelled from the national labour conventions of the 1950s. The delegates were clearly guilty of several serious violations of the anti-communist rules of the TLC and the AFL: they consistently dissented from congress policy in a pattern that demonstrated "communist sympathies;" they opposed the expulsion of communist-led unions; and they supported "communist causes" such as trade with the revolutionary communist government in China and the re-admission of known communists into the labour congress. At a time when many of the AFL and CIO unions were purging communists on the least excuse, these delegates were obvious targets, and if the international vice-presidents of the union had had their way the delegates would have been fired from their union jobs, deprived of their union tickets, and put out on the street. But they were not purged. Throughout the 1950s this group of delegates from the International Brotherhood of Pulp-Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers' Union (hereafter, Pulp-Sulphite) remained active dissidents in the TLC, and formed the core of a tiny clique of outspoken left-wing delegates at the trade union conventions. As such, they were part of the last remnant of an important left-wing caucus in the TLC that had grown to include nearly a quarter of the delegates and united with the moderates to rule the congress before the purges of the Cold War drove them from power.

Before the purges began in the TLC in 1949, Canadian nationalism was a popular cause espoused by President Percy Bengough, who led a left-centre coalition that included prominent radicals (Pat Sullivan of the Canadian Seamen's Union and Alex Gordon of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union) on the congress executive. Bengough, a moderate who kept close ties with the Liberal Party, emerged as the congress leader during the war years, and he was an active supporter of the development of local and national unions, chartered directly to the congress, to balance the influence of the international unions. Bengough's complaint, which won broad support in the TLC, was that the international unions, and especially the executive of the AFL, were cavalier in their treatment of the Canadian labour movement and too often favoured the selfish interests of their own affiliates over the best interests of Canadian workers. As an immediate example Bengough could point to the AFL's demand that the Canadian congress turn over the successful CSU to the gangster-ridden Seafarers International Union, an AFL affiliate. Bengough also had practical reasons for defending the CSU: each of the 7,000 seamen paid about two dollars a year into the TLC treasury. This money allowed the congress to expand its organizing efforts. If the SIU captured the membership, the congress would be lucky to get about sixteen cents per member after the money passed through the American head office. To achieve autonomy the Canadian congress required an economic base.

The attempt to develop a base of Canadian unions chartered directly by the TLC put Bengough and the left on a collision course with the international

unions affiliated with the AFL who made up approximately three-quarters of the TLC's 360,000 members in 1947. The international unions generally saw the Canadian congress as a kind of caretaker operation, similar in function to a state or local labour council, and they resisted Bengough's attempts to build national unions outside of their orbit.

The conflicts between Bengough's left-centre nationalists and the conservative AFL international unions came to a head in a determined and bloody battle over the CSU. This confrontation, the subject of a major section in our forthcoming book on the Cold War in Canada, was won by the AFL unions who pressured the Canadian congress to remove left-wing leaders from the executive, forced the expulsion of the CSU, and won the transfer of many of the Canadian locals into the international unions. The key to the victory by the international unions, or more specifically by the international vice-presidents who led the campaign against Bengough, was their successful use of the anti-communist fervour of the post-war period to divide the left-liberal coalition. Fueled by the Cold War, the anti-communist campaign was dramatically successful in isolating and de-legitimizing the left-wing leadership in Canada and in silencing the nationalist ambitions expressed by Bengough in the TLC and Pat Conroy in the CCL. When the dust settled, Bengough was the leader of a newly conservative right-centre coalition and the left-wing delegates from the Pulp-Sulphite unions were among the few remaining dissidents in the TLC. The left wing, which could occasionally count its supporters in the hundreds, was reduced to a handful.⁴

The survival of outspoken delegates from the Pulp-Sulphite locals on the west coast occurred in spite of the wishes of the Canadian vice-presidents of the union who tried, unsuccessfully, to make the union a leader in the anti-communist, anti-nationalist campaign. The union, the largest in the TLC (with 33,138 Canadian members in 1951), was represented in Canada by vice-presidents S.A. Stephens and William Burnell. Both vice-presidents aligned themselves with what they called the "Right Wing Anti-Communist Bloc" that was formed in 1948 by the officers of at least fourteen international unions who opposed the nationalist direction taken by the TLC under Bengough. These officers had four goals in mind: to expel the CSU in favour of the SIU, to end the drive for more national unions, to revise the voting system

⁴National unions purged from the TLC were the CSU, the UFAWU, and the Vancouver Civic Employees. International unions belonging to the TLC that purged Canadian officers on charges of communist activities include the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, United Association of Plumbers, International Association of Machinists, International Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, International Chemical Workers, Lumber and Sawmill Workers (Carpenters), Seafarers International Union, United Garment Workers, and the United Textile Workers of America. Concerning purges in the CIO-CCL unions see Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour* (1973). Jim Green's *Against the Tide* (1986) is a dramatic study of the death of the CSU.

in the congress to allow the international officers to cast weighted votes that would give them complete control of the congress, and to purge the communists.

Their greatest leverage in pursuing these demands was their threat to disaffiliate and leave Bengough with a scattering of small local and national unions. Several unions even shut off their dues payments in 1948 when the congress rejected their campaign against the communist-led CSU. But to the great dismay of Stephens and Burnell, who were outspoken anti-communists, their own union was not an unqualified supporter of the anti-communist campaign. The first sign of this came when Stephens wrote to union president John "Paddy" Burke seeking permission to threaten to disaffiliate from the TLC unless it abandoned the CSU. Burke made a strict interpretation of the union constitution and forbade Stephens from making any such threat. "I think the Congress will have to take a stand on the Communist question," Burke wrote. "But, no matter what happens, you should not state that we will disaffiliate We could only disaffiliate by action of the international convention." Unlike the other AFL unions, Burke resisted making *ad hoc* anti-communist policies just to win political fights in Canada.⁵

But the threatened disaffiliation of other international unions, combined with a failed deep sea strike and a vicious union busting campaign by the SIU's Hal Banks, finally shattered the CSU and broke the bond between the union and the labour congress in 1949. At the fall convention the right wing consolidated its gains by organizing a roll call vote on the expulsion of the shattered CSU. The vote was a foregone conclusion; its purpose, as Stephens and Burnell noted, was to "smoke out" the remaining radicals and expel them from the congress, from union office, and if possible, from the union. "At this convention," Stephens commented, "there will be people who are ready and willing to sell out our Canada to Russia." "This will be the most crucial convention the TLC ever had and our opportunity to clean house," was Burnell's assessment.

The arm-twisting before the vote was the worst that one of the reporters who covered the conventions could remember. Frank Hall, the leader of the right-wing group, assembled his delegates from the railway and steamship clerks union at Calgary's Palliser Hotel and laid down the law: all delegates would vote to expel the CSU or face expulsion from the union. No abstentions were allowed. Documents in the CLC collection in the National Archives demonstrate that Hall followed through. William Turple, a clerk from Van-

⁵Burke to Stephens, 21 August 1948; IBPS & PMW ff1p 1948 "Stephens." See also "Minutes of the Meeting of International Union Representatives" in this file. Archives of the RFMDA and IBPS & PMW are located at the Wisconsin State Historical Society in Madison. The abbreviation 'ff' in reference to this collection refers to (micro) film files. Additional records of the RFMDA are among the personal papers of Angus Macphiee.

couver, was expelled from the union for abstaining on the vote the next day.⁶

Stephens and Burnell wanted to make the same threat but they were restrained by the lack of specific anti-communist measures in their union constitution. Lacking the power to lay down the law, they had to be content to pressure the locals to turn out the maximum number of delegates from the convention, especially from the conservative locals in Quebec and Ontario. At a sit-down dinner for the delegates before the vote Burnell counted 51 delegates, a satisfying increase of 24 over the previous year, and he confidently predicted the support of 45. As for the rest, Burnell was pleased that the vote on the expulsion of the CSU would be recorded "so we will know who our commies or fellow travellers are in our ranks."⁷

While Stephens told the delegates of their plans for a purge of the CSU and their supporters, Burnell took notes to send to his head office. The delegates from the west coast, he noticed, did not appear to appreciate Stephens's remarks about "cleaning house." Two of the delegates he was referring to were Orville Braaten and Ford MacKinnon, the business agent and secretary of local 433. They were among a group of delegates from British Columbia who were supporters of the CSU and were prepared to defy their senior officers on the issue. The "smoking out" strategy seemed to be working as one of them stood up and challenged Stephens. But as Burnell noted, Stephens "said that he was not going to get into a fight with anyone who did not agree with him, and he wisely refrained from answering one of them who got up to say his piece in defense of the CSU but (instead) went on with his usual story telling and sing song."⁸

Burnell was wrong in his estimate of 45 votes in favour of expelling the Seamen. All twelve delegates from Vancouver and Ocean Falls supported the CSU or abstained as the TLC voted 702-77 in favour of the expulsion with about two hundred abstentions. Overall the Pulp-Sulphite delegates registered ten votes in favour of the CSU — including Braaten and Mackinnon — and six abstentions, the strongest vote of any of the AFL unions. Burnell had his list of "commies and fellow travellers" but try as he might, the axe did not fall.

Far from submitting to the demands of the anti-communists, the dis-

⁶How many others suffered the same punishment is not recorded but the delegate lists published by the TLC are interesting: in the carpenters union, which sent 112 delegates to the 1949 convention, 84 delegates supported the expulsion of the CSU. Twenty-four of them returned among the 50 delegates in 1950. Of the 28 who opposed the expulsion or abstained, only 2 returned. These statistics are only suggestive but the lesson was probably not lost on the delegates.

⁷Burnell to Burke, 7 July 1949, ff1, 1949, "Burnell"; Stephens, circular to delegates, 21 August 1949, ff1, 1949, "Stephens"; Burnell to Burke, 17 September 1949, "Burnell" IBPS & PMW.

⁸Burnell to Burke, 17 September 1949, *Ibid.*

senters seemed to thrive on adversity. At subsequent conventions Braaten and MacKinnon together with Angus Macphee, a socialist from Prince Rupert, were prominent members of the rapidly shrinking left-wing caucus. Among the causes they supported, which were labeled "communist issues" by the right, were resolutions defending national unions that were expelled for communist activities (the Vancouver Civic Employees and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers), favouring the readmission of expelled communists, and supporting recognition of China (and later, Cuba). The dissident Vancouver Pulp-Sulphite local even withdrew from the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council when its chairman, Tom Alsbury, began what its members considered a "witch hunt" in 1951.

But their advocacy was not confined to what their opponents called communist causes. Over a period of years they also developed into leaders of an internal reform movement known as the Rank and File Movement for Democratic Action (RFMDA). This movement, which included locals in Washington and Oregon as well as a number of eastern locals, was organized around demands for greater regional autonomy in bargaining and better service for the western districts. When these reforms were opposed by Burnell and his allies on the executive, the reformers sought to expand their ranks by exploiting charges of corruption by senior officials. The powerful vice-presidents fought back with a vicious red-baiting campaign that divided the reform movement and led to a breakaway by the radical Canadian locals in 1962.

The survival of the union radicals during the McCarthy era can be traced to several factors. Stephens and Burnell, as noted earlier, had no grounds to expel them as communists. Except for a ban on "political agitation" at union meetings, the union constitution was silent on the subject of "communist activities." Although the majority of American unions incorporated some form of ban on communists, the Pulp-Sulphite union was among a significant minority that did not. A 1954 review of 100 unions in the United States showed that 68 per cent of the 10 million workers represented were in unions with regulations that barred communists or "subversives" from holding office.⁹

In the Pulp-Sulphite union, according to Angus Macphee, the lack of an anti-communist provision in the constitution was due in part to the influence of President John Burke, a septagenarian patriarch and socialist who had been president of the union since 1916. In 1914, before many of the union radicals in question were born, Burke had run in the gubernatorial campaign in New Hampshire on the Socialist Party ticket. He lost, but later won the leadership of the union. Under his rule the administration of the union was moderate and stable. In a thirty-year stretch ending in the 1950s, a reformer noted, no

⁹"Anti-Communist Provisions."

incumbent vice-president had ever been defeated in an election. Burke clearly enjoyed considerable credibility.

When a Quebec local proposed changing the constitution to ban communists at the 1953 convention, the delegates from British Columbia, including Angus Macphee, rushed to the microphones to protest. But President Burke spoke first and Macphee watched in admiration as Burke attacked the resolution and "chased it off the floor." "He did such an effective job," Macphee later recalled, "that it was unnecessary for several of us at the mikes to continue. I would hazard a guess, however, that if he had not spoken it would have passed."¹⁰

Angus Macphee was among the potential targets of such a resolution. A progressive unionist in his mid-thirties who might well have been drawn to the Communist Party twenty years earlier, he defined himself as "a left wing socialist, a militant trade unionist," and a member of the CCF. His attitude toward the Labour Progressive Party in the late 1950s, at a time when the Party had fragmented and retained few friends, was critical. In Macphee's view Stalin was "a murderous butcher, a strike breaker and a traitor, no better and perhaps worse from our viewpoint than Chiang Kai Chek." At the same time Macphee had a particularly Canadian curiosity about socialism, not shared by his fellow American reformers, that led him to visit Cuba in 1961, a trip that exposed him to further red-baiting by the right.

But President Burke, far from censuring Macphee for his rebellious views, made him co-chairman of the union's political education committee. Burke also donated several hundred dollars to Macphee's political campaign when he ran for office on the CCF ticket in Prince Rupert in 1960 (where he lost by 228 votes). Burke, in other words, was a stabilizing influence in the union and acted as a check on the often self-serving, anti-communist impulses of other union officers.

At home, Macphee, Braaten, and Bob Bryce, another RFMDA activist, were not vulnerable to attacks by conservative CCFers because all were very active in CCF clubs and all three ran for public office, with Bryce seeking a federal seat. While their statements on union issues were little different from communists who had been purged, their credentials were unassailable. The international union would have a difficult time driving a wedge between these leaders and their local unions.

Why Braaten, Macphee, and others were allowed to return to the TLC year after year is less clear. Other delegates from international unions had been barred for similar activities, and the three national unions mentioned above were expelled entirely. It seems probable that the demonstrated anti-communism of the Pulp-Sulphite senior officers and the majority of its locals put its radicals out of reach. In any case the left-wing caucus was by then so

¹⁰Macphee to R.H. Chatham, 11 April 1962, Macphee papers.

small that the reformers were more of a problem within their union than within the labour congress as a whole.¹¹

At the 1959 convention of the Pulp-Sulphite union, the issue of Burke's impending retirement permeated the debates. At 75, after more than 40 years at the helm, Burke was ready to step down. The fight over who should succeed him in 1962 brought the reform movement to a boil and produced the first open anti-communist campaign within the union. The divisions within the union were already evident at the 1959 convention as the factions jockeyed for position. The delegates from British Columbia threw their lot in with other reform-minded locals from the American west coast and demanded a series of basic changes to the union constitution. These changes were, on the surface, quite innocuous regional issues. The American reformers complained of poor wage gains and inadequate service from the eastern based vice-presidents who were elected at-large, and they proposed regional elections. The Canadians also wanted a special officer for the Canadian district and the right to affiliate the Canadian district with the newly formed New Democratic Party. All of these reforms, they agreed, were necessary at the next convention, before Burke retired. But they were not optimistic; Macphee, addressing the convention, complained that if the needs of the Canadians were not recognized, "It is going to become increasingly useless to come to these conventions." In pursuit of these changes the reformers threw their weight behind union organizer Patrick Connolly, an underdog in a fight for first vice-president, where he could possibly succeed Burke.¹²

The leading contender as Burke's replacement was William Burnell, the senior vice-president who had sought a purge of the communists ten years earlier, and he proved more adept than Connolly in the factional fight that followed: Connolly, his campaign manager, and a union research director who supported him were fired by the executive board in spite of protests from President Burke. Their dismissals inflamed the controversy and swept Macphee and Braaten into the leadership of the RFMDA. The reformers expanded their list of demands to include secret ballot elections, bi-annual conventions, mandatory retirement at the age of 65 (President Burke excepted), outside auditing, an end to corruption, abolition of "female" rates, and the formation of a Canadian Council within the union. The movement elected Braaten president of its Western Canadian division and published a paper from an office in Portland, Oregon.

Burnell and his supporters struck back with a publication called *Truth*, a sleazy twenty-page tabloid that attacked the reformers with ridicule and

¹¹Delegates from the Vancouver Division Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motorcoach Employees (The Vancouver Street Railwaymen's union) led by Charles Stewart also appeared to lead charmed lives as union dissidents. Their story deserves similar attention.

¹²"Union Democracy in Action," January 1972, p. 4, RFMDA f. 61.

red-baiting in a successful effort to divide the American and Canadian reformers. One of the targets of *Truth* (perhaps an unconscious translation of the Soviet Union's *Pravda*) was Angus Macphee who had just returned from Cuba. Unsigned articles made bogus revelations of a plot by Fidel Castro to bomb the Panama canal and demanded that "Cuba Macphee" explain Castro's reasons for doing this. Several of Macphee's letters, including one which compared Cuba and Canada were published because, *Truth* confided, it "tags Macphee, but good."¹³

The letters which the editors of *Truth* found so revealing contained comments that Macphee had written to an American reformer after his return from Cuba where he had been the guest of the year-old Cuban regime. In it he drew some parallels between Cuba and Canada for the benefit of his American colleague:

The Canadians have their identity and it has to be served regardless of American tradition or opinion. Did you ever stop to realize that Canada to a lesser degree is comparable to Cuba? That American capital dominates our economy. That few secondary industries exist? That our unemployment figures are higher than yours? ... These facts are related. Think about them. And realize, too, that a great many Canadians resent the Yankees (to a large extent misguidedly) and that in many local unions the feeling could be exploited to withdrawal from International Union. Mine is one — if the executive so desired. We could get rid of the entire executive board at one swoop But what the hell purpose would it serve?¹⁴

The Canadians' ill-timed trip to Cuba triggered a nasty debate within the reform movement that revealed deep divisions on the Communist issue. American reformers who were gathered in Port Angeles, Washington, reacted to the news of the visit to Cuba with a motion that opposed "any member of our RFMDA making visits of a political nature to any communist controlled country or countries construed as being communist controlled particularly if such a visit is paid for by the agencies of the countries visited." They also decided to add an anti-communist clause to their list of reforms, and they chose the AFL-CIO Code of Ethics which contained a general ban on communism as a proposed addition to the union constitution. The code, created in the mid-1950s provided for the "barring of communism, corruption, and collusion activities by officers and representatives." Those charged with communism would get a hearing but the accused had no right to confront their accusers nor the right to question witnesses under oath. The American reformers, reacting to the charges of communist sympathies, were prepared to do precisely what Burke had resisted for so long, to incorporate an anti-communist clause into the constitution. The Canadians were appalled.¹⁵

¹³*Truth*, October 1961, Macphee papers.

¹⁴Macphee to Henry Rodgers, 23 August 1961, Macphee Papers; RFMDA, reel 2, f. 16.

¹⁵*Oregon Labour Press*, 23 March 1962, p. 4 (RFMDA Folder 2).

Macphee responded with an angry letter saying it was hardly an act of international solidarity to ban travel to Cuba when the Canadian government retained friendly relations with Castro. He was quite certain, he wrote, "that Canadians resent the imposition of American State Department policies on their lives whether they emanate from Washington or from the RFMDA."¹⁶

The rift between the reform factions widened as the 1962 convention approached. "It seems to me," Braaten complained, "that it is the intention of some of you brothers to hold us at arm's length even though we were very instrumental in the beginnings of this movement." Adopting the anti-communist position to defeat the critics, he felt, showed a willingness "to be carried off on a witch hunt similar to that under McCarthyism. My enthusiasm," he wrote, "has been somewhat dampened by those who would practice political silencing of any kind."¹⁷

Privately Braaten and Macphee were worried that they would never make it to the convention in Detroit if immigration officials took note of their trip to Cuba. Both were discouraged.

As the Detroit convention approached in fall 1962, the reformers scrambled to unify their forces. Burt Wells, the editor of the reformers' newspaper, contacted the Detroit police to discuss protection in case the meeting erupted in violence. The reform caucus had grown dramatically but it still only counted 93 of the 688 locals and 150 of the 1000 delegate votes at the convention in favour of the reform program. Any further gains depended on their conducting an effective floor fight.

The incumbent officers and their supporters had other plans. Macphee and Braaten were stopped at the border by U.S. Immigration officials who had, Macphee recalls, the names of all of the Canadian delegates attending the convention. This was clearly information that came from inside the union. Angry and bitter, Macphee told President Burke that he was going back to British Columbia. Burke asked him to stay on for a few days at a hotel in Windsor, just across the border from the Detroit convention. Burke even paid for the hotel, and the convention filed a protest with U.S. Attorney-General Robert Kennedy, but the gestures were fruitless. Reformers who reached the convention found themselves seated at the rear, far from mikes and away from the chairman.

The reformers did manage to get their proposals onto the floor and they sponsored a *delegate from Ocean Falls, B.C.* for vice-president. But support for the reformers never climbed above 15 to 30 per cent on various resolutions, and ultimately the entire program (including, ironically, the proposal to ban communists from the union), was defeated.

Macphee and Braaten, operating from their hotel in Windsor, made a last-

¹⁶ Macphee to Rodgers, 5 January 1962, Macphee papers.

¹⁷ Braaten to Rodgers, 20 June 1962, RFMDA f. 10.

minute attempt to salvage a crumb for their Canadian locals. They circulated a letter asking for a constitutional revision that would allow the Canadians greater freedom in supporting the New Democratic Party but they got no response. After stewing in their hotel room for the entire convention they were joined by the rest of the delegates from their locals and the reformers returned home empty handed and angry.

The American locals of the RFMDA decided to try to rebuild their movement for the 1965 convention but the Canadians were not as patient. Within two months, four B.C. locals had agreed on a draft of a new constitution and broke away from the international union to form the Pulp and Paper Workers of Canada (PPWC) which later joined the Conference of Canadian Unions. PPWC membership grew from an initial 1,700 to about 7,000 in 15 locals and remained stable. A year later many of the American locals of the RFMDA broke with the international union to form the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers. The new union, which included breakaway locals from the United Pulp and Papermill Workers, had 21,375 members when it was certified in 1965.

The transformation of Orville Braaten and Angus Macphee from union dissidents into leaders of a Canadian breakaway was gradual and especially — in Macphee's case — somewhat inadvertent. Both of the labour leaders gained their experience through a long apprenticeship as reform minded dissidents in the Pulp-Sulphite union. This training period could have been cut short and they could have been expelled if the union had possessed and enforced the kind of anti-communist rules enacted by other AFL unions. As it was the anti-communist campaign mounted by Burke's successors came too late. By then the dissidents in Canada and the U.S. could not be expelled without losing the entire locals that they represented. Macphee and the others were allowed more than a decade to articulate the desires of their locals, and to learn to act as trade union leaders in an atmosphere hostile to their interests. After Burke's departure the influence and personal loyalty that helped weld the union together weakened and was replaced by a more conventional mixture of self-interest and Cold War anti-communism.

In the end Macphee and Braaten were not purged, they walked out. Earlier, in many other unions, union leaders with similar beliefs and demands were successfully labelled subversives and purged before they could secure a following. One of the chief consequence of those purges, the story of the Pulp-Sulphite union suggests, was to silence the partly articulated demands for Canadian autonomy for two generations. In this light the recent separation of the Canadian Auto Workers from the UAW and the separation of the Canadian section of the International Woodworkers of America from its parent organization can be seen as fulfilling similar aspirations initially voiced but successfully suppressed during the first decade of the Cold War.