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THE WORKING CLASS AND THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY IN CANADA

AT THE TIME OF CONFEDERATION, the common denominator of the franchise was property.¹ By 1900 the major portion of English Canada had become a formal political democracy and the notion that the franchise was a trust accompanying property rather than a right normally accompanying citizenship all but disappeared in federal and provincial politics.² Spokesmen of both the employing and the working classes saw in the extension of the ballot to the working man an unsettling force which would bring anarchy or the millennium. To the unrequited Tory, the working man and the people would use their new-found sovereignty to topple the holy trinity of religion, property, and throne. To radical working men of the Chartist mould, the ballot and the new formal sovereignty of the people would be put to immediate and intelligent use to usher in the millennium of "pure democracy". Neither of these situations occurred in Canada. The absorption of the artisan into the social and political system closely followed the extension of the franchise to the masses.

The instrument which performed the function of disciplining the working man electorally was the political party, a machine which methodically organized the electoral masses by extra-constitutional means. Political parties had values to distribute. They were, first of all, instruments for the distribution of material consideration. As patronage distributors, the Grit and Tory parties co-opted into their political machines leading labour leaders and reformers throughout the 1870s and 1880s. D. J. O'Donoghue, Charles March, H. B. Witton, J. Carter, Alfred Jury, and A. W. Wright, all prominent in trade-union affairs, left the labour movement after being rewarded with government jobs for party services performed during their tenure in the trade-union movement. As government intervention in social relations increased in the 1880s and 1890s, the number of jobs available and the patronage pressure on labour leadership multiplied accordingly. Labour reformers were indeed faced with a dilemma; the enforcement of social and factory legislation required the

presence on the job of sympathetic government officials, but these could be hired only if working men were willing to take government positions awarded on a patronage basis.³

The material values available to the Grit and Tory parties for distribution were not restricted to jobs. As major parties in control of the government machinery, they acted as instruments for the distribution of material goods through legislation. The method of legal enactment was a principal mode of altering or maintaining the power relationship between capitalist and wage-worker during the period of the rise of industrial capitalism in Canada, and organized labour could benefit from this method in the short run only by exerting its influence on and supporting either or both of the major parties. "Partyism"—the firm commitment of labour leaders and followers to the Grit and Tory parties—was condemned by early radical theorists as the "bane of labour progress".⁴ But it was also a condition of progress. T. Phillips Thompson, one of the more acute observers of the labour scene in the 1880s, argued that the great weakness of the early Canadian labour movement was "the readiness of working men, and more especially, those who have acquired some little prominence as labour agitators to lend their influence to promote party aims".⁵ With Enjolras, the radical columnist of the *Palladium of Labour*, he shared the view that the formal sovereignty of the masses had been usurped by professional politicians and rings and cliques who acted in the name of the people but always for their own or the capitalist's interest. The root cause of this usurpation was the abdication by the masses of the responsibility of the franchise⁶ through "irrational" and "traditional" loyalty or sheer apathy. Both, however, ignored the fact that partyism was enabling as well as disabling. It defeated attempts to initiate independent radical political representation. But it enabled labour leaders and the electoral masses to use the method of legal enactment to improve labour conditions through influencing the election of representatives sympathetic to organized labour within parties which exercised legislative power. To the extent that the early partyism inhibited the rise of a radical third party and independent representation, working men and their leaders were lacking in "class consciousness". To the extent that it facilitated the effective use of the method of legal enactment in the short run, it bore testimony to the existence of a rational political consciousness.

The distribution of material goods and values through legislative enactment by both Grit and Tory parties was proportional to the degree of political

pressure that trade unionists and labour reformers could exert on the parties and the electorate. The single-issue leagues which sprang up suddenly to advertise reform measures such as the nine-hour day, the central labour councils with their legislation committees, and national organizations such as the Canadian Labour Union and Trades and Labour Congress of Canada acted as focusing points for reform agitation and legislative pressure. The pressure was transmitted to the legislature, government, and cabinet through a legislative representative aptly described as "the workingman's friend". Most working-man's friends were, according to Daniel O'Donoghue, foxy; they appeared at election time in constituencies with a large labour vote, and disappeared soon after. In the columns of the party newspapers and on the platform the labour friend paid tribute to the "horny-handed sons of toil", "the bones and sinews of our country", and urged the artisans to show their appreciation for his sympathy by electing him to office. The working-man's friend did not believe in class distinction and class legislation or anything remotely related thereto. His favourite expression was "we are all working men in this country".⁷ The opening comments of Sir John A. Macdonald's address to a crowd of working men gathered to render him homage after the passage of the Trade Unions Act of 1872 remains one of the finest statements of the protestations of this benign species:

I ought to have a special interest in this subject because I am a working man myself, I know that I work more than nine hours every day, and then I think I am a practical mechanic. If you look at the Confederation Act, in the framing of which I had some hand, you will admit that I am a pretty good joiner; and as for cabinet making I have as much experience as Jacques and Hay themselves.⁸

The working-man's friend solemnly stressed the community of interest between party and worker and recruited sympathetic artisans during election campaigns to man the polls and bring out the vote.

The hold of the Grit and Tory labour friend over the newly enfranchised artisan was guaranteed by ties of ethnic, religious, and social affinity. Working men were the active constituents of numerous voluntary organizations led by middle-class civic leaders in Toronto, Hamilton, and other centres. The artisans frequently used their ethnic community with political leaders to advance their interests. High-status city artisans used the Orange Order in the 1850s to check the influence of Irish Catholics and curtail their penetration of the artisan class.⁹ D. J. O'Donoghue reported in 1898 that efforts to secure

the existing work laws for canal labourers were successful only with the aid of religious denominational deputations and representation.¹⁰ But the political labour friends made good use of the ties of ethnic affinity to ensure the support of the artisan electorate. When the factory system suddenly sprang into existence in Ontario in the 1880s and 1890s, when the bond of sympathy and intimate personal ties between capitalist and worker in the small firm gave way to the impersonality of the large establishment, when protective labour societies expanded rapidly,¹¹ working men still shared a cultural, religious, and political sympathy and identification with their social and political superiors. Professor Pentland, writing of the pre-1850s, has argued that Orangeism and the moderate political conservatism which it built "represented the artisan well at a time when capitalism had not advanced enough to subordinate all other divisions to the one between capitalist and proletariat".¹² But the multi-group affiliations of working men still loomed large under the conditions of the maturing capitalism of the 1880s. All divisions within the working class—ethnic, religious, and social—were hardly subordinate to the one between capitalist and proletariat, and working men willing to settle for the industrial leadership of the employer in the enterprise, and the social leadership of capitalists in religious and fraternal organizations, were willing objects of manipulation in political organizations. D. J. O'Donoghue, writing to Laurier in 1898, related how over the previous eighteen years a few Liberals "patiently and persistently laboured in educating their fellow workers in the best school of Liberalism" in Toronto, a city honeycombed with "secret sectarian national and kindred societies in the one or other of which can be found large numbers of our working classes which are more or less influenced by the officers who are Tories".¹³ Fellow Grit Alfred Jury complained at the Trades and Labour Congress convention of 1889 that "when the elections came round other subjects interfered—the man was a Catholic or a Protestant, an infidel or a pagan—and the labour vote was knocked out of line".¹⁴ The religious and ethnic associations served as a bridge between classes, aided the labour friend in co-opting the artisan electorate into the Grit and Tory machines, and arrested the process of class estrangement which Goldwin Smith and others so feared would lead to the dreaded growth of socialism.

The bulk of the working man's friends were of the foxy variety. These were the false friends. The working man's true legislative friend was proxy rather than foxy, a Grit or Tory M.L.A. or M.P. who argued the working man's point of view in the party and "took charge" of bills drafted by the

trades assemblies or the national Congress for introduction in the legislature. The working man's legislative proxy friend may have been an employer such as the Grit candidate Hyman who showered his old employees with "every mark of respect" and presented them with gold watches on retirement.¹⁵ Frequently, however, he was a working man himself, nominated and elected as a Grit or a Tory to speak for the Labour interests within the legislative and party caucus. The Liberal and Conservative parties therefore provided channels of mobility and official rewards not only for artisan party workers, petty office-seekers, and camp followers; the prospective intelligent artisan candidate also used the party as an effective device for political expression and social elevation. Political parties, like other voluntary associations, distributed psychological and social values. Goldwin Smith wrote in 1883 that in order to make the burgeoning artisan class loyal to the institutions of the country, it was necessary to let them feel that everything was perfectly open, "distinction as well as the suffrage".¹⁶ The path to distinction was opened to artisan political leaders through candidacies in the Grit and Tory parties.

The Lib-Labs and Tory-Labs who sprinkled the Ontario elections of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s were hybrid candidates launched to satisfy the primitive yearnings of labour organizations for a minimal representation *within the dominant class structure*. "The working man", declared artisan candidate E. H. Williams, "has as much right to be represented in the legislature as any other class in the community".¹⁷ The hybrid representative was nominated by the Grit or Tory party or endorsed after nomination by a labour convention. He rarely contested an election against representatives of both parties and when elected, submitted to the discipline of the caucus of the party which had sponsored him. The case for the hybrid candidate was well made by the *Hamilton Spectator* in support of the Tory moulder, John Burns:

Mr. Burns is neither more nor less a working man than before his nomination by the conservative convention—neither less nor more a conservative than then. He was a working man before his nomination; he is so still. He was a conservative before his nomination; he is a conservative still. He can do just as much for the working man if elected to the legislature by the votes of working men alone. The only difference in his position is this: he could not be elected by the votes of working men alone; he can and will be elected by the votes of working men and conservatives.¹⁸

The sole difference between hybrid artisan candidates was their political affiliation; some were Grits and others were Tories. All professed to speak

for party and class and held prominent positions in trade-union affairs. Most of the hybrid artisans were defeated, but a few—Ralph Smith, D. J. O'Donoghue, A. Lepine, H. B. Witton and E. F. Clarke—were elevated to the House of Commons or to the provincial legislature. Smith, a Liberal, was successful in the federal election of 1900. O'Donoghue was a Conservative when he entered the Ontario provincial legislature in 1874, but soon aligned himself with Oliver Mowat and the Grits. Lepine, a typographer and a Conservative, sat for a Quebec constituency. Clarke, a Tory lionized by the working element in Toronto, was elected to the Ontario provincial legislature in 1886. Witton ran for the Liberal-Conservatives in 1872 following the Printers' Strike and became the first artisan to successfully contest an election in Canada.¹⁹ The success of the hybrid artisan candidate was built upon the marriage of the working man and the party at the electoral level. By the mid seventies there was already established a traditional pattern of artisan political loyalties in Canada. The *Ontario Workman* in 1873 blamed the failure of a new national organization known as the Canadian Labour Union on the fact that delegates attended the founding convention "as party representatives rather than in the spirit of working men".²⁰ John Hewitt, the first secretary of the Canadian Labour Union and a leading Tory, condemned party differences as the bane of labour progress and hoped that "working men would no longer appear in public as Grits and Tories, but rather as rational beings to approve or condemn measures that directly concern them as producers".²¹ At meetings of the Canadian Labour Union, working men lined up opposite one another according to political affiliation. By the mid eighties, advanced labour reformers in the Trades and Labour Congress bemoaned the futility of efforts to break down the established structure of political loyalties. William McAndrew, delegate to the 1887 convention, said that "it would be just as easy to move Hamilton Bay and put it upon the mountain as to get a Conservative workingman to vote for a Reform Labour Candidate, or a Reform workingman to vote for a Conservative Labour Candidate".²² They would vote, he maintained, "the way they had been educated from the cradle". The same convention recognized the necessity of creating agencies to socialize the working man's son in a class-conscious sub-culture. A resolution was passed recommending all organized bodies to form in all localities "night schools or assemblies of male children 14 years and upwards, to be instructed in the principles of Labour progress and all questions necessary to enable them to take their places when of age in the Labour Party".²³ Phillips Thompson saw in the strength of "irrational party loyalties" an important reason for the failure of

the masses to avail themselves of political power.²⁴ Enjolras blamed "pigheaded and unreasoning partyism" as well as apathy for the failure of the enfranchised to sponsor and support independent radical candidates.

The fortunes of the Grits and Tories in labour circles varied, of course, with time. The pre-Confederation partisan tradesman was a radical, and the Grit Party was the traditional party of the working man. "Liberal-Conservative" loyalties were first evident following the famous Printers' Strike of 1872, when the precipitate action of Brown of the *Globe* drove a wedge between the radical artisan and his traditional party. Sir John A. Macdonald, a virtuoso labour friend, tightened the wedge by playing godfather to the infant movement. Macdonald's benevolent passage of the Trade Unions Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1872 was calculated to woo the artisan, and it achieved notable success. The marriage of the party of union and progress with the working man was confirmed by the nomination and election of the first "bona fide" working man—H. B. Witton—to the House of Commons. The months following Witton's election witnessed the honeymoon between Tory and worker. It proved, however, to be short-lived. Working men soon began flocking back into the Grit camp and by the 1880s the reform party had made a remarkable recovery. The fundamental change in the course of Canadian politics which occurred in the 1880s, when social and labour legislation became a predominantly provincial concern, guaranteed that Ontario labour would move in the political orbit of Oliver Mowat's Reform Party.²⁵

The Tories enacted the Trade Unions Act of 1872, but in the 1880s "not a single important measure on behalf of the industrial worker was placed on the Dominion's statute book".²⁶ The Reform Party, on the other hand, pioneered a vigorous and aggressive policy of reform during the same period.²⁷ O'Donoghue could gleefully report in the *Toronto Labour Day Souvenir* in 1896 that great praise was due to Ontario's Provincial Government for "the liberality, the variety, good intent and the great value of its many measures enacted into laws during the past 23 years".²⁸ A. W. Wright, a member of the General Executive Board of the Knights of Labour during the 1880s and a later Tory organizer stated "while there is still a good deal of legislation that we labour cranks think should be enacted, I am free to say that Ontario has not much to learn from any state in the union in this respect, and is immeasurably in advance of most of them."²⁹

Whether the prevalent partyism was "reasoning" or "unreasoning", whether it sprang from a rational calculation of group interest or a traditional habitual attachment to party leader and label, there is little doubt that it had

become a solid fixture in the Canadian labour world by the 1880s. Both the Grit and the Tory parties had sunk their ideological and organizational roots into the new labour movement and appropriated the formal electoral power of the newly enfranchised masses. Just as the new factory system required a docile and disciplined working class to work at full capacity, so did the political system, which made the laws of the land and guaranteed the hegemony of the capitalist in the enterprise, require an electoral mass subject to the discipline of the party machine and candidate. The viability of the factory system depended upon the successful institution of a system of rules which defined the needs of punctuality, constant attendance, fixed hours, scrupulous standards of care and cleanliness, and continuous application. The problem of industrial discipline faced by the employing class was overcome by a variety of devices and conditions. There was, first of all, the proverbial stick. Corporal punishment, fines, and dismissals were used when necessary to produce the desired response. Attempts at organized employee resistance through combinations were combated by the legal system with its battery of sanctions. The early labour law, in Canada, as elsewhere, was assumed to be at the service of the employers and was called into service for various offences: breaches of contract, trade-union organization, and rioting. Workmen's combinations were widely treated as criminal offences. The problem of industrial discipline was also overcome by the use of the proverbial carrot. Subcontracting, for example, was an effective device wielded by employers for transferring the responsibility for making the worker industrious to specialists with first hand knowledge and contact with work conditions, group leaders, overseers, and subcontractors of various types. A second positive device involved some variant of payment by results, of which piece rates was the most common. Finally, industrial hegemony and discipline were guaranteed by the inculcation of bourgeois values which combated "idleness, extravagance, waste, and immorality". Here the employers were necessarily dealing with working men both inside and outside the factory.

The problem of industrial discipline was, of course, much more acute during the early phases of industrialism than later when the labour force replenished itself and when the new work ethic was congealed into habit and enforced by the conditions of existence.³⁰ It was somewhat alleviated in Canada by the pattern of migration and recruitment which followed not from country to city but rather from British industrial centres to Canadian. As Professor Pentland has so brilliantly shown, the rough Irish labourer of peasant background posed a severe problem of discipline during the period of the

genesis of industrial capitalism in Canada. But the British skilled artisans were already seasoned members of an advanced industrial society when they migrated and easily adjusted to the needs and requirements of the new industrial Canada.

The inculcation and autonomous development of habits of industrial and social discipline was a functional prerequisite of the development of industrial capitalism in Canada. A steady dependent labour force was created and maintained within a social and political system which guaranteed the hegemony of the capitalist in the enterprise. But in a very real sense the electoral and political discipline of the artisan class was a prerequisite to the industrial subordination of the worker to the capitalist. The dependence of the worker on the employer was guaranteed by the discipline of the artisan voter by the politician. The web of rules which defined domination of the worker in any enterprise was embodied in law and enforced by the political state. Working men could alter their relation of dependence somewhat by recourse to the methods of co-operation and collective bargaining. In the final analysis, however, the method of legal enactment was the artisan's most effective device. The extent to which this device was used depended upon the exigencies of partisan politics.

The problem of political discipline—the politician's and employer's limitation and control of the use of the device of legal enactment by the artisan class—was overcome in Canada by a variety of instruments and circumstances. As we have seen, the ground-floor parties possessed a monopoly of values—material, social, and psychological—to distribute among the newly enfranchised. The parties enjoyed, too, a monopoly of the skills of electoral organization required to deliver the working man's votes according to the rules of an increasingly complicated franchise. The mass of working men were political incompetents, and the monopolists of the techniques of organizing elections found little difficulty in getting the sheep to the polls. The party machines were aided in their work by the sheer dull compulsion of the conditions of existence which hardly instilled in the artisan a radical temperament. The ethnic heterogeneity of the electoral mass multiplied the number of cross pressures on the individual artisan and destroyed any possibilities of creating a homogeneous radical working class sub-culture. Finally, the task of the machines was lightened considerably by the upper-status group of the Canadian working class composed of an aristocracy of British artisans essentially moderate in outlook.

Migrations can have varied effects on the host country. Many ancient

migrations resulted in the establishment of the immigrants as conquerors at the top of the social structure. Other migrations, such as the movement of the Negroes into the southern United States or the Irish immigration into Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century, resulted in the deposit of an unskilled stratum at the bottom of the social structure. These groups constituted a depressed class alienated from the dominant social and political community, and their low economic position was reinforced by social and ethnic discrimination. The British artisan immigrant fitted into neither of these categories. He came to Canada as neither conqueror nor depressed proletarian but rather as a high-status citizen who, in an important sense, reinforced the existing social and political structures.

Professor Pentland has argued that a key problem of economic development was disposed of by the immigration of British artisans who were already seasoned members of a capitalist society. The British artisans who began migrating to Canada in large numbers in the 1850s were a matured, disciplined group possessed of that modicum of industrial skill and personal discipline necessary to fulfil the needs of a growing capitalist industrial system. They were "a settled generation that eschewed the radicalism of their fathers, and accepted the industrial society in which they had been raised".³¹ The British artisan also accepted the political party system of his native country and transplanted into Canadian society his essential political conservatism.³²

The moderate political views of the aristocratic mechanic, imbibed in the tranquil paradise of class co-operation in Victorian England, were evident at meetings of Ontario labour assemblies throughout the 1870s and 1880s. The first president of the Canadian Labour Union, John Carter, ended his inaugural address in 1873 by urging the assembled delegates to observe the necessity of being wise and moderate in their deliberations and enactments. "Let those who are watching your movements at this, the first Canadian Labour Congress, be compelled to admit that we are honest, earnest and prudent workers".³³ Delegates to the Canadian Labour Union talked of the "social and moral" elevation of working men. They attacked imported labour as an attempt made by capital to "lower the condition of the working man on the social scale". Monopoly capital compelled the working man to "relinquish those simple but necessary enjoyments which are always found co-existent with intelligence and refinement".³⁴ Many of the artisans based their arguments for an extension of the franchise not on any abstract doctrine of natural rights, but rather on a "stake in the community". They too were property owners, prudent and intelligent, and therefore entitled to the franchise.³⁵

The Canadian Labour Union was described by the *Daily Leader* as an assemblage of "an intelligent party, and likely to conduct the proceedings in a practical, common-sense manner".³⁶ It thought the Canadian working man to be possessed of higher intelligence than the "average European workman", and was confident they would "keep clear of both European and American cabals. . .".³⁷ The Royal Commission on Labour and Capital in Canada reported in 1889 that the trade unions were sound and sensible organizations:

. . . where organization has made progress the moral standing of the people is also high. No one can become a member who is not sober, and, as a consequence, union men and women are temperate, industrious in their habits. The universal testimony of wage earners is that the money paid by them to support their societies is as good an investment as they ever made.³⁸

Working men's organizations inculcated a "spirit of self-control, of independence, and of self-reliance. . .".³⁹ The Ontario Bureau of Industries reported in 1890 that "despite the imputation of thoughtless radicalism, the organized labour element in its unity has always been conservative in the broadest and best sense of that term".⁴⁰ It would be wrong, however, to conclude that the process of political and industrial discipline resulted in the creation of a "kept" class. The early partyism had radical as well as conservative aspects. To the extent that it hindered the rise of an independent radical third party and derived from a traditional and irrational attachment to party label and leader, partyism was conservative. So long as it facilitated the effective use of the method of legal enactment, it was radical and testified to the existence of an elementary level of class consciousness.

The concept of class consciousness and its application to the early Canadian labour movement is extremely ambiguous. Lower-class protest against the conditions of existence can take on many forms. The murmuring, absenteeism, or insubordination of the unskilled labourer represents the most primitive form of protest. Under the feudal conditions of staple production in Canada the dispersion of the work forces, the absence of fixed investment and the habits of mobility of mercantile employers made it extremely difficult and improbable for workmen to organize resistance through combination. The canalman and lumberman endured in a "womanless, homeless, and voteless world",⁴¹ and protest against the conditions of existence were largely individual and ineffectual. Equally primitive were the protests of the Irish labourers who were the largest single source of unskilled labour in the vast canal,

railway, and public works projects of the 1840s and 1850s.⁴² The co-operative nature of the employment and the group cohesion stemming from ethnic affinity facilitated organized resistance, but like the workers in staple production, the Irish unskilled labourers were incapable of forming enduring combinations or taking political action. The spontaneous strike of the Irish labourers was the desperate action of victimized workers in distress. Like the handloom weavers and framework knitters in the early decades of the nineteenth century in Britain, the Irish unskilled labourers were no supporters of revolution but rather the tragic victims of the distress of early industrialization.⁴³

A more highly developed political consciousness arose only with the construction of stable and enduring combinations by skilled artisans. Unlike the canoer, the lumber worker, and the Irish contract labourer, the skilled artisan possessed a stable employment and regular income and lived a settled existence. Possessed of a stake in the community, he was moved to ask why the civil authorities were always drawn from among the rich, why they legislated in their own interest, and why "justice" was administered so unequally as between rich and poor.⁴⁴ The prevalence of "partyism" within the skilled stratum of the artisan class, far from signifying a total absence of class consciousness, testified to the development and existence of an awareness of the possibilities of legal enactment as an effective means of improving the condition of the working class. It consisted of a broadening of the arena of protest from the industrial enterprise to the political community. Legal enactment was the principal method by which uniform conditions could be established affecting all strata of the working class; its acceptance as a legitimate device by trade unionists marked the conversion of sectional economic skirmishes into a political struggle.

The elementary political consciousness of the skilled artisans, attested to by the early partyism, was built upon the ramparts of trade unionism which became a fixture on the Canadian social scene by the 1890s. The new unionism, like partyism, was both a radical and conservative institution; its relationship to the prevailing capitalist industrial system was one of "antagonistic cooperation". Just as the prevalence of partyism testified to the existence of an elementary political consciousness more advanced and effective than the primitive protest of the unskilled, so did unionism mark the beginning of a social and industrial consciousness among the skilled. Partyism among artisans meant the limitation of the authority of the politician to legislate exclusively in the interest of the capitalist class; unionism limited through the power of enduring combination the authority of the capitalist in the enterprise to legis-

late exclusively in his own interest. The new combinations among the skilled were more complex, permanent, and effective than the primitive, spontaneous and temporary combinations of the unskilled labourers. The new industrial combinations served political functions as well. They provided permanent bases of concerted action and consolidated labour's strength at the political level. As union organization increased, the effective political pressure of labour expanded concomitantly.

The first steps towards the political consolidation of labour were taken during the early 1870s. Early union organization was fragmentary and consisted of a few isolated branch locals of British and American unions. The spur to industrial and political consolidation was the nine-hour-day movement in Britain and the eight-hour-day movement in the United States which spilled over into Canada in the late 1860s. Nine-hour leagues sprang into existence in Ontario and Quebec in the months preceding the Printers' Strike of April, 1872. As a movement to enforce uniform conditions covering all sections of organized labour, the new agitation temporarily linked up hitherto separate organizations and established lines of communication between unions in various urban centres. The Leagues were rudimentary political organizations created to agitate the question of the nine-hour day among working men regardless of trade. They were supplemented by the new central labour councils, armed with their parliamentary committees which became a fixture on the labour scene in Ontario in the 1870s. The League and the Central Labour Council served as organization centres for political agitation at the local and provincial level. Political pressure and industrial consolidation at the national level was facilitated by the creation of the first national organization, the Canadian Labour Union, formed in Toronto in September, 1873. The secondary and national organizations passed out of existence during the depression of 1873-78 but were revived and permanently consolidated during the 1880s.⁴⁵

But the new combinations which flourished following the decline of the Knights of Labour in the mid eighties were essentially pragmatic in philosophy and moderate in practice. The craft unionists combined to limit the authority of the capitalist in the enterprise but they characteristically refrained from agitating the abolition of the prevailing system of production and distribution. The spread of trade unionism in Canada testified to the ability of the organized skilled stratum of artisans to win concessions under the prevailing system; its very success guaranteed that drastic solutions would not be sought.

When socialist and syndicalist radicals first appeared in the late 1890s, they soon discovered, much to their disappointment, that Canada was not a paradise of proletarian political innocence. The organized stratum of the Canadian working class had fallen from grace, and much toil and trouble would be required to upset the strategic entrenchment of both the aristocratic craft unions and the ground-floor Liberal and Conservative parties among the newly enfranchised masses. The corner had been turned. The transition to capitalist democracy had occurred without any serious rupture of the political or economic system.

NOTES

1. Norman Ward, *The Canadian House of Commons*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950, p. 211.
2. For a brief discussion of the steps leading to this achievement see Ward, pp. 211-225. There still remained, of course, franchise inequalities which persisted well into the twentieth century. Property qualifications were operative in municipal elections, and women in English-speaking Canada were prevented from exercising their vote until the end of the First World War.
3. The radical journal *Palladium of Labour* directed some of its most severe criticism at working men who accepted government positions. "In Canada . . . the man who accepts a government position binds himself, if not to openly throw in his influence for the party of the administration, at least to refrain from opposing them or denouncing wrongs perpetrated under their auspices. Ought a liberal reformer to place himself in such a false position? Ought a free citizen who professes to have at heart labour's enfranchisement and to devote himself to that work to wear the muzzle of partyism on his mouth and put his conscience in the keeping of politicians who seek only to delude and befool the working man—with his assistance if possible? No—a thousand times—No!" (October 24, 1885.)
4. *Ontario Workman*, March 27, 1873.
5. *Labour Advocate*, March 6, 1891.
6. *Palladium of Labour*, May 17, 1884.
7. *Palladium of Labour*, October 16, 1886.
8. *Toronto Mail*, July 12, 1872, as quoted in D. G. Creighton, "George Brown, Sir John A. Macdonald, and the Working Man", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1943, Vol. 24, p. 375. Jacques and Hay were a large firm of furniture manufacturers in Toronto.
9. H. C. Pentland, "Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in

- Canada" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Political Economy, University of Toronto, 1960), p. 243.
10. Letter of D. J. O'Donoghue to Sir Wilfred Laurier, June 11, 1898, *Laurier Papers*, Public Archives of Canada.
 11. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada*, Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1889, p. 87.
 12. H. C. Pentland, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
 13. Letter of D. J. O'Donoghue to Sir Wilfred Laurier, May 16, 1898, *Laurier Papers*, Public Archives of Canada.
 14. *Proceedings of the 5th Annual Session of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada*, 1889, p. 18.
 15. Douglas R. Kennedy, *The Knights of Labour in Canada*, London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 1956, p. 53.
 16. F. W. Watt, "Radicalism in English Canadian Literature Since Confederation" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of English, University of Toronto, 1957), p. 8, quoting from *The Bystander*, 1883.
 17. Williams was a locomotive engineer who had been in Liberal-Labour politics in England where he aided in the campaigns to elect the miners' agent Alexander MacDonald, the first working man to enter the House of Commons. Williams ran unsuccessfully against Sir John Gibson in the Ontario provincial election of 1883.
 18. As quoted in the *Palladium of Labour*, December 4, 1886.
 19. Witton was a foreman in the Great Western Shops in Hamilton, a self-educated artisan who dabbled in French, geology, astronomy, and microscopy. See *Ontario Workman*, September 13, 1872. He possessed all the true virtues and beliefs of the Tory working man: gratitude for kindnesses bestowed, deference to his "natural superiors", and an unshakable faith in the party of Union and Progress as the true working-man's party. In the campaign of 1872 he assured his constituents that "If elected he would use his best efforts to promote harmony between the industrial classes and the employees of labour. The interests of the two were identical; and he would promise never to use paper or pen to set master against men or vice-versa, but should strive to bring them together". They were both capitalists; and it was essential to the well-being of the country that the man whose capital was in his strong right arm and the man whose capital was in his money should work together for a common end (*Ontario Workman*, July 25, 1872.) Witton had little difficulty in adjusting himself to his new milieu. On April 29, 1873, Lady Dufferin entered the following in her journal: "In the evening we had a large parliamentary dinner. One of my neighbours was very interesting. He is a 'working man' member; we had met him soon after his election when he dined in a rough coat, but now he wears evening clothes, he talked so pleasantly, and was full of information".

- Dufferin and Ava, Harriot Georgina (Hamilton) Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, Marchioness of, *My Canadian Journal, 1872-8; extracts from my letters home, written while Lord Dufferin was Governor General*, London: Murray [New York: Appleton], 1891.
20. *Ontario Workman*, May 6, 1873.
 21. *Ibid.*, March 27, 1873.
 22. *Proceedings of the Third Session of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada*, 1887, p. 26.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 24. T. Phillips Thompson, *The Politics of Labour*, New York: Bedford Clarke and Co., 1887, p. 14.
 25. The staunch Tory *Ontario Workman*, official organ of the Canadian Labour Union, went out of business in 1875 and delegates demanded that it be re-published only on "non-political principles". See "*Minutes of Proceedings of the Canadian Labour Congress, 1873-1877*", Leslie Wismer, ed., Ottawa, 1913. The delegates at the 1877 convention of the Canadian Labour Union saw fit to thank Edward Blake for action he had taken on the law affecting labour in general and the Criminal Law Amendment Act and Breach of Contract Act in particular "in spite of the opposition of the capitalist classes of the Dominion". *Ibid.*, p. 17. For a discussion of the shift in organized labour's party loyalties, see Bernard Ostry, "Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour in the 1870s", *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLI, no. 2 (June, 1960) and Bernard Ostry, "Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour in the 1880s", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. XXVII, May, 1961.
 26. B. Ostry, "Conservatives, Liberals and Labour in the 1880s", op. cit., p. 142.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. *Toronto Labour Day Souvenir*, 1896, p. 39.
 29. D. J. O'Donoghue, "Canadian Labour Interests and Movements" in *Canada, An Encyclopaedia of the Country*, J. Castell Hopkins, ed., Toronto, Liscott Publishing Co., 1900.
 30. The classic example of the cultural shock of industrialism was England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when a new factory proletariat was recruited from a floating rural class. The cultural transition was extreme and the disciplinary devices correspondingly harsh.
 31. H. C. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. XXV, No. 4, November, 1959, 14.
 32. For an excellent analysis of the political conservatism of the British working class in Victorian England and its implications for the development of political democracy, see Trygve R. Tholfsen, "The Transition to Democracy in Victorian England", *International Review of Social History*, Vol. VI, 1961, 2.

33. D. J. O'Donoghue, "Canadian Labour Interests and Movements", as cited in *Canada, An Encyclopaedia of the Century*, p. 253.
34. The *Toronto Globe* could not see why the working men objected to cheap labour: "We desire to see the possession of help of that kind [domestic] obtainable by the wife of the artisan as well as the store-keeper, the clerk, or the merchant. Women are still to a far too great an extent, drudges in Canada. There is no true economy in this. The artisan's home life is happier, his life more cheery, his primary wants are better satisfied if his wife can leave a portion of the harder work to another. . . ." *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Canadian Labour (Union) Congress, 1877*, p. 173, quoting from the *Toronto Globe*, August 15, 1877.
35. Delegates of the 1875 convention of the Canadian Labour Union were divided on the question of manhood suffrage. Del. Vennel introduced a resolution for the extension of the franchise but restricted it to those who possessed freehold property. Vennel favoured manhood suffrage in principle, "but it was possible that people would be gradually educated to that point". The convention failed to rule on the question. The following year Vennel introduced a manhood suffrage resolution because "there were a large number of men who through their saving habits had purchased a lot of ground and erected a house thereon" who were deprived of the vote. He argued that the men who owned small lots should not be debarred from having the vote. He looked on these men "as the very cream of the working class. . ." President Carter argued that the working men are "the most sober-minded people in the whole community". Others felt that keeping the vote from the working man meant that a large proportion of the "intelligence" of the community remained outside of the franchise. The resolution passed. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-15.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
38. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital in Canada*, p. 112.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
40. Ontario Bureau of Industries, *Sessional Papers*, No. 80, 1890, p. 62.
41. V. H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labour*, New York [Toronto]: Farrar and Rinehart, 1945, p. 33.
42. H. C. Pentland, "Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada", *op. cit.*, p. 409.
43. See Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement*, London [New York]: Longmans, Green, 1959, p. 302.
44. H. C. Pentland, *op. cit.*, p. 364, quoting from *The People's Magazine and Working Man's Friend*, 1842.

45. The Toronto Trades Council was the first of the central councils to reappear following the depression and a new national federation, the Canadian Labour Congress, was organized in 1883.

HEREDITY AND DESIRE

Simson R. Najovits

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations."

"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way and few they be that find it."

and between
these poles
am I mired
the heavy cloak
of heredity
the path
strewn with thorns
between these poles
I have only
my nullity
as my guide

The price
I've paid
to glimpse
that heavy cloak
made me a beggar
. . . with no resources
to undertake
that "narrow way"
with no strength
to throw-off
that heavy cloak
And

for that trip
on that terrible
"narrow way"
all baggage
is forbidden

Nudity
and innocence
is the price
exactd at the toll-gate
purity of heart
mind and body
is the fuel required
Which leaves me
in a mire
with only
my nullity
as a guide
a spark of innocence
as my fire
a modest desire
as my hope
imagination
as my biggest enemy