THE ROD YOUNG AFFAIR IN THE
BRITISH COLUMBIA CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH
FEDERATION

by

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Abstract
The years 1949 to 1956 saw a period of constant warfare between two factions within the British Columbia Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. These groups represented basically the right and left in the party. The left wing challenged what they considered to be a continuing rightward drift of the party. Fearing that the party was on the road to becoming "Liberals-in-a-hurry" the left attempted to organize an opposition to this rightward drift, and to rally support for socialist policies within the party. As early as 1949, the right wing was trying to blame the left for the party's failure in the provincial election of that year. The right argued that the left kept the party divided organizationally and that it frightened off supporters and potential supporters with its rhetoric.

In the factional battles the name of Rod Young figured prominently as a widely recognized leader of the left wing. During his twenty-one year party membership, Young held such important elected positions as national Vice-President of the Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement, Second Vice-President of the BC party, and CCF member of Parliament from Vancouver Centre. He was disciplined by the party on three separate occasions, each one arising out of a major ideological dispute: in 1937 the united front question, in 1950 the organizing of the Socialist Fellowship and in
1954 the debate on relations between Communists and the CCF. It was the last of these episodes which led to Young's resignation from the CCF.

The disciplining of Rod Young in 1954 and his subsequent resignation from the party was a key victory for the right wing. Young came under attack for his left wing views and his criticism of trends within the party. The motive for the attack was clearly ideological differences, but injudicious actions by Rod Young enabled the right wing to characterize a principled opposition as "personal idiosyncracy" and "an organizational question." By thus avoiding direct ideological confrontation the right wing was able to defuse membership opposition to action against the left. Rod Young became the stick with which the right successfully beat the left.
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Introduction

The decade following the second world war was one of the stormiest in the history of the British Columbia Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Heated ideological disputes and internal conflicts plagued the party throughout this period. In face of widespread anti-communism and anti-socialism the party leadership was prepared to abandon the forthright socialist aims of the Regina Manifesto for a program of moderate reform. This rightward drift of the party was vehemently opposed by many party members who fought to reaffirm the socialist character of the organization. The ideological disputes which characterized the party in the postwar decade became so intense as to lead to severe antagonisms between party members. As a result, the line between political criticism and personal attack became blurred.

Similar disputes had plagued the party since its origins, but in the climate of the postwar period these disputes were debated with a new urgency. On one side in the debate was a left wing which identified with the Socialist Party of Canada tradition of political education and the need to maintain "Marxian" principles as the guide to political action. To this left wing, the failure of the party in both the long and the short terms were caused by the abandoning of socialist principles. In opposition to
the left was a right wing which felt that the party's major problem was its far-left image. Communists and Socialists, they argued, tended to be synomynous in the public mind, and the party had to make it clear that "democratic socialists" had nothing in common with "Marxist-Leninists."

For both sides the battle within the party was a life and death struggle. For the left, the party by its continual abandonment of basic socialist principles ran the risk of becoming "Liberals-in-a-hurry."¹ For the right wing the threat to the party came from the left critics in the party who were aiding the opponents of the CCF by dividing the party and through their rhetoric making it appear as dangerous and radical. For the right wing, the task was more than simply winning a voting majority at party conventions. They had to silence the left wing inside the party. They would have agreed with the Vancouver Province argued in an editorial during this period that though the "extremists" were not the main body of the party, it was "disquieting" that they were able to "get a hearing, and some support, at a party convention."²

But the silencing of the left wing was no simple task. There was considerable sympathy for their views in the BC party; furthermore, the CCF was proud of its democratic tradition, a point often raised in distinguishing it from the Communist Party, and the leadership was hesitant to take disciplinary action against a member solely for his or her ideological views.

The right wing tackled the problem of silencing the
left in two ways. They first tried to blame the left wing for the decline in the party's growth and the failure of the CCF to form a provincial government in BC. Secondly, they tried to avoid direct confrontation on ideological questions, choosing instead to deal with their opponents' actions as organizational questions, and to deal with ideological disputes as personality conflicts. The right wing took advantage of a dynamic which occurred in party controversies: the tendency of ideological disputes to develop into personality clashes. The leading proponents of opposing ideological views tended to become completely identified with those views. Getting rid of the proponent of a particular view was thereby seen as the way to defeat his or her policy. Rodney Young, a leader of the left wing and the defendant in the most celebrated disciplinary case in this period, provides an excellent focus to study ideological disputes in the BC CCF.

Young was a skilled debater and a popular, influential speaker whose political roots went back to the doctrinaire "impossiblists" of the Socialist Party of Canada. He was described by the *Vancouver Sun* as an indiscreet radical "who insisted upon being ruggedly honest with [sic] fundamental socialist principles." During his twenty-one year party membership, he held such important elected positions as national Vice-President of the Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement, the party's youth organization, Second Vice-President of the BC party, CCF member of Parliament for Vancouver-Centre and candidate for the party in numerous
elections. Young was suspended from the party on three separate occasions, each one arising out of a major ideological dispute: in 1937 the united front question, in 1950 the organizing of the Socialist Fellowship, and in 1954 the debate on the relationship between Communists and the CCF. The last of these episodes led to Young's resignation from the party. In short, Young was a prominent and visible leader of the left wing of the party.

The Rod Young affair, as the 1954 suspension has come to be known, has not been considered in depth by any of the scholars studying the CCF. There is only one published account, that which appears in Walter Young's history of the national CCF, *The Anatomy of a Party: the National CCF 1932 - 1961*. Professor Young uses the conflict which surrounded Rod Young to illustrate the death of "left wing sentiment" in the BC party. Rod Young, he tells us, was one of a group "who caused more damage than good." But, he adds, "sympathy for these people was such that there seemed little the party could do in convention to rid itself of [such] individuals." Rod Young's forced departure in 1954, says Walter Young, marked the victory of the "moderates" over the "doctrinaire left." The party was then able to discipline those members who wished "to go whichever way they chose in as public a manner as their individual egos demanded - provided always that it was to the left."

Aside from Professor Young's the only other treatment of the incident appears in an unpublished M.A. thesis by D.J.
Roberts, "Doctrine and Disunity in the BC Section of the CCF 1932 - 1956." Roberts views the Rod Young affair in a wider context as one of a series of doctrinal disputes within the BC CCF. These doctrinal disputes, Roberts argues, were between the "moderates" and the "doctrinaire" Marxists of the old Socialist Party of Canada. The conflicts resulted in the eventual decline and disappearance of the SPC influence in the BC CCF. In her view,

Not only had Young brought the CCF into disrepute in the eyes of the public, but he had also brought the left wing of the CCF into disrepute within the party. The mood of the rank and file membership had changed and they were no longer willing to tolerate contentious remarks from Marxist individuals as they had in the past.

Both Roberts and Walter Young interpret the Rod Young suspensions of 1954 as a turning point in the battle between the left wing and the "moderates" in the party.

However another study by Professor Young, an article entitled, "Ideology, Personality and the Origins of the CCF in British Columbia," though not dealing with the Rod Young affair, reflects a change in Professor Young's view. In this essay which analyses the events leading to the resignation of Reverend Robert Connell, CCF party leader in 1936, he argues that ideological differences in the CCF "invariably" disguised personal ambitions.

It would be simple to describe the conflict as purely a matter of ideology, but the Connell affair like the events that preceded and followed it, demonstrated what might be a truism of the left in British Columbia;
that is, the distinctions that were invariably drawn in such disputes must be seen as covers for conflicting ambitions.11

Where in The Anatomy of a Party Professor Young saw the Rod Young affair as an ideological conflict, he now argues that such struggles are mere "covers" for personal ambition. In this he echoes a view frequently expressed at the time of the Rod Young affair. The BC CCF party president referred to the Rod Young dispute as "a little problem of human relations which political parties, unfortunately find they have to deal with."12 Indeed Rod Young's opponents within the party, time and again, made the point that actions against Young were of a personal nature. The disciplining of Young, they claimed, was not for his political views, but for his irresponsible actions or statements.

The Rod Young affair provides an excellent opportunity for an examination of these two conflicting interpretations. This paper will attempt to show through a detailed analysis of the record, that the conclusion drawn by D. J. Roberts and by Walter Young in The Anatomy of a Party is a valid one. The Rod Young affair was the culmination of an ideological dispute marking the victory of the moderates over the doctrinaire left. Young came under attack in the BC CCF for his left wing views and his criticism of the direction in which the party was headed. The motivation for the attack was clearly ideological differences; the concentration on the "personal idiosyncrasies" of Young was only a cover for
what was essentially an ideological dispute.
Notes

1Colin Cameron, "An Analysis of the Election Results," CCF News, July 6, 1949, p. 3.


5Young, p. 283.

6Young, p. 283.

7Young, p. 284.

8Dorothy June Roberts, "Doctrine and Disunity in the BC Section of the CCF 1932 - 1956," M.A. University of Victoria 1972.

9Roberts, p. 121.


11Young, p. 161.

12Frank McKenzie, "Closing Address of President," Provincial Convention Minutes 1954, Angus MacInnis Collection, UBC. [Hereafter entered as AMC]
Chapter 1

YOUNG'S FIRST SUSPENSION

To understand the ideological basis of disputes in the BC CCF, one must look first at the history of the Socialist Party of Canada which in BC was the major founding component of the CCF. Founded in 1902 as the Socialist Party of BC (later changing its name to the SPC), this party dominated the left in BC for most of twenty years. As Ross Johnson points out in his history of the SPC entitled, "No Compromise, No Political Trading," "for twenty years the party had been a strong enough force to ensure that, whenever socialism or radical political action was discussed, a representative of the SPC would be involved."¹ The SPC brought to the CCF an important legacy: a non-Leninist Marxist tradition instilled in the membership through twenty years of political struggle as a party.

Viewing themselves as "Marxists" and "scientific socialists," the SPC members saw it as their duty to educate the masses about Marxian economics, class, and Marxism in general. The party took great pride in the "purity" of its Marxism, refusing to join the Second (Socialist) International, because it felt that too many of the affiliates were not pure Marxists.² In fact, the SPC was a party of "impossiblists"
frozen in nineteenth century English Marxism. It failed to develop and apply Marxist theory to the economic situation in BC. Ignoring the "immediate" issues arising out of the day-to-day struggles of working people, the SPC opted instead to educate its audience on the absolute necessity of a full socialist revolution. Anything short of a revolution was regarded as doomed to failure and was denounced by the party as reformism and revisionism. As Ross Johnson pointed out, "the impossibilists could act as just men by describing the inequities of capitalist society but they could not act as political men by relating to specific problems requiring immediate attention."

Not every member of the SPC was an impossibilist. The pressure on militants to get involved in the immediate struggles of working people - the struggle for reform - led to a number of splits from the SPC. An important case in point was the 1907 split in which a number of members left the SPC to form the Social Democratic Party of BC, an organization committed to placing a greater emphasis on the immediate struggles for reforms. In spite of numerous splits and desertions there was not, until the end of the first world war, a labour or socialist party in the province that did not have members or former members of the SPC in its leading ranks. The party produced a whole generation of socialist leaders and educated them in Marxism.

The war and the changes it brought about led to the collapse of the SPC. A significant factor contributing to
the decline of the SPC was the decision by the BC Federation of Labour, in 1918, to launch the Federated Labour Party. This party consisted of the SDP, some members of the SPC, and some union affiliates. Changes in the international socialist movement brought about by the Russian Revolution also contributed to the SPC's decline. In the early period of the revolution, the SPC supported the Bolsheviks, seeing the revolution as a step towards socialism. But in 1919 when the call went out from Moscow for socialist parties to reorganize themselves along democratic centralist lines and join the new Communist Third International, the SPC split on the affiliation question. Approximately half of the remaining SPC members left the party to form the Vancouver branch of the Workers Party of Canada (as the new communist party was called) in January 1922. The split was the death blow for the SPC. Its paper, the Western Clarion, continued until 1925, but the party was essentially finished. Most former SPC members could now be found in the ranks of either the communist Workers Party of Canada or the socialist Federated Labour Party.

In 1924, on the initiative of the BC Executive of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, a "united front" of socialist and labour parties in BC was formed. The FLP, the WPC, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, and a number of unions joined together to form the BC branch of the Canadian Labour Party. The CLP was quite late in getting organized in BC; the first call for the union of the
left and labour groups had come out of the 1921 TLCC national convention. The CLP in BC, as in other parts of the country, was a federated party to which political and labour groups affiliated, although they maintained their independent identities. Shortly after affiliating to the CLP, the FLP joined with several small labour parties in the lower mainland to form the Independent Labour Party. The CLP then consisted of two political parties, the ILP and the WPC which now called itself the Communist Party of Canada.

Though a minority in the CLP, the Communists, by "acting as a unified caucus" were able to have the CLP adopt many radical resolutions. The most controversial was a resolution demanding enfranchisement of "Orientals" and making this demand a part of the party's election platform. The adoption of this policy led in 1928 to the disaffiliation of the unions and the ILP. Members of the ILP felt that the party's stand on "Orientals" had alienated its labour support.

The "united front" experience in the CLP between the Communists and the Socialists left much mutual hostility. The Communists saw the Socialists as "class collaborationist politicians" who were looking to sabotage the CLP and destroy the united front. It was the opinion of the CPC "that the Labour Party could only be a success if it were an effective instrument of class struggle and if it followed the lead of the Communists and the Left Wing." This policy of the CPC was viewed by the ILP as a policy of Communist takeover.
and domination. The lesson drawn by the ILP was that common work with the CPC was impossible.

The whole situation escalated when the Communist International, the Comintern, adopted a new set of theses in this same year and labeled the socialist the "last reserve" of the old order. The "united front" with the socialists was to be abandoned and Communists were asked to take up the battle against the socialist "traitors", who were labelled "social fascists." The split between the Socialists and the Communists was then complete.14

Though there had been some hostility since the split from the SPC of the "pro-Leninists" in 1922 it was significant that Socialists and Communists had been able to work together in a common, federated party. But after the demise of the CLP in 1928, the Socialists would never again work in a common party with the Communists, and exclusion of Communists from socialist and labour parties became an accepted norm. Since both the Socialists and the Communists in BC came from the same Marxian roots in the SPC, it was inevitable that each party would see itself as the real Marxists. The ILP eventually changed its name back in June 1932 to the SPC and became the major founding component of the CCF in BC. Into the CCF, the SPC carried its hostility towards the CPC, its negative experience with the united front, and its claim to be the true heir to Marx.

From the beginning of the CCF in BC, SPC members saw it as their duty to lead and maintain the Marxist purity
of the new organization. Their long experience on the left and in political organizations assured that SPC members would lead the party, but they felt it necessary to take a number of precautions to ensure SPC dominance of the CCF, at least until the new membership attracted to the organization could be educated in basic Marxism. They guaranteed their dominance by inclusion in the constitution of a clause requiring that the Provincial President and Secretary-Treasurer of the CCF would be from the SPC. In addition to these two key posts, three other representatives on the Executive were to be from the SPC. To assure the ideological purity of the candidates chosen to represent the CCF in elections, they were to be quizzed on their competence in socialist theory, before receiving the necessary endorsement of the Provincial Executive. In the first election that the CCF contested, the provincial election of 1933, six of the seven members elected as CCPers were from the SPC.

Rod Young was a founding member of the CCF. He was an immigrant to Canada, arriving in 1926 after having lost his job in his hometown of Liverpool England for participating in the General strike of that year. As a member of the ILP-SPC he had voted with the majority to endorse participation in the CCF. In the SPC, Young had been aligned with the Marxian impossibilist wing and was influenced in particular by the popular Marxist educator and lawyer, Wallis W. Lefeaux.
and other Marxist educators from the SPC.

In 1935, the whole question of the united front resurfaced in BC. After the disaster of the victory of fascism in Germany, the Comintern reversed the line of the Third International and advocated a "popular front" of all democratic progressives to stop fascism. In Canada, the CPC interpreted this position to mean, amongst other things, a popular front with the CCF, progressive Liberals and Social Crediters. The CPC wanted to involve CCFers in their anti-war organization, the League Against War and Fascism, and sought common work amongst the unemployed and in trade unions where both parties were active. The CCF was forced by the united front issue to debate the question of its relation to the Communists.

Support for the popular front came from people within the CCF who, for the most part, saw it as a simple extension of the union of the left or "united front" brought about through the formation of the CCF. Was not the CCF itself, after all, a united front of Farm, Labour, and Socialist parties, as the full name of the party indicated?

Opposition to the popular front came from two quarters. Some CCFers followed long time ILP-SPC activist Angus MacInnis, who vehemently opposed the CCF's having anything to do with the CPC. The anti-communist attitude of MacInnis and his supporters went back to the SPC - WPC split. As a "moderate" he viewed any association with the CPC as dangerous for the CCF's public image, and the negative experience of working
with the communist in the CLP was still fresh in his mind. As one member underlined sharply in a letter to the CCF newspaper, the Federationist "the test of a Popular Front in action may show it to be more Front than Popular."  

The second group of opponents to the popular front comprised the "doctrinaire" or "impossibilist" SPC members and those they influenced, including Rod Young. The popular front, they reasoned, was a tactic which persuaded people to maintain the status-quo - bourgeois democracy - as opposed to fighting for socialism. They criticized the popular front for being "class collaborationist," arguing that the popular front would cut across labour political action by linking labour and the CCF to the "old line parties" or "parties of big business" such as the Liberals.  

The National Executive and the BC Provincial Executive of the CCF were in their majority opposed to the popular front. They pointed out that the CCF as a Farm, Labour, Socialist party brought together many groups and associations, making it in effect the united front in Canada. If people seriously wanted a popular front they would join the CCF and abide by its program and constitution. All those opposed to the popular front agreed on one point: that the independence of the CCF was the most important question in the debate. As early as the 1935 Provincial Convention, the CCF adopted a resolution on the united front, stating in part; "No good purpose can be served by the artificial welding together of organizations the working methods of which
differ in principle and practice."23 The resolution went on to make clear the co-operation with other groups on specific activities and issues was not ruled out.

The main proponent of the popular front within the CCF was A.M. Stephen. Stephen, a poet and a member of the Provincial Executive, was a popular socialist educator. As President of the local chapter of the League Against War and Fascism, he wanted to involve the CCF in common cause with the Communists in campaigns such as that against fascism, and in support of the Republican forces in Spain, as well as through adoption of the popular front by the CCF.24

The debate on the popular front became extremely heated in 1936, raging at all levels of the party - at constituency meetings, club meetings, and on executive bodies. A number of letters from club executives inquiring into the party's position and asking for instructions on work with the CPC were received by the Provincial office. The rise of fascism in Europe and the Civil War in Spain pushed activists within the CCF into closer collaboration with the CPC. In the heated atmosphere of inner party debate, charges were thrown back and forth. The main charge leveled against the supporters of the popular front was that they were "communist stooges," members of the Communist Party out to disrupt and destroy the CCF. The counter charge hurled at the opponents of the popular front was that they were "Trotskyists."25 Young in particular was labelled a Trotskyist for his attacks on A.M. Stephen. As editor of the socialist
youth paper *Ameoba*, Young had published a number of attacks on the popular front and so stirred up the issue that the party Executive ordered the paper to cease publication.

Stephen, at a September 19th Provincial Executive meeting, introduced a notice of motion that he would be bringing charges against Young for dual membership (a charge that he was a member of another political party, in this case the "Trotskyist" Workers Party of Canada). After some months, however, Stephen was forced to withdraw his notice for lack of evidence.

It was inevitable that the debate would find its way into the party paper, *Federationist*. In the December 10th edition Gerald Van, a leader of the CCYM and Young's collaborator on the *Ameoba* editorial board, challenged A.M. Stephen to a public debate on the popular front question. Van's letter of challenge led to a barrage of comments from others, for and against the popular front. Young, in a subsequent *Federationist*, also challenged Stephen to a debate on the question. Charges and counter charges went back and forth for a month. Finally, on January 7th, the Provincial Executive cut off debate and published a statement in the *Federationist* directing the editors not to publish any further letters on the question of the popular front. But before the month was through, the Provincial Executive was forced to deal once more with the issue. Matthew Glenday and Rod Young brought a series of charges against Stephen, including "violation of executive confidence" and "intent
to injure a member of the movement."

The Provincial Executive appointed a trial committee which looked into the charges. While not sustaining any of the specific charges, the trial committee gave the following assessment of the situation.

"It seems clear to your committee that a controversy which commenced as a difference in ideology has developed into a vicious clash of personalities, resulting in the determined effort of all parties, including Coms. Stephen, Glenday and Young, to accept every opportunity to embarrass opponents for a particular point of view." 27

The committee recommended that it was "in the best interest of the CCF" that A.M. Stephen "retire voluntarily" from active participation in the CCF for a period of one year. This included resigning his position on the Provincial Executive. They also recommended that Rod Young "be suspended from membership" for one year. The recommendation concerning Young was without precedent, as no charges had been laid against him, and he was, in fact one of the accusers in the A.M. Stephen's trial. But the committee felt that the conduct of Young's attacks and goading had contributed to Stephen's misbehaviour.

At the Provincial Convention in July of 1937, both Young and Stephen appealed their suspensions. Stephen was expelled by a vote of 96 - 61 for having run as an independent in the Alberni-Nanaimo riding while under suspension. 28 Young did not successfully appeal his suspension either. According to Dorothy G. Steeves, members felt, "it would do
him and the movement both good to keep him 'on ice' for another nine months." The convention took a very strong stand on the popular front question decisively defeating resolutions favouring a popular front.

The popular front fight of 1935 - 37 demonstrates Young's particular ability to snatch defeat out of the jaws of victory. In this dispute, Young was on the side of the majority, which included almost all of the Provincial Executive and a substantial number of the rank and file. Glenday's and Young's charges against Stephen finally got Stephen suspended. But at the same time Young managed to get himself disciplined. While a number of popular front supporters were expelled or suspended, Young was the only opponent of the popular front to be suspended.

The incident also demonstrates Young's ability to goad his opponents and get himself in trouble. The trial committee, recognizing this characteristic of Young's, chose to suspend him for a year to allow the party to recover from the dispute. It is interesting to note that Colin Cameron, who would later be a leader with Young of the left in the postwar CCF referred to Young's "natural mode of address" as "supercilious and offensive." A second aspect of this early dispute is that it reveals a certain dynamic in party disputes and in the role of Rod Young. The trial committee's summary notes that what had begun as an ideological difference had developed into a personality clash. This sequence of events in which
ideological differences heated up and became vicious personal conflicts, happened over and over in the CCF. Stephen's suspension reflects the tendency for ideological disputes to become personality conflicts. The fight against the popular front became a fight against the advocates of the popular front, and A.M. Stephen, as a recognized leader within the CCF, became a focus. What was essentially a question of political tactics, whether or not the CCF would join in a common electoral front with the Communist party, was transformed into a personal attack. Both Stephen and Young accepted this dynamic and were accessories in continuing and escalating it. Stephen accused those who differed with him on the popular front of being Trotskyists, and Young similarly attacked Stephen and the popular front advocates as Stalinists. The line between political criticism and personal attack had been crossed and in the process, the cause for the whole dispute, ideology, appears to have become obscured. This early incident prefigures later ones in that political questions become confused and obscured by the personal level of the debate.
Notes


2 Johnson, p. 15.

3 Johnson, p. 17.

4 Johnson, p. 152.

5 Johnson, p. 153. [Italics Johnson's]

6 Johnson, p. 282.

7 Martin Robin, Radical Politics and Canadian Labour (Kingston: Queen's University, 1968) pp. 149-150.

8 Johnson, pp. 357-8; and Robin, p. 200.

9 Robin, p. 252.


12 Rodney, p. 103.


15 Provincial Executive Minutes, S.P.C. (BC) March 12, 1933, AMC.

16 Constitution BC CCF, September 30, 1933, Section 9a. AMC.

17 Personal Interview with Rod Young, March 15, 1978.

18 Avakumovic, p. 96.

19 Avakumovic, p. 106.


23 *Federationist*, January 7, 1937.
26 *Federationist*, December 23, 1936.
28 *Provincial Convention Minutes*, July 5, 1937, AMC.
29 Steeves, p. 115.
30 Colin Cameron, Letter to Arnold Webster, March 1, 1937, AMC.
Chapter 2

YOUNG'S EMERGENCE AS A LEADER OF THE NEW LEFT IN THE BC CCF

By the outbreak of the Second World War the CCF had changed from the small party which the SPC had controlled. The party now incorporated a number of affiliates, including the Reconstruction Party and the province-wide Associated CCF Clubs. The SPC members had become a very small minority within the party. By 1935 the parties and organizations which had been admitted to the CCF dissolved their separate identities, and the party ceased to be a federated party. Less than a year after this consolidation the BC party was shaken by a crisis. Leader Robert Connell left the CCF and launched his own short-lived Social Constructive party.¹ Connell left the CCF for a number of reasons. The immediate cause was his disagreement with the party's "financial platform" adopted at the 1936 convention. But as CCF caucus member Dorothy G. Steeves notes, it was an old feud between Connell and old time SPC organizer E.E. Winch that was the underlying reason.² In leaving the CCF, Connell accused Winch of leading a Communist infiltration of the CCF.

¹ I cannot approve tacitly or openly of an Executive which has for chairman of the organization committee E.E. Winch, one who is a self-declared pro-Communist and whose efforts show their fruit in the
invasion of CCF Clubs and of the convention itself by Communists and their sympathizers.3

The accusation added to the heat of the popular front discussion. But as Connell and the three other CCF MLA's who had split with him, were not re-elected in the following year's election, the party soon recovered from the Connell split. They went leaderless for about two years, with Harold Winch acting as caucus leader although the party did not actually endorse him as leader. Finally he was confirmed as leader in the fall of 1938.

Connell's desertion and Winch's election to the leadership post represented a small coup for the SPC. E.E. Winch had been one of the central leaders of the SPC. When the BC CCF was founded he had desired the leadership himself, though he eventually became content to have his son, also an SPC member, become party leader. Winch had been associated with the "impossiblist" wing of the SPC, and the fact that Harold was now party leader signaled a victory for the SPC.

During the war years a "new left" started to emerge in the CCF. While not from the SPC, this new left also saw themselves as Marxists and scientific socialists, and along with some of the old SPC members they took up the role of socialist educators within the party. Two of the people who emerged as leaders of the new left were Dorothy G. Steeves and Colin Cameron. Both were CCF members of the legislature during the war. They conducted a much publicized fight against Canada's participation in the war, viewing
the war as a product of imperialist rivalries; against the federal government's War Loans and enforced savings plan, and against the federal government's conscription program.  

The CCF was badly split across the country over the war. National party leader and life long pacifist J.S. Woodsworth resigned as party leader, feeling that his opposition to the war would hurt the party. Though strict adherence to the party program, the Regina Manifesto, with its clause that "Canada must refuse to be entangled in any more wars fought to make the world safe for capitalism" would have required the party to oppose the war, the National Executive refused to take a position on the war until Parliament met in September 1939. At that point Canada was already at war, and the caucus and Executive had managed to skirt the issue. Throughout the war, the CCF national caucus backtracked further and further from the position of the Regina Manifesto; first supporting Canada's participation in the war, then, the sending of troops to Europe, and finally conscription.

In spite of the abandonment of the Regina Manifesto on the question of the war, or as the National Council argued, because of it, the fortunes of the party took a positive turn during the war years. By 1944 the CCF had become the official opposition in Ontario and the government in the province of Saskatchewan and it was reaching its highest level of popular support.

While opposition to the national party's position
on the war was an embarrassment to the caucus in Ottawa, it was not unpopular in the party in BC. Both Cameron and Steeves were elected to Executive posts in the BC party during the war years, Cameron served as party President in 1945 and 1946, and was succeeded by Steeves in 1947. The left was not only accepted but played a prominent role in the BC CCF in the period immediately after the war. But BC as always was a bit of an anomaly. As the positions of the National Council on the war illustrated, the party as a whole was moving away from the Regina Manifesto and towards a moderate program. But the postwar period brought a new wave of anti-communism, and the CCF suffered from a concerted smear campaign aimed at labelling the CCF as communist.

It was in this early postwar period that Rod Young returned to the limelight in the CCF. In 1948, a by-election was held for the federal seat in Vancouver Centre. The largest CCF Club in the riding (and one of the largest in the province) was the bastion of the left; the Stanley Park Club. Traditionally, socialist educator W.W. Lefeaux had been the CCF candidate in Centre, but as he was unavailable at the time of the by-election, Rod Young was chosen to run in his place. Young had enlisted in the Canadian Army with the introduction of the National Resources Mobilization Act and had served with the Canadian expeditionary forces in Italy, France and Germany. As a veteran he was attending law school at the University of British Columbia. He was an activist in the Stanley Park Club, and was viewed as an
articulate Marxist educator in his own right and an able replacement for the absent Lefeaux.

As part of the by-election campaign Young was sent to address a May Day meeting in Nanaimo. Though Nanaimo was clearly a good distance from Vancouver Centre, the CCF traditionally attended labour sponsored May Days, and the sending of a candidate as party spokesperson would give the candidate some free publicity. With Young on the platform of the rally were a number of labour leaders, some of whom were prominent supporters and members of the communist Labour Progressive Party. When news of Young's Nanaimo May Day engagement reached party leader M.J. Coldwell, he immediately sent off a blistering telegraph to acting Provincial Secretary Colin Cameron, threatening to cancel his appearance at a Vancouver Centre by-election rally. He wired,

'Find reported appearance of CCF candidate Vancouver Centre with Pritchett [Harold, president of the BC district of the International Woodworkers of America] at Nanaimo most embarrassing. This action contrary to both Federal caucus and National Council decision. Without satisfactory explanation must cancel Vancouver engagement May 29.'

Cameron sent back an equally blistering reply to Coldwell's telegraph.

'Nanaimo meeting sponsored by affiliated union [United Mineworkers of America] BC Executive decided propriety of attendance at such meeting. Deeply resent threat to cancel meeting. Communicating protest to National Secretary.'

The issue continued to heat up with a series of
letters back and forth from Cameron to Coldwell. Angus MacInnis, CCF MP from BC, finally stepped into the exchange in an attempt to mediate. In a letter to MacInnis, Cameron expressed his view of why Coldwell reacted so sharply to the May Day item.

I have a suspicion that Coldwell has been twitted in the house by some other member, probably Gibson or Sinclair, on Rod's appearance on the same platform as Harold Pritchett. As I see by Hansard that Coldwell went far beyond the decision of the National Council and Executive in his speech in the House on the question of the CCF attitude towards the LPP, I can readily understand that even a perfectly legitimate participation in a May Day rally, called by an affiliated trade union, would provide the opportunity for such twitting.

That however is Mr. Coldwell's problem, neither the Provincial Council nor the National Council has laid down a rule that CCF speakers must not attend meetings at which there may be communist speakers. In fact I see that at their meeting on February 15th the National Executive specifically discussed this matter and agreed that no hard and fast rule could be laid down. If Mr. Coldwell had taken it upon himself to go beyond that decision then he must be prepared to face the consequent embarrassment to which he refers in his telegraph.11

MacInnis in mediating the dispute suggested to Cameron that what was really at the root of things was the egos of Cameron and Coldwell. MacInnis agreed with Coldwell that the May Day appearance of Young was an embarrassment, and they both felt that any association between the Communists and the CCF, regardless of circumstances, was to be avoided at all costs.12

Cameron and the BC Executive took a different view.
Cameron agreed with MacInnis that there had been a certain degree of ruffled ego in the exchange between himself and Coldwell, but he disagreed with the questionable role of the leader and by implication of the National Office's interference in the BC party's affairs.

I suppose I should have been more tactful in my reply to M.J. though really I'm damned if I know why. I have always been allergic to the Voice of God. But then I have few peers when it comes to being a cantankerous and disputatious creature...

Underlying the May Day incident was a dispute about how to deal with Communists. Young, who had been suspended in the pre-war period for the zeal with which he attacked A.M. Stephen and the supporters of the popular front, had strong credentials as an anti-Communist. As Cameron pointed out in a letter to MacInnis, the implied charge made by Coldwell, "that Rod Young is a person [who] would lend aid and comfort to the Communists" was "ridiculous." But the anti-communism of people like Young and Cameron was rather complicated. They viewed themselves as the real communists, as Marxists, and their distaste for and opposition to the Communist Party was motivated by their belief that this party, was not a real communist party. Their opposition was different from that of Coldwell and MacInnis, who opposed the CPC and association with Communists because it might hurt the public image of the CCF. What seems like an insignificant distinction, had rather sharp consequences when it came to making party policy. Coldwell felt it would
be better to boycott a meeting rather than be caught on the same platform with LPP members. Cameron and Young, on the other hand, felt it better to be on the same platform with LPP members than to boycott a May Day Rally. The latter, they believed, would hurt the party image far more than the former.

Coldwell eventually backed down and came to the election rally for the Vancouver Centre by-election. But the differences over relations with Communists and how to take on the Communists as political opponents was far from solved. The incident during the by-election occurred at the beginning of the Cold War, and as anti-communism and anti-socialism increased within Canadian society, the party would have to deal again with the question of its relation to communists. As for Young, though elected to Parliament in the by-election, he got off to a rather poor start with the party's parliamentary leader. Before he was elected he had already managed to come to the attention of Coldwell and had been viewed as an embarrassment by him.

As it turned out, the problems that had surrounded Young's election campaign were minor compared with those of his short career as the CCF MP from Vancouver Centre. Even before Young took his seat on June 21st, 1948, just nine days before the House adjourned for the summer, the attention of MP's was drawn to Young's left image within the party. The Progressive Conservative member from Calgary-West, Arthur L. Smith warned the House that Young was a
Communist. Later, while speaking in the House Young was heckled by opposition members calling him a Trotskyist. Young in describing his first days in Ottawa in a letter in the CCF News appears to have taken this communist baiting in his stride and even joked of it.

Our whip, Stanley Knowles of Winnipeg, commenced the rites of initiation. He remarked at once that the new member did not look like a communist (referring to the warning issued the House by Tory member from Calgary, Mr. Smith). This pleased me somewhat as I had once been told I resembled Tim Buck [leader of the communist party] in appearance, a statement that could give an impressionable soul a complex.

A more serious challenge to Young faced him when the new session opened early the next year. On January 26, 1949, the very day after the opening, Young was attacked by BC Liberal MP James Sinclair. Sinclair, rising on a question of privilege, drew the House's attention to statements by Young to the Vancouver Centre CCF Forum, reported in the Vancouver News-Herald. According to the press account, Young had stated that the Canadian people had been sending "a bunch of crooks" to Parliament. He further vowed that he would not take back his statement. So with only ten days experience in Parliament, Young was faced with a demand to substantiate the charges he had made at the Forum or resign.

Young had indeed said that MP's were a bunch of crooks, but the News-Herald and a good number of other papers which later picked-up the story failed to point out
the context in which the statement was made. Young had been explaining how MP's were absent from the House for much of the time while public business was being conducted. Yet, he noted, they nevertheless collected full salary. MP's were crooks, concluded Young, because they took their full and ample salary and did not show up full time in Parliament. One newspaper, the Winnipeg Citizen took the comments in the light manner in which they were given. The Citizen suggested that the real problem was Young's choice of words. The Citizen suggested in an editorial that it might have been more appropriate to call MP's "a bunch of loafers."¹⁷

Young was, of course, unable to bring any evidence to prove his allegation, and the government and the Conservatives used the occasion to roast the CCF caucus. Finally, under pressure from the caucus, Young rose in the House on February 18th and withdrew unconditionally the statements he had made at the Forum.

The main political battle of Young's parliamentary career was however the North Atlantic Pact. This treaty, presented to Parliament in the early part of 1949, resulted in Canada's participation in the forming of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Pact was opposed by the left in the CCF which saw it as a war alliance. They pointed out that such alliances more often led to war, not to peace. The left was also of the opinion that the threat to world peace was not simply the communists, but that the United States and western nations were equally responsible.
The National leadership, on the other hand viewed the communists as the number one threat to world peace and saw the Atlantic pact as a necessary alliance against the communist threat. Needless to say, the issued badly divided the party once more.

In January 1949, the National Council took a position of support for the North Atlantic Pact. On March 28th, Parliament voted for the first time on the Pact. Young, William Irvine [Cariboo] and Harry Archibald [Skeena], three of the seven BC CCF MPs absented themselves from the House for the vote. All three were opposed to the Pact, and were under pressure from the caucus to maintain party discipline and vote in favour of it. They had consulted with other leading leftists in the BC party and received the advice from Dorothy G. Steeves that "after thinking the matter over. I am still of the opinion that you should vote with the group." While strongly opposed to the Pact herself, Steeves felt that a vote against it would be "a vote of non-confidence with declared CCF policy" and that it might result in their being "put out of the movement." The opposition of the three BC MPs to the Pact, was leaked to the press. The Newspapers began to speculate about the "revolt in BC." Coldwell tried to squelch these rumours by telling the press that his whole caucus would follow the National Council's decision and all would be present and vote for the Pact on the third and final read-
ing of the bill.19

New speculation of a rupture in the party grew with the opening of the BC Provincial Convention in April of 1949. Submitted to the convention were six resolutions opposing the Pact. David Lewis, then National Secretary of the CCF, was sent to BC to attend the Convention and to help win the BC party's acceptance of the national party's position. The six resolutions opposed to the Pact were shelved and not debated on the floor of the convention. In their place a resolution which simply noted the position of the National party, and neither approved nor condemned it, was adopted.21 But the adoption of this compromise resolution did not end the question at the convention. An emergency resolution was brought in, calling for the convention to approve the federal party's position. This resolution was voted down, causing the press to further speculate on the revolt in BC. Typical of the press coverage of the convention was the Vancouver Sun's Monday headline stating in large type; "Convention Refuses Approve Atlantic Pact" and then in much smaller type; "also rejects move for disapproval."22 After the Convention, newly-elected Provincial Executive adopted a resolution approving the Pact, but the damage had already been done.23

Young spoke against the Pact at the convention and suggested that the convention ask the BC MPs to vote against the Pact in Parliament. His position received much publicity and caused a great deal of bitterness towards
him in the federal caucus. Nevertheless, in the final vote on the Pact, Young voted with his Parliamentary colleagues, and the Atlantic Pact was adopted unanimously by the Canadian Parliament.

The North Atlantic Pact issue had left the party badly divided. Young and the left in BC viewed the position they had been forced by party discipline to accept as a fundamental betrayal of socialist principles. The National Executive, and in particular Coldwell and MacInnis, were angered by the public airing of divisions in the party on an issue that they considered to be crucial to establishing the CCF's credibility as a mature, responsible political party.

Young's parliamentary career was brief. At the end of June 1949, he lost his seat to a Liberal in the general election, and returned to UBC to complete his law degree. His short term in Parliament had brought him to the attention of the national leadership. It had further helped establish Young as a leader of the new left in the BC party, at a time when the party was experiencing electoral setbacks both federally and provincially.
Notes

1Steeves, p. 112 and Young, Origins of CCF in BC, p. 160. Note: Young refers to Connell's party as the British Columbia Constructives.

2Steeves, p. 107.

3Steeves, p. 110.

4Roberts, pp. 57-60.

5Roberts, p. 55.

6Roberts, pp. 55-70.

7Young suggests in Anatomy of a Party, "In fact most CCF members probably were against the war, one way or another." p. 103.

8Young, p. 117, and Ivan Avakumovic, Socialism in Canada, pp. 101-103.

9M.J. Coldwell, Telegraph to Colin Cameron, May 12, 1948, AMC.

10Colin Cameron, Telegraph to M.J. Coldwell, May 12, 1948, AMC.

11Colin Cameron, Letter to Angus MacInnis, May 13, 1948 AMC.

12Angus MacInnis, Letter to Colin Cameron, May 17, 1948 AMC.

13Colin Cameron, Letter to Angus MacInnis, May 13, 1948 AMC.

14Colin Cameron, Letter to Angus MacInnis, May 13, 1948 AMC.


17Winnipeg Citizen, January 28, 1949.

18Dorothy G. Steeves, Letter to Harry Archibald, March 17, 1949, Rodney Young Papers, UBC.
19 Steeves, Letter to Archibald.

20 Dillon O'Leary, "CCF Rebels Agree to Vote for Pact," Vancouver Sun, April 12, 1949, p. 1.


22 Ralph Daly, "Convention Refuses Approve Atlantic Pact," Vancouver Sun, April 18, 1979, p. 1.

Chapter 3

YOUNG'S SECOND SUSPENSION

The year 1949 was an important turning point for the BC CCF. In the provincial and federal elections of June the Party suffered a sharp setback. The June 15th provincial election reduced the party's seats in the legislature by three, leaving it with seven seats in a forty-eight seat legislature. The Coalition government established during the war to stop the spectacular rise of the CCF, had increased both its percentage of the popular vote and its seats in the legislature. In the federal election of June 27th, the CCF was reduced from 32 seats on dissolution to 13 seats with a small drop in its popular vote declining from 15.6% in 1945 to 13.4%.¹

On July 6th, a little over a week after the provincial election, Colin Cameron wrote an assessment of the elections in the CCF News entitled, "An Analysis of the Election Results."² Although the article appeared under Cameron's name and therefore was not the editorial opinion of the CCF News nor of any official body of the BC CCF, the article was to have an important impact because of Cameron's prestige and standing and his association with the left wing of the party.

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Cameron began his analysis of the election results by refuting a number of theories which he suggested the "political coroners" had advanced for the party's failure. Foremost amongst these theories was the view that the BC Convention's refusal to toe the line on the Atlantic Pact issue had caused voters to reject the CCF. Cameron pointed out that members of the party had taken very unpopular positions in the past, including his and Steeves position on the war, J.S. Woodworth's pacifism, and more recently the defense by the CCF in the 1945 elections of the rights of Japanese Canadians. In spite of these unpopular stands the CCF vote had continued to increase.

A further argument advanced by the "political coroners," said Cameron, was the adverse effect of the "Red Flag" incident. This incident refers to the singing of the British Labour anthem, the "Red Flag," at a forum during the election. The newspaper played up the claim by BC Attorney General Gordon Wismer, that the substitution of the "Red Flag" for "God Save the Queen" was a clear indication of the CCF's communist leanings. Cameron suggested that the only harm from the "Red Flag" incident was "the frantically defensive attitude of our spokesmen." Noting that "it must have been disconcerting, to say the least, to recent immigrants from Britain to find the CCF in Canada so desperately disowning the traditional anthem of the British Labour Party, which Mr. Attlee himself sang in the House of Commons after the Labour victory." Cameron
also dismissed the theory that the CCF defeat was a result of the people's being too prosperous. He suggested that there had been even more prosperity in 1941 and 1945, and that the current trend was in fact the reverse, with prosperity "noticeably on the wane for some time."

He concluded by noting that the ruling BC Coalition government's "campaign of distortion, misrepresentation and anti-socialist propaganda was no worse than it had been in the previous elections."

Cameron felt that there was a "germ of truth" in the theories advanced by the "coroners", but the real reason rested with the CCF itself. "Something [had] happened since 1945." The CCF provincially had "ceased to be an aggressive fighting force promulgating a new society and economic doctrine with vigor and persistence and [had] started to become a mere opposition sniping, not too effectively, at the Government's administrative record." The CCF had displayed a "playing safe" attitude that had put the party on the defensive.

Practically all the CCF 'drive' was directed towards criticism of the Coalition government's methods of administration and with defending the CCF against the charge of being a socialist party with socialist aims. We became mere contenders for the job of administering the status quo. For while the CCF has a program containing quite revolutionary implications, all those implications were subtly toned down in the sacred name of 'practicality.'

Cameron suggested that the CCF would have to begin
again to recapture the support it had enjoyed "in our less careful and cautious days." The CCF would have to cease concentrating "on seeking office" and "become searchers of truth."

We shall have to revise Acton's famous dictum that 'all power corrupts.' In light of our experience in British Columbia we now know that the lively anticipation of power corrupts. It breeds timidity and caution and evasion. Fear of failure to achieve power creates a tendency to restrict and curtail plans and commitments. And yet history tells us that almost any worthwhile accomplishment has been the fruit of failure to accomplish something greater. It is still true that if we hope to reach the tree-tops we must aim at the stars. If we content ourselves with aiming at the tree-tops we inevitable fall on our faces in the mud.⁴

Cameron agreed that the failure of the provincial party had had an adverse effect on the CCF in the federal election. But the federal party's focussing of their attack on the Tories helped make possible the massive Liberal victory. As with the provincial party, the failure was brought about by the party's concentration on criticizing the Liberal administration and the Tory alternative, and not putting forward the socialist program.

There has been a notable absence of any effective and concerted presentation of positive socialist ideas. Instead there has been a growing tendency to make common cause with the Liberals, until by the time the election rolled around both Liberals and Conservatives were in the happy position of being able to dismiss the CCF as mere 'Liberals-in-a-hurry.'
This tragic and ludicrous position had not been attained overnight. It is the result of a long series of compromises, a whole catalog of delicate evasions, of careful efforts to appease and placate various elements in our society.

What a few years ago was a burning crusade driving right to the heart of the economic and social ills of our age has become a mere political party engaged in clever footwork to outwit our opponents. Instead of bending every effort to the effective presentation of truth, however unpalatable, our spokesmen have fallen into the disastrous and immoral habit of trying to please. More damning than any position on the North Atlantic Pact, more suicidal than any singing of the 'Red Flag', has been the gentle, piece-meal abandonment of socialist ideas and principles which has finally resulted in the CCF being held up to contempt as the lackey of the Liberal party.

In his concluding paragraph, Cameron made his plea for a change in the party's direction. Having made the case that the CCF was on the road to abandonment of socialist policies he saw the setback of the 1949 elections as the proof of the disastrous results of the recent evolution of the party. It was necessary to turn the party around, and return to the "less careful and cautious days" when the party was "an aggressive fighting force promulgating a new society and economic doctrine with vigor and persistence."

The set-back [sic] of 1949 may yet prove a blessing in disguise if it results in discrediting those influences in the CCF which for some years have been gently pushing us down the primrose path of respectability and caution. The most disastrous result of these elections would be for the CCF to be stamped in
its turn into still more caution, still further attempts to placate elements in our society who will never accept the socialist idea no matter how the pill may be sweetened. That way lies complete oblivion. 6

Cameron's evaluation of the recent evolution of the party provoked an immediate response. For the remainder of the summer, the CCF News was filled with letters and comments on Cameron's assessment. In the article Cameron had spelled out a sentiment shared by many activists in the CCF. This sentiment was shown clearly in the letters supporting his article that poured into the CCF News. In the postwar period the cry that the CCF was "abandoning socialism" had been raised a number of times. But the most recent case, the debate over the North Atlantic Pact had left much bitterness. The 1949 article became a rallying call to those who thought the rightward drift had to be halted and who felt that the party should return to its socialist origins.

Rightist response to Cameron's article appeared within two weeks. Angus MacInnis, wrote an article attacking Cameron's criticism of the party. The tone and emphasis in MacInnis' reply is important, for in many ways these two articles represented the battle lines of the factional war that was developing within the CCF. MacInnis began by attacking Cameron for his article which was "rushed" into print before the democratic and "accepted method of consultation and discussion" had occurred. He further
suggested that the article was filled with "innuendos" and "charges" which were untrue. MacInnis accused Cameron of blaming everyone in the CCF for the election defeat except himself. Pointing out that Cameron had been party President since 1945, MacInnis suggested that Cameron should assume a major share of the blame. Having begun by apportioning blame, MacInnis then wrote, "I do not intend to try and apportion blame for our failure to win the successes we hoped for and expected. I shall leave that for our opponents and for any inside the CCF who are anxious to help them."7

MacInnis, like Cameron discounted the "Red Flag" incident, but suggested that there was some validity to the charge that the North Atlantic Pact debate had contributed to the party's defeat. According to MacInnis, "the CCF BC Section vote on the North Atlantic Pact was used more widely by our opponents than any other election issue."

MacInnis also took issue with Cameron's contention that the CCF started its decline in 1945. According to MacInnis 1948 was "the CCF's best year," with the re-election of the CCF Government in Saskatchewan, with victories in two important federal by-elections in BC and with the CCF replacing the Liberals as the official opposition in Ontario. Because there had been steady progress for the CCF from 1945 to 1948, MacInnis suggested that the defeat of 1949 "must be attributable mainly to the general economic, political and social conditions and circumstances of this present time."
One immediate factor, he said, was the Drew-Duplessis alliance which made the Tories unattractive to the voters. An equally important factor was the slackening of the international "trend towards socialism." This trend he attributed to "disagreements between the Soviet Union and the Western nations" and to the "difficulties socialist governments are having in organizing their economies."8

MacInnis concluded his analysis by pointing out that Cameron's appeal to the CCF to cease to be office-seekers and become seekers of truth was argued on the basis that the new direction would bring the CCF to office sooner. In MacInnis' view there was "no conflict between adhering to truth and seeking office." He ended by advancing the opinion that members must first decide "what is truth" and stated that Cameron's article was far off the mark.9

In their analysis of what the problems had been and in the directions they posed in their two articles, Cameron and MacInnis introduced into the pages of the CCF News a debate which had been brewing in the party for a number of years. Cameron articulated the left wing view. According to this view the party was slipping to the right rapidly. Party leaders were hiding or dropping their socialist program in the name of "practicality" and the party was in danger of becoming "Liberals-in-a-hurry."10

MacInnis, representing the right wing, or "moderates" as they preferred to call themselves, argued on a very different ground. He acknowledged no programmatic shift by the
CCF. The electoral failure was due primarily to a shift by the voters and a change in their sentiments brought about by new political and economic conditions. He raised the organizational question by asserting that Cameron should not have published his article and suggested, not very subtly, that Cameron had helped the opponents of the CCF by attaching blame to the party itself for the defeat. Cameron was dividing the party publicly at a time when it most needed unity.  

Animosities between leading leftists and the right continued to increase after the publications of the articles. In August of 1950 Cameron lodged a complaint against Provincial Executive member Tom Alsbury. Cameron claimed that he was "the victim of a well organized campaign of character assassination" and that Alsbury had threatened him with expulsion, at a public meeting at the Stanley Park Club. The trial board of Frank McKenzie and E.E. Winch dismissed the charges against Alsbury. But the incident demonstrated how the atmosphere in the party had once again reached a critical point, and how the ideological dispute was causing members to develop "vicious clashes of personalities."

In this factional atmosphere a "left wing conference" was called. Meeting at UBC on August 25th 1950, the conference was attended by some 70 members including, Young, Cameron, Steeves, W.W. Lefeaux, as well as other prominent left-wingers like Evelyn Smith, Robert Loosmore, Jack O'Brien and George Weaver.
At this conference, the charges that Cameron had made in his article were the main points of discussion, along with a discussion of the more recent shifts in party policy. The members expressed their dissatisfaction with the recent moves by Coldwell, and in particular his support for Canadian participation in the Korean War and the subsequent endorsement of his stand by the national convention. They resented Coldwell's taking a stand publicly before the convention could express the views of the membership on the question. This move by Coldwell, they felt guaranteed the acceptance by the convention of his position, as a vote against it would have been a vote of non-confidence and would have required a reversal of the official CCF stand. In their eyes the CCF support of the North Atlantic Pact and of NATO, of Canadian participation in the Korean Conflict, and of German rearmament all represented a continuing rightward swing and an abandonment of the Regina Manifesto declaration that "Canada must refuse to be entangled in any more wars fought to make the world safe for capitalism." To add to their alarm, the National convention had decided to re-draft the Regina Manifesto itself. Needless to say the left wing felt that considering the recent evolution of the CCF any re-drafted statement would further abandon socialist principles and would no doubt remove what Cameron had referred to as the "revolutionary implications" of the document.

Young took a prominent part in the left wing con-
ference, absenting himself from the Provincial Executive meeting held on the same day to do so, even though he was second Vice-President of the party. As speaker after speaker expressed dismay over the evolution of the CCF and the dismal prospects for winning the organization to left and Marxist positions, Young intervened to move a motion recommending disaffiliation from the CCF. As Young would later claim, his intention was to "shock" those who "were questioning the advisability of remaining within the movement." In speaking to his motion, he gave arguments first favouring then opposing disaffiliation. The motion was resoundingly defeated, with only three or four persons voting for it.

The Provincial Executive found out about the conference about a month after it occurred when Donald C. McDonald, National Treasurer, obtained a copy of the conference minutes while touring Vancouver Island. At the following Provincial Executive meeting the regular order of business was suspended and the Left Wing Conference was discussed instead. The Executive, acting on information from the minutes, laid charges against Young for actions "contrary to his duty as member and officer of the CCF" and prepared to hold a trial. Young was suspended pending trial, though a special motion was passed to allow him to sit until the end of the Executive meeting.

While the minutes of the Provincial Executive meeting record the formal side of the Executive's action, they do
not explain the motives of some of the Executive members in advancing the charge. Donald C. McDonald in a letter to assistant National Secretary Lorne Ingle reveals that a group on the Provincial Executive saw Young's actions at the left wing conference as a perfect opportunity to "deal with him."

Last night the Websters', MacInnis' and I read through this document [the minutes of the left wing conference] and the trend of the discussion was in favour of seizing upon Rod's incredible faux pas (motion of disaffiliation) to deal with him. I never dared to believe that Rod would make this kind of a break so early; and as the vice-president of the movement. I think it places his action clearly in the category of disloyal, and therefore open to discipline. Frank MacKenzie (sic) (with whom I have just had lunch) is not quite so convinced; though coming around perhaps to the belief that while "legally it might not be construed as disloyalty, certainly in fact it could be presented as such to the membership and would be accepted as such by them."

...My own view is that I don't think there is likelihood of our ever getting more conclusive evidence against Rod for years; to repeat, I am extremely surprised that he made this slip. Further, that since it is my belief sooner or later that they (sic) provincial section is going to have to deal with him this should be seized upon and the situation in Vancouver Centre is permitted to drift, Rod gets the federal nomination again, in my view the National Council would have to refuse endorsement if the provincial council didn't.  

On October 15th, 1950, Young was found guilty by a Trial board chaired by Frank McKenzie. The guilty verdict was not unanimous, nor was the recommendation that he be suspended for four months; one of the seven-man board di-
sented from both decisions. But it appears that as McDonald had predicted, McKenzie had been brought around. In the report of the Trial board, written by McKenzie as chairman, he gave his view on why Young had moved the motion of disaffiliation. McKenzie did not deal with his earlier view that "legally" Young's motion of disaffiliation "might not be construed as disloyal" but chose instead to make it appear as a personality problem.

There is only one explanation of the conduct of the accused which I find adequately supported by the evidence we heard. The first concern of the accused was not the welfare of the CCF, but his own vanity. He thought that most of those present would enjoy toying with the proposal of disaffiliation. They would admire his audacity and they would be grateful to him for the exhilaration of temptation, or the 'shock' as he called it. His conduct was foolish and infantile in the extreme. In gratifying his own childish vanity he acted with reckless disregard of his responsibility as an officer and member for the welfare of the CCF. It follows that his intent was wrongful and that he violated his duty.24

David Jaeger, the dissenting member of the Board, disagreed with McKenzie's assessment of Young's motives. In Jaeger's estimation, Young's purpose in moving the motion was "to create discussion and to shock the meeting into facing the serious developments in the movement."25 Jaeger also maintained that Young "expected the motion to be lost and wanted it to be lost. That is why he placed the arguments for remaining in the CCF at the end of his talk."26
Jaeger concluded his minority report with a suggestion that a reprimand would be more in order than the suspension recommended by the board majority.

I do not concede however, that a Provincial Officer of the CCF should be so indiscreet as to have his name connected with a motion of disaffiliation, regardless of how innocent or helpful his intentions may be. His suspension pending our final decision, the publicity and his own inconveniences should further impress upon him that an officer must be more guarded in word and deed than an ordinary member.27

The Provincial Executive, on hearing the recommendation of the Trial Board, reduced the sentence as recommended in the minority report, "to a reprimand and suspension for the time already served under suspension."28 Following the Provincial Executive's decision the whole incident was considered closed. But the incident did not go unnoticed in Ottawa. Coldwell got the final word on the incident in a letter to MacInnis when he wrote

I saw a brief press dispatch that Rod Young had been tried by a rank and file committee, convicted and his suspension recommended. Apparently the Provincial Executive did not concur on this recommendation. That, I think, is a pity.29

The Rod Young suspension and trial were viewed by many who attended the left wing conference as a first step towards the disciplining of all who had attended it. To lessen the likelihood of future disciplinary actions, the group began to omit names from its published minutes. In
October, at a second meeting, the group took on the name the "Socialist Fellowship." The new organization had an existence of only seven months, but it was seen as a grave threat by some on the Provincial Executive and by the National Executive which during these seven months paid a great deal of attention to the Fellowship.

On March 17th, 1951, the National Executive decided that the Socialist Fellowship had developed "all the characteristics of another political party," and recommended to the BC Provincial Council that, because the Socialist Fellowship could "destroy the unity of our movement and paralyse our work" it should "deal with this matter promptly and effectively." In a personal and confidential letter to Angus MacInnis, Lorne Ingle, assistant National Secretary, made plain the National Executive's feelings towards the Socialist Fellowship. Ingle warned MacInnis that although the Fellowship would probably dissolve to avoid expulsion, its members would continue "their disruptive activities up to and including the gaining of control of the Provincial Convention." Ingle said that "if there is a real danger that their supporters will gain control at the convention then it seems to me that the Provincial Executive must deal with these people prior to the convention." He suggested the "no stone should be left unturned to get rid of Young, Cameron, and Weaver prior to the convention." He recommended that the Provincial Executive should consider the fact that they had power to discipline directly, up to and
including expulsion of any member. To add strength and to get the Provincial party to discipline the left Ingle suggested that the Provincial Executive should be told that if they did not "take firm action" the National Executive would. Ingle anticipated that the Fellowship members would try and avoid giving the Executive grounds for expulsion. In this situation he advised that "every effort must be made to build up a case against them and to draw them out at the Provincial Council meeting on the 7th." Ingle speculated that "Colin is obviously the easiest to draw out and the people planning the strategy might discuss ways and means of getting him to come out in his true colours at the council meeting." On March 24th, the BC Provincial Executive and the National Executive was by this time quite different from that during the earlier exchange between Cameron and Coldwell. The National party had intervened directly in the BC situation, and the BC Provincial Executive did not dispute its right to do so. The National leadership was attempting to bring the BC Section of the party into conformity with the national party, and was indeed planning to eradicate left opposition to the changes they were contemplating. Ingle suggested that Cameron was the weak link of the left, the one to be drawn out and used as a disciplinary example. Ingle was mistaken - Young was his man.

Young's trial and the banning of the Socialist Fellowship marked a significant turn in the fortunes of
the left. From the start the Fellowship was put on the defensive. Young's conviction caused some members to leave the Fellowship lest they too be disciplined. The Fellowship was forced to defend its right to exist, instead of organizing opposition to policy. The ideological questions, the very basis for the organizing of the Fellowship in the first place, were now obscured and the organizational question of "a party within a party" became the focus. A second aspect of this incident is the stronger and firmer role of the National Executive in the affairs of the BC section. As Ingle's private letter to MacInnis discloses, they saw Young as one of the leaders of the left and were out to rid the party of him.

The trial reflects the strategy which was to be followed in getting rid of Young. McKenzie sought to establish that Young was an irresponsible left adventurer. The Socialist Fellowship incident showed that Young's political views could be avoided by dealing with his personal actions or supposed motives. The focus of the attack was to be Young's personality, but the reason remained ideological.
Notes


2Colin Cameron, "An Analysis of the Election Results," CCF News, July 6, 1979, p. 3.

3Cameron, p. 3.

4Cameron, p. 3.

5Cameron, p. 3.

6Cameron, p. 3.


8MacInnis, p. 3.

9MacInnis, p. 3.

10Cameron, p. 3.

11MacInnis, p. 3.

12Colin Cameron, Letter to the Provincial Council, August 26, 1950. AMC.

13Cameron, Letter.


15"Report of Trial Committee Appointed to Hear Charges Against Comrade A.M. Stephen by Comrade M. Glenday," February 1937, p. 2. AMC.


17Regina Manifesto, July 1933, Section 10.

18Cameron, "Analysis," p. 3.

19Minutes of Left Wing Conference, August 25, 1950, CCF Papers, PAC.

21 Donald C. McDonald, Letter to Lorne Ingles, Sept. 20, 1950, CCF Papers, PAC.

22 Provincial Executive Minutes, September 23, 1950.

23 Donald McDonald, Letter.

24 McKenzie, Report, p. 5.


28 Provincial Executive Minutes, October 28, 1950, AMC.

29 M.J. Coldwell, Letter to Angus MacInnis, November 7, 1950, AMC.

30 Minutes of the Socialist Fellowship, August 25, 1950 through March 11, 1951, CCF Papers, PAC.

31 National Executive Minutes, March 17, 1951, AMC.

32 Lorne Ingle, Letter to Angus MacInnis, March 28, 1951, AMC.

33 Ingle, Letter.
Chapter 4

THE 1954 CONVENTION AND AFTERMATH

The Provincial Convention of 1951, though quite a stormy one, with press coverage concentrating on the disunity in the CCF, nevertheless ended without any splits, disciplinary actions or other overt signs of open revolt. Ingle miscalculated the tenacity of the left when he suggested that the left was anticipating expulsions and would therefore "be as quiet as mice until after the convention."¹ Neither the suspension of Young, nor the banning of the Socialist Fellowship was sufficient to silence them and the Provincial Executive was not prepared to move further and precipitate a crisis.

Then in the spring of 1953, the federal ridings held nominating conventions in order to choose their federal candidates for the approaching general election. Ridings were required, by a regulation which dated back to the founding of the CCF, to submit the names of nominees for approval by the Provincial Executive. Approval of Rod Young who was seeking the nomination in Vancouver Centre, was refused by a three to seven vote of the Provincial Executive. The Executive further recommended that Vancouver Centre postpone its nominating convention.² However, the
riding defied the Executive by going ahead with the nominating convention, and chose Rod Young as the CCF candidate for Vancouver Centre. A few days later, the Provincial Executive declared the nominating convention "null and void" and gave notice of disciplinary action against Young. The minutes of the Provincial Executive meeting which refused approval do not include details of the objections raised against Young's candidacy, but record only the decision to refuse approval. However, Angus MacInnis wrote to at least one member of the Provincial Executive before they discussed Young's nomination and advised him that there were very good reasons why Young's nomination should not be approved by the Executive.

Before any disciplinary action could be discussed, the issue was raised at the 1953 Provincial Convention. After a lengthy debate, the question was resolved by the adoption of the following motion: "that Rod Young's name be approved to come before a proper nominating convention in Vancouver Centre." The Executive was thus sustained in its decision to nullify the nominating convention, but overruled in its attempt to disqualify Young as a candidate, a contradiction which led MacInnis to write in a letter to newly elected party leader Arnold Webster, "we do do the damndest things at times." The upshot of the convention decision was that a second nominating convention was held in Vancouver Centre, and Rod Young was once more nominated to represent the CCF.
The final battle which resulted in Young's leaving the CCF began at the 1954 Provincial Convention. At the beginning of the Convention prospects looked quite good for the left wing. Young was elected vice-chairman of the convention and was nominated along with Frank McKenzie for party president. Dorothy G. Steeves later suggested Young stood a very good chance of being elected president as McKenzie "was not a popular candidate." McKenzie was seen as an authoritarian because he was the author of the new strict judicial party rules. If Young had not won the presidency, Steeves reasoned, "he would most certainly have been elected to the executive." But the statements which Young uttered during a debate on the CCF's attitude towards Communists allowed the right wing to reverse the left's hopeful beginnings at the convention. In the elections which took place after the newspapers had featured Young's statements but before the emergency resolution calling for his resignation, Young polled a remarkable 43 votes to McKenzie's 78.

The resolution which launched the discussion on Communists and red-baiting was presented by the Sooke CCF Club.

Whereas the drive against the Communists, the witch hunting and the red baiting is merely a screen from the attack of Big Business on all working class organizations, bringing the threat of fascism. Be it resolved that all members of the CCF be asked to refrain from assisting our class enemies by repeating their slanders on many fine class conscious workers.
The debate on the Sooke resolution polarized, with those in support of it arguing that though the CCF was opposed to the Communist Party, they had to defend the Communists against persecutions, jailings and firings. The CCF, they argued, "should not join with the boss in destroying a working class organization" or the CCF would be the next to be destroyed.10

The opposition to the resolution feared that it could be construed as support of the Communist Party. They maintained that the Communist Party was in fact an enemy of the working class and the destruction of the CPC would only affect the class positively. Finally, they argued that acceptance of the resolution would mean that CCF members could not criticize the Communist Party.

Leading the opposition to the resolution was Tom Alsbury, a Provincial Council member and a prominent leader of the right wing of the party. Alsbury argued that the adoption of the resolution meant that the CCF would be calling the Communists fine working class elements. He stated that it was the aim of the Communist Party to "dominate or destroy" trade unions. Alsbury noted that whenever he "dared to reply" to the attacks on the CCF by the Communist Party, his replies were called "red-baiting" and concluded by saying that if defending the CCF from attacks by the Communist party was red-baiting, "I for one am proud to plead guilty to the charge."11

Speaking only a few minutes after Alsbury, Young
opened his remarks by saying that he was not going to give either a pro-communist or an anti-communist speech. He addressed his comments primarily to Alsbury's reasons for voting against the resolution. Young agreed with Alsbury on the necessity of fighting back against Communist attacks on the CCF, but made clear that it would be wrong for the CCF to attack the Communists merely for being Communists. Young went on to tell the convention that amongst the Communist Party membership were "many fine people" and that the CCF itself had "many former members of the Communist party" in its rank and file. He warned the convention to resist "McCarthyism" and ended his argument by using a similar turn of phrase to that Alsbury had used to end his argument. Young stated:

I have people come into my office, see my name on the door, and walk out again because they say Rod Young is a Communist. I'm proud to have them say that. I'm proud to have them say that, because the real meaning of the term 'communist' is an honorable one which every delegate here should be prepared at any time to accept.12

Young's speech was followed immediately by a point of privilege raised by the Provincial Secretary Harold Thayer, who took exception to Young's suggestion that there were "many former members of the Communist Party in the CCF." Thayer said that to his knowledge there was only one such member, Malcolm Bruce, who had "denounced" the Communist party long ago. Young rose to disagree with Thayer and said, "I can personally introduce the Secretary to at least
fifty CCF members who at one time or another were members of the Communist Party, and he would be honored to meet them, whether he knows it or not." Since the speaker immediately before Young, Byron Johnson of Sooke, had identified himself during his address as a former Communist Party member, Thayer said he feared the image "that the CCF is infiltrated with a horde of former Communists." After the initial exchange between Thayer and Young, the issue was dropped. Robert Strachan who was chairing that session of the convention simply asked all the delegates to try and "control their emotions."¹³

Now, Comrades, I'm going to ask you in this debate, to control your emotions, to control your tempers, and to think of the future of the CCF. I don't want any statements made here at this time that we of the movement will regret. This has been a successful convention so far, and let's keep it that way.¹⁴

A further particularly heated exchange during this debate suggests something of the feeling between the right wing and the left at this time. Reg Bullock, in urging the convention to adopt the Sooke resolution, suggested that some people within the CCF were "joining with the boss in trying to railroad [the Communists] politically." Tom Alsbury who had not been named personally took exception to Bullock's statement and demanded a withdrawal. Alsbury pursued the matter with the Chair, until he got a form of withdrawal, with Bullock withdrawing any remarks which could be "construed as casting aspersions on certain members
of the CCF.  "15 The debate was following the pattern seen in earlier disputes, such as the united front debate of 1937; "A controversy which commenced as a difference in ideology had developed into a vicious clash of personalities." 16 The debate ended with the convention voting to uphold the resolutions committee's recommendation of "no action" on the motion, which constituted a defeat of the resolution.

The following day the Vancouver Province headlined Young's convention statement as "Proud If Called Red, Says CCF's Rod Young." 17 The other city newspapers also picked up on the story and it was featured in newspapers right across the country. But the Province's front page banner greeted delegates as they entered the following day's convention session. It was at this point, after the statements had been featured, and distorted, by the press, that the attacks against Young began.

BC CCF MP Grant MacNeil on a point of privilege argued that the previous day's vote had not been understood by the press and public. MacNeil charged that Rod Young had made "wholly irresponsible remarks" and had set the "movement back ten years." But Strachan ruled that the convention had "rejected without much difference the ideas contained in that particular resolution." 18 Young followed MacNeil's point of privilege with one of his own. He pointed out that while MacNeil in the first part of his query had "a genuine point of privilege," the second part "was a matter of personal attack on myself as a delegate of
this convention." Strachan refused Young's appeal and let stand MacNeil's comment that Young had "set the movement back ten years."¹⁹

But the real battle over Young's alleged statements began with the afternoon session and an emergency resolution introduced by George Home, a trade union leader and a member of the Provincial Executive. Home's resolution called upon the convention to demand Young's resignation from the party.

WHEREAS on several occasions in previous years the CCF (BC-Yukon Section) has found it necessary to question Rod Young's loyalty to the policies declared by the CCF, AND WHEREAS his membership rights were not withdrawn because of his assurance that he would not commit further acts of disloyalty, AND WHEREAS it is required under the CCF Constitution that a CCF member cannot retain membership in the CCF if openly professing loyalty to any other political belief, AND WHEREAS on June the 11th in an open convention of the CCF Rod Young stated that he was proud to be called a Communist. 

BE IT RESOLVED that in the opinion of this convention Rod Young should resign from membership in the CCF for making statements detrimental to the CCF.²⁰

Home further asked that the debate take place in a closed session but the convention decided that as the offending comments had taken place in front of the press, the ensuing debate should also take place in an open session.²¹

Young opened the debate on the resolution by suggesting that the only reason for the controversy was because there were "genuine differences of opinion" within the CCF. Young reminded the convention that he had made his comment "because if [people] knew the real meaning of the word
'communist' there would be nothing to be disgraced about."

He pointed out that his statement about ex-communist party members in the CCF was merely to make the point that the CCF should work with and "give full confidence" to "a communist who abandoned the Communist Party and truthfully joined the CCF." Young further pointed out that, if he had said that he was in favour of "the Communist party or Communism as it is used by ignorant people who do not understand scientific socialism," he would have been expelled from his profession as a barrister.

As numerous speakers were to point out, Young used the work "communist" in a very "particular sense," in the old SPC tradition of referring to Marxist and scientific socialists.

Among those defending Young was Margaret Erickson, secretary of the Stanley Park Club, who argued as Young had, that there was nothing wrong with the term "communist" and that the real problem was the newspaper's sensationalist coverage of Young's statements. Erickson explained that the word "communist" meant "communal property" and the "sharing of things in common" and that she could "see nothing wrong with the word 'communist'" asking sarcastically if she too was to be expelled. She further argued that a man had told the convention just that morning that "women shouldn't have equal pay." She then pointedly asked "if that hits the headlines tonight, what are we going to do with him?"

David Stupich, a member of the Provincial Executive
took up the implied charge in the resolution that Young was a Communist party member. Stupich told the convention that until it could be proven that Young was in fact "an active supporter of some other political party," he should be taken at "his word that he is a supporter of the CCF and as such is a member of the CCF." Stupich concluded by saying that if Young was forced to resign, he hoped that Young would apply to re-join and that he as a member of the Provincial Executive would support Young's application.²⁴

Dorothy G. Steeves opposed the resolution noting first that she had the previous year been one of Young's defenders in his campaign to reverse the Provincial Executive's decision disqualifying him as a federal candidate. Although, she said, she doubted whether she would be willing to defend that right again, Steeves raised the point that the resolution amounted to trial by convention and was a break with judicial procedure in the CCF, and undemocratic. Steeves suggested that Young's action showed a great deal about his "irresponsibility and his attitude towards the CCF" but not that he was "connected with or sympathetic to the Communist party." Steeves asked the convention to "dissociate" itself from and "censure" Young for his statements, but to vote against the resolution as it was a "motion of expulsion" without trial.²⁵

A day later in a letter to Colin Cameron, Steeves explained her motive for her rather harsh treatment of Young during the resignation debate. She explained that
the purpose of Home's emergency resolution was "to take an angry convention at flood tide and expel someone the rightists had been trying to get out for a long time." In this situation she saw it as necessary to argue that Young should be censured and that the convention should dissociate itself from Young's remarks, as this would be the only way to prevent his expulsion. The right wing, as Steeves correctly observed, was out to get rid of Young once and for all.26

George Home, who followed Young in the debate, began by taking up the question of Young's "particular" use of the term "communist." Home construed Young's statement to mean that "a true communist is a scientific socialist," thus further proving his point that Young was indeed a communist. Home characterized Young as an "intellectual" and as "irresponsible," arguing that an "intellectual cannot be irresponsible," He contended that Young was therefore "deliberate" in his irresponsibility. Home also suggested that the CCF lost elections "because of irresponsible statements made by people who profess to be expressing the policies of the CCF."27 Joseph Corsbie, retiring Provincial President added that it was about time that the CCF showed the people of BC that they disagreed with Young.28

In reply to the defence that the real problem was the newspaper's sensationalist coverage of Young's statements, a Mrs. Dawson rose to explain that this was not the first time that a Rod Young statement had made front page news. She suggested that Young "had a virtual monopoly of irre-
sponsible statements." She argued that Young had been making such statements for a number of years and this time he had gone too far and had "laid himself wide open" and the party should take advantage of this opportunity to rid themselves of him.29

Alex Macdonald, a member of the Provincial Executive, attacked Young saying that it was "no longer a matter of personalities." it was essential to "put the movement ahead of personalities" and Young represented "a time bomb ticking within the CCF."30

Young, as the defendant in the case, and as opening speaker was given the right to close the debate. He used his summation to defend, not specifically what he had said, but his and the left's view of the party. The object of the CCF, he argued, was to build a party not merely that people would want to vote for since "people have voted for some terrible parties," but to build a party that would be "representative of the working class organized around the principles of socialism." Young concluded by telling the convention, "You will never get rid of what I said. You'll only get rid of me."31

By a close vote of 62 to 55 the convention voted down the resolution calling for Young's resignation, and he retained his membership in the CCF. After the resolution's defeat, a second motion dissociating the convention "from any statements made by Rod Young on the question of Communists and Communism" was quickly adopted by a very
large majority.\textsuperscript{32}

The convention was without doubt the best chance the right wing had to date to get rid of Young, yet still the membership refused to allow him to be expelled and having polled over 1/3 of the vote for president, Young represented a grave threat to the right wing. This they agreed on - Frank McKenzie said that Young would have to be gotten rid of, and M.J. Coldwell expressed great displeasure at the thought of Young being a delegate to the federal party convention.\textsuperscript{33} If Young could not be gotten rid of at the convention, then it would have to be done afterwards.

After the Convention, BC newspapers continued to comment on the Young affair, generally suggesting that the party had to discipline Young and the left if it was going to be successful. Two days after the convention, for instance the \textit{Province} published an editorial entitled, "Undoing A Lot of Good Work."\textsuperscript{34} The \textit{Province} argued that even though "Mr. Young and some of the other extremists in the CCF party" were not the main body of the party, the mere fact that they were able to "get a hearing, and some support at a party convention is disquieting." The \textit{Province} applauded the efforts of the CCF leaders such as Grant MacNeil and Tom Alsbury who had attempted to differentiate between "legitimate freedom of thought" and "disloyalty to our own political system." The editorialist warned that the CCF "in falling over backwards to stay away from McCarthyism" ran the risk of "falling into the waiting arms of the
Though it would be wrong to suggest that these newspaper editorials and stories by themselves caused further action to be taken, they had some impact as was made clear at the convention.

In addition to agitation by the newspapers, CCF meetings throughout the province discussed Young's conduct at the convention. Six CCF Clubs sent letters to the Provincial Executive demanding it take disciplinary action against Young.

On July 10th, 1954, almost a month after Young had made his celebrated statement on Communists, the Provincial Executive acted in response to these pressures by suspending Young pending trial to be held on July 24th on the following charges:

That Rod Young at the 1954 Provincial Convention stated that he was proud to be called a Communist, knowing that in so doing he would misrepresent the CCF and bring it into undeserved disrepute, contrary to his duty as a member and contrary to the constitution of the CCF.

The fact that Young had already been "acquitted" on the very same charges by the convention, made the move by the Executive constitutionally questionable. In the opinion of D.G. Steeves, who was widely recognized in the CCF as an expert on its constitution, "the executive took the wholly illegal interpretation of the constitution that as the people had demanded that Rod be tried, they had no alternative."

Young, on learning that he was once more to be tried
by the party, resigned from the CCF. In a statement to the press he said that the question of his statements at the convention had been dealt with "in open convention, the highest governing body of the CCF," the Provincial Executive "had no power to try me on this issue a second time." As he would be tried by the Executive which had "already condemned" him, he felt that the trial would be "unconstitutional" and a "travesty." Young re-affirmed his "complete loyalty to the party's members and to the Regina Manifesto." Finally he said that he was relinquishing his membership in the interests of the party so as to "defeat the evil intentions of those officers who desire to precipitate a split." In a separate letter of resignation to Stanley Park Club Secretary, Margaret Erickson, Young said that he was driven to resign so as to answer publicly the charges that were being laid for a second time.

Young was no doubt correct in his claim that it was unconstitutional for the Executive to try him after having been tried by the Convention, but this does not explain why Young resigned instead of taking the unconstitutional act by the Executive to the membership, to the Provincial Council, and to the Convention, as he had done so often before. The other reasons Young gave for resigning, the need to answer the charges publicly and the desire not to precipitate a split appear to be the main causes for his resignation.

Young's argument that he needed to defend himself
publicly carries a great deal of weight when one considers his position as a newly-called lawyer. As Young had mentioned in his convention speech, he already had a reputation as a "communist."\(^{42}\) Young had in fact been questioned specifically about his political views at the time of his admission to the bar.\(^{43}\) It is possible that Young's expulsion from the CCF for being a "communist" might have resulted in action against him by the Law Society. As for the possibility of a split, Young and the left were quite aware of the right wing's desire to discipline the left. Steeves refers to the right wing as "smelling round (sic) for evidence to try and convict others."\(^{44}\)

Young's resignation was front page news for a number of days with the three Vancouver newspapers applauding the Executive's decision to take action. The *Vancouver Sun* in an editorial on July 13th, entitled, "Shedding a Liability," commented on the resignation of Young stating that it "appears to be the best thing both for himself and the party." An interesting aspect of the *Sun*'s editorial was its estimation of the direction of the CCF. The editorial noted a change in "the mood of politics" and stated that "the CCF in BC today sees a reaction against left wing radicalism and has hopes of proving an acceptable alternative government."

The *Sun* stated that the CCF "must be discreet in its radicalism and those who refuse to be discreet, who insist upon being ruggedly honest with fundamental socialist principles, have to be disciplined or get out." The editorial ended by
suggesting that the only direction left for the CCF "is to try to prove to the voters it is actually the real Liberal party of BC. With a slight semi-socialist disguise of course."  

After reading Young's statement to the press and various newspaper articles dealing with his resignation, a meeting of the table officers of the Provincial Executive ordered that "additional charges against Rodney Young" arising out of his press statements should be heard at the July 24th trial. On learning of the new charges Young conveyed to Provincial Secretary Harold Thayer, his astonishment at still being treated as a member of the CCF even after he had resigned. He warned Thayer, that if he did not cease attacks on Young's character, he would take legal action against him. Young baited Thayer by stating it was a "well-known fact that no one is ever allowed to resign from the Communist Party, but is always expelled and his character is always assassinated in the Communist-controlled press." Young suggested that this had not been the case with the "democratic socialist party where it is customary for resignations to be received automatically."  

As the date for the trial approached the Provincial Executive took action to end the anomalous situation. At a special meeting on July 23rd it declared that "in view of the resignation of Rodney Young from the CCF" the charges against Young were "adjourned;" and the executive would communicate its decision to all interested parties.
this same meeting letters of protest opposing the laying of charges against Young were received from six CCF Clubs and a number of prominent individuals within the party. But the major stumbling block for Young's supporters and for those interested in Young's reinstatement, was the fact that Young had himself resigned. Young's resignation made it difficult for his supporters even to press for condemnation of the Executive's action.

Both the News-Herald and the Vancouver Sun ran articles on the possibility of Young being reinstated. David Stupich a member of the Provincial Executive questioned the authority of the Executive in taking action against Young and suggested that Young could be reinstated in September by the Provincial Council overruling the Executive's decision. Frank Snowsell, another Provincial Executive member, suggested that if Young was not reinstated by the Provincial Council, then action could be taken at the following year's convention.

The September Provincial Council meeting sustained the Executive's action against Young, but more significantly adopted a new program entitled, "The CCF Program For Action." This new program eliminated what Cameron had referred to as the "revolutionary implication" of the old program. Arguing that the CCF could "no longer go from defeat to defeat," it defined the goals of the CCF - as those of a political party "organized for the purpose of assuming the responsibility of government." The program
had a strong authoritarian tone.

Our program for victory will demand qualities of loyalty and self-discipline which we have not yet been prepared to impose upon ourselves, either as individuals or as a movement. Our program for victory will demand that we keep our eyes on the long-range goals of socialism and our feet on the ground immediately beneath us.

Unless we are prepared for such hard work, such over-all planning, such loyalty and such self-discipline, we may as well resign ourselves to becoming merely a debating group, completely ineffective in the struggle for world socialism.

The Provincial Executive will now ask the membership to observe the necessary self-discipline in regard to statements outside of the party and expects the co-operation of the membership in dealing with those who consistently disregard the movement's welfare in their statements and action.54

These three paragraphs on loyalty and self-discipline were used by the Executive in justifying later actions against the North Vancouver Association and in condemning opposition within the party to majority policies.

Though Young was outside of the party, his influence had not yet disappeared. After his resignation, some riding associations still sought to use Young to speak at their conferences. In the fall of 1954, the North Vancouver Constituency Association invited him to give a talk as part of their educational program on "The Human Race is not White." The Provincial Executive responded with a resolution declaring that no CCF organization would be permitted to
authorize, promote or assist in a meeting addressed by "one Rod Young." The North Vancouver Constituency Association continued to advertise their meeting and refused to accept the Provincial Executive's ban. The Executive therefore suspended the 23 members of the association involved in the educational program and on January 10th 1955 tried them. They were convicted and suspended for the remainder of the month.

The North Vancouver suspensions along with the handling of the Rod Young case were both protested at the 1955 Convention. But after the 1954 suspension of Young an important shift had taken place in the party. The left was now completely on the defensive. Disciplinary action could now take place with comparative ease and opposition to policy was now more easily labelled disloyal.

At the 1955 convention the right wing consolidated the positions they had gained. The Executive submitted a report with four specific recommendations; ratification of the Executive's handling of the Rod Young case, their handling of the North Vancouver case, their ban on Young speaking at CCF sponsored events, and adoption of the "CCF Program For Action." Key to the Executive report and most contentious, was its analysis of the last four years of party history. The Executive reported that in the years 1950 and 1951 the party had experienced a dramatic drop in membership. The fall in party membership, they argued was the fault of the Socialist Fellowship, which they claimed
had "bled" the party. The report suggested that the failure to obtain sufficient votes in 1952 to form the government rested with the socialist Fellowship. 57

In 1952 a few more votes for the two CCF candidates in a single riding, Vancouver-Burrard, would have resulted in the formation of a CCF government and could have changed the course of British Columbia history. Those extra votes would have been won had Vancouver-Burrard not been weakened by the long Fellowship struggle in that constituency. There were other ridings, too, which could have been won but were lost by narrow margins because of the havoc wrought in 1950 and 1951.

Many factors determine the outcome of an election. Our organizational strength is one of them. Had the Socialist Fellowship not reduced our strength it would have sufficed to bring in the additional votes needed for the establishment of a CCF government in 1952. 58

There was some opposition to the Executive's report. Two Executive members, David Stupich and former party president Joseph Corsbie, refused to sign the report because they disagreed with the "official" history that it incorporated. 59 The report's acceptance meant that the party now officially laid the blame on the Socialist Fellowship and the left wing for the defeats it had experienced for the last few years. The report was adopted and with it, the right wing was securely in the leadership and in control of the BC CCF.

The defeat of the left in the BC CCF brought an end to the acceptance by the party of Marxist views. Since its origins, Marxist had been a legitimate component of the
widely varying views which made up the CCF. But 1954 marked the end of the Marxist tradition in the CCF.

A number of leftist within the party published in the fall of 1954 a newsletter which was signed simply "Box more 16, Vancouver, B.C." The "Box 16" group demonstrated clearly than anything which followed it, the complete defeat of the left. The newsletter was not simply anonymous, it was underground. From 1954 on, the left did not dare again to overtly organize opposition in the BC party.

Individual Marxists, not Young of course, were able to remain in the party but their influence was greatly reduced. Colin Cameron, who was elected to Parliament in 1953, stayed for the most part out of the affairs of the Provincial party. Steeves' name was removed from the masthead of the CCF News, a step which she was grateful for, as the paper now contained very little with which she agreed. 60 Both Steeves and W.W. Lefeaux acted as lawyers for the defense in the trial of the North Vancouver members.

Key to the victory of the right wing, was the disciplining of Young. The charges of irresponsibility and vanity levelled against Young were designed, or at least served, to disguise very real political differences under a covering of personal abuse. It further contributed to the right wing's ability to make the left the scapegoat for the party's failures. Rod Young became the stick with which the right successfully beat the left.
Notes

1 Lorne Ingle, Letter to Angus MacInnis, March 28, 1951, AMC.
2 Provincial Executive Minutes, March 22, 1953, CCF Papers, PAC.
3 Provincial Executive Minutes, April 4, 1953, AMC.
4 Angus MacInnis, Letter to Alex Macdonald, March 19, 1953, AMC.
5 Provincial Convention Minutes, April 10, 1953, AMC.
6 Angus MacInnis, Letter to Arnold Webster, April 19, 1953, AMC.
7 Dorothy G. Steeves, Letter to Colin Cameron, June 13, 1954, Colin Cameron Papers, UBC.
8 Provincial Convention Minutes, June 10, 11, 12, 1954, AMC.
9 Provincial Convention Minutes, 1954
10 Preamble to Resolution #42, (Sooke).
12 Transcript, pp. 4-5.
13 Transcript, pp. 5-6.
14 Transcript, p. 6.
15 Transcript, pp. 8-11.
16 "Report of the Trial Committee Appointed to Hear Charges Against Comrade A.M. Stephen by Comrade M. Glenday," February 1937, p. 2. AMC.
18 Provincial Convention Transcript, Morning Session, June 12, 1954, pp. 19A-19B, AMC.
19 Transcript, pp. 19A-19B.
20 Provincial Convention Transcript, Afternoon Session, June 12, 1954, p. 16.
21 Transcript, pp. 16-17.
22 Transcript, pp. 17-18.
25 Transcript, pp. 33-34.
26 Steeves, Letter.
27 Transcript, pp. 18-19.
28 Transcript, pp. 19-20.
29 Transcript, p. 25.
30 Transcript, p. 27.
31 Transcript, p. 41.
32 Provincial Convention Minutes, June 12, 1954.
33 Young, Anatomy of a Party, p. 283.
34 "Undoing A Lot Of Good Work," Vancouver Province, June 14, 1954.
35 "Undoing A Lot Of Good Work," Vancouver Province.
36 Provincial Executive Minutes, July 10, 1954, AMC.
37 Minutes, July 10, 1954.
38 Dorothy G. Steeves, Letter to Colin Cameron, November 8, 1954, Colin Cameron Papers.
39 Rod Young, "Statement to the Press," (No date, probably July 10, 1954), AMC.
40 Young, "Statement to the Press."
41 Rod Young, Letter to Margaret Erickson, July 10, 1954, AMC.
42 At this time professed communists were denied entry into the legal profession.
43 Personal Interview with Rod Young, March 15, 1978.
45"Shedding a Liability" Vancouver Sun, July 13, 1954.

46Provincial Executive Table Officer's Minutes, July 13, 1954, AMC.

47"Rod Young Warns CCF Secretary," Vancouver Sun, July 16, 1954, p. 1.

48Provincial Executive Minutes, July 23, 1954, AMC.


52Provincial Council Minutes, September 18, 19, 1954, CCF Papers, PAC.


54"The CCF Program for Action."

55Provincial Executive Minutes, December 1, 1954, AMC.

56Provincial Executive Minutes, including Report on North Vancouver Trial, January 22, 1955, CCF Papers, PAC.

57"Report of the Provincial Executive on Organizational Affairs to 1955 Provincial Convention," pp. 32-34.

58Report, p. 33.


60Dorothy G. Steeves, Letter to Colin Cameron, Colin Cameron Papers.
Conclusion

The 1954 suspension of Rod Young by the Provincial Executive of the BC CCF was an important disciplinary action which signalled a lasting victory of the right wing over the left wing of the party. The fact that the Executive could discipline as prominent a leader of the left as Young gave a clear warning to those who shared his views: There was no longer room in the party for those "who insisted upon being ruggedly honest with fundamental socialist principles." The disciplining of Young coincided with the adoption of the party's new program, "The CCF Plan For Action." This program freed the hand of the Executive to discipline party dissidents and in fact required it. The party now had a new definition of loyalty: acts which the Executive deemed to be harmful to the party were acts of disloyalty.

In the postwar period, a number of developments prepared the ground from which the Executive was able to discipline the left. The Executive throughout the period consisted of many "moderates" or right wingers and a few leftists. The left was always able to elect some of its prominent spokespersons to the Executive but was never able to win control of the Executive. The hesitancy of the right
wingers on the Executive in taking disciplinary action was based on the likelihood that their actions would be overturned by the membership, who, by party tradition, did not allow members disciplined simply for their political views.

Marxists from the Socialist Party of Canada had been part of the major founding component of the BC CCF, and were viewed by the membership as an important and legitimate part of the party. But as early as 1949, the right wing attempted to place the blame for the party's electoral failure on the left. They argued that the left wing kept the party divided organizationally, and that it frightened off supporters and potential supporters by its rhetoric. These accusations did not at first have the desired effect. Moreover, the BC party received its highest vote in 1952, long after other sections of the CCF, with the exception of Saskatchewan, had gone into decline. But after the 1952 election, which the party saw as a loss, the left was pointed to more and more as the scapegoat for the party's failures.

The problem remained to steel the Executive into action against the left. In 1951 the Executive moved to ban the Socialist Fellowship only after it had been declared "a party within a party" by the National Council. This move obscured the real question in the battle against the Socialist Fellowship. Although it was banned on organizational grounds, the Fellowship was first and foremost an ideological challenge to the leadership. After its dis-
solution, this method of opposition to party policy which the Fellowship had raised was avoided. The lesson was clear. Disciplinary action against the left could take place on "organizational" and, as Young's 1950 suspension demonstrated, "personal" grounds. By avoiding direct ideological confrontation and substituting "personal" and "organizational" grounds the Executive was able to initiate action against the left without facing defeat from the membership.

Rod Young, unfortunately for the left of the party, fell easy prey to the right wing's strategy. He made statements which, the newspapers printed out of context - statements which, when presented in such a sensational manner, embarrassed his friends as well as his opponents. But while embarrassing, his remarks would not have been seen as disloyal in an earlier period. In the new atmosphere of the cold war, with the right wing arguing that anything that embarrassed the party was disloyal, the charge that Young's statements were disloyal was accepted by a majority of party members. The attack on Young as a leader of the left placed the whole of the left wing on the defensive. Rod Young was the test case out of which the new disciplinary code was derived.

Both D.J. Roberts in her thesis, and Professor Walter Young in Anatomy of a Party, are correct in their general assessment of the Rod Young affair. They both recognize it as being part of the campaign against the
left of the party, and as such a key disciplinary action. But the conclusion drawn by Professor Young in "Ideology, Personality and the Origins of the CCF in British Columbia," that ideology is "invariably" a cover for personal conflict or personal ambition is not born out in the case of Rod Young. In fact, the opposite is true. An important ideological dispute within the party was disguised as a problem of personality. It is far from being a "truism of the left in British Columbia," as professor Young claims, that the leftists disguised their ambitions with ideological disputes. Rather, it was the right which disguised ideological disputes as "organizational" and "personal" conflicts by persuading party members and the public the fight against Young was a "little matter of personality."

The Rod Young affair further calls into question the underlying premise of Professor Young in his writing on the Connell affair. Walter Young argues that to prove someone is ambitious is to show that he or she subordinates his or her ideological views to the drive for personal advancement. Again, this does not appear to apply in the case of Rod Young. Rod Young, it can easily be conceded, was ambitious. He sought and ran for important and prestigious positions in the party. But he did not, as ambition would dictate, abandon his unpopular views as it became more and more clear that they were bringing him into conflict with powerful elements in the party. This was because his ambition and his ideological views were inseparable.
Young was ambitious not simply to get ahead personally, but to win the party as a whole to his ideological views.

The Rod Young affair is a single but significant incident in the history of the BC CCF which shows how ideological disputes were consciously disguised as "organizational" and "personal" problems. One cannot avoid asking if this is an isolated case or does this case represent a pattern for the right wing of the BC CCF? Further case studies are necessary to establish whether such a pattern does indeed exist.

The period that followed Young's resignation from the party was not characterized by significant internal power struggles, or at least not in terms of a left and right wing. But with the late 1960's and early 1970's there occurred a resurgence of the left, in particular with the appearance of the Waffle. Groupings such as the Waffle, the Vancouver Area Council, or even the Women's Committee have all represented ideological challenges within the BC NDP in recent years. It would be valuable to see to what extent, if any, the tactics that were used against Rod Young were used against the left of the 1970's. How did the success of the NDP in forming a government in 1972, and its defeat in 1975, affect the internal struggles in the party? A study of these years would be valuable in establishing whether the right wing tactic employed in the Young affair, was an isolated incident, or remains a consistent strategy of the party's right wing.
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VII. INTERVIEWS
