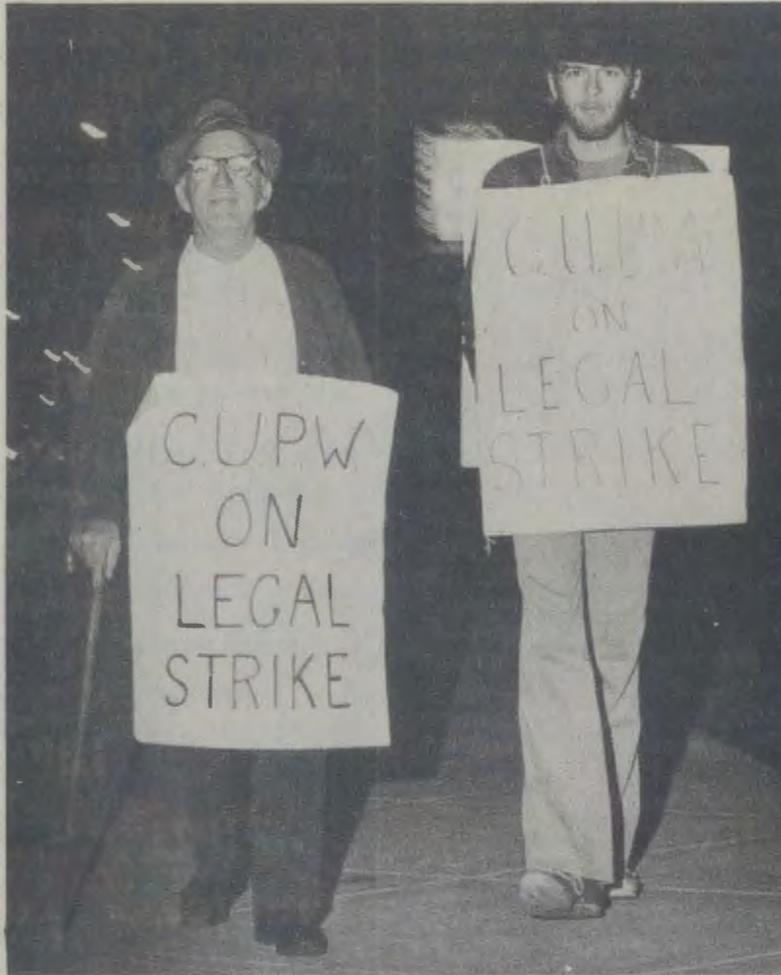


MEMORIES OF BUILDING THE UAW

By J. S. Napier

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Jim Napier marching in solidarity with the Postal Strikers, 1975 "I have not mellowed or softened with the passing years."

Foreword

A great deal has been written about the United Auto Workers' union. Unfortunately, most of it was written by people too young to have been personally involved in the struggles of the early years or by those who have something to lose should the truth be known. In particular, I refer to the PhD thesis of M.L. Veres of the University of Windsor, Ontario, which purports to be a history of the early years of the UAW in Windsor. Of those interviewed for this study, all but one were either right-wingers or actual scabs during the struggles.

I am now close to sixty-five years of age. Recently I suffered two heart attacks. Before I go, I submit this little history for one reason only — to set the record straight.

*Fraternally,
J.S. Napier, April 1975.
Hamilton, Ontario.*

Contents

Beginnings	6	
The First Active Member in Windsor		8
Strike at Kelsey Wheel	12	
UAW's First Win	18	
Organizing GM Oshawa	21	
UAW Rolling in Windsor	25	
Capitalist Counter-Attack	30	
Bosses Step Up Anti-red Drive		33
Napier Fired by Right wing	36	
Arrested	38	
Obstacles: Bosses Bomb Hoax and the CCF		41
Unity Group Dumps the Right	44	
Left Creates a President	47	
United Front — Fatal Compromise		49
Walkout at Chrysler Plant Two	51	
Union Wins at Ford	56	
Back From the War	61	
Fighting Conclusion: Join CPL	63	

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THE HISTORY OF THE

The history of the world is a vast and complex subject, encompassing the lives and actions of countless individuals and the events that have shaped our planet. From the dawn of time to the present day, the human story is one of constant change and evolution. The early civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Mediterranean laid the foundations of modern society, with their laws, art, and science. The Middle Ages saw the rise of the Christian Church and the Crusades, while the Renaissance brought a new emphasis on humanism and the arts. The modern era is characterized by the Industrial Revolution, the rise of nation-states, and the challenges of the 20th century, including two world wars and the Cold War. Today, we face new challenges such as climate change, globalization, and technological advancement, which will continue to shape the future of our world.

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Introduction

The Canadian Party of Labour is proud to present "Memories of Building the UAW". This account of the origins of the UAW is presently being serialized in **THE WORKER**, the newspaper of the Canadian Party of Labour, and has been in such demand that the Party was obliged to assemble the pamphlet before the entire series was run.

"Memories of Building the UAW" is a history, written by the first UAW member in Canada, that does not pander to the big names of the union — the Reuthers, Millard, McDermott, Woodcock, etc. It gives credit for laying the union's foundations to the ordinary autoworkers who risked their lives and family incomes to build a fighting organization. It gives credit as well to the old Communist Parties of Canada and the US that provided them the leadership.

"Memories of Building the UAW" also demonstrates the strategic mistake of the Communist Parties in abandoning the idea that communists must openly lead the unions — as communists. This error put the communist unionists on the losing end of a boss inspired anti-communist drive led by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the forerunner of the present New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Catholic Church.

Jim Napier illustrates over and over again the suffering brought upon the rank and file by this successful anti-communist attack. A central lesson to Brother Napier's story is that Canadian workers of today must dump the NDP hacks who throttle our unions and replace them with revolutionary communists.

Jim's account of the origins of the UAW demonstrates every contention concerning unionism put forward by the Canadian Party of Labour: that international unionism makes Canadian workers

stronger; that communist leadership is the key to healthy unionism; that the fight for the shorter work week means carrying the offensive to the ruling class and to organizing the unorganized; that racism, male chauvinism, and nationalism must be defeated in order to unite workers.

"Memories of Building the UAW" is also the story of a working man, the son of a Scottish coal-miner, a coal miner, immigrant, autoworker, husband and father, union official and revolutionary, also victim of anti-communism, unemployment and the blacklist, a man who refuses to be beaten, and never will be.

This is a true story. When workers seize political power in this country and the real history of the working class is finally taught, the official union histories will be consigned to the trashcan where they belong and the new histories will be made of stuff like this. While the schoolchildren of the future will learn of the Woodcocks and McDermotts in the footnotes at the end of chapters, the heroes in those chapters will be communist fighters like James S. Napier.

Jim tells his story candidly, letting the chips fall where they may. A class conscious worker can get at "what happened", both the errors and wisdom. This is no manicured legend with an all-knowing hero who is always right yet somehow loses terribly, as in the book *Brother Bill McKie*, a feeble "first hand" account of the origins of the UAW published by the revisionist Communist Party USA. Napier gives us the truth to chew on and therefore stronger teeth.

In printing this history, we salute Jim Napier and all the communist workers who fought and suffered to create for us a trade union movement in Canada. Workers inspired by their story can best honour their memory by joining the Canadian Party of Labour in finishing the job they began.

January 1976

Beginnings

«Desperate and Determined»

The spark that kindled the fire for organization at Kelsey Wheel was the birth of my daughter on the 31st of July 1936. On the same date, in 1910, I was born in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, Scotland.

Unlike my son, then fourteen months old, my daughter was not born in a hospital. We could not afford one. My son arrived in the security of the Metropolitan Hospital in Windsor by reason of his parents being "capitalists" — it took us nine months to save seventy-five dollars for the hospital services. The doctor was content to receive his fee on an installment basis. At that time, I was working at Kelsey Wheel and renting a furnished apartment within walking distance of the plant.

However, when I was laid off, we had to give up the apartment and rent a four room house. As we had to buy furniture, we had no money for a hospital for the baby's birth.

At the very moment that the doctor walked out of the room in which my daughter had just uttered her first cries, an investigator from the Welfare Department arrived at the door. The doctor announced that I was the father of a lovely little girl. The investigator informed me that my application for assistance had been denied. I had spent "too much" of my earnings on furniture.

There was no point arguing with the investigator. My daughter's cries ended the conversation.

I told my mother-in-law I was going to the welfare office. I struck out with a firm resolve and in mounting rage. I was desperate and determined — I might end up in jail, but my family was going to get the necessities of life.

As I said, it was my own twenty-sixth birthday. As I walked, I thought of my life to date.

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The coal mining village of Newton, located about five miles from Glasgow, was bordered on one side by the River Clyde and on the other side by the London, Midland, and Scottish Railroad. On the far side of the railroad tracks, the largest steel producing works were located, surrounded by coal pits that supplied the blast furnaces, roaring day and night. The miners worked long hours to keep the furnaces well-stoked, being mindful that the tools of war were moulded and carved from steel. During the crucial years of World War I, miners were paid better wages. Their families reflected this increase in better clothes and foods not under strict rationing. Our elders, I have been told, were in constant fear, since the enemy viewed the Hallside steel works as a priority target, that if their planes penetrated our defenses, we would be destroyed as well. Children were shielded from the fears of our elders who refrained from voicing their concern when we were around.

All this came to an abrupt end when hostilities ceased. Coal and coal miners had served their purpose. Coal was being taken from Germany as part of war reparations. The sons of coal miners and fathers of small children were returning to the villages to mass unemployment and wages back to poverty level. The victorious army, navy, and air force had served their purposes. It was an easy matter to put planes and ships in mothballs and forget them. Not so easy with the workers. They were talking revolution.

It was at this point that the boy, Jim Napier, started to become aware of what exploitation really meant. Mother and father could be heard talking of the callousness of those in high places. Childhood memories are always fuzzy until a certain age. My first clear memory is Red Friday 1919. I was nine years old but the Georges Square riot will live in my mind forever. I saw with my own eyes the men from our villages returning home still bleeding from the pounding they took from the mounted police.

The demonstration was intended as a protest against unemployment and was led by Emmanuel Shinwell and William Gallacher, a communist who made no secret of his affiliation. Groups of workers were led by their village brass bands. The march to Glasgow had a carnival atmosphere — until the cops attacked. Our men never actually made it to Georges Square. They were cut off, massacred, and sent home bleeding. Gallacher and Shinwell were given prison terms.

Two years later, the British coal miners called a nation-wide strike against more wage cuts. At that time, we school children were fed soup once a day with stale bread to dunk in it. In 1926, the coal miners figured prominently in the General Strike.

I suppose the uncertainty of affording a good life for our family of three girls and five boys in Scotland prompted my parents to migrate to Canada. My father and brother Alex ended up living in Windsor and working at Ford. While standing outside the government employment office one morning, I was given a job as a pipe fitter's helper working on Windsor's first Loblaw store at the corner of Gladstone and Tecumseh.

It was at this building I was to meet three families who shaped my future, and all because of a mouse trap. The building's owner hired me to look after the place. The duties included returning to the building twice for no extra pay — to turn off the furnace at night and on again before the tenants rose. This problem called for some deep thinking. One day, while staring at the square D switch, it occurred to me to that a clock rigged by a mouse trap mechanism might automatically trip the switch. The first contraption wasn't strong enough. Bobby Clark, a brother

of one of the building's tenants, as well as Leo Gillette and his brother-in-law Alex Parent, other tenants, pitched in to make the second effort a success. Little did we know then that a friendship of Scottish and Irish immigrants and a French Canadian brought about by a clock, a mouse trap, and a square D switch would bring us together eight years later when industrial unionism crossed the Detroit River into Canada.

It was Bobby Clark, a brother of Ken Clark, who will be mentioned oftentimes in this story, who got me a job at Kelsey Wheel in the closing days of 1928. Ken arrived in Canada later and was hired in Kelsey's wire wheel department.



CIO organizer, Jim Napier, off to war.

"I realize that Hitler is the greatest menace in the world today. That's why I have joined the army — to do my part to crush fascism. I sincerely hope that the workers of Canada will keep up the fight against fascism in Canada so that when the boys come back they won't come back to the conditions they left."

"It was a hell of a life!"

From 1928-36 we worked maybe four years, that is, when there was work, we worked twelve and fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. Other times, we were laid off and hungry. It was a hell of a life.

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The waiting room at the welfare office was full of men, women, and children. The air was stagnant and blue with cigarette smoke. I asked the girl at the information wicket if it was possible to talk to the administrator, Mr. Hays. She took my name and told me to sit down. About an hour later, I was admitted through the first door and into another waiting line. The chap next to me started to say how tough the administrator was and that he had a couple of special police on hand in case of trouble. I was encouraged: if I was turned down again, I could be arrested simply by hitting this tough guy over the head with a chair. If I was in jail, they legally had to give my family welfare. This was my plan — one way or another, they would be taken care of.

A young lady inside his office swung open the door to leave. Before it swung shut, I was inside.

"Who invited you in?" demanded the man on the other side of the desk.

My reply was, "Mr. Hays, the law of need dictates that I get some assistance for my family today, not tomorrow or the next day. Today. I have just left home a few hours ago where my wife gave birth to a child this morning. I have been informed my application has been turned down. Now, Mr. Hays, you are going to give me assistance whether you like it or not, because I have made up my mind that should you refuse, I am going to rise from this chair and bang you over the head with it. You will arrest me but will then be made responsible to supply the necessities of life to my family anyway."

"Mr. Napier," he replied, "I could have you arrested for threatening me, but I won't. Were I in your shoes today, I might well have said the things you have."

He lifted the phone and summoned a woman from the next room to put me on full benefit. Later on, my job as International Rep. of the UAW took me into this same office to meet Charlie Hays on welfare cases whom he always gave the maximum the act would allow. This incident taught me not to do this kind of service for our members by phone. I followed a policy of face to face confrontation, with the person seeking help present.

I left the welfare office that day walking on air, but I now took a new course in life. I swore to myself that from then on I would do everything, lend my strength to any organization whose purpose was to bring about a better way of life for working people.

The First Active Member in Windsor

U.A.W. at Kelsey Wheel

While it can be said that we worked long hours the few months in the year that we did work, Kelsey Wheel was considered one of the better places to work. Seventy-five cents an hour could be made on piece rate. The day rate was 45c. I was among the first group to be called back (in 1936) and found Dept. 6, the hub and drum assembly, relocated in a new building. In a few days it became clear and inescapable that the realignment of machines was not the only change contemplated by management.

We had a time-study man, shipped over from Detroit parent plant, roaming casually around engaging machine operators in casual conversation. No mention of his real purpose was made by him. In a few days things changed: the casual conversations ceased and the stopwatch came into view. Every single job in the plant was timed and new production schedules posted. The company, it became apparent, was intent on recapturing all the lost profits of the depression years. The employees, of course, were the means for satisfying this hunger for profits. Jobs were speeded up to the point that management was satisfied they were getting the absolute maximum out of each worker.

Wages cut \$1.00 a Day

Then the real axe fell. The foreman advised us individually that piece work was finished. Skilled operators would now get a flat 65 cents; semi-skilled, like myself, 62½ cents. For me, this was a 12½-cent decrease. Consider that a loaf of bread was 10 cents and you can see that losing \$1.00 a day was heart-breaking.

Our foreman was a decent chap of German descent. He was not happy about the speed-up and quit his job. He had no appetite for pushing his men. His job was filled by a toolmaker from the tool and die departments. His first act was to assign a close friend of mine as a straw boss. Between the two of them, working conditions became intolerable.

Before I go into conditions in my own department, let me relate an incident from the wire wheel line. Ken Clark, whom I mentioned earlier, took it upon himself to venture into the Superintendent's office to ask for a raise. He now had to lift heavier wheels on and off an automatic riveter. After asking for a raise, he was told by the Superintendent to look out the office window.

"What do you see there, Ken?"

Ken replied, "Men looking for jobs."

"That's right, Ken. Now, if you are not pleased with your present rate, you can quit. All I have to do is

whistle a couple of times and I can get all the men I want."

Ken kept his cool, did not quit, and returned to work. He told me about this incident and complained of having to swallow his pride by not quitting. This wounded pride stayed with Kenny. When he heard of my action later, in Dept. 6, he was quick to respond when I suggested organizing a union. He said there was nothing he wanted more than to meet the Superintendent on equal terms. A union was the only way he could heal his hurt feelings. And he did exactly that.

I watched my straw boss ex-friend using his privileged position to abuse the men and particularly my brother, Walter. I knew my brother was slow to anger by reason of his knowing the power in his arms. I also knew that should he be pushed too hard someone was going to be hurt physically, and it wouldn't be Walter. My concern was that he would be fired. Thus, I reasoned that the time had arrived to make a move to bring to the attention of top management what could happen if conditions of work were not changed immediately. I might add that, personally, there were many times it was all I could do to resist shoving one of my thick arms down the throat of that pip-squeak weasel straw boss, and twisting it. In those days, I was not tall. But I was thick and strong.

I sought the advice of a man for whom I had great respect. Jack Wright worked in the tool crib and thus had his finger on the pulse of the plant. Whenever I went to the tool crib for a tool or first aid (he did both), I got a steady dose of communism. As he bandaged me up or something, he ranted and railed against the capITalists. (He was English and accented the "IT" in capitalists.) Jack was a member of the old Communist Party (CP) and the Workers Unity League (WUL). In fact, he had been fired once from Kelsey Wheel for his political affiliation, but somehow got back in. They stuck him behind a hole in the wall, which was the tool crib, in order (they hoped) to isolate him. For years, while fired, he had come around to my house, talking politics and asking for donations "for the cause". I never had much money, but I gave anyway.

I should state, at this point, that, though I am the first card-carrying member of the UAW in Canada, there is no way I can take all the credit for launching the union. Without the tireless work of the Communist Party and the WUL, there would not have been an UAW. In fact, the WUL had previously tried organizing an auto union, though unsuccessfully. In 1936, the CP and WUL were behind the drive of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) for

industrial unionism.

Jack Wright informed me that the discontent was plant-wide. Ken Clark supported Jack's observation. I did not want to involve Jack, for fear of his job, so I did not make my next move known to him.

At twelve noon the next day, the men sat down to lunch. In Dept. 6, the different language groups sat separately. Over the seven years I worked there, the English-speaking group had increased in size as more and more of the Europeans learned to converse in English. First, I asked the group I ate with about doing something about the working conditions. They all readily agreed. From there, I canvassed every man in the department. By unanimous consent, it was decided that we would all meet at the door leading to the main office, housed in another building. I was to be spokesman.

The men met at the clock as planned. However, the warning whistle (five minutes before work) blew and they all walked back to their machines and punched presses, ready to press the starting switch, when, in five minutes, the starting whistle would sound.

Their action reminded me of the coal-pit pony underground. It automatically stopped when it heard the coupling unhitching from the hutch. Without command, it would turn around and walk to the siding to be hitched to empty hutches to be taken back to the coal face. After it had done this for years, the only communication the pony drivers had with them was a kindly pat on the back or perhaps an apple or some carrots in the way of a "Good morning".

"I guess this is our last day."

Walter and I were the only ones left at the door. He suggested we also return to our machines, laughing, "I guess Auld Wull Lindsay was right: you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. I guess this is our last day here."

A couple of hours passed. Around three, the Superintendent tapped me on the shoulder and told me to stop the machine. He told me of being informed of our getting together at noon and was anxious to know what it was all about. I told him of the intolerable working conditions brought about by the new foreman and his lackie, for more and more production. I reminded him of his humiliating Ken Clark. I said, "I have worked here on and off for seven years and frankly I am getting more than annoyed at being tongue-lashed by your pip-squeak foreman who is using his privileged position to abuse the men. (I pointed to my brother.)

Then I pointed to another chap, an immigrant from Europe, six foot four, 225 pounds and not an ounce of fat. "Some day, one of these men is not going to be able to hold down the hostility being generated by continual humiliation from these two animals. I know the feeling of being humiliated. As a matter of fact, he even told me not to sing on the job!"

-To all this the Superintendent said he would give the foreman notice to stop harassing the men or face returning to the tool room. With that he left. I signalled to Walter not to come over.

The next day, I got another tap on the shoulder. This time it was the paymaster, to tell everyone they were getting a raise. Mine was five cents.

The following day, I arranged to meet Ken Clark

and Andy Stark to assess the mood of the men after getting the raise. The report was what I wanted to hear. I posed the question of organizing a union. They agreed.

The Kelsey workers were not aware that the Kelsey Wheel parent plant in Detroit was being unionized, as well as a number of other feeder plants. This fact was probably on the bosses' minds when they gave the 5c raise. Andy Stark was given the task of getting application cards. He told us he knew Tom Raycraft, Windsor's only communist alderman.

The following morning, I approached Andy for the cards. He replied that he was just jesting about them. I was angered. I told him it was no jesting matter.

I turned to my old friend, Nick Klinger, an Austrian. Nick and I travelled to and from work for seven years together. I trusted him implicitly. Along with Roy Nantais, a French Canadian, we went across to Detroit that night.

At UAW union headquarters, we were advised that Walter Reuther, the president of Kelsey Wheel Local 174 in Detroit, was attending an executive board meeting in the Detrioter Hotel. We met both Reuther and Dick Frankensteen, who was a left-winger. Both were overwhelmed when informed we were from the Kelsey Wheel in Windsor.

Reuther told us that the Detroit plant was progressing towards a sit-down strike. Our desire to organize would have a terrific morale-boosting effect should strike action become necessary.

We returned to Windsor walking on air. Roy, Nick, and I parted company. I met my father as I got off the street car at Lincoln Rd. and let him know where I had



"The Spectre" by William Gropper.

been and what I intended to do.

The language in his reply sounded like a quote from a labour history book. He suggested caution and the risk of being fired. "Labour's righteous cause is like declaring war," he counselled. "As in war, each advance has its price, so you may be the first casualty in this drive for a union."

I replied, "Father, no one knows me better than you. I just can't pass up this opportunity to fight back. Every time the foreman shouts at me, I can feel myself growing smaller and smaller. It's revolting to work under such conditions. Father, the words of Robert Burns—'man's inhumanity to man'—were not idle words. Those who use their privileged positions to harm those less fortunate must be dealt with."

"Goodnight, Jim," he answered, "Your faith in humanity is wonderful, but you are awakening a monster. God knows what it will do to you in the end. Take care, take care."

I said, "I have seen injustice. At the age of nine, I saw, with my own eyes, Red Friday, when workers were massacred in their fight against mass unemployment. At the age of eleven, I went to a school where miners' children existed on soup and stale bread. In 1926, at the age of sixteen, I witnessed the General Strike for the bare necessities of life"

"These events, I believe, persuaded you and mother to move to Canada. In 1928, we had one good year. Then the Depression hit us. For the first time in my life, I got to know real hunger. Previously, hunger was only something we were taught to spell in school, h-u-n-g-e-r."

"I have heard that the Good Lord provided the necessities of life in abundance for all his children.

If that is so, father, there's a lot of hijacking going on along the way. I'm going to organize Kelsey Wheel into industrial unionism. I think it's the answer to all our ills. Perhaps we will find the strength in this new organization to take back from the hijackers what they have stolen from us."

"No one can change my mind. I must do it or I won't be able to look at myself. My whole self is crying out, 'Go ahead, Go ahead!'. And I shall."

First active member in Windsor

"John L. Lewis, the President of the United Mine Workers, has formed the Congress for Industrial Organization. Tonight I will sign my application card. Starting tomorrow morning I will be its first active member in Windsor. Tomorrow, Nick Klinger, Roy Nantais, Andy Stark, Ken Clark, and I will start talking union to people we can trust."

Seeing I was set on my course, Father advised me to see Alderman Cauley, a friend of his who had been connected with a social-democratic labour party started in Walkerville early in the depression years. Father himself was a member. Cauley, in turn, put me in touch with Percy Fisher, the business agent of the Bricklayers Union. He agreed to come to my house on Highland Avenue the next night at 8 p.m. for a meeting.

I should interject at this point to state that the thesis written by M. L. Veres, covering the UAW to 1955, is inaccurate on this point, as it is on so many other points. It reports that several meetings were called prior to the strike by Tom Parry, at which a list of

demands were drawn up and presented to the company. Actually, Tom, a member of Local 155 in Detroit, a communist from what was called the "communist local", did not enter Windsor until the morning of the strike. If he had, we would not have made the colossal error of dealing with an AFL union. We were as green as grass. Also, we would have been crazy to have held open meetings at that point.

I invited Nick, Andy, Ken, Roy, Steve Koski, Clarence Wiper, and my brother, Walter. Andy Stark, who later became a right-winger and anti-communist, did not attend. Roy had a previous commitment for that night. When Fisher arrived, I introduced everyone. Nick arrived late. I introduced him only as "Nick".



John L. Lewis with Samuel Gompers. Lewis had a hand in UAW beginnings.

I was not aware that the UAW was under suspension from the American Federation of Labour until Fisher told us. As a matter of fact, I knew nothing about the UAW. I had read, however, that John L. Lewis of the Mineworkers Union (UMW) was sponsoring the CIO. I had absolutely no idea of the struggle put up by the reactionary, anti-communist AFL against the CIO, backed by Lewis in his tacit coalition with the Communist Party of the USA. Up to the formation of the CIO, the UMW was the only major union in North America that united all the workers in one plant or one industry into one union. The AFL was content to organize the minority elite of tradesmen into craft unions, several craft unions in one plant or industry. Most unskilled workers were left out in the cold. Naturally, so divided, the craft unions couldn't put up much of a fight against the capitalists under depression conditions, even if their leaders wanted them to. Lewis and the Communist Party were out to change all that.

Fisher did his very best to discourage us from joining the UAW, which he described as "communist-controlled." He advised us to join the AFL machinists union and had brought union cards.

Being a Scottish miner myself, I was all the more pleased to learn that the auto union was connected to the miners. My leanings to the UAW were supported by the fact that the Detroit plant was already in it.

Fisher left in anger because we all thought the auto union was best for us. But news travelled fast. At 10 a.m. the next morning, I was escorted to the President's office, where all the Kelsey brass were already seated. No seat for me. I was asked if I knew anything about a union being organized. I forgot my Baptist teachings and said, no, I knew nothing.

Campbell, the president, stood up, leaned over his desk, handed me a cheque, and made known to me that my services were no longer required at Kelsey Wheel. On my way out the door, the straw boss who had been harassing us, was also on his way out. He had also been fired. I felt sorry for him. He had lost his job and all his friends. I just lost a job.

In the next few days, I was joined by four more who had been introduced to Fisher. Only Nick was saved by being late. It was impossible to find a particular "Nick" in a plant full of European immigrants.

So we had five casualties already. Things looked black. But we had a lot of resources on our side. Clarence Wiper was one. He was one of those fired, a man well-respected on the wheel rim line, manned

most by Europeans. It was all the more to Clarence's credit since he was French Canadian.

I should say, at this point, that, without the Europeans, we would never have been able to organize the union at Kelsey. They understood trade unionism far better than Canadians and they were better equipped at organizing, due to being far more politically advanced. Many had seen workers' rebellions back home. In those days, the Communist Party was able to recruit support and members rather easily from the various ethnic groups for precisely this reason.

We were also fortunate in having some communists in the plant, for it was at this point that Jack Wright and Steve Koski contacted Bill Aldridge, a member of the typographical union and a ranking communist. The Communist Party and Workers Unity League surfaced. Bill Aldridge showed us how to apply for a charter and gave us good counsel.

Communist's good counsel

Bill Brady, who I believe was a communist, was exceptionally helpful, since he was timekeeper. He was one of the unsung heroes of the embryo stages of organization at Kelsey. He suffered from and was later killed by heart disease. He was slight of build but had the heart of a lion. He supplied us with a mailing list of every worker in the plant.

On the basis of all this, we called a meeting on a street corner on Sunday morning. Clarence Wipers dept. turned out nearly 100 percent. We divided up the mailing list and got busy. On the basis of signing up another 38 members, we arranged another meeting with Reuther and Frankenstein at the union offices of the west side local 174. Reuther was more than anxious for us to pull out the Windsor plant: morale was declining at the sit-down strike in Detroit.

Should we pull the Windsor plant, it would then be an international strike. Reuther promised no settlement would be made that did not cover both plants. We shook hands all the way around on this history-making verbal agreement. Workers of two countries pledging solidarity, one to the other. The Wobblies would have been proud of us. (editor: The Industrial Workers of the World — Wobblies — were a pre-Communist international union movement which lead or influenced many great strikes in North America, including the Winnipeg General Strike)

When we returned to Windsor, all the key men were notified to pull the switches at 10 am sharp the next morning.

Strike at Kelsey Wheel

The Real Struggle Begins

The day of reckoning had finally come, December 16, 1936.

Tom Parry, Ken Clark, and I met company president Campbell at the information desk at just a few minutes to ten. Tom, once a miner in the old country like myself, was our spokesman. Politely, he asked Campbell to discuss rehiring the five of us. That was our only demand at that time, Tom also let Campbell know that the plant would come to a halt if he refused.

Campbell answered in exactly these words, "If I thought for one minute you boys were that strong, I would take a shit hemorrhage!"

Tom pointed to the clock on the wall and informed him that, in fact, he had three minutes to change his mind. Campbell, however, was adamant that the five fired men would never again work in the plant. What was going through my mind at this time, believe it or not, was that I had used to think of Campbell as a Christian.

We were just outside the office when everything in the plant became silent. The key men had shut it down! The silence was one of the greatest thrills of my life.

I couldn't contain myself. I left Tom and Ken, scaled the eight foot fence, and ran back into the plant with a company bureaucrat on my tail. Inside the workers were cheering. I only stayed a moment as the workers were pouring out of the building towards the fence. I climbed the fence again and got out.

The first international strike of the UAW was a reality!

What a change had taken place in my fellow workers! Seven years earlier, when I started, guys tried to get me in trouble in the hope that I would lose my job and that they might be able to get some relative or friend my job. Now, we were all together, all 140, after all the years of foremen running around trying to turn workers of one nationality against workers of another.

We knew from the start that our sit-down strike could not last long. We wanted a sit-down because, next to a general strike, it is the best way to guarantee that production will stay shut down. After all, since you're sitting on the machinery and occupying the factory, you don't have to worry about scabs. Also, having all the workers together inside in control, you can build real unity and get across some solid trade union and political ideas. And it sure as hell beats trying to drum up a picket line to march around outside for hours in the cold. But, for a sit-down, you need to have support in the city, such strong support that the cops don't dare bust in, for fear that they will be massacred by workers and their families from other plants.

We didn't have such support in Windsor. In fact, even in the plant, we hadn't signed up a good number. The shut-down was as much a surprise to all but the key men as it was to Campbell. In short, when Campbell called in the cops in large numbers, we decided to end the occupation in favour of picketing outside.

With cops and reporters on the plant roof and all around, about seventy-five of us formed a picket, complete with signs prepared for the occasion. Tom immediately set up a strike committee and dispatched Roy Nantais, Jimmy Wilson and others in a car over to Detroit. There they talked from a sound truck to the sit-down strikers in the Kelsey parent plant. I was told the cheers from inside were tremendous. We had pulled Reuther's chestnuts out of the fire. He phoned me personally to say that our strike had bolstered the morale of his local.

Now the real struggle was to begin.

We knew we could not count on very many to man the picket lines since we had so little time to prepare for the strike. Also we couldn't count on the CCF'ers (editor: The CCF was the forerunner to the present New Democratic Party). These fireside philosophers and book socialists wouldn't go to work but they wouldn't picket either. Of course, this attitude gave no encouragement to the weak ones among the strikers.

The next morning at 6 am, about fifty or sixty of us turned out to see that no one went in to work. Some tried to enter and, naturally, the cops were there to help them. I was pounding the hell out of a scab between some parked cars in the lot when a huge cop picked me up by the scruff of the neck and literally deposited me about four feet away.

The cop said, "Now listen, why are you fighting here? Why don't you deal with these guys up the road or somewhere else where we can't see you?"

It may seem strange to hear a policeman utter such remarks. However, in those days, at least in Windsor, the cops were almost as poorly paid as we workers, and some even sympathized with us. It was precisely for this reason that Premier Mitchell Hepburn, at about this time, created a new provincial police force, for he swore, "The CIO will enter Ontario over my dead body!" We saw to it that the CIO did enter Ontario. Unfortunately, it was not over Hepburn's dead body. The new police were nicknamed, "Hepburn's Hussars". A more ruthless bunch you would not want to meet. Today, they are known as the OPP.

This Windsor cop gave us a good idea. We decided, given the small number of strikers and the unlikelihood of other mass support, that guerilla warfare was the best strategy. Terry Laughran and I were given the task of organizing a flying squad to prevent the scabs from reaching the picket line.

It so happened that the straw boss fired at the same

time as me was rehired when the strike began. Stopping him the next morning was our first assignment. I was looking forward to settling a few personal scores in this job. When we arrived at his house early in the morning, a big black taxi was parked at the curb. We pulled alongside the cab. The rear window was rolled down and a red-headed fellow leaned out to say, very softly, "It's OK, boys, we'll take care of him." This chap was among the force of the Communist Party and unemployed men who were assigned to help us win the strike. They took the most dangerous jobs in order that we wouldn't lose any of the few strikers that we had to picket.

A strike is a serious business at any time. This particular strike was especially serious. Today the unions are an established fact. Then, we were fighting for the right to have a union. We were also desperate, hungry men. Veres, in his thesis, and others, laud us pioneers of the CIO for our courage. This assertion is baloney. It was not courage that built the CIO. It was fear—fear that if we failed, our wives and children would continue to do without the necessities of life, fear that it meant our jobs, and, therefore, misery.

Terry and I drove off to our next assignment—to stop a couple of farmers driving in from Pike Creek. We waited for them on the highway. When they passed, we pulled out and then passed them. To our advantage, the roads were icy. We slammed on the

brakes. They slammed on their brakes and into the ditch they went. That was the last of them we saw during the strike. But when we returned to the picket line we heard that the straw boss, though severely beaten, had made it to work. He had a black eye closed for the duration of the strike. It got bigger with each passing day.

We had our good and bad days. Ken Clark and I were sent out to Remington Park to take care of a guy. We decided just to scare him, just to put a brick through his window. It had snowed all night. When we arrived, we couldn't find anything to throw! Ken and I had to rummage through garbage cans until we found an empty soup can. We packed it with snow, for weight, and through the window it went. This action did not act as a deterrent, for he went to work. He was stopped, however. Other means were used.

We got a report each night from inside from Bill Brady, the timekeeper, through Jack Wright. Jack stayed at work, not by choice, but because we insisted. It worked out well in that we were informed of management's plans for the next day. After a while, however, Jack couldn't take crossing the picket line any more and joined us outside.

The message we got from Bill one night was that management was going to arrange for all the scabs to meet at one scab's house the next morning, and then go in by truck. The next morning, we let the scabs



Scabs tried to enter Kelsey Wheel in cabs. Strikers pushed the cabs down the icy streets far away from the plant.

enter the house. When we saw the truck coming, we put the picket line up in front of the house. The truck left empty.

Bill let us know that management had convinced one of our charter members, a European, to return to work. By doing this, the company hoped to break us. I worked with the guy seven years and knew him to be very nervous and high strung. At 6 am, we drove to his house. When the kitchen light came on, we knocked at the door. He opened the door and was visibly shaken to see us. He invited us in. We informed him that we knew of his intention to go to work and that we weren't going to permit it. We told him to dress warm because he was going to walk the picket line for four hours between two members we named. He showed signs of fear but continued getting dressed. We also warned him not to let on to the cops or anyone else what had transpired. Everyone had seen what we had done to the straw boss. We told this guy the same would happen to him, if he squealed. He marched faithfully on the picket line.

Next Bill informed us that management was going to use taxis to bring in the scabs. What a great day that was! We put on an extra big picket line aided by the Communist Party and unemployed men. Again the road was covered in a sheet of ice. When the taxis arrived at the gate, it was an easy matter to push them down the street. The drivers got as scared as the scabs. We chased them all the way right down to the police station. What a scene it was as the scabs scrambled out of the cabs and into the station. Unfortunately, in this action, we lost Tom Parry and Walter Stillmack who spent six and two months in jail respectively.

It was not a one way street though. We received a few beatings, too. I myself was banged up three times. It was tough to maintain a good picket line, the weather being so cold. With the small number of picketers, the willing had to put even more than their share in walking in the freezing weather.



Bud Simons, a strike leader and CP member, shakes hands with UAW Vice-President Mortimer during the sitdown at Fisher One in 1937.



From the left Vic Reuther, Bob Travis and Roy Reuther. Travis, a CP member, was a key strategist in the sit-down strikes. The Reuthers, under brother Walter's leadership, became rabid red-baiters.

We were fortunate to have the cook from the Prince Edward Hotel make lots of soup and stew for us. The Communist Party used to have sympathetic farmers and grocery stores keep us well fed.

It was while I was in the soup kitchen, with strikers sleeping on the floor all around, that the 11 pm news reported a settlement had been made at the Detroit Kelsey plant. No mention was made of us. How can I express my feeling of being betrayed? Imagine what it felt to have led four others to be fired and 140 on strike for two weeks. That was Dec. 24th, 1936.

I called Dick Frankenstein who promised to come to Windsor to speak to Campbell about our jobs. Dick came, cap in hand, but the old buzzard refused to talk reinstatement and that was that.

When Reuther sold us out, both the strike and Local 195, Canada's first UAW local, died speedy deaths. The company felt obliged to give the workers, I believe, another nickel. Those who returned, however, including the scabs who took the jobs of the five of us originally fired, went back without a union under the same old conditions.

I had to go back and apply for welfare. This time Charlie Hays was not in control. David Croll, then a minister in Hepburn's Ontario cabinet, now a federal senator, had appointed a reactionary Dresden farmer over Hays to see that welfare payments were cut to a minimum. I had to sell my furniture in order to eat and get welfare.

But if we who built the UAW in those days were beaten so easily, there would be no union today. I went across to UAW headquarters in Detroit and was fortunate to meet two truly great men, Wyndham Mortimer and Bob Travis. These two had been given the task of organizing the Flint, Michigan, General Motors plants. I told them of the verbal agreement with Reuther and how he sold us out. They hadn't heard the story before, but they weren't surprised.

Mortimer was first vice-president of the UAW until he was forced by right-wing UAW President Homer Martin to yield. Travis, who was in his early thirties,

got the job, however. Both were well-known communists. Mortimer assured me that should the union win the battle (which had just started the day ours finished) for union recognition at Flint, he would cause to be called a meeting of the west side Detroit Local 174 to right the wrong we had been done by Reuther. He and Travis were impressed by our joining the UAW. "Now," they said, "we truly are an international union. Our ability to win an international strike will be a much needed tonic for all of us."

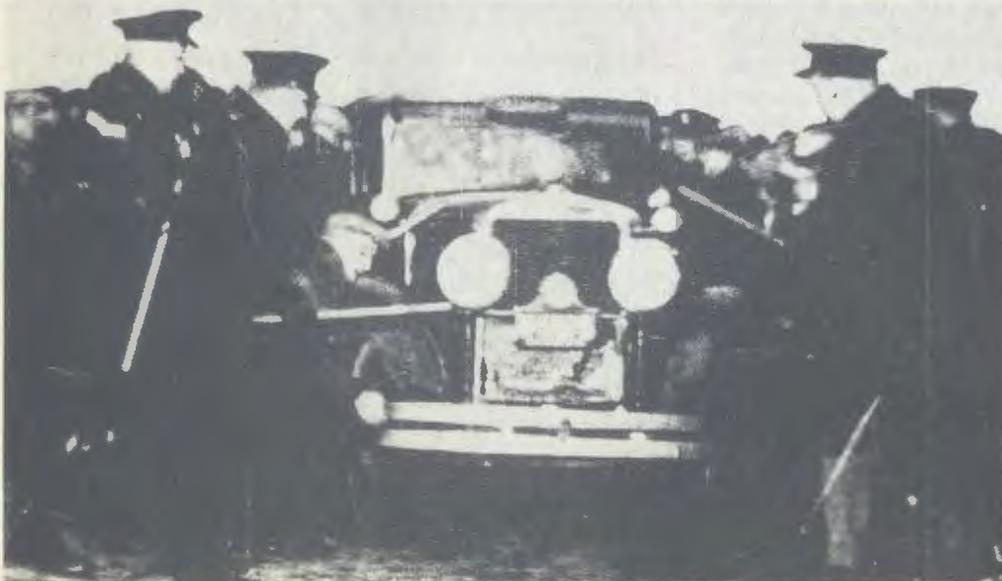
I was instructed by Mortimer to contact him immediately when the General Motors strike was won. "I have that much faith in the ability of Bob Travis," he said. "We're going to win. Assure your people in Windsor that, when we do, the Communist Party will give Local 195 a blood transfusion."

I had to wait six weeks before the outcome was finally settled. In the waiting period, one event stands out in my mind. A strike began about the middle of January, 1937, at the Briggs plant in Detroit. Dick Frankenstein, who was president of the Chrysler local, called for a mass picket. As workers left the Chrysler and Dodge plants at the end of the afternoon shift, they were led to the union hall where they were fed soup and asked to stay for the picket line next morning. I think virtually every auto worker on afternoon shift in Detroit spent the entire night in their respective union halls. Dick had called me up and suggested I bring people in from Windsor. I couldn't get anyone to go, so I went myself. At five a.m. the Chrysler contingent left its hall in Hamtramck. If memory serves me right, there was a cavalcade of five hundred cars.

We threw a picket line right around the Briggs plant four people deep! It was the first experience I had had with tear gas bombs which were being thrown at the picketers by company goons and Detroit cops. Our people picked up the bombs and tossed them right back. Only one scab was crazy enough to try to pass through. He circled the block once on foot. The next time I saw him he was lying on the road flat on his

The Windsor Star

POLICE WIELD BATONS OUTSIDE WHEEL PLANT



Clash With Strikers When Taxicabs Bring Workers Into Factory

EMPLOYEES ENTER THROUGH MILLING. SHOUTING
MOB: PICKET STRUCK ON HEAD. OTHERS
NURSE SMARTING KNUCKLES

Tom Parry, of Detroit, organizer for the United Automobile Workers of America, who has been organizing the strike at the plant of the Kelsey Wheel Company, Limited, was arrested this afternoon on a charge of taking part in an unlawful assembly. He will appear in police court tomorrow.

POLICE armed with batons mixed it freely with strike pickets outside the Kelsey Wheel Company plant this morning when taxicab loads of employees were brought into the factory through a milling, shouting crowd determined to force the company into curtailment of production.

As each taxicab arrived with its load of workers, the pickets swarmed around and endeavored to hold the cars back. Icy pavements failed to give the cars traction and the pickets held some of them for several moments, even pushing them backwards until the police interfered and gave the cars passage.

back. Now that is real unionism! All for one and one for all!

Finally, on February 11, 1937, the General Motors Corporation did in fact bow to the United Automobile Workers. The strike had involved sit-downs, bloody clashes in the streets between thousands of workers and cops, seizures of plants by the workers, repulsions of police attacks on these plants, surrounding of plants by the US Army complete with machine guns, and mobilizations of the strikers' wives armed with clubs and organized into battalions. Now the Union was firmly established and its membership growing by the tens of thousands. (*see footnote).

It was to the credit of the Communist Party and these two great men, in the flush of victory over the greatest corporation in all the world, that they did not forget five men fired from a relatively insignificant plant in Windsor. I did meet Mortimer and Travis again and they did cause to be called a meeting of the shop stewards of Reuther's own west wide Local 174.

It was quite a meeting.

Ken Clark, Andy Stark, Bill Aldridge and I crossed the Detroit River and arrived at the hall only to be refused admission to the meeting. We were furious at the tyler. Even after we told him who we were, he still wouldn't let us in. It was only later that we found out that he had instructions to keep us out until Reuther, who was speaking at this point, finished and left the hall on other business. The tyler was a communist or with the communists. That's how well organized they were!

Finally, he let us in. When the shop stewards of Local 174 were told that the Windsor members had not been included in the settlement, contrary to what Reuther had informed them, they were angered. When they saw that five of us had still not been rehired, they were enraged.

First, an older black brother rose to speak. He was infuriated to hear that his Windsor brothers had lost their strike and that five were still out of jobs. He claimed that Reuther had told them exactly the opposite story.

Then, another steward, for sure a communist, got up to propose a motion instructing George Edwards, then a secondary leader of Local 174 and later a Michigan State Supreme Court judge, to meet with Campbell the next day in Windsor informing him that his failure to immediately rehire the five fired men would result in action by Local 174 in Detroit. The action proposed was that for each day that passed without a settlement in Windsor, another department in the Detroit Kelsey plant would shut down for one hour, starting with the largest department. The motion carried unanimously.

George Edwards duly visited Campbell the next morning and got a "no". He drew up the following

*-EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE: The pamphlet, "The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike Against General Motors", describing the exciting events and background to the great strike that established industrial unionism in North America, is available from the Canadian Party of Labour. Send 25c plus 15c postage for each copy, to P.O. Box 1151, Adelaide P.O., Toronto, Ontario.

Strike Ends In Detroit

Employees Vote to Halt
"Sit-Down" at Wheel
Plant

"An Armed Truce"

Windsor Deadlock Awaits
Arrival of Mediator
From Ottawa

Almost on the eve of Christmas settlement was reached in the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company "sit-down" strike in Detroit, while the arrival here on Saturday of a federal labor department mediator was expected to bring some compromise into the strike at the Kelsey Wheel Company's plant in Windsor.

RETURN ON MONDAY

The Detroit company's 5,000 employees will return to work on Monday as a result of a vote taken last night in which 2,000 men of the United

leaflet which we handed out at the Kelsey gate. It had only two lines:

“The General Motors Corporation, the greatest of all corporations has bowed graciously to the UAW. Campbell will find himself in the same embarrassing position soon.”

The leaflet was well received. For the first time in three months we were greeted with smiling faces. Since the end of our strike, all of our periodic leaflets had only provoked, “Wipe (your) ass with it!”, from our fellow workers.

Kennedy, the general manager of all Kelsey operations, phoned Campbell that morning from Detroit. Kennedy had learned the hard way how to deal with the union. With the bargaining committee of Local 174 present, he told Campbell to reinstate the five of us at once. He did not want operations closed down again because of a “two-bit plant in Canada”.

Campbell did what he was told. We were informed to meet the plant superintendent to make arrangements to return to work.

I still cannot, forty years later, find words adequately to express my gratitude to the Communist Party.

There is an important lesson for today to be drawn from our victory — the need for proletarian internationalism and for international unions. Our experience at Kelsey Wheel showed how far we would have got had we not chosen to organize ourselves into an international union. Needless to say we would have been smothered in our infancy. However, even though we did join an international union, our strike was nearly scuttled by unprincipled leadership — by Reuther. We finally were rescued by the Communist Party, a world-wide organization disciplined and dedicated to fight for a better way of life for the underprivileged of all nations. Obviously, international unions are a must. The key element for successful international unionism is correct leadership. We must get rid of the right-wing rats who run the unions now and replace them with communists at the helm.

I have been an organizer all my life for international and national unions. To those who advocate national unions or national “socialism”, may I point to the power acquired by multi-national corporations. In order to deal with this power structure spreading over national boundaries, we must first recognize our adversary’s full potential. The harder we try to find a solution to our many, many problems within the framework of nationalism, the more futile becomes the task before us. As Joseph Stalin said, “The best interests of the working people of the world demand that we band our efforts together through the formation of a common organization so that we will be able to wage successful struggle against industrial and political dictatorship.” The international union is precisely such a “common organization”.

I was drawn initially towards the Canadian Party of Labour by its correct position on international unions

and its stand against nationalism. Having seen the Party in action for several years, I believe this growing organization will not subordinate its principles to expediency, as did the old Communist Party. This no-compromise attitude is in conformity with my own way of thinking, now, and forty years ago, when I took part in the embryo stages of organization for industrial unionism.

We met the superintendent in his office. He told us he was hiring us back as new men without our seniority. Ken Clark spoke up, pointing out to the boss he was not dealing with children. It was this very same boss, you may remember, who had humiliated Ken when Ken once asked for a raise. It was the very same office, with the very same window out of which the boss had pointed to the crowd of unemployed men waiting for work should Ken be unsatisfied with his job. Ken passionately wanted a union in order to be able to speak on equal terms and with equal power to management. Now, he was doing just that.

No trouble regrouping

He told the superintendent, “You are not putting us back to work. The union is putting us back to work, and we’re going back to work on union terms — with our seniority.”

The boss replied, “I will have to see Mr. Campbell. That’s his orders. Right now, he is out to dinner.”

I suggested to the man that we had lost over three months’ wages and, if management was sparring for a face saver, we, as a union were in no mood for half measures.

“You heard what he said,” Ken followed up by saying, his face beaming with pleasure. “He has given the union position.”

The superintendent repeated, “We will wait till Mr. Campbell comes back.” Then he told us that he could not put us back to work till he found places for us.

Ken piped right up, “I think the best thing for us is to call Detroit and tell them to see Kennedy again to smarten you people up.”

The superintendent left and walked towards the main office. He was only gone a few minutes. When he returned, he said, “OK, boys, you get full seniority. Two (he indicated whom) will start tomorrow morning, two the next day, and one (me) on Monday morning.”

To this we agreed.

Andy Stark was with us during these first negotiations and he soon passed the glad tidings throughout the plant. I suggested to Ken Clark that he pick up two chief stewards buttons along with a bag full of dues buttons for the union members to wear. I went to the gate the next morning to see, with my own eyes, Ken and Andy entering the plant wearing the large black and white chief stewards buttons. It was quite a sight for me.

Ken reported that the response to the wearing of the union monthly dues buttons was a success and that we would have no trouble regrouping when I was to re-enter the plant Monday morning.

U.A.W.'s First Win

Company on the Run

It is one thing to win a strike and another to hang on to the gains made when you return to work inside the plant. Today, because of poor leadership in the unions, workers are usually sold out when they strike. Returning demoralized to the plant, they often lose whatever gains they made before the ink is even dry on the contract. The grievance procedure adds to demoralization since it removes the fight from the shop floor where united action can win. Instead it provides for long, complicated, legalistic procedures that do not usually involve even the original grieving worker.

At Kelsey Wheel, we did have a strike which Reuther lost for us. Our return to the plant was due, not to our own strength, but to that of the workers in Detroit. I figured that management was now going to try us out for size. I was filled with a burning hatred for all bosses — especially Campbell. If someone had suggested taking up guns and finishing them all off, I would have been his first recruit. At the same time, I was confident of winning in the plant. I was sure of my fellow workers, and looked forward to the fight.

On the Sunday morning before I was to be reinstated, Fred Bull, a machine operator, came to my home to tell me he had been fired, with no reason given, on the Friday before. I could not understand at the time why the chief steward, Andy Stark, had not communicated this information to me. I told Fred to be at Campbell's office at exactly 10 am Monday.

When I entered Department 6 at seven a.m. Monday morning, I was greeted by cheers from my fellow members of the UAW. After a great deal of handshaking, I had a talk with the chief steward concerning the firing of Fred Bull. I was itching to meet Campbell, the President of Kelsey Wheel (Canada), the man who caused so much hardship to my family and the families of the four other men. We summoned the key men, seven of them, to meet outside the door of the main office a little before ten a.m. We had no contract, but we did have a functioning shop steward system. All the key men were now shop stewards.

Everyone was there just before ten and was eager to proceed once I briefed them how I was going to handle the case. We had entered the front office through the swinging doors from the plant and met head on with Fox, the second-in-command. He looked as if he could not believe his eyes and asked us what we wanted.

I informed him that we had a union in the plant and that, when we had grievances, he could expect to see us.

At this point, Campbell himself came to the door of his office. "Do you want to see me, boys?" he demanded.

"Yes," I said, "we've got a grievance. And that's our grievor now coming in the door." At exactly that

moment, Fred Bull entered the front office from outside.

Campbell said, "Come in my office."

We all went in. I informed Campbell that, having a union in the plant, we expected to meet him on equal terms, and not in the manner I experienced at our last meeting when he had fired me.

"A member of our union, Fred Bull here," I continued, "was fired last Friday with no reason given. I have worked with Fred and, to my way of thinking, he is a very capable mechanic."

Campbell butted in and suggested that perhaps I did not have all the facts.

"Facts?" I replied, "I am not concerned with facts — especially facts that come from your foremen. Facts are many-sided. I am not here to listen to them. If Fred Bull is not reinstated at once, we will take appropriate action."

Campbell did not hesitate. He assured us Fred would be rehired. We said, "Good day," and returned to work.

This action firmly entrenched the union. The stewards, who had been collecting \$2 initiation fees, were now kept busy collecting money and issuing receipts. The skilled tradesmen, though few in number, all joined the union. The resolve I made the morning of my daughter's birth to dedicate my life to right the wrongs was batting a thousand.

Now, more than ever, I was sure that the union was being tested. I told the stewards to report at once anything that could be called a grievance.

All went well until the fifth day of my return to work. The department steward in the washroom informed me of having to work the Saturday. He had requested time and a half pay from the foreman. The foreman took it up with management and the answer was "no". I informed Terry Laughran, who was the steward, that we didn't have a grievance until the men actually started working Saturday. He agreed. I arranged to have the grievance committee (consisting of the seven key men) meet at the superintendents office 10 a.m. Saturday.

It so happened that, besides Terry, the other two fellows required to work the Saturday were old friends of mine. They were both elderly Europeans (though, at the time, since I was 26, anyone over thirty seemed old). For seven years, I had been helping Bill Mishic and Tony out. One of the machines I operated was right on the aisle along which Bill and Tony had to push a heavy wire cage full of parts to be immersed in caustic soda. The concrete floor was old, broken, and full of potholes. They had to push the cage up a grade at this point. I used to shut down the machine and give them a hand.

When management picked on these two Europeans to work the Saturday, they may very well have thought that, since they were European immigrants, we might not stick up for them. If so, the company underestimated us. They didn't comprehend that they had driven the workers together by worsening the working conditions and cutting our pay. Over the seven years I worked at Kelsey, I watched workers of all nationalities coming closer to each other. As the non-English-speaking gradually learned English, we all learned that we had exactly the same problem — trying to provide the necessities of life for our families.

The other side of the coin was that we left-wingers building the unions emphasized over and over again

that, in the union, we must forget nationality, recognize we are all just workers, and we must stick together.

It seemed the superintendent was expecting us when we arrived at his office Saturday morning. We stated the reason for our visit. His answer was "no". I asked for permission to consult with the men inside. He agreed to take me but not the whole committee. Roy Nantais, a proven leader, told me it was ok — it was just a matter of bringing the members out, no time and a half, no work.

When we reached the washroom, I told the men "no dice" and, as union members, that they knew what to do. The three of them stopped work at once and went to get their coats. The superintendent fired Terry on the spot.

— CHARTER —

International Union
United Automobile Workers of America

Affiliated with the American Federation of Labor:

To All To Whom These Presents Shall Come:

Know Ye, That the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, established for the purpose of effecting thorough organization of the automobile industry, and composed of Local Unions and members in different sections of the country, doth, upon proper application and under conditions herein provided, hereby grant unto

Jagan Rajpal Robert Oullitt William Low
William Lokenburg Kenneth Clark Nick Atlagant
Adrian Stach Leslie Wassell Nick Lamb John Rajpal
Clarence Robert Pop Heston Raymond Leikowski
Albert Hour Mikhail Usov

and to their successors, this Charter, for the establishment and future maintenance of a Local Union at *London, Ontario, Canada* to be known as Local Union No. *195* of International Union, United Automobile Workers of America.

Now, the conditions of this Charter are such: That said Union forever and under any and all circumstances shall be subordinate to and comply with all the requirements of the constitution, by-laws and general laws or other laws of the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America as they may from time to time be altered or amended; That said Union shall, for all time, be guided and controlled by all acts and decisions of the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America as they may from time to time be enacted; That should the Local Union above chartered take advantage of any powers, privileges or rights conferred under the laws as they may exist at any time, said action shall not prevent the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America from recalling, amending, changing or abolishing any such powers, privileges or rights.

So long as the said Union adheres to these conditions, this Charter to remain in full force; but upon infraction thereof, the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America may revoke this Charter, thereby annulling all privileges secured hereunder.

In Witness Whereof, We have hereunto set our hands and affixed the seal of the International Union, United Automobile Workers of America, this *Eleventh* day of *December* One Thousand Nine Hundred and *Thirty-six*

General Executive Board:

<p><i>Harold Martin</i> President</p> <p><i>Wyndham Martin</i> First Vice-President</p> <p><i>E. J. Hall</i> Second Vice-President</p> <p><i>Walter K. Wall</i> Third Vice-President</p> <p><i>Delmond Page</i> Secretary</p> <p><i>J. J. Kennedy</i> Treasurer</p> <p><i>Walter A. Mason</i></p>	<p><i>Quassey J. Merrill</i></p> <p><i>J. J. Mitchell</i></p> <p><i>J. C. Piper</i></p> <p><i>Epstein P. Friedman</i></p> <p><i>John Lottis</i></p> <p><i>Frank R. Mason</i></p> <p><i>Levin Washburn</i></p> <p><i>Richard E. Hamilton</i></p> <p><i>Chas. F. Collier</i> Secretary-Treasurer</p>
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First UAW charter in Canada.

On the way back to the office, I told the superintendent that Monday was only two days hence. Should Terry not be on the job then, the plant would be all his.

The longest ten minutes of my life was spent waiting with the committee outside the plant for the three men to emerge. I feared they might have had a change of heart. Finally, when they came out, Terry told us that, as they punched out, he was told he had been reinstated.

The superintendent apparently had thought and acted quickly. Another win for the union.

From the plant, we went to the union office which we had rented. Waiting for us was a delegation from the press department. They wanted something dope about the scabs. Their foreman had told them that, starting Monday, in order to keep on the scabs hired during the strike, the rest of the department would be working a three day week. On top of this, the foreman had said that the union went along with the idea.

I asked why we had not been informed of scabs working in the department. The steward, a weakling, said he thought I knew. I told him his function in the union was to be sure that the grievance committee was kept informed. I assured the members that the committee would take up their grievance with management Monday morning and would see that all the scabs hired during the strike would be fired.

We did meet with Campbell Monday morning and made known to him that the foreman in the press dept. had lied to the men. If the scabs weren't fired, and if the idea of the three-day week was not dropped, we warned Campbell the whole plant would walk out. At this point, a weak committeeman said out loud that we were going too far. I told Campbell the grievance committee was going to retire for a few minutes from his office. Once outside the office, I made it clear that there would be no compromises and that the weak committeeman was not coming back into Campbell's office. (This practice of retiring from management's presence when some dissension occurred in our own ranks and of returning without any remaining dissenters became my practice after this experience.)

After our re-entering the office and making clear our demand, it did not take Campbell long to make up his mind to lay off the scabs.

Within one week of my return, then, we had fought and won three important grievances which established the union. That same afternoon, Campbell came to Department 6 and suggested I had no respect for him.

To this I retorted, "Respect is something one must earn. How could I display respect to a man who had fired me, not because of a bad work record, but rather because I was organizing a union to stop the vicious conditions of work and the low wages he supported."

"Now, Mr. Campbell, those of us fired for union activity would still be suffering the anguish and pain of seeing our wives and families going without the necessities of life, had the union lost to General Motors in Flint, Michigan. No, Mr. Campbell, I have no respect for you. I will try, however, to be as polite as my conscience will allow. I do hope that time will heal the wounds inflicted by your action. One can, I suppose, forgive. I doubt very much that any of us will forget."

"Mr. Campbell, have you ever given any thought to

the fact that, up to now, you have dictated everything we do to live? You have determined when we shall work and when we shall not work. You have determined the wages we receive for the work we do and, in turn, our wages determine everything we do to live. Our wages dictate what kind of food we eat and how much, what kind of clothes we wear, whether we live in a decent house or a slum, what kind of education our children get. So you see, Mr. Campbell, when we banded together in a union, we changed the condition that we must have respect for you. The union gives us power. It gives us self-respect. Now you will have to have respect for us."

The foreman ran

Clearly, we had the company on the run. The next week, a foreman, who, in getting our attention, had the habit of grabbing the workers by the shoulder and spinning them around, sent Alec Andrews home during a slack period, but not in accordance with his seniority. Andy Stark, the chief steward in my building, informed me of the foreman's action. We both immediately approached the foreman. From behind, Andy grabbed him roughly by the shoulder, spun him around, and told him to go find Alec and bring him back. The foreman ran outside the plant after Alec and brought him back. He never grabbed a worker again.

Shortly afterwards, we tried to get the Kelsey truck drivers to join the union. They refused. When the stewards at the Detroit plant heard of this nonsense, they had the shipping department there refuse to load or unload our trucks. The result was that Campbell had to fork out the money for their initiation fees into the union plus a sizeable fine. This action was the work of Andy Stark and Ken Clark, who was chief steward in the other building.

By this time, I was already out of the plant. J.J. Kennedy, an international board member of the UAW, informed me that I had been appointed an international rep for the union. My job was to expand the union into other plants where unionizing drives were already underway in Windsor. I was to be a full time officer, paid \$20 a week plus expenses by the International Union and \$20 by Local 195. (The weekly pay was about \$30.00 at this time in the plant for a five day week.)

Self-reliance wins

I never worked again at Kelsey but I left the union in good hands. Local 195 at Kelsey, I believe, never signed a written contract until after the war nor had a written grievance procedure. When the members needed a raise or a problem settled, they got it the right way — by demanding it from management and getting it by relying on their own united strength. As new gains were won by the Local 195, they were posted in minutes as union-management agreements and became the regular practice in the plant. At a speech at McMaster University on April 14, 1975, George Burt, former UAW Board Member for Canada, remarked that Kelsey Wheel was a union shop long before the Rand Formula came into being. The workers simply dumped any newcomer who refused to join the union into a wheel-barrow and rolled him out to the scrap heap.

Organizing GM Oshawa

CP Abandons Politics for Unity

History does not move forward in a gradual straight line. It goes in leaps and jumps. One of those historical leaps for the UAW was the victory over General Motors at Oshawa.

Unfortunately, as I did not participate directly in the Oshawa strike, I can't give the blow-by-blow account that this struggle deserves. Probably this kind of account will never be told since all my old friends from Oshawa are now dead. In Windsor, only a token picket line was maintained at General Motors. We saw no action there against the company since, just as in the great fight between the UAW and GM in Flint, Michigan, the whole capitalist class and the whole working class were waiting and watching to see if the CIO would win or lose at Oshawa.

I would warn students of labour history to beware of the book, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour* by Irving Martin Abella (University of Toronto Press, 1973) and its accounts of the Oshawa strike, the early struggles of the UAW, and the CIO in general. The book distorts history in order to make it appear that the alliance of Canadian and U.S. workers within the CIO was harmful to the interests of Canadian workers. On page 6, for instance, the importance of internationalism in winning our strike at Kelsey Wheel is ignored in the one-line reference to us in Windsor. The same page contains two historical inaccuracies in that ours, and not the Sarnia Holmes Foundry, was the first and successful CIO activity in Ontario, and that John Eldon was not our organizer. In fact, I brought John Eldon to Canada myself in the fall of 1937.

Abella never gives enough credit to the rank-and-file communist workers who did the hard, base-building work in laying the foundations for union organization. Instead, he relies for many of his facts on accounts from J.B. Salsberg, then trade union director of the CP, now an ardent Zionist and anti-communist writer for the *Canadian Jewish News*. In his history, Abella concentrates altogether too much on what union and company bureaucrats were up to, rather than the workers themselves.

In Oshawa, the foundations of the UAW were laid a decade earlier by the Communist Party. In March 1928, the United Autoworkers Industrial Union led a three-day strike against a forty-per-cent wage cut by General Motors. The UAIU was a Red union, an explicitly communist-led trade union. In those days before 1935, the Communist International, the organization of all the communist parties in the world with its headquarters in Moscow, was organizing workers into Red unions all over the world.

In Canada at the time, there were, in effect, three trade union federations, plus the French Canadian nationalist and church-dominated Canadian and

Catholic Confederation of Labour (now the CNTU). There were the Red unions being organized under the banner of the Workers' Unity League, the nationalist All-Canadian Congress of Labour (ACCL), and the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC), affiliated to the American Federation of Labour. While communist strategy in Canada tended to flip-flop a little with regard to uniting with the various other federations, basically the idea was to establish new unions in which the workers followed open communist leadership or to establish communist "fractions" in existing unions in order to replace the sellouts in leadership with communist militants.

The United Autoworkers' Industrial Union in Oshawa applied to the ACCL for a charter. The TLC started a rival craft union in the plant. GM took advantage of the TLC action, if in fact they weren't the cause of it. Not long after, the UAIU died away. The workers were left without a union, then, until 1937.

In 1936, in the midst of depression, GM recorded its highest profits ever — \$200,000,000. Each worker was regarded as just another piece of machinery — to be literally discarded at 50 years of age, if not before.

January 1937 saw the fifth wage cut in five years. The spark for the new union was kindled in the same way as at Kelsey. On Feb. 15 1937, efficiency experts were brought in from the U.S. who set a new quota of 32 units from the old 27 units, with a nickel increase for the workers.

On Feb. 19, one week after the UAW sitdown victory over GM in Flint, 250 body shop workers had had enough. They walked off their jobs, marched to the loading docks, sat down, and waited for the company to come to them. (Incidentally, Abella has recorded this event incorrectly — not giving the workers credit for sitting down and making the bosses come to them). George Burt, later Canadian Director of the UAW, was one of them. GM was so scared of a sitdown or walkout that they paid the wages of all the workers in the plant despite the fact there could be no production. Hugh Thompson, UAW International Representative sent in from Detroit (whom I never met), hurried to the loading docks. He managed to sign up the 250 striking workers in a hall that evening.

In the next month, almost all of the 4,000 GM workers had signed up in Local 222, including the Oshawa mayor and most of the city council, who were eager to stay on labour's good side.

While workers' militancy was definitely surging ahead, a change had taken place in the world communist movement. Right-wingers had got the upper hand who argued that workers were not ready to follow communist leadership, to accept communist ideas, or to fight for socialism. They argued that, for the time being, the international communist

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TO YOU OUR WHOLEHEARTED MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT UNTIL YOUR
HISTORIC STRIKE IS WON.

TORONTO MAY DAY CONFERENCE, REV BEN H SPENCE

CHAIRMAN I R HALOBERG

Toronto May Day pledge of solidarity for U.S. GM strikers.

movement must merge itself with the social-democrats and liberals (capitalists) in a fight to destroy fascism which was on the rise. The policy was called "The United Front Against Fascism". In practice, the policy meant abandoning the communist fractions in existing unions, merging the Red unions into the TLC, and, when John L. Lewis initiated the CIO, jumping in with both feet. The Communist International was itself disbanded in 1943.

This rightward turn was very unfortunate. Previously, in the fight-to-the-death struggle between the communists and the social-democrat CCF (the forerunner to the present NDP) for leadership of the labour movement, communists would win hands down. The CCF'ers — capitalists in socialists' clothing — were all talk and no action. Now, the communists put themselves always on the defensive. Even when they were powerful and active in a union or local, their leadership purposely was not openly acknowledged. If they were weak, they no longer had the fractions from which to organize a base. It is to the credit of the Canadian Party of Labour that it has once again begun building communist fractions.

In practice in Oshawa, the new policy meant that CCF'er Charles Millard, a Sunday School teacher, anti-communist bosses' stooge, was elected to the presidency of Local 222.

According to Abella, there were three formations

within the new local: communists who kept out of sight as such; the Unity Group, a united front of communists and CCF'ers; and CCF'ers opposed to the Unity Group. In any case, the Communist Party, as far as I know, didn't run anyone in opposition to Millard. What a mistake! Not only did Millard nearly kill Local 222 after the strike; not only did he use the presidency of Local 222 as a stepping stone to the Canadian directorship of the UAW, which position he used against the communists and left-wingers until we kicked him out; but, also, a few years later, as Canadian director of the United Steelworkers, he played a leading role in eliminating communists from the Canadian Labour Congress.

How did Millard get in there in the first place? Like Homer Martin, International UAW President, who was a baptist minister, he was practised in public speaking. At that time, since we rank-and-file workers were completely without such talents, an orator naturally came to the fore. Incidentally, Millard had also owned a grocery store. For a long while after he became a union official, I kept reading newspaper articles about people chasing him for money he owed.

The actual breakthrough in Oshawa came at a smaller plant, Coulter Manufacturing, where a one-week strike to fight the layoff of the night shift on March 21 resulted in recognition of UAW Local 222. This victory put the CIO on the map in Oshawa.

On April 8, the entire workforce at GM walked off the job. Homer Martin led a cavalcade through the streets of Oshawa a few days later. It was the largest demonstration in Oshawa's history. He told a tremendous rally, "If GM doesn't make cars in Canada under union conditions, they won't make cars in the U.S. at all." Talk is cheap. This was the right thing for Martin to say, even though he later tried to sell out the struggle.

Premier Mitchell Hepburn of Ontario began to take a personal interest in seeing that the strike was lost. "This is a fight to the finish," he stated. "If the CIO wins at Oshawa, it has other plants it will step into . . . (next) it will be the mines, demoralize the industry and send stocks tumbling." How right he was! It was at this point he established his special police force, nicknamed "Hepburn's Hussars" and "Sons of Mitches", "to fight the inroads of the Lewis organization and communism in general". Hepburn also fired two cabinet ministers, Croll and Roebuck, whom he felt weren't anti-union enough. Croll, now a Liberal senator, made himself famous as a supposedly pro-labour man by telling Hepburn, "My place is marching with the workers rather than riding with General Motors."

Hardly a week passed before Martin was trying to sell out the strike. On April 16, the Oshawa Times (according to Abella) quoted him as saying to GM executives in Washington, that the strike "should be settled on a Canadian basis with recognition of the CIO". Naturally, the Oshawa autoworkers were angry. Nonetheless, Martin set out a four-point program for settlement which called only for opening negotiations(!), a seniority system, a contract running parallel to that of GM in the U.S., and individual contracts for GM plants in St. Catharines and Windsor. Millard and Thompson agreed that the workers should return to work before the contract was signed.

The workers had other plans. At a huge rally to sell the workers on the idea, the chairman, Mayor Hall, (with tears in his eyes) was hooted off the stage.

So the strike continued.

In his book, Abella makes the question of financial support from the International seem as if it was a burning question in Oshawa. It definitely was not in Windsor, and, from what I can tell, in Oshawa either. You see, the average rank-and-file striker at that time was smarter than Abella and didn't have the nationalist axe to grind against the International that Abella has. The workers then understood that the International had completely bankrupted itself in winning the Flint sitdown, a strike that lasted 44 days and involved tens of thousands of workers and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Unlike Abella, Canadian autoworkers understood that winning in Flint was the absolute key to their own victory and they were grateful to American autoworkers. They had no axe to grind. Anyway, the strike lasted only 15 days, and, compared to other strikes at the time, caused little hardship. Farmers and grocers rallied to the workers' side.

Abella does not mention in his book that, when the Flint sitdown started, John L. Lewis sent a blank

cheque from the United Mine Workers to the UAW in Detroit. To this day, I believe, the UAW has not paid back all of the enormous monies they received at that time.

The problem during the Oshawa strike concerning financial support arose only because Homer Martin, Millard, and Thompson promised it to the workers. There are always weak ones among any group of strikers. It was these weak strikers, plus those CCF'ers and nationalists (like Abella today) with axes to grind against the CIO, who griped about financial support.

In Windsor, I got involved in this affair by taking Jerry O'Malley and another GM striker or two across to the International Headquarters in Detroit. We sat down outside Martin's office and declared we weren't leaving until he came to talk about support. By and by, George F. Addes, International Secretary-Treasurer and dean of the communists in the UAW, came over to us and told us that Martin was the kind of leader that couldn't care if we sat there for a week. I began to see I was wrong to bother with this issue, in that the union's treasury was spent establishing the UAW in Flint, the action that made the UAW possible both in the U.S. and Canada.

Despite the fact that Martin showed his true colours on April 19 at an executive board meeting in Washington, recommending against a sympathy strike in the U.S., GM in Oshawa had had the biscuit. A few days later, they settled with the workers. Because of weak leadership by Martin, Millard, and Thompson, union recognition was not included in the contract. But that was just a formality.

The Daily Clarion, newspaper of the Communist Party, printed on April 26 that the settlement marked the "Dawn of a new era . . . for the CIO victory in Oshawa . . . has broken into the hitherto unorganized and terrorized mass production industry."

Just a few days after the Oshawa victory, the Party organized a mass leafletting at virtually every major industrial enterprise in southern Ontario, all on the same day. This leafletting was to spearhead CIO drives simultaneously into steel, rubber, electrical, textile, mining, and lumbering. Unfortunately, the campaign fell flat.

There were a number of reasons for this failure. First was anti-communism. Previous to setting up the CIO, John L. Lewis was well-known for his anti-communism. When he set up the CIO, he must have figured that he could use the communists, and he played down anti-communism. Shortly after the Flint victory, however, he once again began red-baiting. At the same time, the Catholic Church got into the picture. The Catholic Action Group it set up to seize the leadership of the trade union movement from the communists will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. Hepburn also made a crusade of anti-communism. So did the CCF. This anti-communism had a bad effect on organizing in that it caused divisions among the workers.

The problem was worsened by the fact that the Communist Party, instead of using the attack as an opportunity to show why communist leadership, by its

very nature, is contrary to making any sellout compromises with the employers, like CCF always did, more or less shied away from any counter-attack. Because of the new United Front policy, the Party probably did not want to revive the old CP-CCF antagonism in the open.

Another reason for the failure of the drive was the let-down about financial support. CIO organizers went around selling the CIO as an enormous international organization with unlimited resources. At Oshawa, right-wingers burst that balloon. In the first place, the Oshawa strikers should not have been promised financial support. Secondly, the weak ones who demanded it should have been ashamed to do so in a two-week strike. In fact, international solidarity, in terms of sympathy strikes as at Kelsey or secondary boycotts of scab goods, is a lot more important than money. However, the CIO had been shown up. The organizing drive was weakened.

A final weakness of the campaign was simply that we didn't have enough workers on the inside of the plants.

Immediately after the strike, the Oshawa local nearly fell apart, thanks to Millard. He was more interested in fighting communists than fighting GM. The membership of Local 222 dropped from over 4,000 to 200-300 within six months. Millard was a CCF do-nothing when it came to taking up workers' grievances. In the same period in Windsor, we formed locals in two more plants. Both Millard and I, and everyone else, were completely green in this new game. Millard, however, didn't have enough sense to consult the people who knew — the communists. It was the communists and their friends who kept Local 222 from disintegrating altogether.

However, a tactical error was made in Oshawa that also hurt the local. I don't know what position the communists took on it. After the strike, GM announced a big layoff. In the spirit of solidarity and fraternity, the local decided to share the unemployment among all the members by working a universal three-day week at reduced pay. This action nearly killed the local. As I pointed out in a letter to *The Worker* last year, workers cannot share misery. If the employer lays off, it is the job of the union to put the load on him or his government to take responsibility. At that time, this policy meant taking layoffs by seniority and sending those laid off for welfare. It also meant raising the demand for the shorter work week with no loss in pay. Last year at Kelsey Wheel in Windsor, the same mistake was repeated. I say now, as I did in *The Worker* then, that the Canadian Party of Labour has the correct policy to solve this problem within the capitalist system:

"Make the bosses take the losses — fight for 30 hours work for forty hours pay":

I'll come back to the Oshawa story when I relate what transpired when I was sent there as International Representative in 1939 to salvage the situation.

Before I go on to describe how the union steamrollered into two more plants in Windsor, I think a few words should be spent summarizing the lessons of Oshawa. First, it must be recognized that the basebuilding was done by the communists. Graham Spry, Ontario CCF leader, complained to David Lewis, national sec.-treas., "Everywhere there is the demand for union organizers, everywhere there is the cry for 'labour party', everywhere there is a new attitude, a new public opinion, and everywhere the CCF is almost totally ineffective" (Abella, page 24). On the other hand, Tim Buck, CP leader, wrote, "Our party had trained and developed a whole cadre of people who knew about unions and how to go about organizing them. And the Party members, even though they didn't work in the industry, would go distributing leaflets, helping to organize the union" (Abella, page 25). Yet, because they abandoned their strategy of leading the unions, by dissolving the Red unions and communist fractions, the communists handed the leadership on a silver platter to the CCF.

Internationalism key to victory

A second lesson is that international unionism was the key to the victory. Even though Abella refused to see it, both capitalists and workers knew that once we won in Flint it was just a matter of time until industrial unionism became a fact everywhere. Abella's concern for financial support from the International was as much a white herring in Oshawa in 1937 as the dues question is today in the international unions. The key question should not be, "Do we need international unions?" Of course, we do. The question is the quality of our leadership. We have many national unions in Canada in which the dues go to Ottawa or Quebec City merely to line the pockets of the executives. If we had decent communist leadership running the international unions today, our dues money, even if it went to the States, would win victories for us.

Every trade unionist should take this lesson to heart, as has the Canadian Party of Labour: only international unions openly led by communists can fight every strike to the finish for workers. Only such unions can lead to the destruction of the capitalist system. And it cannot be said that the present trade union leadership doesn't know this as a fact.

U.A.W. Rolling in Windsor

Some Doubts About the CP

The weight of the victories at Flint and at Kelsey Wheel steamrollered the UAW into two more plants in Windsor.

While it can be said that Local 195 was having some initial success in many of the plants in Windsor, the L.A. Young employees readied themselves faster than the others and became our number three unit (after Kelsey and GM). The organization of L.A. Young Industries, manufacturers of automobile springs for seats and seat backs, was comparatively easy in that this plant was located across the street from Kelsey Wheel. Many of the workers were friends and relatives of Kelsey Wheel workers and were aware of our new-found strength by reason of our joining the same international union as workers of the Kelsey parent plant in Detroit. L.A. Young in Windsor was also a subsidiary of L.A. Young in Detroit. The L.A. Young workers were aware, too, of our initial failure at Kelsey Wheel and of the role played by the Communist Party in the rehiring of the five men fired for union activity. Here again we were fortunate to have a goodly number of women and men of European origin who understood left-wing and union politics, and a few militant French Canadian women. I am thinking at the moment of the Chauvin sisters, who, after the strike, married two of our brothers from Kelsey Wheel. In particular, credit is due to the Schiller family.

All too often, credit for organizing a plant is given to the international rep., like me, or to some big-name union leader. Personally, I don't mind taking credit for the success at Kelsey Wheel but I really can't take the credit for organizing Walker Metal, L.A. Young, Ford, Chrysler, or any other plant. What really determines whether a plant becomes unionized and whether that union will be militant is the quality of the workers organizing inside. No plant was ever organized from outside. Charles Millard, at a speech this year at McMaster University, claimed that unionism was brought to Canadian plants by the CCF (the forerunner to the NDP) from Great Britain. This racist and false statement is contradicted by my personal experience organizing in the United Auto Workers' International Union, which union kicked Millard out for his miserable failures at the same job. The truth is that my success and the success of all the other organizers for the UAW was due only to the good solid work done by the rank-and-file communists inside the plants. At L.A. Young, there would have been no victory without the leadership of Joe Schiller, his sister Elsie, and Anna Horoky, who was fired just before the strike. At Walker Metal Products, our next victory for the UAW in Windsor, the real leader was Roy Nykor. I don't know for sure if these old friends of mine were communists, but I think so. All these

working class heroes have been buried in the Reuther-inspired histories of the UAW. I salute Joe's and Anna's memory.

I am not sure whether it was Joe Schiller or myself who made the arrangements with management for our first meeting with Mr. Platt, plant manager. I do remember, however, borrowing a car from Nick Larsh, one of our charter members at Kelsey. We had, by this time, rented a small hall where we had an office. In other words, we had a union headquarters. Bill Emery, a Ford worker fired for his communist affiliation, borrowed a suit from Jack Wright from Kelsey. The pants were too short and didn't even reach his ankles. He was armed with a briefcase which contained two or three sheets of paper: handwritten lists of demands. Thus prepared, Bill and I set out to keep our appointment. It was May 10, 1937.

When we arrived at the plant, Joe Schiller and the committee were waiting for us outside the plant manager's office. At 10 a.m. we were ushered in. Joe introduced us to Platt, King, the personnel manager, and a foreman whose name I can't recall. The deference shown us was in marked contrast to the treatment we had received at Kelsey.

A member of the committee, Joe Dominic, was asked by the foreman why he had joined the union. Joe's understanding of English was limited. He answered, "Union go up, me go up. Union go down, me go down." I suggested to the foreman that he not use our time trying to intimidate members of our committee, particularly a man perhaps more aware and informed than he was as to why workers need a union but one who lacked only the fluency of the English language. I said, "Ask him the same question in his own language and the measure of his intelligence will surprise you. There are seven committee members, six of whom speak fluent English. Why not direct your question to one of them?"

The plan works

At this point, I asked Bill Emery to give Platt and King a list of our demands, the most important being recognition of the UAW. Platt listened intently as I read the list and, in a very shaky voice, made known that he could not address himself to our demands until he had consulted with his superiors in Detroit.

While driving to the plant, Bill and I discussed pulling out the workers that day. While inside, I had second thoughts. As a result, when Platt suggested that both sides sign an interim agreement — no lockout and no strike for 24 hours — I agreed, signed my name, and underneath wrote, "International Union, United Automobile Workers, Local 195".

When we retired from the office, I explained to the

committee why I had signed the agreement. The plant had three floors. My reasoning was that the most effective way to pull the workers out was for the committee to meet on the third floor at a point farthest from the stairway. At the designated time, they would start moving, taking everyone possible on to the second floor then to the main floor, and then out. If we had struck that day, the committee would have been outside. We therefore stood a good chance of leaving inside the plant men and women who needed the extra encouragement the mass movement from floor to floor would create. The committee agreed to this plan. We all knew what the answer would be from Detroit.

I contacted Bob Stone and Paul Gold, president and secretary-treasurer, respectively, of L.A. Young local of the UAW in Detroit. They were on hand the next day to assure our people of their support. Again the Communist Party was at our side. These two leaders made no secret of their affiliations.

My plan worked well. About 175, or two-thirds of the workers, walked out. Kelsey Wheel workers, across the street, threw open the doors and windows of the plant cheering and singing the UAW's battle song. "We Shall Not Be Moved". Production at Kelsey must have hit a low low that day. Every hour on the hour everything stopped and all the workers came to the windows and doors to cheer on the strikers. We did not have the same worries we had at Kelsey this time, in that General Motors had been mowed down to size by our union, both in Flint and in Oshawa. Our members at L.A. Young also were well aware of how the Detroit local saved our skins at Kelsey and of the support that Bob Stone and Paul Gold of the Detroit local of L.A. Young were prepared to give. These new conditions

created a happy, carnival-like atmosphere.

Two days later, we pulled Walker Metal Products out on strike. Management refused to meet with us. Half of the 400 workers walked out the first day. We were able to maintain a good picket line and used the same methods as at Kelsey to keep the action away from the vicinity of the plant. The organizing committee visited the homes of men still working. Ninety-five per cent of the workers were European. Each day, a few more would join the picket line. Roy Nykor could speak several languages and acted as official interpreter. The plant leadership were competent. Roy Nykor, Ted White, the president, along with Bill Emery, looked after the picket line, making sure the scabs had a good reception and send-off every morning and afternoon, and giving me more time with the L.A. Young strike.

On May 18, J.L. Cohen, the UAW legal advisor, along with Louis Fine, chief conciliation officer for the Ontario Department of Labour, conferred with the leaders of Local 195. The following day, the plant committee and management reached an agreement which was ratified by the workers. In line with the policy of Hepburn, his boss, Fine made a statement that he would not sit at the same table as Napier, the CIO organizer. L.A. Young workers got a yellow dog contract with no mention of the UAW. In fact, the only official recognition during this period that the UAW managed to get was on the interim agreement I had signed with Platt and written "UAW Local 195". The strike did produce a wage increase, a reduction in hours to 45, time and a half for overtime, and no-discrimination clauses. Personally, after our good experience at Kelsey, I didn't really care what the



"Every hour on the hour, everything stopped and all the workers came to the windows to cheer on the strikers."

contract said. As long as I had a functioning steward system, I felt confident of keeping the company in line.

Incidentally, I believe to this day that there was some sort of collusion between J.L. Cohen, Louis Fine, and J.B. Salsberg, trade union director at the time for the Communist Party. Cohen was close to the Communist Party, even though this situation didn't prevent him from charging the highest fees to the UAW. Salsberg once boasted to me that Cohen's car and the professional services of his secretary were at his disposal 24 hours a day. Fine refused to meet with CIO organizers, yet bargained with local CIO negotiating committees. Was the Party taking a rake-off from Cohen's fees? Having given up the idea of openly leading the UAW, the CP wasn't in a position to ask for money directly from the members, even though they built the union. Why didn't the CP put up a fight against Fine's refusal to talk to CIO organizers and recognize the CIO? We had enough strength in the rank and file to hold out until he did. These questions have bothered me over the years.

Militant women strikers

The L.A. Young strike revealed many dastardly conditions. Joe Dominic made known that he not only paid to get his job but also had to buy beer for his foreman and foreman's friends since being hired. Worse yet, the female employees told us of having to use their bodies to get their jobs and of being threatened with dismissal for refusing to be used by their foremen. As our organizational drive took us to plants where women worked, it became clear that they were crying out for help, since this immoral and disgusting practice was city-wide. It is little wonder that the strikes where women were involved were driven by a militance that one had to see to believe. The L.A. Young contract, it could be said, was a milestone in giving women workers protection against all forms of coercion and intimidation.

As in Kelsey Wheel, we had no problems after the strike settlement, in that we had built on a solid communist-led foundation. Joe Schiller and his sister Elsie, the Chauvin sisters, and Anna, a sister of Paul Horoky, a communist who had given time and help to the Kelsey strike, kept matters under control. Joe and Elsie Schiller's father deserves some credit at this point. He farmed and organized other farmers to supply food for the three strikes we had to this point. Mike Horoky, Paul's brother, married Elsie Schiller and went on to be a true activist when we organized Chrysler.

We followed the same policy in regard to open meetings prior to striking that we held during the Kelsey strike. We didn't have any. That way, it was hard for management to ferret out the organizers. At L.A. Young and Walker Metal we simply gave the word to the key men to pull the switches and start the mass movement in the desired direction. Our previous base-building and the element of surprise did the rest.

The end of the L.A. Young strike with the aid of our Detroit brothers left us with a tough one on our hands. Walker Metal Products was a strictly Canadian company with no visible U.S. connection. Walker Metal management was well aware of how we won at Kelsey and Young. They took a tough stance and were convinced they were going to give us a "shellacking".

The "British-born agitators" and "agents of Moscow" had run up against a blank wall now, they thought. If I were to say that this condition did not give me sleepless nights, I would be a liar.

Our Canadian membership had not to this point been tried out on the question of the secondary boycott, which, to my way of thinking, was the only weapon that could be used effectively in this new experience. Walker Metal was the source from which the GM engine plant in Windsor got their motor block castings and from which Kelsey Wheel got brake drum castings.

If Father Garvey's Catholic Action Group had been organized at this point, we would have never pulled it off. Fortunately, our theme was still "Solidarity Forever", and not "Praise the Lord" and "the meek shall inherit the earth".

I caused to be called meetings with Bob McCartney, Andrew Hinding, John Sovran, and other key people from the GM plant, and in turn with the key people from Kelsey. At these meetings, I explained the advantageous position management was in and how they were beginning to throw salt into our wounds inflicted by reason of their being able to operate with men from the Sandwich foundry, which was closing down operations. There was a good response from these meetings. As a matter of fact, I had the feeling that our Local 195 members wanted to flex their muscles. Both sets of key men liked the idea of refusing to handle scab goods until the Walker Metal strike was won.

I suggested calling a meeting of all UAW members in Windsor at which Bob McCartney, plant chairman at GM, would make the motion that would be seconded by someone from Kelsey. The communist training I had absorbed from masters like Wyndham Mortimer and Bob Travis was now coming to fruition.

Refuse to handle scab goods

The Masonic Temple was filled to overflowing in a good show of solidarity. The packed hall was what I needed. I traced the building of the union from a meeting of six men around my kitchen table. I showed how all the Canadian strikes — Kelsey, GM, and L.A. Young — had been won by pressure from the U.S. I then made my plea to the meeting, making known that the Walker foundry was still operating and saying that the only way to settle this strike in the best interests of the families involved was in their hands. To sum up, I pointed out that we had all derived the benefits of united action by reason of our American brothers sitting inside the GM plants for 44 days in Flint, men who had made the largest corporation in the world say "uncle". Surely, we in Windsor are strong enough, I argued, to say we are the UNITED Auto Workers and tell Gregory of Walker Metal, "You can produce motor blocks and brake drums with scabs, but we will NOT handle them."

By the time I was finished speaking, emotion got the better of me and tears of joy began streaming down my face. Bob McCartney made the motion calling on GM and Kelsey workers not to handle the scab goods. It was seconded and supported by speakers from both plants pledging their solidarity. It passed unanimously.

The following statement was issued to the press:

"Mr. Gregory better realize right now that he's not just dealing with his own employees," Mr. Napier declared. "He's dealing with all of Local 195, which has approximately 2,000 members in Windsor. The workers in Kelsey and General Motors are just as determined as the Walker strikers to have the union recognized at Walker Metal Products. Beginning on Monday, they will refuse to handle any shipments from the Walker plant. That was agreed at our meeting last night." (Windsor Daily Star, May 29, 1937)

Exactly five days later, Gregory sued for peace. Two days after that, we had a contract. Now is that real trade unionism or is that real trade unionism?

Family hardships

The catch is that, as at L.A. Young, it was a yellow dog contract, with no reference to the UAW. More on this later.

The important lesson to be drawn is that unions must not sign contracts forbidding secondary boycotts, sympathy strikes, sit-downs, etc. Unions today are burdened with the threat of huge fines and other penalties if they don't obey these contract clauses written into almost all union agreements. These clauses only weaken our class unity and provide the weak leaders of today with an excuse to do nothing to aid a strike in another local or union. In other words, workers today must strive for the freedom we had forty years ago when we refused to sign such agreements.

Another lesson that became clear to me during this period was that, for organizing, you have to rely on the young workers. You might get the occasional middle-aged worker who will take a leading role, but not of-

ten. In those days, all the leaders were in their twenties or early thirties. It is youth that makes change.

I myself was undergoing changes at this time. When I had returned to work at Kelsey, I felt for the first time in months a sense of inner contentment. I had lived with a guilt complex for what had seemed a very long time. I had not only hurt my own family but also the families of the other fired men and all the strikers. Many, many nights, I lay awake asking myself over and over again how a system can survive that takes away the necessities of life from men and their families? How can one condone a system which gives the owners of industry the right to give and take away at will?

The feeling of contentment was shortlived. The Ford Motor Co. fired my brother Alex and my father. My father, who was a social-democrat, had helped me during the L.A. Young strike. Alex was not political at all. Neither were members of the union. Alex's foreman, who was given the hatchet job, said he had protested the action in that Alex's work record was exemplary. My father got no explanation at all.

This was the most traumatic experience of my life. When I was told of the firings, my legs went out from under me. Once again, I was responsible for taking the bread out of my family's mouths. I can remember walking aimlessly about Windsor, waiting for the union hall to close, so that I could go in and sit alone with my grief. I wasn't blaming Wallace R. Campbell, president of Ford Canada, brother of Malcolm Campbell, president of Kelsey Canada.

I found myself condemning workers who were still fighting their way through picket lines. We had opened the door to a new way of life but they would not enter.



Elsie Schiller (now Mrs. Mike Horoky). The late Joe Schiller and his family. Official UAW histories give all the credit to the Reuthers, Mazey, Millard, etc. The real credit should go to the rank and file communists and militants like the Horokys and the Schillers.



Word must have travelled fast since another family of Napiers in Windsor, unrelated to us, put an ad in the Star stating they were not part of the family of J.S. Napier, CIO organizer. I got even with them a few years later, when James, a son of the family, was named as co-respondent in a divorce affair. A report of court proceedings published in the Star prompted a number of guys to call me up demanding to know, "What the hell are you doing?" I called up my old friend on the Star, Angus Munro. Next day, the Star ran an article stating that the Napier referred to in the court proceedings was not James S. Napier, CIO organizer.

Members of the Communist Party in Windsor had been trying to get me to join for months. Even though I was impressed and attracted by their actions and ideas, I resisted since I was still hung up on my Baptist upbringing. It wasn't long after the firing of my father and brother, however, that I joined the Party. I stopped blaming the workers and started blaming the Campbells of the world.

I did not last long in the Party before I quit. At first, the leader in Windsor was Joe Spence, a Ford worker fired for his communist views. He was a working man, like me from Scotland, and really down to earth. Soon

after I joined, he was sent elsewhere. The new leader was an intellectual who knew lots of theory and nothing at all about organizing workers. Every once in a while, some intellectual from Toronto was sent down to talk to us about trade union organizing. I felt put down by their attitudes and manner of flaunting their Marxist vocabulary. I wasn't impressed by their knowledge. There was a difference of night and day between the "Communist trade union organizers" in Canada and those across the river in Detroit. The American party activists were really something.

However, I can't lay the blame solely on the Party. I wasn't ready for the discipline a communist party requires. I think the bosses were sometimes more scared of me than of Party members, since they didn't know what I might do. I rejoined the Party a few years later, again for a short time, and then quit again, for different and more substantive reasons. However, if I knew then what I know now, I would have stayed in the Party and tried to change it from inside.

As it was, I never attacked the Party, even when it was dangerous not to do so. Rather, I attended Party meetings which planned trade union strategy, and defended the Party, even though it meant sacrifice on my part, as you shall presently see.

The Windsor Star

Will Boycott Parts In Two Other Plants

**WORKERS IN GENERAL MOTORS AND KELSEY
WHEEL COMPANY FACTORIES WILL REFUSE
TO HANDLE THEM**

UNION workers in the plants of General Motors of Canada, Limited, and Kelsey Wheel Company, Limited, will refuse to handle parts produced in the strike-crippled plant of Walker Metal Products, Limited, U.A.W.A. leaders announced today in formulating plans to force the Walker management into recognition of the union.

Agreed at Meeting

After negotiations collapsed yesterday at the refusal of H. M. Gregory, Walker plant manager, to recognize any union, Local 195 of the U.A.W.A. held a closed meeting to determine what action was to be taken. The decision, according to James Napier, union organizer, was to boycott parts manufactured in the Walker plant and shipped to the two other automobile

now that he's not just dealing with his own employes," Napier declared. "He's dealing with all of Local 195, which has approximately 2,000 members in Windsor. The workers in Kelsey's and General Motors are just as determined as the Walker strikers to have the union recognized at Walker Metal Products. Beginning on Monday they will refuse to handle any ship-

Capitalist Counter-Attack

Catholic Action: Angels of Destruction

There was no question that the UAW in early 1937 was steamrolling into the hearts of working people, flattening the bosses as it rolled into plant after plant. In fact, the whole CIO was moving into a higher gear, though more in the U.S. than in Canada. It is my conviction that, if we had not been stopped then, we would have won thirty years ago the things workers are fighting for today. Thirty years ago, we would have had 30 for 40 — thirty hours work for forty hours pay — and all the other goals that the Canadian Party of Labour is putting out front for workers today, had we not been stopped in our tracks.

Naturally, the capitalist class made plans to stop our advance. Realizing they had to live with industrial unions, they relied on anti-communists, directed from the Catholic Church and the CCF (the forerunner of the present New Democratic Party), to replace the communists leading the unions with men they could work with and trust.

Yet it was not the strength of our adversary, the capitalist class, that laid us low. Rather, as is always the case, it was our own weakness that beat us.

In early 1937, about the same time as we were whipping Walker Metal Products, Father Garvey of Assumption College (now the University of Windsor) began holding classes. These were leadership classes designed specifically to train Catholic workers to take over the UAW. When the classes first started, a young Catholic auto worker, "Cap" McNeil, from Chrysler, asked Father Garvey if he wanted a really experienced union man, Jimmy Napier, to address a class. No, Father Garvey did not want Napier in his class.

But Catholic Action was not something that was initiated just in Windsor, or just in Canada for that matter. It was a world-wide organization brought to life by the Catholic Church to fight the growing world-wide communist movement. In pursuing its goal, Catholic Action supported fascism and broke strikes by bringing backwoods peasants in droves as scabs to struck factories, in order to "keep out the devil". Today, Catholic Action is a different story. Today, young Catholic priests are being arrested around the world for joining the workers' struggles. In those days, however, it was Catholic Action versus the "godless communists".

Let me make it clear from the start: I have nothing against Catholic workers, or workers of any faith for that matter. In fact, I hesitated even to write this piece for fear of being misunderstood and branded "anti-Catholic". I have learned from my own family history what it means to be involved in quarrels that are fought along religious lines. The Napier family in Scotland during the 1500's was a Protestant family in a Catholic country. They became embroiled in the

Jacobite Rebellion and every subsequent inter-religious fight. The result is that there are very few Napiers left today. There used to be only two Napier families in Windsor. There are only two Napiers in the Hamilton phone book today.

As far as I am concerned, all religions are equally false. Each faith has a set of fairy tales supposedly to explain the world, but not one is of any aid to the working people in providing the necessities of life. If a worker wants to believe in these fairy tales, that's his business. But when some church comes along and tries to undermine an organization that fights in the workers' interest, I draw the line.

Since I have become associated with the Canadian Party of Labour, I have finally got beyond being simply a trade unionist. Now, I have begun to study the Marxist-Leninist world outlook. For workers, it makes more sense than religion. Change comes from the contradictions within things, not from some external being. For example, the question of whether autoworkers will end layoffs and increase wages in 1976 depends on the contradiction between the union and management in the auto plants over how the surplus value (the new value created by the workers beyond the cost of their wages, raw materials, and overhead — in other words, gross profits) is divided. It also depends on the general contradiction in society as a whole between the capitalists and the union movement. If the union movement is weak due to poor leadership, then autoworkers and their families will continue to suffer from unemployment and even hunger. If we can dislodge the weak leaders, then things will improve.

It could not be said in 1937 that the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, did not know the intolerable conditions to which workers were subjected. It cannot be said that they were not aware of the thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands, of unemployed men and their families. Yet, we never heard the churches raise their voices against this gross violation of human rights. Even today, when different churches lament the injustices done to millions of workers every day, not once do they attack the capitalist system that is the root of the evil.

To those who make excuses for the inaction of the churches and use the volume of the sacred law to defend them, I say this, "If it is so, that God has provided adequately for all his children, then the churches have reneged on their responsibility to expose the capitalists' hijacking of the workers' share. Communists have always responded to the cries of the underprivileged of the world and organized them to fight back. The churches, on the other hand, teach people to be pacifists, that "the meek shall inherit the earth".



Communists organizing in U.S. drew inspiration of the working class dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. Stalin symbolized steel-like qualities necessary to beat ruthless capitalists.

In 1932 or 33, I had the pleasure of attending a debate between Harvey Murphy, a communist, and a young Catholic priest. Murphy said, "If the Church is interested in eliminating the suffering among the poor, and the Communist Party is equally interested in eliminating the suffering among the poor, then they must walk along the same road."

The priest retorted, "What if the Communists win away some of our good Catholics along the way?"

Murphy replied, "The Church has the same opportunity."

We had many discussions on how to deal with the Catholic Action threat to our leadership of the union. It was obvious that the Communist Party was not going to attack the Church and expose its anti-communism as a front for the counter-attack of the capitalists against communist leadership in the union. Rather, the Party sought to undermine Catholic Action by bringing Catholics into leadership positions.

Let me illustrate this point by describing a conversation with my good friend, John Eldon, who deserves and will get more space later.

As bright as John was on matters of organization, he fell into a trap carefully set by men in black robes. When John got established in Windsor, he made it known that he was not a communist, but his wife was. While sipping a beer one night after a union meeting, I

told John the difficulty we were having recruiting Catholic workers to the union. To this, he answered that, in order to get the Catholics to join, we must first push some of them into leading positions. This, he went on to say, would silence, to some degree, those who had knowingly been sent to infiltrate the union in order to weaken our leadership by spreading false rumours that we were godless agents of Moscow.

I argued with John and suggested that, if the Catholic Church sent its members into the union, they could also take them back out. They could also direct their members on policy, should we push them into leadership positions.

Knighted for anti-communism

I maintained that we would gain very little by playing into the hands of Father Garvey in that our most militant members, for example, Leo Gilette, Red Parent, the Casa brothers, the McNeil brothers, Ernie Menard, Wilf Gravelin, Roy Nantais, Nick Klinger, Nick Larsh, the Chauvin sisters, and Herb Ovelette, as well as some of our leaders, for example, Mike Horoky, Paul Horoky, Roy Nykor and Alec Parent, were former Catholics. They had divorced themselves from the Church and now were the hard core of our union and members, in many cases, of the Communist Party.

It is easy to be correct by hindsight. Nonetheless, it is clear to me, from my experience with CPL, that the only way to fight anti-communism is head-on, no matter the quarter it comes from. You lose by hiding your politics. We who had organized Flint, Kelsey Wheel, L.A. Young, Oshawa, and Walker Metal had shown the way to autoworkers. We had a better way than the Catholic Church.

Catholic Action took the olive branch being offered by the Communist Party and crushed it in its mailed fist. During the war, Father Garvey caused to be brought to Canada one Earl Watson, a disbarred lawyer from Detroit. Watson led a whole pack of Catholic Action recruits who began sniping away at us. We made them look like fools before the war. However, while most of the left-wingers were off fighting in Europe, they gained experience and ground. Joining up with fireside philosophers, wheelchair Marxists, and actual scabs who comprised our CCF opposition, they swept the left wing out of control of Local 195 in 1946. (Much more on this later.) Earl Watson became president and was knighted by the Pope for services rendered.

Local 195 was not an isolated case. Almost the entire CIO was cleaned of the communists and left-wingers whose sweat and blood had given birth to the organization. To this day, CIO unions in Canada are dominated by Catholics. They did a real job on us.

I repeat that it was our own shortcomings that lost us the fight to Catholic Action. Perhaps the Communist Party did not understand that behind the mask of religion was the ugly face of the capitalist class, in those days with Catholic Action, just as today it is different sets of warring capitalists behind both sides of religious strife in Ireland, Lebanon, and other parts of the world. In any case, we retreated before the bogeyman of anti-communism. The capitalists must have chuckled to themselves about the ease with which their counter-attack succeeded.



Sir Earl Watson

The "Sir" before Earl Watson's name was not a recognition by the King. It was awarded by the Pope, for services rendered, to the leader of the Catholic Action, who succeeded in cleaning the communists from leadership in Local 195, UAW, Windsor.

By way of concluding this section on the role of Catholic Action and introducing the next section on the role of the CCF, let me draw a comparison between our situation and that of the workers in the Soviet Union at the same time. In 1937, the imperialists also counter-attacked against the leadership in Socialist Russia. It was the time of the purges of the Trotskyite sympathizers who were in cahoots with the Nazis and other imperialists. A lot of people in the union movement had harsh words for Stalin. And while they criticized, I admired the man. I always said that the capitalists have taught us to be ruthless. You have to be ruthless with your enemy to win.

In the Soviet Union, the workers had state power. They lined the counter-revolutionaries up against the wall and shot them. Having in my mind Red Friday in Glasgow, the workers killed in the Winnipeg General Strike, the strike of the Estevan miners in Saskatchewan, and the Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago, the electric chair murders of Sacco and Venzetti, the lifetime imprisonment of Tom Mooney on trumped-up charges, the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children that suffered due to the infamous blacklist, the millions of workers maimed for life and killed in industrial accidents caused by capitalists more concerned with profits than safety, and the untold hundreds of millions who starved in the Depression in the midst of plenty — having in my mind all of these crimes, how I longed to do the same in Canada!

Reuthers knew Soviet socialism worked

"What you have written concerning the strikes and the general labor unrest in Detroit, plus what we have learned from other sources, makes us long for the moment to be back with you in the front lines of struggle. However, the daily inspiration that is ours as we work side by side with our Russian comrades in our factory, the thought that we will forever end the exploitation of man by man, the thought that what we are building will be for the benefit and enjoyment of the working class, not only of Russia but of the entire world, is the compensation we receive for our temporary absence from the struggle in the United States. And let no one tell you we are not on the road to socialism in the Soviet Union. Let no one say that the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are not on the road to security, enlightenment and happiness. . . .

"Here are no bosses to drive fear into the workers. No one to drive them in mad speedups. Here the workers are in control. Even the shop superintendent had no more right in these meetings than any other worker. I have witnessed many times already when the superintendent spoke too long. The workers in the hall decided he had already consumed enough time and the floor was then given to a lathe hand who told of his problems and offered suggestions. Imagine this at Ford or Briggs. This is what the outside world calls the 'ruthless dictatorship in Russia.' I tell you . . . in all the countries we have thus far been in we have never found such genuine proletarian democracy. . . .

"We are witnessing and experiencing great things in the U.S.S.R. We are seeing the most backward nation in the world being rapidly transformed into the most modern and scientific, with new concepts and new ideals coming into force. We are watching, daily, socialism being taken down from the books on the shelves and put into actual application. Who would not be inspired by such events?"

*From a letter by Walter and Victor Reuther to friends in Detroit,
written in Gorki, U.S.S.R., where they worked in an auto factory in the early '30's.*

Bosses Step Up Anti-red Drive

C.C.F. Puts Its Nose In

I arrived in Milwaukee on August 23, 1937, a delegate to the UAW Convention representing Local 195, Windsor, Canada. My first observation was that a large percentage of those present were young men and women. Immediately I could hear again the words of Bill Gallish. In broken English, this communist told a group of left-wingers, members of the Unity Group in Oshawa, "Ford Motor Company just like spider in web. When spider get fly in web, he suck all vitamins from fly and throw fly away. Ford Motor Company do same with young man. Hires him eighteen years old, works life out of him, and at forty years, throws him in industrial scrap heap."

Yes, and I heard again my own words, spoken at similar meeting in Windsor, where I told the old, baldheaded men in the audience that I could not understand how in hell they could have sat back and allowed conditions to get to the intolerable state they were in at the time in the mass-production industries. I became overwhelmed with joy: youth had answered the call. They had seen and observed the law of need, the law of the kitchen. The depression with all its pain and suffering had changed the minds of the young men and women of my generation. They had made up their minds that the time had come to call a halt to starvation conditions. They were on the march to a better way of life and were not listening to CCF book socialists, evolutionists, and men in black robes who were loud in their condemnation of the call for revolution. Yes, this large concentration of young men and women gathered for the convention brought me joy and re-dedication.

In the morning on the first or second day of the convention, there was an air of expectancy in the hall. Everyone was looking towards the entrance of the hall, which was the grand ballroom of the Schroeder Hotel. Like all the others, I tried to get a good vantage point from which to watch John L. Lewis enter the convention. It was a real thrill to see the great man escorted in by an honour guard of UAW international board members from the US and Canada.

The event was one of the highlights of the convention. Delegates tore the placards that indicated their local union numbers off their one-by-twos, and banged them on the tables, cheered, applauded, and stamped their feet for a total, believe it or not, of thirty-two minutes straight. The uproar in the hall was so great that plaster was falling from the high ceiling of the ballroom. I never heard so much applause for one individual in my whole life. It ended only when Lewis himself pleaded with the delegates to get on with the convention's business. After this ovation, any word or gesture from Lewis was followed by the workers.

Little did I know at that time, green as I was, that there were forces at the convention that were trying to put spokes in our wheels, forces trying to tear our union apart.

I was made aware of this when I sought counsel from Nat Ganley, who re-introduced me to the Unity Caucus. Nat was one of the leading speakers, one of the leading floor men, one of the best parliamentarians I ever heard in my life. He could deal with international presidents who tried to railroad motions and to thwart left-wing motions put upon the floor. Nat was a master, an artist. It was a real loss to the workers when he died a few years ago.

In the Unity Caucus, once again I met Wyndham Mortimer, Bob Travis, Bob Stone, Paul Gold, and "The" John Anderson. "The" John Anderson, who was the equal of Nat Ganley on the floor, was the president of the so-called "Communist" local 155 of the UAW in Detroit, from which Tom Parry had been sent over to us, to help us win our very first strike at Kelsey Wheel. It was a great feeling of pride I had in being a trusted member of the Caucus. Almost all the young delegates were completely green at this, our first convention. I was still so green, I really had no idea what was the purpose of the Unity Group, other than that it was a group of the most militant workers.

Homer Martin, the International President, was less than pleased with the manner in which the members of the General Motors locals, particularly in Flint, were getting their grievances settled in the absence of a shop steward system, not provided for in the settlement. GM had taken an adamant position against the shop steward system. As a result, the Communist Party in the plant led 200 sit-down strikes in the GM plants within six months to win grievances. The reader will recall that similar tactics were used at Kelsey Wheel with good results. Sit-down fever was sweeping North America and, in fact, the whole capitalist world. At GM in Oshawa, however, Millard and the CCFers refused to try the sit-down. As a result, the local nearly fell apart.

Martin, by reason of his privileged position, hand-picked a credentials committee, which caused bitter floor fights over the seating of the delegates from Flint and over the right of the international to stifle the publication of local and shop papers, which were one of the organizing tools of communist-led locals.

The convention turned out to be a frustrating experience. Prior to the convention, Martin had made a point of visiting and speaking to small local unions. In this manner, he became aware of those whose finances dictated that they could not afford to send a delegate to the convention. Martin was a former Baptist minister and a really good platform man. He



1937 Milwaukee UAW Convention at which John L. Lewis kept the lid on bitter faction fights.

was a real demagogue, a spell-binder. As a matter of fact, when we brought him over to Windsor during the GM strike of April 1937, we couldn't get a hall big enough. We had to provide loud-speakers for the people outside to hear the proceedings. I can understand how the green delegates ended up voting for Martin. If I had not been rubbing shoulders with

the Communist Party, I might have been taken in by him as well.

Once Martin gained the confidence of the inexperienced delegates from the small locals, he saw to it that funds were provided for them to attend the convention.

The issue that nearly tore the convention apart was the election of officers. The Progressive Group which Martin led came out of the convention with the following positions: president, three vice-presidents, and 16 board members. The Unity Group came out with two vice-presidents, secretary-treasurer (George F. Addes), and eight board members. For Canadian board member, only myself and Jim Smith, a delegate from Oshawa, voted against Millard.



John L. Lewis speaking to UAW delegates. At left is former UAW President Homer Martin, a notorious anti-communist who was bounced for crookedness and ended up on the Ford payroll.

Martin seemed to be in control. However, by his arbitrary actions at the convention he had made his old enemies more hostile and had created new ones. The Unity Group went back to their locals doubly determined to build caucuses to oppose Martin.

Naturally, as a member of the Unity Caucus, I sought to find out how a fink like Martin could get elected International President in the first place. It was explained to me that both Walter Reuther and Dick Frankenstein, two young leaders from Detroit, were aspiring to the job themselves. John L. Lewis as well as the Communist Party sought to avoid a confrontation which they feared would break apart the UAW. As a result, at the South Bend, Indiana, convention the year before, Lewis and the CP decided to pick a leader from one of the smallest locals represented. By reason of his ability on the platform, Martin got the nod from Lewis and the blessing of the CP.

While it may have avoided a confrontation detrimental to the union, these kinds of actions by the CP had a disillusioning effect on rank-and-file militants like myself.

It wasn't too long after the convention that we were holding open meetings of our left-wing caucuses. At first, right-wingers came to these meetings. We welcomed them because they always left these meetings in a weaker position than when they came. We were able to supply the answers and show how Martin's weak leadership was dividing the union. Catholic Action was also in evidence at our open meetings but was easily defeated. These people were so unintelligent that, despite the fact they were briefed

by the Martin-Millard forces in advance, they were unable to parrot what they had been told. They became flustered and ended up heckling. Of course, the Unity Group followed a policy of letting them talk as much as they wanted. The more they talked the more ridiculous they became. One has to be very smart when not speaking in the interests of truth on the floor of a meeting of workers.

We realized in Windsor, after discussions with the Communist Party in Detroit, that we had to develop public speakers, people trained in the art of parliamentary procedure. Like Martin, the only reason Millard rose to the top so quickly at Oshawa (outside of his membership in the CCF) had nothing to do with ability as a trade unionist, but rather with the experience he had gained in public speaking as a Sunday-school teacher. At Milwaukee, terror gripped the hearts of the young delegates like myself when we had to approach a podium or microphone. Not so with Martin.

After a while, I began to notice that Millard had only one stock speech that he repeated over and over again. It was this speech that rode him into leadership of the Oshawa local. He would say, "A new day is dawning for Canadian workers . . . I can see it coming over the horizon . . ."

Party trained speakers

The key to good public speaking, the Communist Party decided, was having important and timely things to say. With this end in mind, the Party caused speakers' notes to be circulated, on a regular basis to the up-and-coming young leaders within the Unity Group. Having the key to good speaking in our hands, we green union men had only to polish up our style and our knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and build up our self-confidence.

Personally, I had the help of experts. I first met John Eldon, introduced in the previous chapter, at a summer school the UAW sponsored at Brighton Beach, Michigan. John was not there in any official capacity, but he was one of the ablest trade unionists there. John and I became good friends. He coached me on public speaking, teaching me how to make motions, how to challenge the chair, how to make points during a speech. At meetings, he used to sit behind me on the platform. Like most new trade unionists, I tended to speak too fast. Behind me, John used to say, "Slow down, slow down, you little bugger!" and when it became necessary, "Let yourself go! Make the emphasis with your fists!" John was formerly an English miner. With his knowledge of unionism, he was second only as a platform man to George F. Addes, Nat Ganley, and Bob Travis.

I practised speaking to the looking-glass in my bathroom, I learned how to make appropriate hand gestures, I learned to structure a speech around a good beginning and a good finish, I learned how to project my voice (we had no amplifiers), and I mastered how to knock down a cheeky chairman. You only have to knock him down once, and you're the top dog in the hall after that.

In short, the Communist Party trained us in the secret of public speaking knowing what you want to say and how to say it. This training stood us in good stead in the battle to dump Martin and Millard.

Napier Fired by Right Wing

Millard Botches Walker Strike

I returned home knowing that my arch enemy in the Canadian region was now my boss and a disciple of the UAW International President, Homer Martin. Like Martin, the former Baptist minister, Millard was not immune to quoting the volume of the sacred law when it suited his purpose.

I had just settled down after the Milwaukee convention when I got the call from Millard to meet him and J.L. Cohen, UAW legal counsel, at the Prince Edward Hotel in Windsor. I knew what to expect, since I had supported the Unity Group.

First, Millard told me that I was not a loyal employee. I was one of the two delegates who did not support him. Cohen interjected that Charlie was boss and his orders must be carried out.

"We are in command now," Millard boasted. "I am going to recommend to Homer, our illustrious president, that you be dismissed."

I did not think I could take this expected dismissal so calmly, and without anger. Instead, I softly and gently told his lordship, Charlie Millard, that the title bestowed on his holy head by the convention would not enhance his ability to think nor would it make him an organizer.

"Up to this point," I went on to say, "You have organized nothing and haven't a clue where to go from here. You have gathered around you members of the CCF and Catholic Action. Perhaps Father Garvey has already named my successor."

"Now, Charlie, I have news for you and Father Garvey. We have more Catholics in our Unity Group than you and Father Garvey have in your anti-union group. The months that follow will, I am sure, vindicate me and prove my point. One year will roll around very quickly. In the meantime, I am going to regard your firing me with the same optimism as Campbell's firing me from Kelsey Wheel. I am going to view your action as a temporary layoff.

"I know you are a weakling. I am sure your CCF and Catholic Action friends have not the intestinal fortitude to stand up and fight the battles that must be fought and will be fought by members of the Unity Group, both Catholic and Protestant. They will not be fooled by church leaders, who have sat back in their easy chairs and never raised their voices in protest against those who have taken the food from our tables.

"Charlie, Homer Martin is a phony Baptist minister and you are a phony Sunday-school teacher. I will be in the regional office immediately after the next convention to boot your rear end out the door. To that end will I devote every day and night until the next convention meets in Cleveland."

I called the shot right. Joe Durocher, one of Father Garvey's Catholic Action boys employed at the Windsor GM plant, was appointed by Millard to take

my job. I felt sorry for this lacky. He dressed well, smoked expensive cigars, hired a secretary, divorced his wife, married the secretary, and bought a car. His first action was to erase the names from the application cards of new members and sign his name on them. The cards had on them a place on which the steward or organizer would sign his or her name, after collecting the initiation fee. Imagine! He did it for his own self-glorification.

As for myself, and my family, it was back to welfare for the third time. As already mentioned, we had signed no contract at Kelsey Wheel, my own plant. As a result, there was no agreement that a full-time union official had to be rehired (with seniority) at the completion of his term of office. However, I still held my position as secretary of Local 195.

The Windsor Star

U.A.W. Firm, Says Martin

Union Determined to
Organize Auto Trades
in Canada

Despite Hepburn

New Deal Needed Here.

President Tells 2,500

In 1938, five abortive strikes were called, from Aug. 1 to Nov. 1, under Millard's direction.

The first was at Walker Metal Products. The reader will recall how the secondary boycott was successfully applied by the militant membership of Local 195 to bring the union into Walker Metal. That important victory made known to the anti-CIO Premier Hepburn of Ontario and the manufacturing community in Windsor that nothing was going to block the door that the advent of industrial unionism had opened for us. One month after the signing of the contract at Walker Metal on June 4, 1937, the union members there were granted a charter from the UAW to establish Local 502, the second local union in Windsor.

Fourteen months later, on Aug 3, 1938, the company refused to negotiate with Local 502 for a new agreement, precipitating strike action.

I intend to deal with this strike at some length. In fact, I regard the lesson of this strike to be the most important of all my recollections of building the UAW, in that it shows most clearly the difference between communist and social-democrat leadership.

Bill Emery, a communist, was by then an executive officer of Local 502. The members regarded him as their leader. However, Durocher and Millard were the representatives of the International Union.

As soon as the strike started, Millard left his office in Oshawa to take personal charge, an unusual procedure for him. When he arrived in Windsor with all the fanfare that Durocher could muster, Millard gave the following statement to the media: "Employers of labour in Windsor and elsewhere in Canada might as well get ready to deal with unions. We're going to organize the automobile industry, including Mr. Ford's and all the feeder plants."

This statement, of course, was in line with what we expected from Millard. We in the Unity Group applauded. Charlie Millard was going to organize Windsor. What more could anyone want? We organized picket line support.

From the beginning at Walker Metal, Gregory, the plant manager, made it abundantly clear that he was not going to negotiate an agreement with union representatives. To those of us who led the 1937 strike, Gregory's attitude was routine and nothing to worry about.

But instead of applying the pressure of a secondary boycott, like the one that won the strike of 1937 under my direction, Local 502 appealed to the City Council for aid! The Council was split and the Mayor was openly anti-CIO. I have been searching ever since for an explanation of the failure of Millard and Durocher to make use of the secondary boycott, to rely on the strength of the workers.

On Aug. 9, 1938, I was arrested for allegedly assaulting a foreman at Walker Metal. I was marching on the picket line on Sheppard Avenue when a Kelsey Wheel truck passed. Being a disciplined union member, I asked the picket captain for permission to follow the truck to the Kildare Road entrance to check what it was about to take in or out. This entrance was not visible from the main picket line and was not picketed. My big mistake was that I went by myself.

By the time I had walked around to the Kildare Road entrance, the driver had left the truck parked with its rear end about three or four feet inside the gate. I took

Ruin Paint On Machine

Second Similar Offense

Within 48 Hours,

Police Report

Parked on Street

Association With Strike
at Walker Products.

the two paces necessary to look inside the truck. To my surprise, a foreman, Walter Beebe, came rushing at me ordering me to get out. He landed a solid blow on the back of my neck as I turned to take the two steps necessary to clear the company's property.

"What's this for?" I shouted, and I let go a haymaker at him which only grazed his glasses.

By this time, some scabs from inside, including a former light-heavyweight boxer, Stanley Ridout, who had been a staunch union man during the 1937 strike, joined Beebe to work me over. If I had been allowed to fall, I might have gotten off easier. But, as they attacked me from all sides, they battered me from head to heels. I ended up on the ground near the railway tracks, about 60 feet away.

It was hard for me to fathom what would make a young man like Ridout act in such a manner. I said to him, "Ridout, you should know better than this. Look at me, all for doing nothing."

Inspector Brumpton of the Windsor Police drove up beside me and politely asked me to get in the front seat of his car. I thought at first he was going to take me to the hospital. Instead, he informed me that I was on my way to jail as Beebe had laid an assault charge against me. I lay in jail all that day and night.

Arrested

Never Trust a Lawyer

My case came to court on Aug. 24. The gallery was packed with strikers. When I entered the courtroom and observed Magistrate Hanrahan on the bench, I had a hunch I was in for a rough time. He was a former court clerk and had got his new job as a political appointment for services rendered to the Liberal Party. Since he was a Catholic, it went through my mind that he might be an accomplice of Father Garvey of Catholic Action. In fact, this turned out to be the case. In 1946, when Catholic Action and the CCF purged the left-wing from the leadership of the UAW, Walter Reuther appointed Hanrahan to an inter-union board intended to solve grievances among unions.

The crown attorney, James Allan, and my lawyer, David Croll (later Mayor of Windsor and Ontario Liberal cabinet minister) clashed several times at the opening of the trial chiefly over the crown attorney's revelation that he had been instructed by the attorney-general of Ontario to prosecute me himself. Croll expressed surprise that the crown-attorney was acting as prosecutor in a private case and indignation that my counter-charges against Beebe, Ridout, etc., would not be prosecuted by Allan as well. Croll's objections were over-ruled and the case proceeded. You could almost feel the presence of the rabidly anti-communist and anti-CIO Premier Hepburn of Ontario in the courtroom.

It was clear from the outset that Allan's strategy like that of any judge or lawyer, was to unnerve me. He played upon the fact that I was a welfare recipient, that I refused to swear on a Bible, that I had lost my job as International Rep. Every question he asked was loaded. To answer the question, meant affirming something else implied in the question.

I knew that Allan drank too much and had high blood pressure. I said to myself, "OK, you drunken bastard, you want to play, do you?"

Each time he asked a loaded question, I asked him to please repeat it. If he repeated it without changing it, I asked him to please repeat it again. When he lowered his voice, I asked him to please repeat the question as I could not hear it. His face and forehead became as red as the roses my father used to sing about at family gatherings. I knew he was going to break. Finally, he did. He was situated to the right of the magistrate and I to the left. In one bound, it seemed, he leaped from where he was to a spot right in front of me. I thought he was going to be a candidate for a heart attack for sure.

He appealed to his buddy in the driver's seat to have me answer the questions without having him repeat them. I faced the judge and very quickly said, "Surely, your honour. I have the right to understand the question before I answer it."

I think Hanrahan was beginning to feel his neck

getting red, having to watch Allan make a fool of himself. He replied, "Yes, you have that right."

Croll jumped in at this point. Allan told him I was able to speak for myself. Croll retorted, "And how you know it."

I now had the crown prosecutor unnerved. Hanrahan had to take over.

"Why were you there?" he asked.

I responded, "Because I believe the outcome of this strike affects my economic security." I went on to explain that I belonged to Local 195 and that, if the strike was lost for Local 502 at Walker Metal, then a general wage cut would follow for all unionized workers and then for the whole working-class community. Even though I was on welfare at that time, I also would feel the pinch.

"Then you were just a visiting lodge brother?" Allan asked.

"That's right," Croll interjected.

"Why were you there?" Allan continued.

"All good union men go out on the picket line when there is a strike," I replied.

"What is the purpose of a picket line?" inquired Allan.

"I'll write a letter to the Crown and explain the purpose of a picket line," said Croll.

"You were one of the leaders of the Kelsey Wheel strike a year and a half ago," Allan stated.

"Yes."

"And you got an agreement, too," Croll interjected.

"Were you there to prevent men from going to work?"

"No."

"What was your object in being there?"

"I object again," Croll said. "There is nothing illegal about being in a picket line. He was there because he was there and that's all there is to it."

Allan appealed to Hanrahan, who pointed out to Croll that the answer to the question would have something to do with the case. "If his purpose was mischief, then what was in his mind is important."

"What does it matter what he was thinking when he was acting legally?" persisted Croll.

"What was your object in being there and going into the yard when you were not an employee and never had been?" resumed Allan.

If I were to have answered in full, I would have told the court that I was trying to build a stronger union so that we, in the Unity Group, could turf out Millard and his ilk. All I said was, "The only reason I was there is that I was a member of the union."

"What were you trying to do?"

"We want an agreement with the management of the company."

At this point, another clash took place between Croll



Cops and company goons often attacked organizers. Napier was beaten more than once, but he also could dish it out.

and Allan, when Allan rose the point that I had not sworn on the Bible, implying that my testimony was untruthful.

Alex Ignatowski, a worker at Walker Metal, took the stand. He claimed to have been with me when I left the picket line on Sheppard Avenue to go to the Kildare Road gate. To the best of my memory, I don't recall him being with me. If he was, why didn't he help me or run back for reinforcements?

I made a serious mistake. I wasn't aware beforehand that Ignatowski would testify. Since he seemed to be testifying on my behalf, I didn't challenge him. However, under cross-examination by Allan, he declared that my attackers carried chunks of iron. The more he talked the more he hurt my case. I found out later that the Communist Party thought he was a stool-pigeon. You know how cleverly stool-pigeons can appear on the surface to be your friends.

Croll called Vincent Majcak, Nathan Bedner, John Janowski and Jon Pondyk to the stand. They were scabbing at first in the plant, but later came out to join the strike.

Under oath, Bedner said he had scabbed only two days.

"Finally saw the light, eh?" Croll suggested.

Bedner agreed.

Janowski, a worker with nine years' seniority, testified that he had worked for three days before joining the strike. Along with Pondyk, Bedner, and Majcak, he corroborated my story and that of Ignatowski.

As in the case of Ignatowski, I was not made aware in advance by Croll that these fellows would be testifying. Not only could they not have seen the action from the Sheppard Avenue picket line where they were, but also they helped Ignatowski make the case look ridiculous since, if Beebe and the others had attacked me with chunks of iron, I would never have lived to be brought to court.

Beebe and Van Henry Coates, another Walker Metal worker, were called in rebuttal by Allan to deny that any of the employees carried chunks of metal or any other weapons. Beebe also testified that my "attack" on him did not amount to much. Ridout also went back on the stand to deny that he struck anyone.

Needless to say, I was convicted of assault and sentenced to 30 days. When the sentence was read, boos filled the courtroom. In sentencing me, Harahan stated, "I am not concerned with who is right or wrong in the labour dispute . . . I am only concerned with the preservation of law and order."

Croll replied, "I thought this was an assault case but I find it is a law-and-order case. There was evidence of discipline in the strikers' ranks. They did not pile into

this fight . . ."

The "discipline" statement by Croll really rankled me since the picketers could not have seen the fight from Sheppard Avenue. Croll concluded by arguing correctly that, even if I had been trespassing, no one had the right to attack me. The police should have been called.

J.L. Cohen, UAW legal counsel, announced that the conviction would be appealed.

The next day, it was the turn of Beebe, Ridout, and the others to be defendants, as my charge against them was heard. Allan, of course, did not act as prosecutor for me. Awrey, their lawyer, put the same questions to me in cross-examination as Allan did the day before. He also asked what I did for a living, since the last time I was employed was Dec. 31, 1937. I replied that I was "temporarily laid off" from the UAW.

Cumming, my lawyer, part of the Croll firm, called Ignatowski to the stand. He testified that he had a chance meeting with Ridout the night of August 16 when he and Ridout found shelter from the rain in the lee of a shed near Wilson Park.

Ignatowski stated, "I said to Ridout, 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself, hitting a little fellow like Napier, and you are a professional fighter?' He said, 'We were told to do it.' I asked him who told him and he wouldn't say. He just said again, 'We were told to do it.'"

"I told him we had our own men there, but they didn't get into the fight, and he said, 'I wish you had. We had lots of steel handy. We were prepared.'"

Once again Ignatowski testified that Ridout and one other defendant carried chunks of iron.

Needless to say, Beebe, Ridout, and the others were all acquitted.

Having experienced capitalist justice first hand, I could understand much more easily how the authorities framed Sacco and Vanzetti on a murder charge. Sacco and Vanzetti were US radical workers who had emigrated from Italy and had been rounded up in the racist and anti-communist Palmer Raids after World War I. They were sentenced to be electrocuted in 1920, but huge communist-led demonstrations held off the executions until 1927.

The lesson I learned from the experience was that, as for any other political event, exacting preparations are necessary. It was not enough to have the pressure of a packed courtroom to win. I was appalled afterwards by the lack of pre-court consultation I had had with Croll. I should have been made aware of what questions might be asked and what witnesses might be called. I should have been able to instruct my lawyer on how I wanted the case to be fought. Since then, I have always wondered whose side Croll was on.

Obstacles: Bomb Hoax & CCF

Millard's "lust for personal recognition"

In his account of the second Walker Metal strike, Michael Veres writes: "The strike reached a climax on August 31 when a 'home-made bomb' was placed in the home of John Ulcine, an employee of Walker Metal Products. An examination of the fuse revealed that it had been lit but had gone out before the fire had reached the contents of the can. John Pitke, a striker, was arrested but later released because of insufficient evidence. The 'bomb' was taken to the laboratory of Canadian Industries, Limited, and Dr. Lyle Streight was testing a spoonful of the explosive when it exploded. The blast indicated, police said, that if the whole bomb had exploded at Mr. Ulcine's home it would have demolished his home and undoubtedly smashed surrounding dwellings, probably causing death or serious injury to all the occupants."

I disagree once again with Mr. Veres. First, the strike in no way reached a climax with a bomb. Its climax came, as I will shortly describe, in Millard's failure to rely on the strength of Local 195 at Kelsey and GM. Secondly, it has always been my belief that this bomb was placed either by the police or by Pinkerton agents in order to discredit the strike in the eyes of the general public. When we used strong-arm methods in building the unions, as at Kelsey Wheel in 1936, we directed the violence against the scabs themselves (and not at their families or other innocent people.) Moreover, the scabs knew who they were dealing with.

This bomb, however, smacked of the kind of boss-inspired terrorism that Hitler used when his men set fire to the Reichstag. Hitler utilized the destruction of the Reichstag as an excuse to round up the Communist Party in Germany. The bomb also smacked of the FLQ terrorism in Quebec of a few years ago. The Canadian Party of Labour was the only working-class organization that denounced those activities. Today, evidence is gradually surfacing that proves CPL's contention that the FLQ was directed by the ruling class itself.

On the other hand, workers must always be prepared to use violence, especially mass violence, to survive. And to survive in the coming period, we must rebuild the union movement. In other words, to win the coming strikes, to fight unemployment, and to provide the necessities of life we must be prepared physically to take on our own union mis-leaders and the bosses, neither of whom will voluntarily let us have power.

Before the end of the Walker Metal strike on Nov. 1, 1938, another strike action took place at Plant 3 of the Chrysler Corporation of Canada. Veres, in his history of the UAW in Windsor, states that 78 employees staged a wildcat. Once again, because he interviewed

only the right-wingers who kicked us out of office, Veres got the story wrong.

The action was not a wildcat in that Millard and J.L. Cohen, the UAW legal adviser, met with Cyril Prince, Cliff Getty, and others not known to me in a room of the Prince Edward Hotel to plan the walkout. Prince was one of the most knowing trade unionists of that time. A few years later, he became secretary of the Communist Party of Windsor and he was recognized by all as a leader of labour. His word was his bond. Cliff, like Cyril, was a man whose only interest was building the union. Incidentally, the next time I joined the Communist Party, when we seriously began undertaking the unionization of Chrysler, all three of us joined together.

On Sept. 2, 1975, I was fortunate to locate Cyril Prince after a great deal of searching. He told me that in 1938 he led a left-wing group that had key people in Chrysler's three main operations: the truck plant, the motor plant, and the assembly plant (No. 3). I was surprised to learn, after all these years, that the walkout was indeed planned.

Once I learned this fact, more of the pieces of the puzzle in my memory fitted together. While an International Rep., before Millard came along, I was approached by a leading CCFer from Chrysler in Windsor at our first union picnic held in Memorial Park. He wanted me to sign his application card for membership in the Chrysler unit. I told him point blank that for the safety of union members in plants we were organizing, and that for his own safety I would not take his card. The reader will recall that, in order to protect ourselves from informers, we never signed cards until we were able to call a meeting at which most of the workers would be present. Then we signed them all up into the union at once.

CCF sabotage

I know this CCFer was a first-class opportunist, an egotist who would not hesitate to lead the type of hare-brained action that occurred at Chrysler Plant 3. I can only surmise that, since Prince did not want it, the shemozzle at Plant 3 was arranged by Millard and CCFers with whom he had made contact inside the plant since his arrival in Windsor.

When the action at Plant 3 failed to materialize in a big way, Millard caused to be pulled out Kelsey Wheel, Duplate Glass (which had joined Local 195 without much struggle), and L.A. Young, for token strikes of about one day. All of this fell flat on its face.

I'll never forget Tommy Johnson leading the Kelsey workers onto the Chrysler picket line. Here was a guy who refused to walk on our picket line during that first important strike at Kelsey Wheel, his own plant. He

wouldn't lift a finger to bring the union into his own plant, because the CCF wasn't running things. But he strutted like a peacock with its chest sticking out as he led the guys from Kelsey to Chrysler. He was willing to stick his neck out this time; he figured he might be on Millard's payroll soon, because he knew about Durocher's lack of ability.

A deal was worked out with the Department of Labour for the 78 Chrysler workers to go back to work.

The Walker Metal strike dragged on. Despite my arrest and conviction, I never stopped walking the picket line. On November 1, Local 502 gave up and died. Two hundred working men lost their jobs. Two hundred working-class families went without the necessities of life. Most of these men would be lucky to find any other work at that time of depression. The elderly ones hardly had a chance at all. Just to make sure, the Windsor capitalists put the name of each and every striker on the infamous and hated blacklist, so that none could get jobs.

Workers today might have difficulty grasping the significance of the defeat. Today, the union movement is a fact. When we lose today, in most cases, we can retreat back into the factory. During the depression, it was win or watch your family go without. Of course, with the economy going the way it is today, young workers may only too soon get a taste of capitalist depression.

For almost 40 years, I have wondered and wondered why Millard did not use the secondary boycott, as was done in the first Walker Metal strike, in which Kelsey workers refused to handle scab brake-drum castings from Walker Metal, while the GM workers refused to touch its motor-block castings. As the reader will recall, only five days of boycott were required to win the strike.

Millard owed GM a favour

The final missing piece to the whole puzzle came right from the horse's mouth in a public speech at McMaster University, Hamilton, on March 10, 1975. Now I understand why Millard rushed down to Windsor to personally see that GM was not hurt. It seems Charlie owed a favour to General Motors. Here is the verbatim report of Millard's account of the settlement of the GM strike in Oshawa of April 1937: "There was something about the settlement of the General Motors strike in Oshawa that not many people in Canada know about. We had the help of a management person . . . Mr. Harry Carmichael . . . became general manager of General Motors in Canada. And I can say positively that Mr. Carmichael helped to get the kind of agreement we got to settle the General Motors' strike about April 15, 1937. When the strike started, Mr. Carmichael was over at his mother's deathbed and funeral. But during the strike period, Mr. Carmichael came back to Canada . . . In signing the agreement in Mr. Hepburn's office about the middle of April 1937, we really got help from management's side, because Mr. Carmichael was experienced in this field. The recognition clause, one of the things we needed, wasn't spelled out as it is today in collective agreements, but it was there . . . One of the great strengths of the agreement was to have a provision that there would be no discrimination

for being on strike. And it came about chiefly through the advice of Mr. Harry Carmichael . . ."

So, now, after all these years, the truth comes out. Because, in Millard's own words, Carmichael had "pulled our (Millard's) chestnuts out of the fire", Millard rushed down to Windsor in 1938 at the beginning of the second Walker Metal strike to ensure that the workers of Local 195, under left-wing leadership, did not pull off a secondary boycott that would hurt General Motors.

Millard's religious hypocrisy

In his speech at McMaster, Millard claimed that he joined the ranks of labour in Oshawa because of his religious background as well as because of the inspiration of J.S. Woodsworth, founder of the CCF party. First, I am at a loss to recollect a single thing Millard did, while in the labour movement, that might be attributed to a religious background: Throwing me and my family onto welfare? Sabotaging a strike? Destroying a local? Losing the livelihood of 200 families and putting them on the blacklist? Having Bill Emery deported? More on this later.

So we can safely assume that it was not on inspiration from heaven that Millard acted, but rather on inspiration from Woodsworth. Millard was a social-democrat par excellence, that is, what Lenin first condemned as a class collaborator, one who sells out the workers to get favours from the boss. All social-democrat parties, like the present-day NDP, which runs most of Canada's unions today, accept the capitalist system and inevitably make compromises with it. The same is true of social-democrat union leaders. It was not the strikers of Local 222 in Oshawa who went looking to management for favours. I know for a fact that they didn't. It was Millard who did.

Let's be realistic. The whole basis of a social-democrat party like the CCF, and now the NDP, is the idea of peaceful transformation from capitalism to socialism via the ballot box. One hundred and twenty-eight years ago, Engels showed the folly of this position. In his *Principles of Communism* of 1847, he wrote: "Can private property be peacefully abolished? It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would be the last to oppose it . . . (Communists) know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and always they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working towards a revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the interests of the proletarians with deeds as we now defend them with words."

Since 1847, it has become even more clear that revolution is necessary. Not a single ruling class in history ever gave up its power and privileges voluntarily. Certainly, since 1847, the capitalists have tried to crush every workers' movement for political power with the most ruthless force. The massacre of

workers in Chile is the most recent example of the failure to take power by the ballot box.

If there is one single lesson that I would draw from all my recollections of building the UAW, it is that only a revolutionary Communist Party, along the lines of the Canadian Party of Labour, can provide the leadership necessary for workers to take power in their own unions and, as well, in society as a whole.

The loss at Walker Metal Products and the failure at Chrysler ended the first drive for union organization in Windsor. The Windsor membership of the UAW had

had its first taste of CCF leadership.

Charles Millard (if you are still alive when this article appears in print), listen to what I have to say, written in language you will understand! "You are lower than the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve. You sold out 200 families for a favour from management. Your lust for personal recognition made you bare a fact you had kept secret for 38 years. Now, you shall receive your reward. Today, we look back and revere the victims of your folly, while you, Charles Millard, who have been revered all your life, shall forever be remembered in disgrace."



Militant strikers withstood the elements and scabs in Osbawa but the two-faced Charlie Millard quietly sold them out.

Unity Group Dumps the Right

Blow for Blow with Millard

On the other side of the Detroit River where the union's international headquarters were located, Charlie Millard's illustrious president was going off his rocker. The power given him by inexperienced delegates from small locals and opportunists from big locals was too much for him. We now had a power-drunk president.

The communists in the Unity Group were looking around for a candidate to put forward as International President. To me, it seemed obvious that the best and most logical man for the job was George F. Addes. He was also the most likely, in my opinion, to get elected if nominated. Addes may have been a member of the Party, but not an open member. In any case, he was so close to the Party that he should have been a member. Instead of putting Addes forward, the Party decided that the nominee had to be either Dick Frankenstein or Walter Reuther, both Unity Group members. This decision was the result of "United Front" politics by which the Party always watered down its aims in favour of a supposedly united front against fascism.

When the Party failed to win Reuther, they captured Frankenstein and rationalized him as the lesser of two evils. It is a little-known fact that Reuther belonged to the old US Socialist Party (which became social-democrat in nature and thus precipitated the birth of the Communist Party of the USA). Reuther quit that party to be more acceptable to Catholic Action. Frankenstein was just as much the opportunist. By joining with the Communist Party, he hoped to use its strength as the stepping-stone to power.

The "communist" strategy came into the open at the first Michigan State CIO convention in Lansing over the election of officers. John L. Lewis had chosen Germer for president. No UAW faction dared to take on the big man.

I ask the reader to note now the kind of discipline which prevailed in the Communist Party. The contest was staged for secretary-treasurer of the Michigan State CIO Council for which Unity ran Victor Reuther of the West-side Local 174. On the eve of the election, Weinstone and Gebert, two Communist Party leaders, called in the communist delegates, who were expecting to vote for Reuther, and summarily ordered them to vote for Dick Leonard of Desoto Local 227, who, of course, won easily. This turnabout of the Communist Party hurt the Unity Group, however, as a lot of members quit.

I, who knew of the Communist Party alliance with Frankenstein, UAW Regional Director for Detroit's East-side, was not surprised. I knew (and knew that even Homer Martin knew) that Frankenstein had attended a meeting in the home of Wyndham Mortimer, at which Weinstone and Gebert were present, to discuss going for the presidency. The Canadian Unity

Caucus met in a farm house on Ontario Street in St. Catharines, Ontario, where Mortimer and Frankenstein briefed us on the developments on the American side.

We were informed that the anti-Martin coalition was now in control and that Martin had suspended Mortimer, Addes, Frankenstein, Walter Wells, Board Member and Ed Hall, Second Vice-President. This left only Martin and R. J. Thomas and Millard, board members, as executive officers. Six members of the Board, including Reuther, announced that they would boycott its meetings. For all practical purposes, the International Union, UAWA, had ceased to function.

Charlie Millard, Canadian Board Member, stayed with Martin to the end. Millard knew that the Canadian membership would never re-elect him and figured that he had nothing to lose by hanging on. At least, if Martin survived, he'd have his job.

A few of us from Windsor, through curiosity, went over to the union headquarters held by Martin. When we entered the Griswold Building, we were frisked by goons carrying revolvers and ushered back onto the elevator. We were not admitted.

We had no difficulty in Canada when requested by the Unity Group to send our per capita tax to Addes, who had set up headquarters at the Shelby Hotel on Cass Avenue in Detroit. In effect, there were two UAWs at this point, one run by Martin at the Griswold Building, the other by Addes at the Shelby Hotel.

The Unity Group was still loyal to John L. Lewis, who was kept informed constantly by Addes. When the question of a special convention was raised in the Unity Group, Addes made representations to Lewis.

Lewis was vehemently opposed. His reason was that Martin still had a large following, though it was disintegrating. Lewis's advice was to wait a little until Martin's backing diminished to a minority of the union's total membership. "If you call a special convention," he reasoned, "we will come out of a hastily-called convention the way we went in—a disunited U.A.W."

Addes made known that it was an easy matter to measure Martin's strength by the per capita payments.

When the per capita payments showed that a vast majority of the locals had deserted Martin and had come over to Addes, the Unity Group was called together, late in 1938 in Toledo, Ohio.

Walter Reuther was against the calling of a special convention, claiming that the time was not ripe for the move. He was for continuing with dual unionism. However, Mortimer, Travis, Addes, and Frankenstein carried the day. Frankenstein was especially strong in denouncing the wait-and-see policy. He came off the platform and told me to ask for the floor, since I

was the only Canadian present. I did so and followed the lead given by the previous speakers in support of the call for the special convention. I also vowed to get rid of Millard. This remark was loudly applauded. The motion carried and the special convention was called. The convention call had the full support of John L. Lewis.

I purposely reported that Martin and his Progressive Group came out of the Milwaukee convention with a two-to-one majority of executive officers compared to the Unity Group. Now the tables had been turned. Martin's majority had been based on the inexperience of the delegates. So great was the determination of the Communist Party and the Unity Group to return to their locals and build left-wing caucuses that they had completely turned the situation around in just a few months!

Martin showed up to speak in Windsor on April 17, 1939. This man, who, it had come to light just then, had used his position to make a backroom deal with Ford Motor Company, was not allowed to say one word. The workers called him "traitor" and booed, heckled, and hissed the great demagogue off the stage.

I go to jail

George F. Addes called me to meet him at the Shelby Hotel. He told me he wanted me to attend the special convention, because there was no one in the union in Canada who had, like myself, been party to the policy-making decisions of the Unity Group, other than Bill Emery. There was some fear that Bill might not pass through US immigration, being a known communist and, like myself, in Millard's black book. Bill was sure that Millard would inform US immigration and have him barred from entry, if he were elected a delegate from Windsor.

George explained what was expected of me. I was to give myself up to serve the thirty days in jail. The reason given was that Millard was aware of his weakened position and could arrange for my appeal to come before the court at a time that would exclude me from being at the convention. I was well aware of the deviousness of Millard and J. L. Cohen, UAW legal counsel, and readily agreed.

To this end, I said goodbye to my wife and children. I first called at the Windsor Police Station and made known my intention to serve the thirty days. They told me they couldn't do anything for me and that I should go to the Essex County Jail. The head man there advised me that he didn't do that kind of thing and that I should cross the yard to give myself up to Sheriff Marentette. When I told him what I wanted, he exclaimed, "Now I've heard everything! A man requesting to serve thirty days in jail! Well, if that's what you want, I'm at your service. Come with me."

He took me into his office, made me sign the necessary documents, and had me locked up. It was a long period of time to be away from my family. However, my only hope of regaining my self-respect and employment was removing Millard, Martin, and Durocher.

The morning I was released, the streets were clogged with snow. I think I walked the whole way home. I had served thirty days for a crime I did not commit. I now had a criminal record, thanks to my enemy. But I was glad I was even with the law and had had a whole month to think. If Magistrate Hanrahan

had asked me what was on my mind after serving thirty days, I would have told him of my solemn pledge to remove his kind from the face of the earth.

The convention call to Cleveland was sent out, and local unions held elections for delegates. My Local 195 decided to send only two delegates in the interests of economy, though we could have sent more. Tom Johnson, the CCF peacock (of Walker Metal infamy), Leo Grondin of Catholic Action, and I were nominated. When the votes were counted, four votes separated the highest and lowest, with myself being the low man. The left-wingers immediately started up a collection to send me to Cleveland with a firm mandate to get rid of Millard. This show of respect was heart-warming. My fellow workers had shown their confidence, I knew I had earned their respect when the money was handed to me in a sealed envelope.

In response to the Unity Group's calling of a special convention, Martin decided to call one of his own, which took place first in Detroit. It fizzled. In Canada, the CCF and Catholic Action groups headed by Millard made a surprise eleventh-hour decision to attend the special convention in Cleveland instead of the one in Detroit. Millard sent a telegram to Addes informing him of this decision. It has been said, and later events support the information relayed to me, that John L. Lewis was taking credit for convincing Millard to change his allegiance. In return Lewis was to support Millard for re-election.

When I arrived at the Hollenden House in Cleveland, I met none other than big Ed Hall, UAW Second Vice-President, known as the "Bull of the UAW." He said, "Napier, if you can get rid of Millard, I'll kiss your ass right here on the street in front of the hotel."

Millard and Durocher were quite surprised when I entered the hotel lobby where they were seated. Arrangements had been made for me, but I elected to



John L. Lewis, demagogic leader of the CIO, CP organizers made an unprincipled "united front" with Lewis which he later destroyed when he had no further need of them.

play broke and asked Johnson and Grondin if I could sleep on the floor of their room. You see, I knew that both of them had aspirations to be placed on the union payroll and I wanted to be very close to them. Millard had by-passed them by giving the job to Durocher.

I did not raise with them the question of ousting Millard. I wanted first to count noses and find out the mood of delegates from Local 199 from St. Catharines and Millard's Local 222 from Oshawa. I soon heard what I wanted to hear and arranged for two delegates each from Local 199 and 222 to approach Johnson and Grondin and report back. My informants soon reported back and classed them as opportunists. They also made known that Millard, according to their nose-counting, had at least half the voting delegates, counting Johnson and Grondin, on our side. To this end, I started to make known to Johnson and Grondin that Millard could be defeated and that the Unity Group was prepared to have them appointed to staff jobs provided they supported a delegate from Oshawa for Canadian Board Member—Regional Director. To this, Johnson and Grondin agreed.

Now the task was what to do with George Burt, who had five-and-a-half votes that he was holding on to as uncommitted. We couldn't count on them, but neither could Millard. I consulted with Wyndham Mortimer and Bob Travis. They pointedly asked what we could offer Burt for his votes. I had to admit that the only thing we could offer Burt for his votes was the directorship of the Canadian region. On the other hand, Millard could offer him a staff job. Mortimer and Travis were anxious to meet Burt and Tom Maclean, a leading militant from Oshawa, and asked me to invite them to a dinner meeting. I did so. There, the final decision to support Burt was made. I wasn't very keen on Burt, since he was no more an organizer than Millard. But he wasn't anti-Communist. We had no choice anyway.

On the convention floor the day of the elections, when Millard counted noses, we have good reason to believe that he made contact with the big man with the bushy eyebrows. John L. Lewis, whose presence made this convention the "official" UAW convention, sent a runner to me to inform me he had influenced Millard to join the Addes camp and had promised to support his being elected. I told the runner, "Please go back and tell Mr. Lewis that the Canadians are ever mindful of his great ability to lead and it is not with disrespect that we must say 'no' to his request. Tell Mr. Lewis that our people in Canada have spoken and we intend to follow their mandate." Burt won easily.

A strange incident took place at this convention. The Communist Party wanted me to meet an important Communist from Poland. We changed cars six times before I was finally brought before this fat man who was gorging himself on a sumptuous meal—and I was hungry. I don't know whether I was supposed to impress him or him me—I never really even caught his name—and that was the last I ever saw or heard of him. The Communist Party must have trusted me a lot, even though I was not then a party member. It's too bad, though, that I didn't get a piece of that sumptuous meal.

Back on the convention floor, R. J. Thomas was elected President. As I pointed out, Thomas, a big fat hulk of a man, stayed with Martin until almost the last moment. He was a yes-man and the choice of John L.

Lewis. The Communist Party supported him and not Frankenstein for precisely the same reason. It turned out that he did exactly what they wanted. But, in fact, Thomas was a clown, someone who couldn't even speak well, and thought nothing about filling his mouth with a handful of chewing tobacco at a meeting. It was very disheartening for me and others like me to see the Communist Party support a clown like this, when they could have put someone like Addes into the presidency.

Homer Martin was now finished. The former Baptist minister, who, Millard said, lost his pulpit in an affair with a choir girl, now lost his office mainly due to the efforts of "godless" communists.

Needless to say, Ed Hall, the "Bull of the UAW" congratulated me as the convention drew to a close and offered to live up to his promise. I declined. He offered me twenty-five dollars, which I accepted.

Millard did not suffer long. Because of his deal with Lewis, Lewis arranged with Philip Murray, head of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee of the CIO, to put Millard on the payroll of Silby Barrett, SWOC Director in Canada and a CCFer. It was not long before Millard displaced Barrett as Director. Being the yes-man he was, Millard carried out the instructions of Murray, a staunch Catholic, to get rid of all the communists on the SWOC payroll in Canada. As a result of the witchhunt, first class trade union organizers like Dick Steele, Harry Hunter, and Harry Hambergh were replaced by green young members of the CCF. Millard pointed out in his speech at McMaster University, March 10, 1975, that he chose young CCFers because they would be loyal and carry out his wishes to a "t". The CPL pamphlet, "STEEL STRIKE HAMILTON 1946", ably shows Millard's scab role and the activities of the communists who won that crucial strike.

It would be well to point out to the reader that, about this time, John L. Lewis also reverted to his old anti-communist ways. Prior to the establishment of the CIO, Lewis was viciously anti-communist. He knew only too well, however, that he could not possibly organize the mass production industries without the help of the Communist Party. Once the CIO was on its feet, Lewis returned to anti-communism. I remember one organizer coming up to Lewis saying, "Mr. Lewis, I am a communist—"

"You're fired!" interjected Lewis, "There are no communists on my payroll."

Lewis ruled the UMW with an iron fist throughout his long term as president. It is no secret that he used goon squads to fight the goon squads of the mine owners. In other words, he fought fire with fire. However, Lewis also did not hesitate to use the same tactic against any individual or group with the courage to question his absolute power in the union.

Because of his absolute power, his death sparked off a series of events that have blown the good ship UMW off course and is still tossing it about rudderless. The murder of the Yablonski family by Tony Boyle is but the latest example. Had there been communist factions established in the UMW, however, the situation would not have degenerated to this point.

For Jim Napier, things once again looked up. He left the ranks of the unemployed and was hired again as International Rep. by George Burt for \$35 a week without expenses.

Left Creates a President

Oshawa UAW Wives Carry the Fight

I was sent into Oshawa with a long title: James S. Napier, International Representative of the United Automobile Workers of America, signed by R.J. Thomas, International President. I had just been appointed to the staff job a few weeks earlier. The winter of 1939 was setting in.

Millard and an entourage of CCF and Catholic Action Members were on hand.

When I finished my talk at the first union meeting of Local 222 after I arrived, Millard, very much to my surprise, came over and shook hands. While they had applauded my first speech in Oshawa, it became clear and inescapable that they were just being coldly polite. I was just a bit uncomfortable, in that the left wing, which I was led to believe was a strongly-knit unit, was nowhere to be found.

Upon investigation, I learned that the Financial-Secretary, the only full-time paid officer of the local, was Millard's right-hand man. Thus, my arrival in Oshawa was not generally known.

I was given an office by the local and a part-time secretary, paid by the regional office.

I soon found out that the left wing in Oshawa had had the business, as far as being active in regrouping the local was concerned. I could sense an unwillingness to become involved. The Smith brothers, Jim and Malcolm, George Thompson, Dave Carey, and many others had played leading roles in the organizational drive and during the 1937 strike. These few leaders apparently had canvassed the city door to door with little or no success. Millard and his CCF followers, along with Catholic Action, had them all branded as communists and fellow travellers. Of course, the weak element in any union will grasp at any excuse for dropping their membership. Then there was the problem of my age among the left-wingers, who were mostly ten to fifteen my senior, and some of them with aspirations for staff jobs like mine in Windsor.

I had to rely more on Tom MacLean, the local president. Despite the fact that Tom had a mild dislike for the Communist Party, he was all union. Because he was an Orangeman, he could be counted on to oppose Catholic Action. The contacts given me by the Unity Group only made a token effort.

On top of everything else, I was operating at a handicap financially. George Burt, while treasurer of the Oshawa local, had made a reputation for himself as a tightwad. Now, it's just fine when union officials are watchful and sparing of the members' funds. However, Burt went too far. I had no money to help pay for the gas of those members who were trying to help me regroup the local. In a very short time, their wives complained of the financial drain that the union was becoming on their households. Soon, these

members drifted away. Also, one of the favourite gathering spots of the members of the local was a local pub. Since I had no money for beer, that place was out of bounds for me.

Because of Burt's stinginess, I couldn't operate at peak efficiency. I wasn't given the expense money, guaranteed by the UAW constitution, in order to rent a hotel room. As a result, I was soon installed in George Burt's own house. While Mrs. Burt was hospitable and considerate, I couldn't run in and out at all hours of the night as an organizer must, nor could I come home during the day to catch forty winks.

I was trying to live on thirty-five dollars a week, paying installments on the car, supporting my family in Windsor, paying my own gas, and helping out the Communist Party with a few dollars here and there. Finally, the Oshawa bailiff called at my office, informing me he had been instructed to seize my car, and asked for the keys and whereabouts of the car. I told him it was in Windsor.

Wives leaflet plant gates

At this point, I had to take myself into a corner and ask myself some questions. I reasoned, on the basis of all the aforementioned, that I had to formulate policy according to conditions as they were, not as I wished them to be. My effort would have to be by leaflet and by as much personal contact at night as time would permit. The first mistake I made was putting out a four-page paper, which was too bulky for the women of the Ladies' Auxiliary to handle at the gates.

Dick Steele, Harry Hunter, and Harry Hambergh, all communists and organizers for the Steelworkers Organizing Committee in Canada, were working out of the office of Silby Barrett, SWOC Director. Barrett's record with the United Mine Workers in Nova Scotia did not indicate that he was a strong man in the labour movement. It has been said that John L. Lewis had appointed him a Director of the UMW to do a hatchet job on the communists. As an organizer, old Silby was out of place. He was the first to admit his inability in this field and relied heavily on the energetic Dick Steele, who enjoyed the distinction of telling his boss what should be done and how to do it.

While I consider my stay in Oshawa of little benefit to the local, my meeting with SWOC staffers was a new experience for me. They were of the same calibre as organizers with whom I dealt in Detroit. They had two foundries on strike in Oshawa. I was invited to speak to the strikers several times.

After one of these meetings, I met with Dick Steele privately at the Genosha Hotel. I told him of the conditions under which I had to work. He advised me that the first thing I had to do was to build up a



Wives of autoworkers were organized into an auxiliary to help build the UAW.

member of the local. "You are here to build up the local" he said, "Not yourself. Now then, who, in your opinion, will respond to this idea?"

I mentioned Tom MacLean, of all the individuals I had met to that point the most determined to regroup and salvage the local.

"OK", continued Dick, "he is president. From here on we start to build him up to lead the GM Workers. Tonight there is a local union meeting. Write down carefully the minutes of the meeting, particularly what MacLean has to say. Meet me at midnight at the SWOC office in Toronto and we'll run off a leaflet based on the information you bring."

Before leaving for the meeting, I discussed the leaflet with Mrs. Burt, who was an officer of the Ladies' Auxiliary. She agreed to have as many women as possible at the main gate half an hour before starting time in the morning, to cover all the gates.

I met Dick at 12:30 a.m. With my written material, he skilfully moulded "A Message From The President" and ran it off on the Gestetner. I was soon on the way back to Oshawa where the women were waiting.

Tom MacLean was pleased with the content of the leaflet. I told him who had written it and where. He became interested, in that the feedback was favourable. The fact that the women were involved in the early-morning distribution gave new life to the lame-duck union.

I had a folder full of leaflets written by Bill Emery and by Bill Walsh, another communist of the calibre of Dick Steele. (In fact, they were old chums.) I gave them to MacLean because they covered every

conceivable action with which one might be confronted. Only a few words would have to be changed to suit the local conditions.

I myself became more encouraged. I rented a summer cottage outside Oshawa — at Pennington's Summer Cottages, with an old street car made into a light lunch restaurant. The second day after my family arrived, it snowed. While the snow blew through the cracks in the kitchenette, we enjoyed our stay there. We were supplied with lots of firewood.

Finally, I got tired of being broke. We packed up and went home to Windsor. On the way home, I ran out of gas about five miles from my parents' house, with no money. I called home. My brother came to the rescue with enough gas to take us to the nearest gas station.

We had hardly arrived in Windsor when Ken Yokum, the bailiff, came into the regional office and requested the keys to my car. I told him it was in Oshawa. He said, "Like hell it is! I have a man watching it on Goyeau Street." There went my means of transportation.

George was in Oshawa that weekend. When he returned, I told him of the difficulties both organizational and financial. I also complained that I needed new glasses and winter clothes. To keep up the department of my long title. I needed more than a flat \$35. George called Addes in Detroit. Addes, the International Secretary-Treasurer, instructed George to pay me what the Constitution called for, plus expenses: \$50 a week plus \$10 expenses plus \$10 per day expenses while out of town on union business.

I had just settled down again in Windsor when some rumbling started at Chrysler.

United Front-Fatal Compromise

Less Popular, Not More Influential

At this point we must step out of the UAW circles for a little while for a look at what was happening to the labour movement as a whole and to the CIO in particular.

The reader will recall that the impetus for the birth of the CIO in the US was the fact that delegates from industrial unions like the United Mine Workers, led by John L. Lewis, were always in a minority at conventions of the American Federation of Labour. The AFL leadership was solidly against industrial unionism and frustrated all attempts to organize autoworkers or steelworkers, for instance, in one big union irrespective of crafts and trades. For this reason, the industrial unions like the UMW set up the Committee for Industrial Organization in order to build industrial unionism. The AFL promptly expelled the CIO unions.

In Canada, The Trades and Labour Congress did not initially expel CIO unions, even under great pressure from the US head offices of the many craft unions in the TLC. In 1939, however, the AFL pressure succeeded. The CIO unions in Canada were expelled.

Immediately, on November 4, 1939, the CIO unions in Canada including the UAW, called their own convention with the main purpose of "Organizing The Unorganized". The strength of the communists was indicated by the fact that 82 of 105 delegates supported the communist resolution to condemn the Second World War as "another conflict between the capitalist countries". The convention, in its brief to the federal government, wrote that the war "must not be allowed to detract attention from unemployment and other pressing problems of internal economic security."

However, at precisely the same time as the convention was taking place, Millard and communist leaders were meeting secretly with Mosher, M.M. Maclean and Dowd, leaders of the nationalist and anti-communist All-Canadian Congress of Labour. The ACCL leaders wanted a merger simply because the advent of the CIO into Canada had undermined them completely. Their organization was at the point of collapse. Millard wanted the merger because he would have more anti-communist and pro-CCF forces with which to defeat his communist enemies in the CIO.

But why did the Communist Party want this merger? The easy answer is that they were following the "United Front" policy of allying with anyone who was, if only on paper, anti-fascist. In fact, this merger was a trap for the Communist Party's work in the trade unions from which they never recovered.

Only a few months went by before the Party saw the trap. The 1940 May Day editorial of the *Clarion*, the Communist Party newspaper, wrote, "Any action to merge the two bodies under a bureaucratic set-up

from the top without rank and file participation must be vigorously fought." According to Irving Abella. (*Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*, page 49), however, J.B. Salsberg, the CP's leader in trade union work and later a renegade from the Party, as well as C.S. Jackson, head of the United Electrical Workers, were both actively pro-merger, despite the Party decision.

UAW Local 195 in Windsor sent a letter to Allan Haywood, CIO Director of Organization in the US, claiming that Millard was sabotaging the CIO with the proposed merger, and called him a "pie-card artist". George Burt also wrote a complaining letter to R.J. Thomas, UAW International President.

The coup de grace came when District 18 of the UMW joined the Canadian CIO — 25,000 out of a total of 50,000. According to Abella (page 50), the new constitution was written by none other than J.L. Cohen and J.B. Salsberg.

The convention, convened on Sept. 9, 1940, was a big anti-communist success after the right-wing leadership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers under Sol Spivak brought the ACW with a total of 40 voting delegates into the new Canadian Congress of Labour. The Congress adopted a resolution by 111 to 81 condemning communism and urging affiliated unions to refuse membership to "subversives". It also narrowly voted to support the war effort.

Only while reading Abella's book forty years after the events did I realize that something was really fishy about that convention. Even though I was a Party member at that time, I had no idea that the Party wanted this merger to succeed. Or, if they didn't want it to succeed, it was news to me. During this convention, I took the floor to lambast Mosher and the ACCL leadership as "collaborationists with the Mounted Police" for their failure to support Pat Sullivan, then communist leader of the Canadian Seamen's Union, who had been put in jail. Sullivan later ratted on the Party. His payoff was a farm, the whereabouts of which no one knew. When I sat down after my tirade against Mosher, Harry Hunter, who was sitting near me, surprised me by being less than pleased. I was not aware that he had been involved with Mosher and others in the negotiations to set up the new congress.

Believe it or not, I always had respect for David Lewis until I read Abella's account of his role in the affair: "As the Communists had feared, the CCF replaced them in the leadership of the new Congress. David Lewis had been paid by the ACCL leaders to spend the week at the convention 'to assist them in whatever way necessary in getting the thing properly launched'. An ecstatic Lewis claimed that this

'establishes the relation between our office and their work on a much more direct basis . . . and (shows) the need (of the new Congress) for working together with the CCF.' The success of the convention was partly the result of Lewis' activities. At a meeting with the ACCL leaders in early September, Lewis succeeded in persuading them 'of the need to sound at the convention a note of unity of the bodies and the creation of a new central labour body rather than that of the continuation of their old Congress.' He convinced them that to please the CIO unions it was necessary 'to avoid any suggestion that what is happening is that the CIO unions are being absorbed in the ACCL,' but rather to stress 'that the ACCL unions and the CIO unions are joining together for the creation of a new central labour body. "

"Lewis had succeeded beyond his wildest expectations. In the election of officers, the entire CCF slate was easily elected." (Abella, page 51).

Once the CCF'ers had a majority on the executive board of the new Congress, they proceeded to use their power, mostly in an unconstitutional manner, to grind down the communists, preparing the situation for the coup, which we left-wingers, who had gone off to war to fight fascism, returned home just in time to

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE CARD											
1974 United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural											
1975 Implement Workers of America - UAW											
LOCAL 27 - LONDON, ONT.											
JIM NAPIER						Plant.....					
HONOURARY MEMBERSHIP											
Clock No.....						Unit.....					
<i>Bill M. Shulch</i>						Int. Date					
Fin. Sec'y											
Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75

Honorary membership card — one of few ever issued by the international executive of the UAW.

experience. For the gory war-time details, I recommend reading Abella's relevant chapters on the subject.

What lesson can be drawn from all of this?

In my opinion, the Communist Party, in its eagerness to forward its united front strategy, forgot the main reason for which John L. Lewis had created the CIO: so that the proponents of industrial unionism could escape the position of forever being in the minority in the AFL and could get down to actually establishing industrial unionism. David Lewis clearly understood that, by merging the Canadian CIO in the CCL, the left wing would be outnumbered and smashed. The united front strategy, then, led the Communist Party directly into a trap. First, in 1935, the Party dissolved the Workers Unity League, merged its red unions into the AFL and then into the CIO, and gave up trying to organize communist fractions in right-wing-controlled unions. Then, in 1940, it submerged the Canadian CIO, which it clearly controlled, in the CCL and in the space of only a few years was forever destroyed as an influence in the trade union movement.

The lesson is that by uniting with the right wing we become weaker, not stronger, and by watering down and hiding our politics we become less popular, not more influential. As Lenin once said, "Better fewer, but better." As I mentioned before, it was not the strength of the right-wingers that laid us low, but rather our own weakness. In short, first-class communist organizers like Steele, Hunter, and Jackson brought about the condition that wiped them out.

One final point on the CCL. The constitution of the CCL was so written that small locals were given disproportionate voting weight and that the CCL executive was elected by slate voting. Both of these factors have been severely criticized over the years by the Communist Party as having the effect of perpetuating the right-wingers at the top. Yet, it was communists wrote the constitution! This fact leaves us to speculate as to the real motives of J. B. Salsberg and J. L. Cohen.

Walkout at Chrysler Plant Two

Shop Paper "Spark" Succeeds

Bill Walsh arrived to take over the leadership of the Communist Party in Windsor. When he arrived, things began to move again at Chrysler. We couldn't have wanted a better leader, organizer, writer, and key-board wizard all rolled up into one.

One of the first things we did was to give birth to a shop paper for our members inside the plant. It was called the "Chrysler Spark". The night we named the mimeographed, four-page paper (typed in columns, which were Bill's trademark), I was at a loss to understand why Bill was so insistent on that name. It was not until later that I discovered that the first paper put out by the Bolshevik workers in Russia was called "Iskra", or "Spark" in English. Bill, the night hawk, would meet with Cyril Prince, our key man in Plant Three, the assembly plant. Cliff Getty would often join the club on Friday nights. It was at this time that Cyril, Cliff, and I joined the Party. Bill became our mentor.

While the Party in Windsor gained during this period, it also lost one of its exceptional organizers. Conditions got so bad for Bill Emery, that he caused himself and his family to be deported. Millard's sacrificing of the 200 families at Walker Metal Products, whose local union Bill led, broke his spirit. He felt, as did I, that under Millard's leadership we were organizing workers to be slaughtered. At that time, the federal government was offering to deport, at its own expense, any unemployed immigrant. Because he was blacklisted from working and because of his state of mind and his young wife and family, Bill went back to England.

One day, Pennington, a troubleshooter from Household Finance, came into my office, asking for Bill Emery. I knew this guy. While I myself was unemployed, I borrowed money from Household. He gave me a really hard time. He didn't care about his own children. So why would he care about mine? However, when I got back on the UAW payroll, I paid them off in full.

I knew Bill was leaving the following week and was in the process of selling his furniture, which had been collateral for his loan. Very casually, I said, "How much does Bill owe you?"

Pennington told me the amount.

I said, "Well, you know Bill and I are very close. I think I should take over this responsibility. I'm going out of town for four days. In the meantime, you can draw up the necessary papers, transferring the loan to my name."

As instructed, Pennington arrived at the office with

all the necessary papers, which he laid on the desk.

I growled at him, "Pick up those papers and get the hell out of here before I get a couple of my boys to throw you bodily down the stairs! For your information, Mr. Pennington, the furniture is all sold and Bill Emery and his family are all on the high seas right now. Now you will be able to rest in peace with those papers in your dead file!"

I'll never forget the look on that guy's face.

George Burt knew how I felt about the campaign at Chrysler. From the start, I advised him that it was going to be difficult to regain the confidence we enjoyed before Millard and Durocher took over. (By the way, after I was again put on staff, we saw no more in the UAW of Joe Durocher.) I warned George that he might find me unusually cautious in that I knew, from personal experience, the hardships arising from being fired for union activity. When the "Spark" started to produce some results and the Unity Group began to take shape again at Chrysler, I tried to convince him to hire some of the key men from the three plants as part-time organizers.

Fortunately, at the first Chrysler meeting that George attended, our small hall was packed, with most of the members standing. The reader will recall that my personal policy was never to call union meetings at plants we were trying to organize until we were sure we would get out a majority who would sign up on the spot. This practice protected the in-plant organizers. However, the train of events had been disrupted by Millard who had called some lulu union meetings for Chrysler that were poorly attended and crawling with stool-pigeons. The trouble for us, since we booted out Millard, was that were getting good turnouts, but no increase in membership.

By this time, we had John Eldon helping us. John was an artist on the platform. He could make a speech to a group of workers, meet the same group of workers the next week, and tell them the same thing a different way. New organizers, like me at that time, on the other hand, spoke to a meeting once and were played right out. The second time I spoke to the same group of workers, I didn't even try to make the speech sound different. I simply made the point of telling the members that what they were about to hear might be repetitive of what they had heard before but that my purpose was not to talk to them but to those new members they brought. John had that rare ability to speak to the same group of workers five or six times and hold their interest. At that embryo stage of our union, it was important to be able to call on speakers

13 OF 14 HELD IN CHRYSLER TROUBLE RELEASED ON OWN BAIL

Pickets Defy Order to Disperse, Go for Ride



The Windsor Star



Napier under arrest.

Napier Faces Charge Alone

Others Held Are Accused
as Group, Crown
Attorney Explains

Remanded to 20th

Cecil Groll Appears for
Union Members
Today

Released on \$500 personal recognizance bail, 13 of the 14 former employes of Canada, Chrysler Corporation of Canada, Limited, arrested yesterday and charged under the Defence of Canada Regulations in city police court today, were permitted to return to their homes after spending the night in jail. They were ordered to appear November 20.

ONE PROPERTY BAIL.

James Napier, the fourteenth member of the group and a U. A. W. A. local official, was similarly charged but his bail was set \$500 property bail. He will appear with the others.

Crown Attorney James S. Allan, K. C., asked Magistrate Brodie for the remand after explaining that further information was being compiled and would not be ready for submission until November 20. Mr. Allan agreed that the men, inasmuch as all of them have permanent residence in Windsor, might be permitted personal recognizance bail.

Napier was charged separately. Though the charge was identical with that against the others, Mr. Allan explained he was not charging Napier with the group as police were now investigating a further prospective charge against him.

like John to keep our fledgling members interested and involved. In short, the Chrysler workers loved John Eldon.

With Bill, John, Cyril, and Cliff, we had a considerable bank of talent. When George decided to spend a little money on expenses and on hiring Leo Gillette of Plant Two on a part-time basis, things really got going in the summer of 1940. Plant Two was well stocked with French Canadians whom Leo organized in equal numbers with the European immigrants. Bob Brierley, a few others from England, a few Canadians, and Hugh McCrindle, our only Scotsman, rounded out our membership there.

Alex Parent, Leo's brother-in-law and later president of Local 195, was also doing a good job in Plant Three aided by the McNeil brothers, the Casa brothers, Red Parent, Victor Wanhalla, Vince Coulson, Whitey Quesnell, Paul Horoky, and many others whose names I unfortunately have forgotten.

Beware of provocation

The spur to action at Chrysler in Windsor was the successful unionization of Chrysler in Detroit in September 1940. Dick Frankenstein had smuggled me into the negotiations in Detroit. I had hardly been seated at the table when I opened my big mouth to the great embarrassment of Dick to demand of the big shots what they were going to do for the workers in Windsor. The big shots, realizing who I was, adjourned the meeting. When I returned to Windsor, I made a statement to the Windsor Star to the effect that Chrysler was discriminating against the Windsor workers.

Several nights before the walkout in November at Plant Two, better known as the motor plant, Leo called me to book the union hall for a meeting of Plant Two members. At that point, percentage-wise, Plant Two was where our strength lay, in that the Plant Three workers had been slow in regrouping after Millard's abortive strike there in 1938.

At the meeting, there was agitation for action. My figures dictated that we were not in a position to win should strike action be taken. On this basis, for the first time since December 1936, I raised my voice at a union meeting asking workers to be patient a little longer. Management, I went on to say, was beginning to feel our strength in Plant Two. Therefore, we had to beware of being provoked into action at a time opportune for them. As a matter of fact, one of the members took the floor to express surprise at my words of caution.

The union "brother" who had expressed surprise was none other than the straw boss who received such a severe beating from us during the first strike at Kelsey Wheel. I am fairly sure now that he was a company agent. In fact, the Communist Party suspected him of collaborating with his brother-in-law, who was suspected of being a Pinkerton agent. After the Chrysler wildcat, the former straw boss was hired on as a foreman at the Motor Lamp Company where he went back to his old way of pushing the workers around.

Chrysler succeeded in provoking an incident only a few days later. In mid-November, they transferred a mechanic from one department to another over the heads of workers with more seniority than the mechanic.

It was only a few days after the union meeting that

thirteen of our Chrysler boys walked into the regional office with broad smiles on their faces, declaring they had been fired. What is an organizer expected to do? The workers are always, always right. Yes, I was burning inside, but kept the flames there. I reasoned to myself that I could be wrong. This action might well be the spark for which we had been waiting. When the company blunders, sometimes, if well prepared, the workers can benefit.

George Burt was away. I had to decide what should be our course of action. Leo Gillette, whom I had met ten years earlier at the Loblaw Building, was our key man in Plant Two. Leo always impressed me as a pretty sensible, well-adjusted man with the responsibility of a young family. One would have expected his judgment to be tempered accordingly. When Leo informed me that the whole of Plant Two was ready to walk out, I had no reason to doubt his word. He was inside and I was outside. My figures said, "No." His assessment said, "Yes." So, "yes" it was.

We made the arrangements for picketing the plant the next morning. Leo and I decided that one of us should not be on the picket line in case of arrests. We needed at least one of us there at 10 a.m. when we knew more men were planning to walk out of the plant.

I spent a bad night worrying that we had fallen into a trap. I finally fell asleep so late that I didn't hear my alarm go off. When I awoke, it was already starting time at Plant Two and pouring rain.

I didn't shave. I jumped into my car, but the damn thing wouldn't start. I flagged down a cab. The driver was an old man who drove too slowly for my purpose. I gave him a dollar, jumped out, and flagged down another cab which, luckily, was coming along right behind. The driver was a young man. I told him I would give him \$5 if he could get me to the Chrysler Plant in a hurry.

Informer in our ranks

By the time I arrived at Chrysler Plant Two, all 13, including Leo Gillette, had already been picked up by the police.

By default, it was up to me to meet the men coming out at 10:00 a.m. There was an informer in our ranks somewhere, since at 9:50 a.m. the paddy wagon and police cruisers began to line up. At 10:00 on the dot, men started filing out of the plant. Ten of us immediately set up a picket line and were arrested. The Windsor police fouled up our arrests for themselves. The strikers arrested earlier in the morning by the Ontario Provincial Police were read the Defence of Canada Regulations. In arresting us, the Windsor police neglected to read the Act. As a result, the strikers arrested with me were released but I was detained, supposedly to be charged separately under the regulations. It was made known to the press by my old adversary James Allan, the crown attorney, that after a full investigation other charges would be laid against me.

The Federal Department of Labour sent a man who interviewed me in a cell apart from the 13 still in captivity. He suggested to me that, if I would promise not to picket the Chrysler plant, he could arrange for us to be let out of jail. I said in reply, "Mr. Ainsborough, ours is a democratic union. Allow me to talk to the men and then we will give you an answer."

He left. In a few minutes, I was ushered into the main cell block where the 13 were being held. I let them know what had been offered as a condition of our release.

Ernie Menard spoke up and said, "I will stay in this jail till kingdom come before I will promise not to picket the Chrysler plant!"

All of the strikers were solidly behind Ernie. Mr. Ainsborough, of the Labour Department, was so informed. For the life of me, I cannot remember under what conditions we got out. But we did get out that day.

It was all or nothing at this point. We decided to call an emergency meeting of Chrysler workers for that night, to try to shut down the plant the next morning. Jack Taylor, communist secretary-treasurer of Local 195, and I went to hand out notices of the emergency meeting at the plant gates. We were both arrested again. No leaflets got out. So I hired a soundtruck to broadcast at the gates. The driver was arrested. A few weeks earlier, I had seen a film in which French workers, forbidden to hand out leaflets at a plant, designed a kite big enough to hold leaflets, guided it over the plant, pulled the ripcord, and thus leafleted the plant. The lesson was clear. I rented twelve horses which Ernie and the boys started galloping down the highway towards the Chrysler plant. Each rider was sandwiched by two placards announcing the emergency meeting. It was quite a sight. Unfortunately, the horses were unshod and fit only for the bridle path. The owner was angry that the horses were being used on the highway and repossessed them. So we didn't do as well as the French workers after all. The emergency meeting never came off.

A bold rank-and-file

George Burt arrived in Windsor and was briefed on the events. At that point, an old newspaper reports, 60 Chrysler workers were out. The next morning, Burt led 46 back onto the picket line, including the 13 arrested the day before. The Regulations were read by Sergeant Duncan of the OPP. After a short meeting, Burt and the strikers decided to continue picketing. I had a grandstand seat in a nearby car. When all the men were neatly packed into paddy wagons, police cars, and passenger cars commandeered for the occasion, and after the procession took off, I left for Detroit for the UAW International Office, to arrange bail.

These bold actions on the part of our rank-and-file union members show the militance of the workers at that time. Their defiance of authority, in turn, reflected their confidence in our leadership. Imagine workers smilingly breaking the law and waving to photographers as they entered the paddy wagon for the second time in two days! You don't see this rebelliousness often enough today. Yet, with proper leadership, it can become commonplace again.

If memory serves me right, bail was set at \$5,000 for all 46. After all the press statements by James Allan that I would be investigated and charged, to this day I have never been brought before a judge. I was fined \$26 without ever appearing in court.

On the way down to jail in the paddy wagon on the first morning of the strike, one of our members started to cry the blues. "Now that the right to picket has been questioned, "I assured him, "it now becomes the fight

of the entire labour movement. I signed most of your application cards with the firm belief that labour's only weapon, the right to strike and to picket, would be defended by the united action of all trade unions. Should we not get this support, I will quit my job as International Representative of the UAW."

The union I was building meant all for one and one for all.

Supporting 60 strikers

Needless to say, the strike fizzled. The union was left with the burden of supporting about 60 strikers. Every weekend, Leo and I made the rounds of the locals in Michigan to ask for support. At some of these membership meetings, one communist would get up and propose that a certain sum be given to the strikers of Local 195. Then another communist would get the floor and declare, "Brothers and sisters, the sum of such-and-such is not enough to help our striking brothers. I move to amend the motion to double the amount we send them!" And so it went for several months.

I should point out that, at that time, it was Emil Mazey's Local 212 at the Briggs Plant in Detroit, renowned for its lousy working conditions, that was by far the most generous with its aid to us. After the first visit to that local, Mazey had us just appear at the executive meetings to ask for money. At that time, the executive meeting took place simply at a table set up in a corner of the union hall. Mazey said to me, "You don't have to make a speech, Jimmy." (I tend to get a little bit carried away sometimes when speaking.) "Just tell us how much you want."

Naturally, there was a general let-down in our spirits with this defeat. Yet the union had plenty of work to do. For instance, I was often called upon to make representations at the welfare office on behalf of our members. One day, I was particularly pressed for time and deviated from my strict policy, which the reader will recall, of never consulting the welfare office, except in person. I phoned Charlie Hays and had the case settled satisfactorily over the telephone. I was so pleasantly surprised that I suggested to Charlie that, as a reward for his generosity, I was going to take his name off the blacklist. I said, "You know, Charlie, we have your name up here on the blacklist on the wall here in my office, one of many we have scheduled to be shot after the Revolution."

I met Mayor Croll when the King and Queen came to Windsor, an occasion at which I was a special guest. Mayor Croll sent me a big fancy four-by-six-inch invitation to be at the railway station to welcome the royalty.

When I arrived, Inspector Neale spotted my wife, and me in my brand new suit, and demanded, "Where are you going?"

Nonchalantly, I hauled the huge invitation out of my suit pocket. Neale was flabbergasted.

When I was received by Mayor Croll at this function, he pointedly asked me, "What are you trying to do to Charlie Hays, scare him to death?"

We had our office problems as well. When George Burt took over the regional office in Windsor, he hired the daughter of a CCF city councillor. I had to fire the woman because of her appetite for alcohol and her habit of rolling into work in party dresses. I mention her only because she pops up again later on, with

disastrous results.

During the Plant Two dispute, George Burt told me that he had been informed by Mr. Dunn of the Ontario Department of Labour that the Mounted Police had my home under surveillance and that it was known to them that Bill Walsh was in constant contact with me. I don't think this was news to George, in that his secretary had kept him well informed of every call Bill had made to me by telephone. I was suspicious since hiring her, because she tried to ingratiate herself with me by lying that her people were all communists. She was a very smart secretary, but lax. She left her shorthand notes lying around where it was easy for me to have them read. I confronted Burt to his face with the fact that he had made a stool-pigeon of this woman. What he didn't seem to realize was that a stool-pigeon will stool to the highest bidder. And there were bidders in considerably higher positions in society than Canadian Director of the UAW. More on this later.

One morning, Burt paid a very early visit to my home — early enough to find Bill Walsh sleeping in my living room. At that time, Bill was supposed to be in

hiding, in that he was a leader of the Communist Party which was denouncing the war as an imperialist adventure. He was supposed to be on the run. Yet he continued to put out the "Chrysler Spark" on his own typewriter.

One night, several months after the walkout at Chrysler, I took myself into the union hall and arrived at a decision to quit my job at the end of the month. Looking back, I realize this was a foolish move. The Communist Party, of which I was a member, was furious and tried to dissuade me. However, they were correct. International Rep. is an important political position and is not to be thrown away carelessly. Moreover, my influence on the union members was sharply curtailed as a result of quitting. The action was shown to be all the more rash by the next conference in the Canadian region, held at St. Catharines. George Burt had to call me suddenly by long distance from the meeting and pay my way out of his own money to get to St. Catharines. When Burt insisted that I quit, of my own accord, the delegates refused to believe him and demanded that I come to the meeting to speak on my own behalf.



Chrysler was declared "essential" to the war effort and picketing was illegal, but strikers stuck by their class interests and preferred arrest to capitulation.

Union Wins at Ford

War Smooths the Path

The day after I decided to quit my job as International Rep., I had a surprise visit from my old friends, Sgts. John Watson and Alex Innes of the Windsor Police Morality Squad, armed with a search warrant. They went through the files but, of course, found nothing of interest to them. We always saw to that. George Burt was out of town. While the files were being scrutinized, I found a cigar in my coat pocket. When the sergeants had finished their witchhunt, I invited them into Burt's private office. I pulled two chairs alongside the desk and invited them to sit down. I was on a swivel chair in the driver's seat with my big cigar lit up, puffing away till I saw Sgt. Watson's blood pressure rise. Then I said, "John, I'd like to do something for you and Sgt. Innes, but I don't know what I am going to be able to do. After the Revolution, we will be putting in our own police force, and I just don't know how we are going to fit you in."

Sgt. Watson became furious. Sgt. Innes said, "Calm down, John. Stranger things have happened." They both then left.

I arranged that I and some of the Chrysler boys got jobs digging ditches. We were employed by the City of Windsor Works Department. To this day, I don't know who informed Sgt. Watson of my new job. One day, he arrived at the scene, all 300 pounds of him. I was about four feet down in the ditch. It was the spring of 1941. The sun was blistering hot and, in the ditch, there was no escape from it.

I looked up as I straightened my back after using the pick. There he was, standing on the pile of dirt I had thrown up. He looked at me, said nothing, walked a few yards away, wheeled around, and stood again on the top of the pile.

"Ha-ha, so you don't know what you're going to be able to do for me, when the workers of the world take over?"

"No, John, I still don't know. I got a leave of absence from George Burt. I was getting too fat and took this job to get into shape again. Some day soon, John, I will invite you into my office and we will have a nice little chat."

It may be hard to believe that events in 1941 took me out of the ditch and back into the office.

You see, while I was ditch-digging, I was also organizing workers. In many cases, rather than go to the regional office or the Local 195, workers from unorganized plants came looking for me at home. Word had got around about my promise to the Chrysler workers to quit my job, and about my keeping my word. My personal popularity among

workers in Windsor rose. When the organization of Ford began to move fast, George Burt hired me to manage the office from which the campaign would be directed.

When the campaign really gathered steam, workers were streaming in to pay their initiation fees. As a result, we had a lot of money on hand. The money provided me the opportunity to call the Police Department to ask for an escort to the bank which, I think, was one block from our office. Inspector Neale was a very officious sort. We exchanged a few words in anger. Anyway, lo and behold, who comes in the front door half an hour later? Yes, you guessed it — Sgt. John Watson.

I moved back into an inner office and asked my secretary to tell Sgt. Watson to have a seat and that I was busy but would see him in a few minutes. In the meantime, I sent for a big White Owl cigar. I put my feet up on the desk and had Sgt. Watson invited in. I was puffing away on the cigar (and trying not to be sick: I don't smoke).

"What can I do for you, John?"

"I've been sent by Inspector Neale to escort you to the bank."

"Fine, John, the Police Department is always available to protect money and I have a whole bag full. You see, John, I may be able to do something for you after the Revolution. We might just be able to use your issuing warrants, search warrants, to round up all those who have stolen our country and all its natural resources for their own profit."

"Am I here to be lectured to or are you going to the bank?"

"OK, John, let's go."

Shortly before Sgt. Watson died of a heart attack, I met him and his wife in Windsor. When he saw me coming he started to laugh. He stopped and said to his wife, "I would like you to meet an old friend of mine, Jim Napier."

"So you are the one that keeps John out in the fresh air walking picket lines. His health has improved since the CIO came to Windsor, not sitting on his rear end in an office as much."

We started organizing Ford in Windsor in 1937. That is to say, under the leadership of communists like Joe Spence, fired from Ford for his political views, the basis for winning was methodically laid. The method was called the Aniox System. Why it was called that, I still don't know. Groups of five workers held meetings. Then, each of the five, in turn, tried to form another group of five, and so on. The first meeting of five was

held in the basement of an Italian brother, Louis Sovran. His brother John had been active in the organization of GM in Windsor.

The Ford organization really started to move into high gear in the closing months of 1941. And I do believe to this day that, without the job security created by the war, we would not have been able to organize Ford for years afterwards. You see, when the war started, a good part of the unemployed men who were the victims of the capitalist depression immediately joined up. At last, the necessities of life would be provided for themselves and their families. It was truly amazing to see the system, which couldn't provide a nickel more for strikers, or an extra loaf of bread a week for those on welfare, suddenly fork over billions to feed, clothe, and shelter the families of soldiers, not to mention putting the factories onto full production. Unemployment disappeared overnight. Yes, indeed, there is nothing like a profitable war to get the capitalist factories going.

For industrial workers, the war created a novel situation. Not only was there no unemployment, there was underemployment. In other words, if you were fired from factory A today, you could get a job at factory B tomorrow. Thus, the workers' fears of joining unions dribbled away. Also, before the war, we always found that it was the unskilled workers who were the first to move and that the skilled only fell in the end. With the wartime job security, the opposite situation prevailed, at least at Ford. The breakthrough at Ford took place when the skilled tradesmen took the union bit between the teeth and took off with it. Since no plant can operate without its skilled tradesmen, the writing was on the wall for Ford.

Fall of fascism in Ford

Tom Brockbank and Jack Critchely made organizing possible. Neither was affiliated to any political party. Critchely defied all convention and brought about the fall of fascism in the Ford plant, that had ruled with Gestapo ruthlessness since the plant opened its gates to manufacture cars. There is no doubt in my mind that Jack and Tom were mindful of the new wartime job security. During the campaign, I heard it said that when these two men came out openly in favour of union organization, they got into the hearts of the 3,128 men who joined the union before the Labour Dept.-supervised vote was held.

Both held meetings in their own homes. In fact, I attended five meetings in one night, all arranged by these two old Englishmen. Oftentimes, these meetings were held around a table full of beer at the Army and Navy Veterans Club on Tecumseh Road, near Jack's own residence.

Organizing Ford was a stunning experience. Our US brothers had just organized the Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, and won the check-off. All this made for a spontaneous initial success. The first open meeting held at the Carpenters Hall was filled to capacity. The next meeting at the Capitol Theatre was filled to overflowing. Dick Leonard of the Michigan Desoto local was the key speaker. He had been a member of the Unity Caucus since the Michigan State

CIO convention of 1938. Since then, we had become close friends. When Dick entered the hall, he spotted me and came right over to shake hands. This act displeased the CCF hacks present.

From this successful meeting, the Ford drive was officially launched. An organizational committee was set up. The Communist Party was successful in having Roy England, who, I believe was a non-public communist, elected chairman of the committee. Roy had sort of a shady background which didn't make him the best candidate for the job. Moreover, problems arose because of his not being known openly as a communist or friend of the Party. One time, when Tim Buck, the leader of the Communist Party of Canada, was due to speak in Windsor, we had a debate in the Party over whether or not Roy should speak at the meeting. Roy didn't want to, since he felt it would jeopardize his position. I argued that he shouldn't speak. In retrospect, however, I see that, if he had won the chairman's position as an open communist or friend of the Party, this problem would not have arisen. Roy ended up not speaking. England was an opportunist who always went along with the crowd. After the war, when it became especially hard to be a left-winger, he swung to the right to the point of crossing the street to avoid old friends.

The committee opened an office on Drouillard Road, just a block from Ford's main gate. I was installed as office manager.

Jim Smith and Tom MacLean were both brought into the campaign. Jim, who was the only Canadian delegate to vote with me against Millard at the Milwaukee convention, was given my job when I resigned. He was one of the Pioneers of Local 222 in Oshawa.

Tom MacLean was a past president of the Oshawa local. He was the only militant I can remember who held a leading position, yet had nothing to do with the Communist Party. As mentioned, he was an Orangeman who hated Catholic Action with a passion. He retired along with Burt since he knew he could not face Catholic Action alone. He was appointed Organizational Director for the campaign.

Hard work, narrow win

After the initial rush for union membership, which had gladdened our hearts, the flow of new initiation fees stopped as suddenly as it had started. We grew concerned. John Eldon, Tom MacLean, and I met to discuss this unexpected development. John, in his wisdom, advised that we should keep this fact to ourselves.

We kept no books or records for prying eyes. When the initiation fees came in, the money was deposited in the bank. George Burt was not advised of the situation, because of the girl in the office who was known to carry information to George. I considered her a stool-pigeon. I think I informed George to my thinking on this question.

During the campaign, Wallace Campbell, Ford Canada President, really put up a last-ditch effort to discourage the UAW. He was brother of Malcolm, the President of Kelsey Wheel, who had caused me so much personal hardship. Wallace Campbell held in-plant meetings day and night to try to keep the union

Great Ford Plant Scene of Vigorous Campaigning All Day Today



George Burt, UAW Regional Director, Alice Campbell, secretary, G.T. Brockbank, and Napier, shown during the Ford organizing campaign.

out, while we held our rallies outside to try to bring the union in.

The night before the Department of Labour-supervised vote, we had 3,128 members inside, out of a total of about 11,000 workers. Needless to say, we were sweating.

The results came in the next day: voting against the union, 4,455; for the UAW-CIO 6,833; spoiled ballots 46. With the eyes of all Canadian workers and a large part of the workers in the US on us, we had won.

Pessimism unwarranted

Personally, I was upset. I was very, very glad that we had persevered with the meetings of five over the years. Yet I was disheartened that, after being offered a chance to end the terrible depression conditions, 4,455 men voted to maintain them. Was it that they were influenced by the President's speeches in the plant, or by the news media which told workers that, as Christians, they must do their part to keep the Moscow-controlled union out of the plant? Perhaps it was the threat by Campbell to close down the plant. Who knows? The fact remains that, given the Labour legislation in Ontario of today, we would not have been able to organize Ford. Yet, in my opinion, conditions of work at Ford dictated voting for the union.

My father and brother, Alex, who were fired from Ford for possessing the surname, "Napier", were ecstatic on hearing the news that the union had come in at Ford. My mother, hearing my disappointment, said to me that one can only advise people. You can't do their thinking for them.

In retrospect, my pessimism about Windsor's Ford workers was unwarranted. They came through with flying colours in the militant 100-day showdown with Ford just after the war ended.

Well, the campaign was over. When Local 200 received its charter, elections of officers were held and my job ended. Ken Bannon, Jack Taylor, and I were waiting for the positions of International Rep., which were generally understood to be ours. Thanks to Burt's secretary, however, Jack and I did not get staff jobs. This secretary, the stool-pigeon, for reasons best known to George, was now dominating the office.

Not only was I, once again, out of a job, but I was also without political support. When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, almost all of the Party members in Windsor joined the armed forces. In fact, by the end of the Ford campaign, I knew of only three left in town. There may have been more but, because of the Party's cock-eyed policy of organizing workers by nationality rather than area of work, I didn't know them. Bill Walsh joined the army himself after having to leave Windsor in a hurry. His absence left a vacuum in our cell.

I was neither an ardent enough communist nor adequately trained in Marxist-Leninist politics to take a leading role. We were given the literature to read but our cell discussions were always on trade union and not on political matters. (Incidentally, this error is not made in the Canadian Party of Labour). There were no communist activities in Windsor of which I was aware. So I gradually drifted away.

Seeing as how there weren't any factory jobs for the blacklisted James S. Napier, even though the factories

were crying out for help, I joined the mass movement of tens of thousands of workers and communists. I joined the navy.

Well, I tried to join the navy. I started drilling at night at the Toledo Scales factory on Howard Avenue. I think it was the second night the roll was called that I was told to appear before the ship's officer. I was marched before him between two uniformed sailors. He had my police record in front of him on the desk. He asked what the 30 days I had spent in jail was for. I replied that I had been involved in a picket line hassle and went on to say, "You will see by my record that I have always been a champion of democracy."

To this he replied that my application would be held in abeyance pending further investigation. They would get in touch with me.

I waited one week and decided to join the army.

When I left Windsor for basic training in Chatham, I gave the following statement to the Windsor Star: "I realize that Hitler is the greatest menace in the world today. That's why I have joined the army — to do my part to crush fascism. I sincerely hope that the workers will keep up the fight against fascism in Canada so that, when the boys come back, they won't come back to the conditions they left."

I know the Windsor Star was sorry to see me go since, a year or two earlier, I was named in a special year-end edition as one of the ten top newsworthy people in Windsor, after tallying up all the lines of print used up in reporting my statements, my speeches, my arrests, my trials. Incidentally, the judges were not sorry to see me go. I was in court so often for a while that one judge in particular would greet me with a "Good morning, Jimmy," when he saw me in his dock.

I guess the brass were a little afraid of me as a security risk. I was to have left for overseas from Camp Borden along with all those with whom I had joined up and gone through Chatham. However, while we were lined up in the drill hall for the travelling warrants for our last leave, my name was called and taken off the draft. I was kept behind in Camp Borden, doing menial jobs. This condition went on for months until I was notified while on leave in Windsor that I was chosen as the army's representative to speak in a Victory Loan drive. I think Alex Parent was behind the move.

It may be of interest to note that a number of the communists in the European cells in Windsor were immediately commissioned as officers — majors and captains — and dropped into occupied Europe. When the war was over, however, those who survived were reduced to non-coms again.

There is no point in going into my wartime experiences, except to say that I had the good fortune to stay in touch with the communist movement while I was in my native Scotland.

While I was away, the Windsor autoworkers did keep up the fight. On January 15, 1942, Ford finally signed a contract with Local 200, recognizing Local 200 as sole bargaining agent for the autoworkers. It wasn't a great contract. On the other hand, the new local didn't yet have the full support of all the workers.

On April 20, Motor Products recognized Local 195 as sole bargaining agent for its 300 workers after a strike

and a threatened united action by the unanimous vote of 5,000 Local 195 members at a mass meeting.

That same year, 1942, Local 195 won votes for certification at nine out of ten feeder plants.

Best of all, Local 195 finally made Chrysler bite the dust. On May 28, 1942, in a Labour Dept. — supervised vote, 2,856 voted for the union and only 797 against. On Sept 1, an agreement was signed.

Despite the fact that the Dominion government wanted no labour strike during the war and made regulations that facilitated unionization, the company bosses did not change. At Ford, the Gestapo still tyrannized the workers. The 1942 contract came up for re-negotiation in April 1944. When Ford suspended some shop stewards, however, they got a surprise. All of the workers, members of the new Local 200, walked out. George Burt immediately criticized the action. This was not surprising, since the Communist Party gave its cue to George in taking out a large ad in the Windsor Star condemning the strike. Once the Soviet Union was attacked, communist policy in the trade unions was to prevent strikes and increase production. There is no doubt that this policy undermined the support of the Party among the workers.

A near General Strike

Once the war ended, the Party's policy reversed. Burt appealed for help against Ford to the Canadian Congress of Labour. The CCL executive was against the calling of a strike at Ford. Burt also appealed to the UAW International Board, under R.J. Thomas, for authorization to call out all the UAW plants in Windsor or to call a general strike in Windsor. He was turned down flat. Alex Parent, now President of Local 195 and spokesman for the joint policy committee of all the UAW locals in Windsor, spoke out for a general strike.

On September 12, 1945, the Ford workers walked out. Neither the CCL nor R.J. Thomas would authorize a general strike. On November 1, Ford and the Insurance Underwriters advised the Ontario government that, unless maintenance men were permitted to work in Ford's powerhouse, severe damage would result. Immediately, RCMP and OPP constables were rushed into Windsor to reinforce the Windsor cops. The workers, under the leadership of our Unity Group, were more than prepared for them. Almost every union member and supporter in Windsor drove into the core of Windsor and parked their cars bumper to bumper in the streets in a twenty-block radius around the plant and went home. The city was paralyzed. No cops could even approach the picket line. And, to top it all off, the Chrysler membership of Local 195, all 8,500, walked out in sympathy with their

brothers at Ford. The joint policy committee under Alex Parent sent out telegrams to hundreds of CCL locals across Canada calling for a one-day general strike. Despite the fact that the mood of the workers was angry, as is always the case after realizing that they had sacrificed themselves for a bosses's war, the CCL executive prevented what would have been, and would still be, the first nationwide general strike in Canada.

The UAW International Board, under Addes' direction, tried to get the workers to return to work in favour of arbitration. The left wing showed strongly at the membership meeting and the workers voted down the scabby proposal. Tom MacLean then assistant Canadian Director, was one of those who called for defeating the motion. Two weeks later, on December 18, however, after 100 days of strike, the workers passed the same motion. They returned to work.

Justice Ivan Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada was appointed arbitrator. His report held mixed blessings. On the one hand, Ford, which had hoped to smash the union, destroy the wartime gains, and return to Depression ways, was dealt a severe reverse. The "Rand Formula" provided for union dues checkoff but voluntary union membership. The Formula was heralded as a breakthrough by the CCL executive. They made the attainment of it the goal of every one of the numerous big post-war strikes that followed.

In my opinion, while the victory at Ford provided for union security, which was uppermost in the minds of the auto workers at that time, the Rand Formula was one of the worst possible tricks to which the labour movement could have fallen prey. In the first place, the trade union movement should have fought for the closed shop, as we had at Kelsey Wheel before the first contract was signed in 1946. You will remember that the Kelsey workers had a dim view of anyone who refused to join the union. They rolled them out in a wheelbarrow and dumped them on the scrapheap. A closed shop, as is the practice in the building trades, is the strongest form of union. There are no scabs in a closed shop, since they get thrown out of the union and can't get work.

Secondly, and just as important, the dues checkoff, as provided in the Rand Formula, undermined the stewards system with the revenues rolling in automatically every month.

Previous to Rand, the stewards had to go round every payday and collect the dues. The union and the stewards had to be doing a good job to get those dues. Not so today. The Rand Formula turned the unions into big businesses.

Back From the War

Black-Balled in Auto

When I returned from overseas service, my wife and children met me at London, Ontario. The four of us walked away from the railroad station to a nearby hotel where we reserved a room to wait for the through train to Windsor. If I were to be asked what was the most exciting moment in my life, I would reply, when I saw my family on the crowded platform looking expectantly for me and the warm "welcome home" expressions on their faces. When I returned to London a few weeks later to be officially discharged, my old friend Charlie Hays, who happened to be attached to the demobilization centre, was the one to document me back to civilian life. What a relief it was to get home and throw everything military into the garbage can where it rightly belonged!

After several weeks of just loafing around, I started to think about getting a job. I applied at Canadian Automotive Trim, a UAW plant. To my surprise the personnel manager was a former member of the GM unit of Local 195, Charles Farrell. Charlie shook hands. His facial expression was as warm and friendly as the handshake. He had me sign an application, which he said was routine.

I started the next week. It was heart-warming to be back in a factory again. I was assigned to a job on the assembly line. The foreman mentioned to me that I caught on very quickly. After I had worked a week, naively I decided it was time to get re-instated into Local 195 by handing in my withdrawal card, issued when I entered military service. I cannot recall what month I started work but I do recall that Catholic Action was in full control of Local 195.

On the Monday morning after being re-instated in the union, I felt a tap on the shoulder. It was my boss to tell me that several men were being laid off and that I was one of them. I was later told by a friend that the other men were rehired several days later. Under the circumstances, I should have waited until I had passed my probation in the plant. I tried Ford and was almost hired. I passed the physical and other tests. I was given a Ford badge and the department to which I was to report. While waiting for final instructions, the girl I had fired from the regional office for rolling into work drunk and in party dresses passed by and recognized me. Shortly afterwards, I was ushered into the office of the chief of personnel. He shook hands, then proceeded to tell me it was more than his own job was worth to hire me. He voiced his regrets and quickly showed me the way out.

Perhaps it might be well to make known that I was anxious to get back into the action at Local 195. Upon

being re-instated, I was put in charge of the Education Committee. I decided then to run for the office of vice-president.

Catholic Action was running Bill McDonald for vice-president. Like Watson, he was a total stranger to me, having done his dirty work while I was overseas. The left wing was running Mike Kennedy, an open communist, who had been elected alderman to the Windsor City Council. The left wing felt his status would enhance his chances of election as vice-president.

I was approached by the Communist Party through Alex Parent, who was running for re-election as president, to ask me not to run. He explained that I would split the left-wing vote and get McDonald elected. I argued with Alex that Mike Kennedy could not possibly be elected and that, in fact, my information was that the whole left-wing slate could very well fall on the issue of a communist candidate. I would have applauded had Kennedy been a communist of the calibre of Bill Walsh or Dick Steele. But he wasn't. In fact, he had a shady reputation previously as a runner for a bootlegger. He was no match for Watson who subtly made it appear that anyone who opposed Catholic Action was, by definition, a "godless agent of Moscow" or a fellow-traveller.

On the other hand, my personal prestige was at its zenith. Not only could I stand on my pre-war record as an organizer but I was also a veteran and a spokesman for the Victory Loans. Nonetheless, I did not run.

The Watson Catholic Action group swept their full slate into office, including Wilfred Blackburn, who scabbed on both strikes at Walker Metal. They could have run donkeys and had them elected. Men and women came to vote at the Hall who had never seen it before. While standing half a block from the Hall, I was asked by passers-by, "Where is the union headquarters?"

I asked them if they were members, to which they replied, "Yes, but I have never been to any meetings."

"I guess the priest forgot to give you the street number," I observed.

Several asked, "Are you Catholic too?"

"Yes," I replied, "but the priest wrote '42 Chatham Street East' on a letter which the church mailed to us."

Father Garvey had done a commendable organizational job.

I was so bitter I just left Windsor for two weeks.

At about the same time we took a beating in

Windsor, the same thing occurred at international headquarters. According to George Burt, in the 1946 elections, R.J. Thomas was re-elected, with unity getting 18 board members while Reuther got only six. The next year, the situation was exactly reversed.

When Reuther and his group took over the International Executive Board, "The John Anderson", president of Local 155, went over to management's side, as did Dick Frankenstein. George F. Addes quit the union altogether and opened a bar somewhere in Detroit. Others, like Dick Leonard and R.J. Thomas, were appointed to staff jobs in other CIO unions.

I am quite sure that, if Addes had taken over the presidency at Cleveland instead of Thomas, the Unity Group would have survived. Thomas was no match for Reuther who, it must be said, knew where he was going and had no scruples about anyone who might get in the way. Unfortunately, there were many on the casualty list who could not open a bar or get a job with management. George F. Addes did a great disservice to the secondary leadership of the union who had given him their loyalty and support. His action was the fatal blow for the Unity Group.

Clearly, here is the reason that communist leaders must come from the working class. Those who come from the middle class will often retreat there when the going gets tough.

Reuther, until his unfortunate end, had only a few hard-line communists, like Nat Ganley, with whom to deal. His strength on the Executive Board was absolute. His disorganized opposition had little chance. The Communist Party as an important influence in the UAW was destroyed forever.

When Addes threw in the towel, George Burt joined the Reuther majority with reluctance, I think. But George had become a master at making the correct move at the correct time to come out of the wreck unscathed.

While a guest of Local 27, London, I had the good fortune to meet George again. I pointedly asked him why he had appointed two scabs at that time to the regional staff. He answered by first telling me that he was elected that year by only a few votes. He continued explaining that it was Reuther who ordered the removal of left-wingers Harry Rowe as Publicity

Director, Drummond Wren as Educational Director, and, I believe, Paul Siren as International Rep. In their places, Burt appointed Catholic Action CCF'ers Gerry Hartford, Bill McDonald, and Scab Wilfred Blackburn to the respective positions.

I decided not to pay the rent from the \$32 a week unemployed veterans were getting. Before a veteran's family could get a wartime house, the City of Windsor had to sign a lease with Central Mortgage and Housing. This arrangement meant that if I didn't pay the rent, the City did.

I ran up a rent arrears bill over \$500 at \$25 a month. The City solicitor had me summoned before a judge in his office at the County Court Building in Sandwich, now part of Windsor.

I told the judge I was willing to work at any job, but no one would hire me by reason of being a former union organizer, a victim of the infamous blacklist. I told him also that I was receiving \$32 a week, which barely covered the bills for food, clothing, and coal to heat the house in question.

"What would you do, sir, under the same circumstances?" I asked the judge.

He replied, "I'd feed my wife and children, buy clothes for them and coal to keep them warm." Then he turned around, facing the solicitor, and said, "This is a tough case. The man is willing to work. His allowance from the government, by reason of military service, does not adequately meet the needs of his family. I find it difficult to do anything other than to advise you that gainful employment is the answer to this whole question."

The city solicitor seemed embarrassed. He put his papers in his briefcase. We both left. Finally, Alderman Bill Riggs made a motion at a City Council meeting to write off the \$500.

Shortly afterwards, I left Windsor for good.

I spent the many years since then organizing for many different unions in various capacities. I hope to have the opportunity to write up some of these experiences in the future.

One experience, however, sticks in my mind. Just after the War, I was offered a staff job by CCFer's in the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union, a CIO union. The condition was that I denounce the Communist Party when told to do so. I refused.



UAW members marched from Detroit to Windsor to show their support of the Ford of Canada strikers.

Fighting Conclusion: Join CPL!

"We Outnumber Them Thousands to One"

I would be remiss if I were to conclude without making known that I am indebted to Ken Stone, a member of the Canadian Party of Labour, who edited all of these episodes presented for your information in *The Worker*. Many of the episodes I wrote in longhand. Others were given to him orally by cassette. I am sure that the reader will agree with me when I say, "Ken, you did an excellent job."

I would also like to mention the names of two young men killed fighting fascism in Spain who encouraged my early efforts to organize at Kelsey Wheel. They are Jimmy Cochrane of Windsor and Wilfred LeBlanc of Tecumseh, Ontario, who were front-liners whether it was in demonstrations called by the Communist Party at the welfare office, preventing evictions of workers from their houses, or fighting Franco. I salute as well the memory of my brother, Matthew Napier, Royal Canadian Air Force, killed in action in 1942, who helped me with the "Chrysler Spark". I shall be ever mindful of their contribution.

It is now 1975. Age is beginning to make itself felt. But, unlike a lot of old trade union militants and communists, I have not mellowed or softened with the passing years. The older I get, the more impatient I am to see the end of the capitalist system and the rise of world socialism.

Conditions now are as bad, if not worse, than those that brought about the need for industrial organization. Thousands upon thousands are leaving the work force, not by choice, but rather by the breakdown of the capitalist system, the system that produces only when motivated by the dollar sign. Production to meet the needs of working people has no place in the capitalists' plan.

The working men and women 40 years old and older have experienced relatively full employment since World War II and have watched, perhaps with eyes that do not observe what they see, the declining work force due to automation and speedup.

The first meeting I attended of the left-wing caucus in 1946 I observed a new face. It was Charlie Brooks who was a militant at that time and who is now president of Local 444 at Chrysler. Burt and Tom MacLean were present. Burt was being hard-pressed by Catholic Action and came to our meeting for support.

The question of youth was raised by me and was supported by Brooks. The situation was that we had helped our fathers' generation by protecting their seniority rights. Yet, what about youth? By protecting seniority, we were actually discriminating against young workers. At that time, I voiced what was the

new cry of the left wing in the UAW — 32 for 40, thirty-two hours work for forty hours pay. The strength of the left wing forced even Reuther to popularize this slogan for a while until he got rid of us.

To conclude this account of my experiences in the UAW may I take this opportunity to call on the youth of all nationalities, particularly the black and white youth of this continent, to merge their efforts to wage a successful struggle against industrial and political dictatorship. There has never been in the last 30 years a more opportune time for united action. We have wasted a great deal of time and energy sniping at each other. Let us use the voltage we have generated against each other to fight the common enemy. Let us unite our forces against fascist dictatorship, which has dictated everything we have done for a long time.

Hundreds of thousands of young people of all races are walking the streets looking for jobs. And there are none. The wheels of industry turn only when the masters give the command. Houses are built when the masters give the command. Food is grown and processed when the masters give the command. It cannot be said that the working people are not aware that the masters, who are in the driver's seat, are but a small minority. We outnumber them thousands to one. Thousands to one, we have the strength to join forces against them, simply by uniting behind a common organization, the Canadian Party of Labour. We owe it to ourselves and our children to revolt, to take back from the hijackers what they have stolen from us.

First, we must rebuild the unions with CPL leadership and by popularizing "30 FOR 40", thirty hours work for forty hours pay. Under capitalism, the shorter work week with higher pay is the ONLY way to fight unemployment. It is the single most efficient manner in which to take back from the hijackers a serious piece of the surplus value that they reap from every hour of our labour. Best of all, winning the fight for 30 FOR 40, because it is so serious for the capitalists, necessitates the unity of the whole working class. This kind of unity moves us one step closer to revolution.

There will be those who will complain that the Canadian Party of Labour is too small to undertake this momentous task. Take it from me: all movements start small. The UAW in Canada began with six men sitting around my kitchen table in Windsor in 1936. Now the UAW in Canada can count tens of thousands of members.

I began these memories of building the UAW by describing the series of events that led to a solemn

promise to myself, made the morning of my daughter's birth, 40 years ago. The solemn declaration I made was that I would work with any organization whose purpose was to eliminate all the indignities to which working people are subject. I described through the events in successive episodes how I came to the realization that this end could only be achieved by replacing capitalism with socialism.

I still honour my vow. I have seen and observed the Canadian Party of Labour in action for the few years since its birth. This party is vibrating with energy. I attend their meetings, and I see myself 40 years ago. I see in attendance, youth, young fathers and mothers, very much concerned about what their future holds for their children.

Don't hide politics

I found to my surprise that there are today a number of parties in Canada that call themselves communist. To my way of thinking, the CPL is the only one whose policies will lead to unity of the workers and to success. The policies of the CPL are the same uncompromising methods we used so successfully in building the CIO unions. Yet, the Canadian Party of Labour believes in not hiding its politics. We know from experience now that hiding communist politics is a losing strategy. Such a strategy may bring dramatic initial successes but, because no base has been established to fight anti-communism which the bosses spread through agencies like the NDP and the

Catholic Church, the legs can be cut from under those gains and from the party that achieved them.

Openly putting forth communist politics in the struggle to dump the right-wingers that run all of our unions today will be a hard, hard task. Specific conditions will dictate how this aim can be achieved in each plant and union. But we know that, as we proceed along this path, we may proceed more slowly, yet more surely. In any case, difficulty is not something that should come unexpected to a communist. From personal experience, I can say that there is nothing harder than living as a radical in a bourgeois society.

To my fellow workers who have persevered thus far in reading my story, let say that I have enjoyed sharing these memories. Now, let me take this opportunity to advise you what to do. Do what I have done. JOIN THE CANADIAN PARTY OF LABOUR. Make your decision today. When you have made the decision, get your fellow workers to join. Even then, you will still not have done enough. Get your neighbour to join too.

The future of all the workers of the world demands your active participation. We workers have created all new things of value in the world. The time is now ripe to make them ours.

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM! POWER TO THE WORKERS!

Fraternally,
Jimmy Napier.

THE FORD WORKER

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ORGANIZE FOR OUR DEMANDS

With the contract coming up in the fall of this year, auto-

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