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**THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CANADIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT FROM
INTERNATIONAL TO NATIONAL UNION DOMINANCE:
Tracing the Roots of Breakaways**

by

Lenore Duff

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

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Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
November 1997

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the dramatic shift from international to national union dominance in Canada. Within this context, this analysis explores breakaway activity, and discusses the broader significance of this phenomenon in relation to the labour movement in Canada. It identifies factors critical to the development of international unions, and factors related to their decline, both in Canada as reflected in breakaways, and in the United States as reflected in the general decline of the labour movement, and concludes that contextual factors and individual responses have been central to this process. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates existing distinctive elements of the Canadian labour movement, and suggests that these became more apparent over time. It identifies changes that occurred in objective and subjective conditions that led to the expression of this distinctiveness in a series of breakaways that contributed to the 'Canadianization', if not the dramatic differentiation, of the labour movement in Canada.

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CHAPTER 1

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Introduction

In 1996, some 34 percent of the non-agricultural paid labour force in Canada was unionized. This representation can be broadly divided into two groups; those represented by national unions and those represented by international unions¹. Statistics Canada further divides the national unions into government unions and non-government unions. Union representation has remained relatively stable in Canada, ranging between 32 and 38 per cent over the past three decades. This stability, however, masks dramatic changes that have occurred in the character of the labour movement.

Historically, the majority of the unionized workers in Canada were represented by international unions. Since around 1965, however, a steady, relative decline in representation by international unions has occurred, with recent figures released by Statistics Canada revealing that in 1994, national unions represented 56 per cent of Canadian workers while international unions accounted for 30 per cent. The remaining 14 per cent were unionized employees of provincial and federal governments. Labour

¹ The term international union refers to unions with membership in both Canada and the United States. Although more accurately described as binational unions, the term international union has typically been used to describe unions operating in Canada and the United States and will be used throughout this paper.

Canada's (now Human Resources Development Canada) most recent statistics indicate that in 1996, national union membership accounted for 66 percent of union members in Canada.

While this trend towards 'Canadianization' developed slowly over the entire post war period, a distinct acceleration of the process began in the 1960's, such that between 1970 and 1990, the proportional representation accounted for by international and national unions had almost completely reversed. Labour Canada statistics indicate that in 1970, international unions accounted for 63 per cent of union members, while national unions represented 35 per cent of union members. By 1990, international union membership had fallen to 32 per cent, with national union representation increasing to 64 per cent². This brief statistical sketch underscores a fundamental change that occurred in the character of the Canadian labour movement -- one that bears closer examination.

Broadly speaking, there are three important factors that account for the relative decline in international union strength in Canada over this period: 1) the explosive growth in public sector unionization, 2) the loss of traditional international union jobs, particularly in the primary and manufacturing sectors that resulted from deindustrialization and the transition to a 'post-industrial' economy, and 3) breakaways of the Canadian membership of international unions.

² The remaining 4% includes directly chartered unions and independent local organizations.

The first of these factors is relatively straight forward. Public sector workers gained the right to unionize and bargain collectively in the 1960s (with the exception of Saskatchewan which did not exclude public sector workers from coverage when industrial relations legislation was enacted in 1944). Public sector workers are overwhelmingly represented by national unions, either by choice, or as in the case of Quebec, by necessity³. Clearly, an expanding public sector with newly acquired rights to organize made a significant contribution to the relative growth in national union membership. According to Kumar (1986:15), the 1970's represented the most significant phase of expansion in union organization since the 1940's, and nearly one-half of the membership growth was due to organization of public sector employees made possible by legislative changes.

The loss of jobs that began in the 1970s in the primary and manufacturing sectors, two areas of traditional international union strength, also played a role in the relative decline of international unions. The Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act (CALURA 1992:8) reported that in 1966, 39.2 per cent of all union members were employed in manufacturing, and by 1992 that proportion had fallen to 16.0 per cent. In contrast, the services sector accounted for 37.2 per cent of unionized employment in 1992, over four times its share (9%) in 1966. Assessing the impact of this decline, however, is

³ Legislation governing public sector collective bargaining in Quebec restricts union membership to unions with no political affiliation. Public sector unions in Quebec were prevented from affiliating with the Fédération des travailleurs du Québec (FTQ) because of its prior affiliation with the New Democratic Party (NDP) through the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). Public sector unions in Quebec are affiliated with the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN).

complicated. It is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty to what extent this loss of membership contributed to the actual decline in international unions in Canada, or to establish to what extent these effects are cyclical or structural. Linking these effects to unionization rates, other than at the most general level of analysis, is all but impossible and it is not of direct interest to this study. Suffice it to say that the significant decline in these industries, particularly through the 1980s, played some role in the relative decline of international union membership in Canada.

The third important factor accounting for the relative decline in international unions in Canada is breakaways of the Canadian membership of international unions to form new Canadian unions, or join existing Canadian unions. CALURA acknowledged, in 1988, that "over the last three years, 45% of the membership gains of national unions resulted from the shift of members from international unions" (CALURA 1988:13). This trend, however had started nearly two decades before. Unlike the other two factors, it is precisely because the occurrence of breakaways demonstrates a direct link between the decline in international union membership and the growth in national union membership, that the phenomenon is important. It is with this factor that this analysis is primarily concerned.

Breakaways are an interesting phenomenon in that they reveal something about unionization that goes beyond the level of whether individuals decide to, or are permitted to, join a union or not. In other words, they reveal something that examining union

density rates, the most common form of measurement with respect to union membership. cannot. The other two factors that have contributed to the relative decline of international unions in Canada have completely different origins and outcomes. The mass organization of public sector workers in the 1960s and 1970s, moved workers from a non-unionized environment to a unionized one and the spectacular growth might best be attributed to pent-up demand. Those members of international unions who lost their jobs due to the economic restructuring and deindustrialization that occurred throughout the 1970s and 1980s were essentially moved out of unionized employment. Breakaways, on the other hand, are a move from one unionized environment to another unionized environment that is presumably different in some meaningful way. There is no acceptance, rejection, or loss of unionization involved. Breakaways should, therefore, say something about the nature of unionization and the character of unions, and examining the phenomenon will illuminate some of the differences that exist between international and national forms of unionization.

If we assume, then, that the occurrence of breakaways is evidence that fundamental differences exist between the two labour movements, it is particularly intriguing that while quite an impressive number of breakaways have been documented over an approximate 20 year span between 1970 and 1990, examinations of this topic have been limited, both in terms of quantity and substance.

As yet, there has been little effort to examine these events in a systematic way. Early

analyses of breakaways (which are discussed in Chapter 4) have proven to be largely unsuccessful in their attempts to account for the occurrence, explain the apparent contradictions, or predict the future direction of this process. Later analyses, these almost entirely concerned with the breakaway of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), have provided a more thorough examination of a particular instance of this phenomenon and, perhaps more importantly, make available a wealth of information on the events surrounding a breakaway, that unfortunately is not available with respect to earlier occurrences.

What is evident from the types of analyses of this phenomenon undertaken thus far is that narrow economic or historical treatments of the process have proven to be less than successful both in terms of accounting for the phenomenon and especially in predicting future occurrences. Perhaps this suggests that there is no general theoretical proposition that is likely to account for breakaways and that more can be learned about the process from revisiting this topic with a view to undertaking a broad examination of these incidents, paying particular attention to the context within which they occurred and the factors associated with their occurrence. Clearly, this phenomenon, like all sociological phenomena, comprises a complex interplay of factors and individual responses to these factors. Thus, breakaways occur in the context of a broad array of social and economic factors that include the prevailing political culture, Canada's relationship with the U.S., nationalism, economic conditions, union strength and leadership and these events were influenced by these factors to a greater or lesser degree.

As noted above, the study of breakaways will be the central theme of this thesis. This analysis undertakes a broad systematic examination of the phenomenon from 1970, when the first incidents occurred, through 1990 when the balance had swung, and the process of "Canadianization" of the labour movement was essentially complete. It assesses the early analyses of the phenomenon, and along with the more recent material, examines when and under what circumstances breakaways occurred, and identifies the factors associated with these events.

This thesis is primarily a library thesis. Information was gathered from a variety of published sources, except for informal conversations with a couple of individuals involved in the labour movement during the period in which some of these events occurred. My interest in this topic is a long-standing one. More specifically, the events surrounding the breakaway of the Canadian Paperworkers Union in 1974, unfolded in my community, my neighbourhood, and indeed my household. The ensuing lengthy strike endured by the fledgling, and ill-financed, independent Canadian union in 1976, demonstrated, that despite the hardship, support for independence was strong. Subsequent developments within the labour movement in Canada suggested that the events at one paper mill in Cornwall, Ontario, were part of a pattern that might be better understood situated within a broader socio-economic context that would, perhaps, reveal common factors associated with the occurrence of breakaways. This thesis is an attempt to undertake a sociological analysis of events that not only had a dramatic and profound effect on the lives of those involved in Cornwall in 1974, but, in the broader context,

would contribute to profound and enduring change in the direction and character of the labour movement in Canada.

Overview

An assessment of breakaways, necessarily involves a comparative analysis of the Canadian and American labour movements and consideration of their respective origins, development and, to a lesser extent, future prospects. To this end, Chapter 2 presents an examination of the historical development of the labour movement in Canada. Particular attention is paid to the role of international unions vis à vis this development.

International unions, are a structure unique to Canada and they have played an important formative role in the development of the Canadian labour movement. This chapter examines the historical context within which the labour movement in Canada developed, beginning in the early 1800s. It also examines the historical circumstances that are associated with the occurrence of breakaways that began at the end of the 1960s. If breakaways are indeed a rejection of international (American) unions in favour of national (Canadian) unions, it is important to understand both what gave rise to international unions and what led to their decline.

Chapter 3 presents a statistical picture of the developments that have occurred with respect to unions in Canada and the United States. From its inception, the labour

movement in Canada has comprised both international and national unions and, over the years, international unions have remained a dominant feature of the industrial relations system in Canada. More recently, however, statistics reveal the dramatic change that occurred between 1970 and 1990 when the proportions have reversed such that national unions now predominate.

A labour relations system in Canada, born of similar circumstances to that of the American's, with characteristics so similar to one another that they were often treated as one entity, has, in a particular twenty year period, diverged significantly and this pattern is continuing. Current statistical comparisons reveal striking variations in union density between Canada and the United States. In Canada, union density has remained relatively stable at around 34 per cent. In the United States, on the other hand, density has fallen precipitously to below 15 per cent. Chapter 3 develops a statistical picture of the growth and dynamics of unionization in Canada and examines density rates, national/international representation rates, and breakaway activity.

Assessing the influence of international unions on the labour movement in Canada has been the subject of some debate. Chapter 4 presents a review of the literature that situates the theoretical treatment of this topic broadly divided into three distinct perspectives. In the first, unions in the two countries are generally viewed as homogenous. This perspective describes the people, culture, labour markets, and economies as essentially similar. Thus the development of international unions is viewed as quite natural and

generally positive or, at worst, neutral. This 'historical deterministic' view would conclude that divergence from this course would require some significant incentive or event.

The opposing 'economic determinist' view suggests that international unions were imposed on Canada in a manner similar to the domination by American corporate interests of the Canadian economy. Characteristics of international unions are viewed as distinctly American, and they are considered a vehicle for the transmission of wage-conscious 'business' unionism, and organizational fragmentation into Canada where it would not have otherwise existed. This perspective concludes that in the absence of this generally negative influence, a fundamentally different, more socially oriented, labour movement would have developed in Canada.

The third, and most recent, treatment of the developments in the labour movement in Canada originates with industrial relations analysts. These analyses concentrate on examining the recent and striking divergence in Canada-U.S. union density rates and more particularly the failure of the labour movement in the U.S. Divergence between the two labour movements are attributed to differences manifested in a series of environmental factors that include legislation, labour board decisions, political considerations, organizing activity, and demand for unionization. These analyses remain neutral with respect to state and class and seek only to identify and formulate economic models that account for some percentage of the recent density divergence.

Thus, a variety of theories exist to explain the development and growth of the Canadian labour movement. Chapter 4 situates the discussion within a theoretical framework and provides a critical assessment of the treatment of the breakaway phenomenon.

Whereas Chapter 2 examines the historical development of unions in Canada and describes the circumstances that gave rise to international unions, Chapter 5 identifies and examines the factors associated with breakaways. Underlying contextual factors that distinguish the two labour movements are discussed and specific conditions that contributed to actual breakaways are considered.

Apart from the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) split from the international in 1985, there has been little analysis of breakaways. Moreover, very little documentation exists with respect to earlier breakaways such that we know little about why and how they happened. In light of this, Chapter 5 identifies and assesses the relative influence of factors or conditions that are associated with breakaways including, political culture, nationalism and relative economic and legislative advantage. This chapter goes on to consider two related issues: 1) the relationship between breakaways and a faltering American labour movement and, 2) what aspects of international unionism were being rejected by breakaways and whether breakaways have contributed to the emergence of a labour movement in Canada that is materially different from that which existed when international unions were dominant in Canada.

Finally, breakaways have played a largely neglected role in defining the Canadian labour movement as a separate entity. In order to understand the processes now under way, it is important to identify and assess those factors that gave rise to the development of a system of international unionism as in Chapter 2, and those factors that subsequently led to its decline. Chapter 5 examines breakaways, identifies factors associated with their occurrence, and assess the impact of these developments on the Canadian labour movement.

While the divergence between the labour movements in Canada and the United States continues to receive considerable attention in industrial relations literature, little effort has been directed towards sociological analyses of developments in the labour movement in Canada. Chapter 6 will synthesize an explanation for the trend away from representation by international unions to representation by national unions and comments on what this type of assessment reveals with respect to the future potential and direction of the labour movement in Canada. It also makes suggestions regarding further research that might better illuminate the processes at work.

This thesis begins with a comparative analysis of the labour movements in the two countries and examines the rise and fall of international unions. At the same time, it also reveals the existence of a Canadian labour movement as distinct from that of an American or international labour movement. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates the distinctive elements of the Canadian labour movement that existed historically and identifies the

specific objective and subjective conditions that led to the expression of this distinctiveness in the form of a series of breakaways that ultimately contributed to the 'Canadianization', if not the differentiation, of the labour movement in this country.

CHAPTER 2

LABOUR MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Early Organization of the Unions in Canada

Worker organizations in Canada began in the early part of the nineteenth century with early craft-based unions that included, shoe makers, printers, tailors, and carpenters. Many early unions were branches of British unions and reflected their socialist origins. Nonetheless, their principal objective was to protect their craft from lower-wage competition.

By the mid-1800s American unions were also organizing iron workers, cigar makers, coopers, shoemakers and transportation workers in Canada. At the same time Canadian unions were established in shipbuilding trades, bricklayers, bakers and tailors.

While American unionists were interested in preventing low-wage competition north of the border, they were also interested in creating transnational organizations to oppose employers operating in both countries. In general, political boundaries were of little significance before the turn of the century. Pentland (1979:19) suggests that:

Before 1900 there was virtually unrestricted movement across the Canada-United States border, so that the two countries in effect constituted a single labour market. It was therefore natural that many Canadian union locals should affiliate with the more numerous locals of the same trade in the United States to produce "international unions".

Early legislation treated unions much the same way in Canada and Great Britain. Prior to Confederation, trade unions were considered criminal conspiracies in restraint of trade. The Canadian Trade Unions Act and the Canadian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1872 were the legislative developments that first legitimated unionization. The Acts followed similar legislation enacted in Britain in 1871, and were in response to a series of labour confrontations and protests. Employee organizations that registered under the provisions of the Canada Trade Unions Act were no longer liable for prosecution on grounds of criminal conspiracy and collective agreements were no longer invalidated because they minimized or prevented competition in the marketplace.

Organizing activities and industrial development moved in tandem through the latter half of the 19th century with most of the growth concentrated in foreign-based unions. "By 1887, the most influential labour organizations were the American-based unions of typographers, bricklayers, iron moulders, and cigar makers; the American brotherhood of carpenters; and the British-based Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners" (Smucker, 1980:183).⁴

The Knights of Labour, an American-based union dedicated to the transformation of

⁴ Historical material in this chapter is drawn from a number of sources, for a brief overview of the history of the labour movement in Canada see Smucker (1980). Other historical material was derived from Logan (1948) and Jamieson (1968). For material on the history of the labour movement in Quebec see Smucker (1980) and Panitch (1993).

capitalism and the formation of a cooperative society, made considerable progress in organizing workers in both the U.S. and Canada, proving particularly successful in Quebec. The Knights of Labour met with considerable opposition from both employers and craft-based unions, due to their socially-oriented philosophy of organization, and were reduced to an inconsequential force by the turn of the century.

The Trades and Labour Congress/The American Federation of Labour

The first national coordinating body in Canada, known as the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC), was formed in 1886. It had two principal objectives; to advocate for favourable legislation, and to mediate internal conflict among affiliated unions.

Most TLC locals were connected to the newly formed American Federation of Labour (AFL), founded in the same year, through existing ties with the American unions.

American labour had suffered through a divisive period at the end of the 19th Century that saw the more socially-oriented form of unionism essentially defeated by internal struggles between Socialist and Communist parties in America. Moreover, Pentland suggests that the aftermath of the Civil War produced a type of Social Darwinism and concomitant hostility towards state intervention on behalf of the common welfare.

Individualism, rather than class identity grounded in a feudal past, was the dominant social reality, and this was distinctly reflected in the philosophical position of the AFL.

Whatever the precise origins, the essential point is that there was a

dominant labour movement that went off in a different direction from the movements of Britain, of Canada, or, indeed, of any other country in the world. In particular, here was a unionism that would neither organize the army of non-craft wage earners itself, nor let anyone else do it (Pentland:16).

Thus, there would be no accommodation sought between the existing craft unions and emerging industrial unions in the United States, as had occurred in Britain.

Americans had clearly indicated their discomfort with the potential influence of European colonization or political culture on the U.S. in 1823 with the Monroe doctrine. Manifest destiny ideology that emerged in the mid-1800s took this philosophy further granting divine sanction for U.S. territorial expansion in the 'Americas'. Americans not only viewed the organization of their society as fundamentally different (and of course superior), but came to believe that it was their duty to expand this 'social experiment' throughout the Americas.

This political context clearly influenced the development of the dominant form of unionism in the United States. Samuel Gompers, often identified as the leading proponent of 'business unionism', would lead the AFL for some 38 years, from 1886 to 1924. His philosophical position was no doubt reinforced by a number of spectacular failures for American social unionism that included the Haymarket Square battle, the execution of leaders of the Black International in Chicago in 1886, the failure of the strike against the Pullman Palace Car Company in 1894, the persecution of the Wobblies, and

the disorganization and rapid decline of the Knights of Labour.

He was responsible for establishing and advocating the guiding philosophy of 'pure and simple unionism', and believed that labours' interests were best served if objectives were limited to immediate benefits for workers. Gomper's aim was to mould a nationwide organization of sufficient discipline and clarity of purpose to challenge the growing industrial combines (Babcock 1974: 211). Continentalist ideology was gaining broad acceptance at this time, and the growth of American organizations to a continental scope was increasingly seen as inevitable and even desirable (Babcock: 212).

From its inception, there existed an uneasy relationship between the TLC and the AFL. There would soon emerge conflicts in this relationship that continue to present day. Complaints regarding protectionist legislation and dues payment were an early and frequent occurrence. However, it was perhaps the underlying philosophical differences that would prove to be the most difficult to overcome.

The unifying strategy of the TLC, composed as it was of American affiliated unions, Canadian unions and assemblies of the Knights of Labour, was to seek improvement through political action and favourable legislation. The strategy of the AFL, on the other hand was to confront employers directly and to seek immediate economic benefits (Smucker:186).

The 1902 TLC convention in Berlin (Kitchener), Ontario is regarded by some as the pivotal event in the loss of autonomy for Canadian labour. The American affiliated unions controlling the majority, voted to oust the Knights of Labour, national unions

which represented the same crafts as international unions, and those unions that sought active political involvement, especially in alliance with the Socialist Party. This action solidified the American stance against the Knights of Labour and dual unionism, political action and particularly socialism and autonomous Canadian unions.

In the United States the socialists were marginalized early on. The American position of strength and wealth in relation to the Canadian labour movement allowed them to influence, if not define, the direction the nascent Canadian movement would take.

The Beginnings of Canadian Autonomy

"Controversies regarding the membership of Canadian workers in American-controlled unions have remained dominant throughout the history of the Canadian labour movement" (Smucker:187). The aftermath of the American action at the Berlin Convention was an immediate attempt to launch a Canadian national-based labour federation. This resulted in the formation of the National Trades and Labour Congress (whose name was changed in 1908 to the Canadian Federation of Labour (CFL)), which sought to protect members from both capital and international unionism. This was to be achieved through the pursuit of distinctive nationalist policies including support for higher tariffs, recognition by the Canadian government as the only legitimate Canadian congress of workers, rigid enforcement of the Alien Labour Law and a union label campaign (Logan 1948:376).

The propensity of the CFL to entice organized unions rather than organizing the unorganized, to advocate for favourable legislation as a means to further its aims rather than producing immediate benefit for workers, and the continued opposition of the AFL, resulted in significant decline by the mid-1920s. The vestiges of this organization joined the All Canadian Congress of Labour in 1927. Overall, attempts at developing a unique Canadian labour congress met with limited success in large part due to the defensive posture these organizations were forced to take.

The other significant cleavage with respect to the early development of unions in Canada was of a geographic nature. In addition to conflict regarding nationalist/continentalist perspectives and social/business unionism, an west-east element was about to surface. The TLC Convention in Quebec City in 1918 brought to light the conflicts between the Eastern provinces, where manufacturing was dominant and craft-based unions had existed for 50 years, and the more militant Western provinces, dominated by extractive industries and industrial-based organization. At its conclusion, unresolved issues led to the development of plans for a Western Canada Labour Conference, which was held in March, 1919. At this conference, the convention resolutions committee recommended the reorganization of labour along industrial lines and condemned capitalism, craft unionism, and lobbying tactics. It further proposed that members sever all ties with international unions, and produced a new labour organization to be called the One Big Union. Resolutions went even further to condemn the federal government's limitations on workers freedoms and register support for the Russian Bolshevik and German

Spartacist revolutions.

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, has been described as a reflection of general unrest among Western workers which was attributed to a number of causes including conscription, massive war-related profits, high inflation, high unemployment and falling wheat prices. The Western Canada Labour Conference had left little doubt that Western unionists were more radical. Moreover, with no craft-based tradition, their advocacy of industrial-based organization put them in direct conflict with the prevailing ideological foundations of North American trade unionism. "The (Gomperist) principles of the AFL and its Canadian affiliate, the TLC, contrasted sharply with the ideas held by Western Canada labour leaders" (Bercuson 1975:9).

The massive resistance to the initial success of the more radical wing of the labour movement in the West was a reaction that was undoubtedly influenced by the fears of Bolshevism sweeping the American West. "The announced intention to found a radical Marxist labour union, industrial or syndicalist in nature and sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Bolsheviks, provided the enemies of the strike with a focal point for their deepest fears" (Bercuson:13).

While the Winnipeg General Strike contributed to some initial membership growth, the One Big Union was unable to secure support in the East. While some feel that the strike enhanced the political position of labour, others, and perhaps the majority, felt that the

strike was a setback for labour generally. Bercuson (30) summarized this perspective with "much of the vitality of the labour movement, grown powerful and energetic during four years of war, was sapped in the grinding and hopeless struggle of the six-week confrontation at Winnipeg."

Yet another attempt at building a national structure was attempted with the founding of The All Canadian Congress of Labour (ACCL) in 1927, when leaders from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees were ousted from the TLC over charges of dual unionism. The leaders of this new organization held to a reformist philosophy, and were primarily concerned with the national identity of Canadian unions.

The aims of the new organization were to organize workers into autonomous bodies along industrial lines, to educate workers about the necessity to engage in political action, and to work for legislation that would bring immediate improvements for workers. The new congress supported existing national unions and embarked on an organizing campaign of its own (Smucker:193).

Many of the affiliated unions, however, ascribed to more radical policies and internal disaccord led to the demise of the ACCL in 1939.

Conflicts produced by the inherent contradictions manifest in international representation sparked numerous attempts to establish autonomous Canadian labour organizations and the relative success of these efforts is revealed by the fact that nearly half the organized workers in 1935 belonged to national unions. This was due, in large part, to the increased organization of semi- and unskilled workers, a sector of the labour force that tended to be

neglected by the TLC. It should be emphasised, however, that up to this point, unions represented a small minority of the workforce.

The Depression and the New Deal

The crisis sparked by the Depression in the U.S., caused a reassessment of labour's role among many influential economists and leaders in government and industry. The Depression starkly illustrated the inherent weakness in an economic system that was thought to be infallible and brought forward demands that action be taken to mediate the effects of the crisis. In 1935, one of the most significant events in labour history occurred, with the passage of the National Labour Relations Act (Wagner Act) in the United States. This legislation provided workers with the legal right to organize and bargain collectively.

It is difficult to overstate the effect of this legislation. President Roosevelt's encouragement, and the proactive framework that the Wagner Act provided, produced spectacular gains in union membership, particularly in organizing workers along industrial lines. Union density in the United States increased from 13.5 percent in 1935 to 21.2 per cent in 1939, to 30.4 per cent in 1945 (Troy 1986: 81.87).

Although hostility against organized labour continued to run strong in Canada throughout the 1930s, industrial-based organization benefited from the additional resources and

collaboration it attracted from the United States. While union membership in Canada increased by 37 percent between 1935 and 1938, finally surpassing the previous peak level of 1919, the fear of both Communism and agents of foreign domination, especially in the absence of supportive legislation, delayed the growth of industrial unions in Canada until near the end of WWII. Thus, the relative size, strength, and especially legal status of Canadian unions as a whole, lagged at least ten years behind the unions in the United States (Jamieson 1968: 259)

Still, the appeal of industrial unions was particularly strong where corporations were operating on both sides of the border and the importance of this development is referred to by Abella with respect to the 1937 strike at General Motors in Oshawa, as perhaps the most significant labour event of the past fifty years. Not only did it mark the birth of industrial unionism in Canada but, perhaps as important, it had a convulsive and lasting effect on the Canadian political scene (Abella 1976:93).

The Canadian labour movement was again affected by events south of the border when in 1936, philosophical differences led to the expulsion of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), along with its affiliated unions from the AFL, which in turn placed the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress in a difficult position. The ultimate separation of the CIO from the AFL in 1937 essentially forced the Canadians to follow suit in 1939. Craft-based international unions still held the majority position in the TLC and their philosophical position was derived from their American headquarters. Craft-

based unions continued to argue that increasing strength should be based on international affiliation by craft designations rather than by industry within Canada.

The Canadian affiliates of the CIO that were expelled, formed the Canadian Confederation of Labour in 1939. Two issues, however, would continue to generate considerable conflict: the issue of continuing affiliation of Communist-dominated unions (the United Electrical Workers and the United Auto Workers the two notable examples), and the issue of autonomous Canadian unions versus those with US affiliation (Smucker:198).

The Canadian workers' awareness of CIO successes in the auto plants south of the border, paved the way for the participation of the UAW in Oshawa in 1937 and the success of the Oshawa strike despite intense political opposition⁵, secured the place of industrial unionism in Canada. Likewise, the strike at Ford Windsor in 1945, brought about a similar debate regarding the role of the Communists in the union and the forceful reaction of the state. The conclusion of the strike however "proved to be the major turning point for Communist involvement in the Canadian UAW. The successful drive [by the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and other anti-Communists within the

⁵ The extreme opposition to the CIO organizing efforts at the Oshawa General Motors plant and the subsequent strike, was centred with the Premier of Ontario at that time, Mitchell Hepburn. While there were more general concerns regarding Communist and foreign influence from CIO unions entering Canada at that time, Hepburn's reaction to the Oshawa strike has been attributed instead to a concern for the protection of business interests throughout the province. For a more thorough discussion of the events in Oshawa in 1937, and the role of the federal government see "Oshawa 1937", in *On Strike* (Abella 1975:93-128).

labour movement] to push the Communists out of the union began with the settlement of the [Ford] dispute" (Moulton 1976:153).

Before WWII, the Canadian government's reaction to international unions, appeared to have more to do with opposition to unions generally than a reaction to their political orientation. Following WWII, however, the actions of the Communists in Europe, along with the anti-Communist hysteria that emerged in the U. S., and to a lesser extent in Canada, ensured victory for the moderate forces within the labour movement in Canada. Two notable examples of the Canadian government acting in favour of international unions over existing Canadian-based unions at that time involved the case of the United Steelworkers of America versus the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union and the Seafarers International Union versus the Canadian Seaman's Union.

Mine, Mill lost their battle for certification in Sudbury to the Steelworkers who were "a stronger union with greater financial resources, as well as support from the media, politicians, courts and the labour relations board" (Krawczyk 1973:10). Likewise a concerted campaign against the Canadian Seaman's Union (CSU) by the government, the ship owners, the police and the American unions, resulted in the destruction of the CSU culminating in the "illegal decertification of the CSU by the Canada Labour Relation Board" (Rowley 1975:31-2). It should be noted that the rationale for the persecution of both of these unions was their 'Communist' domination.

The second major point of contention -- internationalism versus nationalism -- would not be resolved. Internationalism continued to cause problems within the new organization (CCL) related to the control of finances and political policies. In addition, a significant lack of sensitivity was displayed by American officials of the CIO who held to their position that Canadian unions were no more unique than State organizations. By the late 1940's, the continued growth of mass production industries saw the United Steel Workers rise to become the largest and wealthiest union in the CCL and, in turn, lead the drive for more influence of international unions.

After 1952, international unions controlled the major policy decisions of the CCL. This did not necessarily mean outright control from American headquarters. But it did result in an orientation which minimized the importance of uniquely Canadian problems. Canadian leaders of international unions not only had to deal with the requirements of their Canadian constituencies, but they also had to make sure their decisions were consistent with the overall policies of their American headquarters (Smucker:201).

After WWII, both the CIO and the AFL agreed that a more united labour front was necessary. The political climate under the Republican control of Congress was becoming considerably less supportive of labour. Legislation moved towards greater supervision of union-management employment practices. The Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, curbed growing union control over employment practices, picketing and boycott tactics. It also instituted increased regulations over strike procedures. This was followed in 1959, by the Landrum-Griffin Act which further restricted the power of unions and reaffirmed the American's return to their more traditional emphasis on individual rights.

Canada, on the other hand, appeared to be moving in the opposite direction. PC 1003, modelled on the Wagner Act, was promulgated by the federal government in 1944. Although the end of the WWII saw jurisdiction over labour relations revert to the provinces, substantially similar legislation was enacted in all provinces over the ensuing years. By 1955, a new generation of leaders, along with the easing of philosophical differences between the two organizations, allowed the AFL and CIO to merge. In Canada, where it has been suggested that the original division might never have occurred, the way was paved for the formation of the Canadian Labour Congress in 1956.

With reasonably progressive labour legislation in place in both countries following WWII, spectacular union growth and buoyant economic conditions prevailed. Along with the United States, Canada emerged from the Second World War in a relatively strong economic position. The period that followed the war was marked by an unprecedented era of industrial growth that continued virtually unabated through the 1950s and 1960s. Throughout this period, international unions, already dominant in the industrial sectors, saw their dominance solidify through the absorption of workers necessitated by a burgeoning manufacturing sector. Reinforcing this was the strong performance of the Canadian economy and steadily increasing wages and benefits flowing from it. It was clear Canada was riding with, and benefiting from, a booming American economy.

The Emergence of Breakaways

The Diefenbaker era, 1957 through 1963, has been identified with the birth of broadly-based Canadian nationalism. The 1957 Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects first raised concerns over Canada losing control of her economy and resulted in a reexamination of Canada's headlong rush into the easy wealth of the American empire. By 1967, it was within the context of a centennial spirit of Canadian self-examination that labour activists began to seriously question the merits of international unions. These developments led to the Canadian Labour Congress' first attempt to stem the rising nationalist tide, and emerging breakaway activity, through the adoption of minimum standards of self-government for Canadian sections of international unions at their 1970 convention.

South of the border, attempts to control an ever worsening balance of payment problem caused by deficit financing of an increasingly expensive and unpopular war in Vietnam led to a series of restrictive trade policies. In 1971, Nixon reacted to the recession with a 'new economic policy'. The measures taken included ending the 'special relationship' Canada had historically enjoyed with the United States. For the first time, Canada failed to gain an exemption from restrictive American trade policies.

Nationalist momentum within the labour movement was clearly growing in the early 1970s and the incidence of breakaways of Canadian sections of international unions was

escalating. In 1972, the Communications Workers of Canada was founded from the Canadian section of the Communication Workers of America (CWA). "Formation of the all-Canadian union represents a spirit of nationalism within the industry" (Krawczyk: 1973). Likewise a number of locals of U.S.-based internationals broke away from their parent organizations in 1973, including steelworkers in Trail and Kitimat B.C. Issues at Trail were identified as nationalism among the younger members and local autonomy and responsibility more than anti-Americanism. At Kitimat, the issue was the perception of poor service provided by the international. Chemical workers in Montreal, service employees at the University of Manitoba and locomotive engineers in Vancouver were among the rash of unionized workers who voted to sever their ties with their respective parent international unions (Canadian Dimension, March, July 1973). Union journals and socialist periodicals of the day were vehicles for expressing dissatisfaction with international unions, which included documenting complaints from Canadian members regarding dues expenditures, access to pension funds, and the use of trusteeships to control Canadian union locals.

In 1974, the Canadian section of the United Paperworkers International Union separated to form the Canadian Paperworkers Union. Although nationalism, a profound understanding of the differences between continentalism and real internationalism, and a desire for autonomy played an important role in the split, other issues were equally important (Hamilton: 1975). Hamilton (1975) described the complex constellation of factors that contributed to the separation including, differences in economic and social

policies between the two countries such as pension plans and hospital insurance that in turn influenced bargaining agendas, regressive national economic policies in the United States as reflected in the imposition of wage and price controls, high and increasing wage differentials between the two countries, international [protectionist] trade policies such as Burke-Hartke, product differences, different labour policy and finally regional subtleties that include biculturalism and bilingualism.

With protectionist legislation proposing direct harm to Canadian unionists (Burke-Hartke) before Congress in the U.S., the CLC once again responded by broadening the minimum standards of self-government for Canadian sections of international unions and implementing tough new standards for enforcing compliance with these standards at its 1974 convention. These measures, however, would prove ineffective in stemming the tide of breakaways of Canadian sections of international unions as evidenced by the breakaway of the Broadcast Employees in 1974, the Brewery Workers in 1975, and the Energy and Chemical Workers in 1980. Buoyed by these breakaways and the mass organization of a growing army of public sector workers with recently acquired bargaining rights, national union representation had outstripped that of international union representation in Canada by the early 1980s⁶.

⁶ Labour Canada (now HRDC) divides union affiliation between international and national unions and makes no distinction between private and public sector unions. Statistics Canada, on the other hand, categorizes union affiliation as international, national and government. However, government unions are narrowly defined to include only employees of federal and provincial governments and does not include the broader public sector, such as health care, education and municipal sector employees.

Responses to the steepening economic difficulties occurring in Canada and the U.S. were markedly different. Despite the difficult times, the labour movement in Canada continued to grow stronger and more militant throughout the 1970s. The faltering labour movement in the United States through the 1970s, would be directly affronted in the 1980s, with the return to conservative policies under President Reagan who was elected with the intention of leading America out of the economic wilderness. This coincided with the beginning of the severe decline of unionization in America. For reasons that will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 5, the labour movement in the United States had none of the resources required to withstand the anti-union environment in which it quickly found itself under the Reagan administration throughout the 1980s. The Canadian experience was again fundamentally different both in terms of the political environment the labour movement faced and in terms of the enduring strength of the movement itself.

Perhaps the most significant breakaway in Canadian labour history occurred in 1984 when the 'Canadian Region' left the United Auto Workers (UAW) to form the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). Although the split was widely attributed to economic considerations, the significance of this event goes well beyond obtaining a superior contract in a particular round of negotiations. The character of the Canadian labour movement was fundamentally changed by this event. It not only confirmed the existence of a distinctive labour movement in Canada, it played a pivotal role in redefining the Canadian labour movement more generally. Subsequent merger activity (with other

national unions) has vaulted the Canadian Auto Workers into the position of largest private sector union in Canada.

By the mid-1980's, with the majority of union members in Canada represented by Canadian unions, the CLC too had shifted its position from defender of international unionism to the promotion of distinctive nationalist policies, perhaps culminating with their program of opposition to the Free Trade Agreement (Smith:1992). At the same time, the American labour movement was in severe decline; a decline from which it has yet to recover.

The Influence of Quebec

The history of the labour movement's development in Quebec is quite different from that of the rest of Canada. While an exhaustive treatment of that history is beyond the scope of this analysis, events in Quebec played an important and influential role in the development of a national labour movement in Canada.

From their inception, Quebec's unions were controlled by the Church which created confessional unions that were brought together into the Confédération des travailleurs Catholiques du Canada (CTCC) in 1921. Its most forceful stance was negative, "it was anti-socialist, anti-communist, anti-international union, anti-American, anti-English, anti-Protestant and anti-foreign capital in the province" (Trudeau in Smucker: 221). The

church provided especially forceful opposition to international unions, viewing them as a direct threat to the Catholic faith.

For much of the history of the Quebec labour movement, the proportion of workers who were members of unions remained relatively small in comparison to the rest of the country and the vast majority were affiliated with the CTCC. By the end of WWII, however, unionization rates were increasing and the affiliation with the CTCC was declining even more rapidly.

The continued expansion after WWII of mass production industries created a more diverse and urban labour force in the province and the labour movement which was also becoming increasingly sophisticated sought to model itself on the leftist Catholic labour movement emerging out of postwar France. The province would remain in the grip of the conservative Union Nationale party, however, with Premier Duplessis' strategy of a corporatist government with strong ties to small business, pulp and paper, the church and rural voters continuing to generate political success.

The labour movement, in the face of rivalry from international unions and a hostile provincial government, gradually emerged as a radical force of opposition to government policies. A series of hostile strikes that began with the 1949 Asbestos Strike coincided with the beginning of the "Quiet Revolution" and produced a radical working class and intelligentsia. The secularization process was complete in 1960 when the formal

separation of the federation from the church occurred.

The 1961 election victory of the Lesage Liberals formally broke the hold of the "ancien regime" on the Quebec state, and initiated belated and rapid political change in the province. This change necessitated a political settlement with labour no less than that which had been necessary elsewhere in Canada in the 1940s. The basis of this settlement was the extension of collective bargaining rights to Quebec's public sector workers in 1965. The breakthrough in Quebec sent shock waves reverberating through the Canadian state because the reforms went well beyond what had been achieved in English Canada (Panich 1993:16).

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, unions in Quebec took increasingly radical positions that were presented in the Manifestos of 1967 and 1968 and the emergence of Common Front unions demands in 1971. While these radical goals would not ultimately be realized, unions in Quebec today retain a greater ethnic-nationalistic and socialist character and have undoubtedly exerted an influence on unions in other parts of Canada, particularly with respect to unions that had a significant Quebec membership.

Conclusion

This chapter served to illustrate that the labour movement in Canada developed in the presence of an existing American labour movement, and that its character was shaped, or at least influenced by that circumstance. At the same time, it is important to note that although the labour movements in the two countries were often described as quite homogenous, it seems clear that this homogeneity was somewhat exaggerated. Considerable evidence exists to suggest that disputes of a nationalist nature between the

two groups arose early and often.

During the early years of the labour movement in both countries only a small portion of the total labour force was unionized, and these workers were overwhelmingly represented by craft-based unions. Moreover, at the turn of the century, the border was no barrier to workers in the two countries and indeed, there was considerable support for formalized continentalist policies.

The passage of proactive labour legislation in response to the crisis sparked by the Great Depression in the United States led to the mass organization of industrial workers into unions that were theretofore the purview of a narrow band of skilled workers. Once again the Canadians followed this development with their own legislation some ten years later, towards the end of WWII. Thus, when international unions dominated the Canadian labour movement, American ideology influenced the philosophy and defined the policy direction pursued by the labour movement in both countries. This undoubtedly unduly influenced the character of unions in Canada. It soon became apparent, however, that internationalism was in fact bi-nationalism and that the interests of American workers would prevail in the event of conflict. This along with an increasing awareness on the part of Canadians that international unions were especially insensitive to uniquely Canadian concerns eventually resulted in the emergence of serious challenges to the international structure of the labour movement.

The 1970s were the turning point in international union relations between the two countries. As foreign and domestic policy diverged on economic and social dimensions between the two countries, the international union structure was increasingly unable to respond effectively, either through accommodating or putting down these conflicts.

Canadian ambivalence with American society and the emergence of Canadian nationalism in the 1970s, redefined a range of institutional relationships between Canada and the U.S., and this included the organization of the labour movement.

At the same time, the American retreat from the liberal path, which began under Roosevelt, was complete with the installation of the Reagan administration and the rapid and profound decline of the labour movement in the United States solidified the divisions in the labour movement between the two countries. Nowhere were these distinctions and different directions played out more clearly than in the negotiations with the Auto Workers in the early 1980s that would ultimately lead to the breakaway of the Canadian membership.

Finally, although the labour movements in the two countries were structurally integrated, the nature and characteristics of the Canadian movement were as distinct, for example, as the political and economic systems, and these distinctions were often evident in the history of the labour movement in this country. At the same time, the dominant international unions had a profound effect on the development and direction of the labour movement in Canada. It should also be noted that this effect was not uni-directional.

Anti-American sentiment was often the impetus for action. Ultimately, the 'true' effect of the American influence on the development of the labour movement in Canada is uncertain as it remains difficult to remove a set of historical circumstances and guess at what might have otherwise happened.

The next chapter will provide a brief statistical sketch of the development of the labour movement in Canada and the United States. It will provide evidence of the relative decline of international union representation in Canada and document the recent striking divergence in union density rates between the two countries. The relative impact of breakaways on the labour movement in Canada more generally, will also be considered.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF CANADIAN LABOUR

A brief history of the development of the labour movement in Canada with particular emphasis on the role played by international unions in that development was presented in the last chapter. This chapter will provide a statistical sketch of the development of the labour movement in Canada and the U.S., and highlight the dramatic changes that have occurred with respect to union density rates in the two countries. It will also illustrate the shift in Canada away from affiliation with international unions to affiliation with national unions and document the series of breakaways that have occurred since 1970, that have played an important and largely neglected role in the development of an increasingly 'national' labour movement in Canada.

Union Growth and Change

As indicated in Chapter 2, unionization affected a rather small portion of the labour force in Canada before WWII. These early union members were employed in the skilled trades and belonged in large measure to international unions. By 1911, only 4.9 per cent of non-agricultural paid workers in Canada were union members at the same time as the proportionate high point of international unionism had been reached with 89.7 per cent of the unionized workforce holding membership in international unions.

During the 1920s and 1930s, economic conditions were such that the level of unionization overall had declined and likewise the relative position of international unions had also declined to around 50 percent. After 1935, however, international unions experienced an impressive resurgence increasing to 60 per cent by 1939 and holding steady at about 70 per cent until the mid-1960s (Crispo:1967).

Union membership overall, did not exceed 15 per cent of the labour force until after the start of WWII. The war years, however, were responsible for significant economic activity and concomitant growth in union membership in Canada such that by the end of the war the unionization rate stood at almost 25 per cent.

The picture of unionization in Canada has undergone a vast change over the years. In 1920, union membership as a percentage of non-agricultural paid workers stood at 16 per cent. By 1930, it had fallen to 14 per cent. In 1940, increased industrial activity brought on by the war, saw union membership rebound to 30 per cent. By 1951, membership had grown to 28 per cent, and further increased to 32 per cent in 1960. Although union growth continued, the pace slowed somewhat in the decades to follow. In 1970, union membership stood at 34 per cent and had climbed to 37 per cent by 1980, before falling slightly to 36 per cent in 1990. The most recent statistics available from Human Resources Development Canada (Labour Branch) reveal that in 1996 union membership stood at 34 per cent. Overall, union density in Canada has remained relatively stable over the last 30 years (Table 1).

Union density in the United States, on the other hand, has declined significantly. Union density in the United States had reached a relatively stable level around 30 per cent of non-agricultural employment in the 1940s. This began to decline slowly through to the mid-seventies, reaching around 25 per cent at the end of that decade. The decline accelerated through the 1980s, finishing that decade at just over 15 per cent. The most recent statistics reveal that the union membership in the U.S. now accounts for just under 15 per cent of non-agricultural employment.

Table 1

Union Membership in Canada and the U.S., 1920-1996

As a % of Non-Agriculture Paid Workers

<u>Year</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>U.S.A.</u>
1920	16.0	17.6
1930	13.9	12.7
1940	16.3	22.5
1951	30.2	31.7
1960	31.6	28.6
1970	32.8	29.6
1980	37.0	23.2
1990	36.2	15.2
1996	33.9	14.9 (1995)

Sources: Canadian Data: Labour Canada, Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada (annual). In 1950 the reference date of Labour Canada survey was changed from the 31st of December to 1 January; therefore, no figure for 1950 is reported. U.S. data: from 1920 to 1984 Leo Troy and Neil Sheflin, Union Sourcebook: Membership, Finances, Structure, Directory (West Orange, NJ: Industrial Relations Data and Information Services, 1985); from 1983 to 1990, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1995 rate U.S. Bureau of National Affairs.

International and National Unions Affiliation

The stability of union density in Canada and the acute decline in density in the U.S. has led to the striking divergence in unionization rates between Canada and the U.S. (Table 1). Another prominent trend in Canada is the steady relative decline of international union membership and corresponding increase in national union membership. Recent statistics published by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) - Labour Branch illustrate the apparent impressive 'Canadianization' of unions that has taken place. In 1960, international unions accounted for 74.5 per cent of the membership while national unions accounted for 21.9 per cent. By 1970, membership has dropped to 62.5 per cent with national unions increasing to 34.6 per cent. In 1980, the percentage of national union members had risen to 50.1 per cent, surpassing for the first time the membership (46.3%) in international unions. 1990, saw a further decline in proportionate international unions membership to 31.8 per cent with national unions now accounting for 63.6 per cent. Figures from 1996, reveal that international union membership now accounts for less than 30 per cent (29.4%) of membership whereas national unions accounted for 65.7 per cent (Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada, various years). What is interesting in these figures is that between 1970 and 1990, the relative percentage of international and national union membership in Canada reveal an almost complete reversal. It would appear that, within a twenty year span, aspirations for a truly national labour movement had been largely fulfilled.

The ten largest unions in Canada in 1990 present an interesting picture of the change that occurred in the labour movement in Canada over the 20 years between 1970 and 1990 (Table 2).

Table 2

Rank Order of Unions in Canada by Size of Membership

<u>1970</u>		<u>1990</u>	
1)	United Steelworkers of America	1)	The Canadian Union of Public Employees
2)	Canadian Union of Public Employees	2)	National Union of Provincial Government Employees
3)	Public Service Alliance of Canada	3)	United Food and Commercial Workers Union
4)	United Auto Workers	4)	Canadian Auto Workers
5)	United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America	5)	Public Service Alliance of Canada
6)	Teamsters	6)	United Steel Workers of America
7)	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	7)	Teamsters
8)	International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	8)	Quebec Social Affairs Federation
9)	Fédération Nationale des Services-Service Employees Federation	9)	Quebec School Board Teachers Federation / Service Employees International
10)	International Woodworkers of America	10)	Canadian Paperworkers' Union

Source: Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada, 1970 and 1990

By 1990, the two largest unions in Canada are public sector unions (although both have among their membership private sector employees). This is followed by two large "industrial" unions, one international and the other national. The remainder are a

conglomeration of public sector national unions, private sector national unions (both of which were "breakaways" from international unions) and international unions.

The picture of union strength has changed dramatically such that international unions hold a much less important place in statistical terms. This diminishing importance is also reflected in the executive of the Canadian Labour Congress, once a bastion of international power, now replaced by an executive, the vast majority of whom are representatives of national unions.

Table 3

Percentage Distribution of Canadian Membership of Unions (Affiliation)

<u>Year</u>	<u>International</u>	<u>National</u>	<u>Government</u>
1962	66.9	21.3	11.8
1965	67.1	22.3	10.6
1970	61.0	27.5	11.5
1975	55.3	29.3	15.4
1980	50.2	33.8	16.0
1985	39.6	45.0	15.4
1990	31.5	54.5	13.9
1992	29.5	56.6	14.9

Source: CALURA, various years

A very clear picture emerges of the shift in union representation from international unions to national and government unions (Table 3). How that shift took place, however, is less clear. Explanations offered for this development often attribute the trend to shifting industrial employment patterns. As indicated earlier, dramatic shifts in employment from

manufacturing to services have taken place. CALURA (1992:8) reveals that in 1966, 39.2 per cent of all union members were employed in manufacturing and by 1992, the proportion had fallen to 16.0 per cent and contrasts that with the services sector that accounted for 37.2 per cent of unionized employment in 1992, over four times its 1966 share of 9.0 per cent. Likewise, growth in public sector employment has also played an important role in increasing the relative proportion of national union representation in Canada. Nearly one half of the union membership growth in the 1970s was due to the organization of public sector employees made possible by legislative change (Kumar 1986:15).

Clearly, shifting industrial distribution of employment has an impact on unionization rates and union affiliation. Overall economic performance affects unionization rates, both with respect to potential job loss and forgone organization activity. Shifts in type of employment that most Western economies appear to be experiencing, move employment opportunities away from the more densely unionized industrial sector to the more lightly unionized services sector. Likewise, union saturation in particular sectors leaves little room for union growth, whereas low density rates allow potential growth.

Organization in particular sectors has traditionally been undertaken by particular types of unions. For example, if the vast majority of employees in the manufacturing sector are unionized and by internationals, there is very little room for the percentage of industrial unionization to grow in that area. If on the other hand, the service sector is lightly

unionized, and more 'appropriately' an area of traditional, national union organization, more room for national union growth exists. Moreover, if the manufacturing sector is in decline and the service sector is growing, the effect is magnified.

Breakaways

Nonetheless, breakaways, have also played an important role in this process of 'Canadianization' of the labour movement in this country. In 1988, Statistics Canada revealed that:

Over the past three years, 45 per cent of the membership gains of national unions resulted from gains of members from international unions. 190,000 members - 10% of the membership of international unions in Canada - changed from international unions to national unions in three major events. In 1986 and 1987, members of two international unions (Auto Workers and Woodworkers) opted to form their own Canadian unions. In 1988, a fisherman's local of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union in Newfoundland voted to join the recently created Canadian Autoworkers (CALURA 1988:17).

While these three breakaways produced dramatic shifts of large numbers of members, they are only the most recent in a series of breakaways that began much earlier. A list of breakaways that have occurred since 1970 indicates the approximate membership involved (Table 4).

Table 4**Chronology of Breakaway Canadian Sections of International Unions 1970-1990**

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Canadian Organization</u>	<u>Membership Affected</u>	<u>Parent International</u>
1987	Newfoundland Fishermen Food and Allied Workers Union	23,000	United Food and Commercial Workers Union
1986	IWA Canada	48,000	International Woodworkers of America
	Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of Canada	9,000	Brotherhood of Railway Carmen
	National Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers (CAW)	140,000	International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers (UAW)
1982	Independent Canadian Transit Union	2,700	Amalgamated Transit Union
	Canadian Signal and Communications Union	1,650	Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen
	United Headwear, Optical and Allied Workers Union	900	United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union
1981	United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of Canada Workers of Canada	11,000	International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers
1980	Energy and Chemical Workers Union	22,500	Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union
1976	Brotherhood of Railway Airline and Steamship Clerks	20,880	Brotherhood of Railway Airline and Steamship Clerks
1975	Canadian Chemical Workers Union	2,825	International Chemical Workers' Union
1974	Canadian Union of United Brewery, Flour, etc.	10,000	International Union of United Brewery, Flour, etc.
	Canadian Paperworkers Union	56,000	United Paperworkers International
	Canadian Telecommunications Union No. 43	2,000	United Telegraph Workers
1972	Communications Workers of Canada	4,145	Communications Workers of America
	Fraternité interprovinciale des ouvriers en électricité	7,000	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Source: (Dawes, Colin The Relative Decline of International Unions in Canada Since 1970, School Of Industrial Relations, Queens University 1988:52-3)

The final CALURA publication (1992:11) reports that the share of international union membership in Canada continued its twenty-five year trend of decline to just less than 30 per cent. Part of the decline of international union influence in Canada is attributed to defections of international membership to other national unions and breakaways to form new autonomous national unions. The "recent significant losses" were also compiled by Statistics Canada (Table 5).

Table 5

Recent Significant Losses of International Union Membership

<u>Union Name</u>	<u>Membership Lost</u>	<u>Year Loss Occurred</u>
Food and Commercial	22,000	1988
Woodworkers	45,000	1986
Auto Workers	136,000	1986
Railway Carmen	8,000	1985
Paperworkers	10,000	1981
Telegraph	2,000	1981
Electrical Workers	16,000	1980
Chemical Workers	19,000	1980
<hr/>		
Total	258,000	

Source: CALURA 1992:11

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief statistical sketch of the development of unionization in Canada and, more importantly, documented the rise and fall of the importance of international unions in Canada. It has also identified the period in which the loss of international union membership and the growth of national union membership was greatest.

While the statistics do point to an impressive 'Canadianization' of unions, this chapter makes it clear that the traditional explanations of increasing public sector and declining industrial sectors do not tell the whole story. Breakaways, that were occurring largely in the manufacturing sector, had a significant impact on the relative increase in national union representation through the first half of the 1970s, and again through the 1980s (Tables 4 and 5). Moreover, this trend continues beyond what has been predicted and in sectors that are most unlikely, according to the economic theories that have attempted to account for this phenomenon (see Chapter 4). Breakaways account for a significant proportion of the rising relative strength of national unions in Canada. The next chapter will examine the theoretical treatment of international unionism and the breakaway phenomenon and assesses the success of these treatments, particularly in light of development that have occurred through the 1980s.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In Chapter 2, a brief history of the development of some aspects of trade unionism in Canada and the U.S. was offered. Included in this treatment were some suggestions as to why there was a movement away from international unions in Canada. Chapter 3 went on to describe unionization in Canada in statistical terms, highlighting the development and decline of international unions and the magnitude of the breakaway phenomenon. This chapter will present a review of the literature regarding these phenomena. Most of the analyses to date have been carried out by economists and this chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the sociological implications of these analyses.

It should be noted that the phenomenon of international and national unionism in Canada has not received a great deal of attention overall. However, the perspectives taken on this subject tends to be clearly divided between those who suggest that the development of international unions was both natural and perhaps beneficial, and those who suggest that the development of international unions was yet another example of alleged American imperialism.

Historical Determinists

Initial treatments of international unionism took a functionalist perspective and are largely of an historical narrative nature. Analyses can be broadly grouped into those which present a historical determinist perspective and those of an economic deterministic nature.

Perhaps the best known analysis of international unionism in Canada is a study by John Crispo (1967). His functionalist, empirical analysis identifies a multitude of factors that account for both the development and persistence of international unions in Canada. These factors include the absence of viable domestic alternatives in combination with the availability of established unions. Canada's industrial development followed that of Britain's and the United States'. Unions were well established in these countries and Canada's weak industrial base and sparse populations made importing established unions the more appealing option (Crispo:13). Social factors also played a role, with both countries sharing essentially the same cultural and continental heritage and, in turn, developing similar product and labour markets.

Indeed, there was very little to distinguish American industry from Canadian industry. Much of the manufacturing capacity was derived from branch plants of American firms. To the extent that the management of these plants remained in the hands of Americans,

that they would prefer to deal with American unions on both sides of the border was perhaps not surprising.

Crispo remained convinced of the benefit of international unions and enumerated how international unions were advantageous to Canadian workers, particularly with respect to introducing a viable labour movement to Canada earlier than would have otherwise been the case. Membership in international unions also strengthened the Canadian's bargaining position allowing them to obtain comparable wage and benefit levels while relying on American union personnel and financial resources. Crispo does acknowledge, however, that this type of unionization process did interfere with controlling one's destiny and, moreover, had a tendency to produce workers who were somewhat more wage conscious and somewhat less class conscious.

Perhaps the most interesting part of his analysis was his discussion of the possibilities which exist with respect to the future of international unions. He suggests that: "the future of international unions in Canada probably depends more than anything else on their willingness to adjust themselves to the 'Canadian fact'" - a concept which he leaves undefined - and he concludes by suggesting that "whether or not nationalism becomes a more potent force, the challenge of accommodating international unions to the special needs of Canadian membership will remain." (Crispo:322)

Apparently aware of the emerging nationalist sentiments of the era, he does speculate that

while it would take considerable provocation to induce a wholesale breakaway from international unions, the conditions which tend to produce this outcome included some failing on the part of the international such as, perceived lack of service, restrictions on the election of Canadian officers, or constraints on policy development. According to Crispo the potential exists for two possible outcomes: radical change evidenced in the possible emergence of an entirely independent Canadian labour movement, or the potential for the success of the Canadian-American trade union relationship eventually setting the pattern for the development of a potential worldwide labour movement.

(Crispo:324)

This analysis clearly illustrates the confusion between the notions of international unionism and binational or continental unions. Prevailing attitudes remained supportive of continentalism and it followed naturally from this perspective that international unions dealt most effectively with international capital. What was perhaps not yet possible to envision was how this economic arrangement, that had produced such consistent wealth, could cause conflict beyond those "lack of service" incidents that tended to create tension. It was clearly unimaginable, within an analysis of this sort, that there were more basic, inherent, contradictions in this type of international relationship and that the elements of dependency and control in the economic relationship between Canada and the United States, rather than a neutral logical and beneficial arrangement, produced this type of union.

A second type of 'historical determinist' analysis common in the literature approaches international unions as an aberration; the unfortunate result of the failure of an indigenous Canadian labour movement to develop due to a specific historic event or series of events. Abella in *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour* (1973), suggests that in 1935, the national union movement was felled by two blows. Firstly on orders from Moscow the most militant national union in Canada, The Workers Unity League (WUL), disbanded and turned over its membership to the American-controlled Trades and Labour Congress in an all out effort against fascism and another imperialist war. Secondly, Abella suggests that the formation of the CIO doomed whatever possibility there remained of creating in Canada a labour movement, the majority of whose members belonged to Canadian unions (1973: 3-4).

In a similar type of analysis, Babcock in *Gompers in Canada*, suggests that American economic development in Canada led naturally to American unions developing in Canada. "In a word, branch-plant factories begat branch-plant unionism" (1974:28). The period in which 'Gomperist' ideology entered Canada was marked by considerable support for continentalism. Gompers, in a speech in support of striking streetcar workers in London Ontario "urged Torontonians to help the men in London to put down the American capitalist who had come to Canada to oppress Canadian workingmen. When the Yankee capitalist did this it was natural that the Yankee agitator should follow him." Gompers words remain to this day the chief justification for international unionism in Canada (Babcock 1974:36). Ultimately, Babcock suggests that it was at the 1902 TLC

convention in Berlin (Kitchener) that the Canadian labour movement, over Gomper's war against dual unionism, was permanently divided and that, moreover, they were never able to achieve this unity again.

Babcock concludes that the AFL's influence on the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) was essentially a divisive one, ultimately transforming the TLC from a body unifying Canadian unionists into an arm of international crafts. Although association with the Americans probably improved Canadian wages and working conditions, Babcock goes further to suggest that the AFL intervention retarded the growth of a movement linking trade unions with moderate socialist policies and perhaps delayed the appearance of the labour politics in Canada (216).

In these types of analysis, control of the labour movement was secured by international unions, often by a series of strategic manoeuvres; intentional or inadvertent. Both Abella and Babcock identify the state as complicit in these developments, either through favouring international unions or through participating in a campaign against alternative political arrangements, in this case, communism. That is, the state, rather than neutral as in Crispo's analysis, is an overt actor either in the interests of capital or its own political ends.

While these descriptions are useful in situating important historical events and their results, these analyses remain constrained by their point-in-time static nature. If the

potential for the achievement of an autonomous Canadian labour movement ended in 1902 or 1935, then the potential to consider this a dynamic process is lost. Clearly subsequent developments have challenged the theoretical positions taken in these analyses and suggest that the notion of a 'Canadian' labour movement as distinct from that of an American or international labour movement was not well defined.

Economic Determinists

Political economy analyses differ markedly from those produced by the functionalists. This approach suggests that economic considerations were responsible for the development of international unions. Watkins (1973:188-90) suggested that American unions in Canada inhibited the development of a Canadian labour movement through encouraging an economic relationship with American workers in the same industry rather than political integration with Canadian workers in other industries. While acknowledging the short run benefits of international unionism, Watkins believes these benefits are far outweighed by the entrenched put-down of Canadian unions. He suggests that Canada's labour movement is characterized by continentalism and fragmentation and goes further to suggest that American business unions have in essence, layered one type of imperialism on top of another. This, he believes, has undermined the development of class consciousness and thwarted the development of a truly Canadian labour movement, which would look vastly different than the existing model.

Ultimately Watkins concludes that dependency creates costs for Canadian workers in terms of fewer jobs and a lower standard of living and thereby creates the objective conditions that should favour national unions.

As the contradictions in the Canadian-American relationship increasingly manifest themselves we might expect to see breakaways of whole Canadian sections. The independent Canadian unions that result will do much to increase anti-imperialist consciousness among working people and thereby transform Canadian politics (Watkins:197).

For the first time, we see the emergence of objective economic conditions as having a dynamic impact on the operation and structure of unions in Canada. Unfortunately, Watkins fails to give sufficient weight to the underlying economic structure which would tend to influence the resultant union's operation despite the modification of the structure. In this case, the fact that the economy of the U.S. would remain in a dominant position to the Canadian economy, precludes the possibility of a union structure emerging that would be free of the constraints imposed by operating within an overarching, and dependant, capitalist system. Perhaps more importantly, this type of analysis is unable to accommodate the unexpected decline of the American labour movement and would certainly be unable to predict the different response of the Canadian labour movement to the same types of pressures, in view of its ascribed dependant status. The real distinction between the two labour movements may indeed be illustrated by outcomes, that is, by the vitality of the labour movement in Canada in the face of the American labour movement's spectacular decline.

Systems Typologies

Other analyses have attempted to examine unions as political actors and assess their level of independence versus dependence by operationalizing particular aspects of their character or operations. For example, Litvak and Maule (1972) examined the content of union constitutions as an indicator of the extent of Canadian independence. The structural relationship of binational unions was assessed and classified into "Assimilationist", "Distinctive Component", and "Separationist" Models. Litvak and Maule suggested that structural and legal linkages not only limit the potential development of individuality in Canadian sections of international unions, but their subordinate position will also produce economic disadvantages at times when the interests of the dominant partner conflict with those of the subordinate.

Cox and Jamieson (1974) produced a complicated analysis that attempts to combine a centre-periphery model of dependency with labour market dualism. They felt that the Canadian labour movement was fragmented and divided, and possessed little political clout. This resulted in Canadian labour being weaker in relation to both employers and political leadership, than labour in the U.S. In addition, both employers and labour in Canada stand in a subordinate and dependent relationship to their U.S. counterparts.

Operating within a transnational system, the most important linkages in labour organizations, as in industrial management, are between the centres of both economies.

Cox and Jamieson locate the geographic centre of the transnational economy in Southern Ontario and Montreal and further divide it between one part closely integrated in the transnational economy and another part more national in character that includes the broader public sector. They attribute tensions between these two groups to the recent emergence of nationalism. On the other hand, they believe that integration is most strongly in evidence in certain segments of the primary labour market, as manifest for example in virtual wage parity in the steel industry, and in almost identical collective agreements in the automobile industry.

Despite acknowledging growing tendencies towards greater autonomy for the Canadian locals of some major international unions such as steel and autos, Cox and Jamieson maintain that workers in the transnationally most-integrated part of the Canadian centre are, among all Canadian workers, those who have benefitted the most from the continental centre-periphery structure.

Perhaps the weakest aspect of their theory is their definition of the periphery in Canada -- a geographic region that they call "middle Canada" that is typified by linguistic, political, and labour market distinctiveness. They also indicate that there is evidence to suggest that changes may be emerging within British Columbia and Quebec which could shatter the peripheral syndrome and acknowledge the recent movement for cultural and economic independence in the Canadian milieu has strengthened the demand for autonomy in trade unions. Ultimately, the position of the CLC, like that of business and

government, tended to support the privileged position of the international union in Canada. "Independence has been manifest on the more symbolic issues, those on which policies have the least immediate practical consequences, while the dependency pattern generally prevails where material interests are involved" (223). They conclude by reiterating that "their paradigm describes the transnational system of labour relations prevailing in North America - a system with a centre periphery structure that produces outputs beneficial to the participants in proportion to the centrality within it" (232).

Although both of these theories were reflective of the rising nationalist tide in Canada and the breakaways occurring in locals in both B.C. and Quebec, subsequent developments that included breakaways in more integrated industries could not be accommodated by these theoretical models. Apparently neither the structural aspects of the relationship between the international headquarters and their Canadian members, nor the nature or location of the industry in which union members were engaged played an important role in breakaways.

By the late 1970's interest in nationalist economic issues had been submerged to some extent by more immediate economic difficulties. Advancing the theoretical discussions regarding international unionism would wait another decade. Clearly where those theories attempted to predict the future direction of the labour movement in Canada, they could only be considered a failure. In no instance was this made more clear than with the breakaway of the Canadian Auto Workers in 1985; a situation where there existed both a

union with a distinctive Canadian component that enjoyed a great deal of autonomy, and members who were employed in what was surely the most transnationally integrated industry in North America. This event led to renewed interest in the international union structure. It would also ultimately provide something that was heretofore lacking in the analyses of breakaways, that is, some actual documentation and analysis of the events leading up to and surrounding the breakaway and the context in which it occurred.

Sam Gindin (1989) in a political economy analysis of the CAW breakaway suggests that the 1970's era, along with the influence of the Waffle⁷, heightened awareness that international unions expressed and institutionalized Canada's dependence on the U.S. and were a conduit for American ideas, styles and practices. International unions also contributed to fragmentation and interfered with the formation of alliances within the labour movement in Canada and within the NDP (68). Gindin, however, indicates that Canadian autoworkers did not have difficulty functioning within an integrated international union structure. While there were instances of American insensitivity to uniquely Canadian issues, the United Auto Workers (UAW) were a progressive organization in which the Canadians enjoyed unprecedented autonomy.

Around the same time, the capitalist economies adopted a radical shift in direction,

⁷ The Waffle was a faction that developed within the New Democratic Party in 1969 that subscribed to more radical nationalist and socialist policies. It was particularly opposed to American interests in the Canadian economy including the international union structure. The faction, in which Mel Watkins played a prominent role, was ultimately defeated by more moderate forces within the party and expelled in 1974.

particularly in North America. With the postwar period of steady growth over, a transition began towards lowering the expectations of workers while strengthening the flexibility and power of corporations. It was conflict over the best response to the new situation faced by workers, particularly in bargaining, that led to the split of the Canadian union from its parent organization (Gindin 1995:278).

Gindin suggests, however, that it was more than simply a case of the two countries facing different economic situations. There were differences in objective conditions which the two unions confronted that had existed and grown over time. The Canadian auto industry was healthier, the Canadian labour movement was stronger, as were wage rates generally, and political influence had been maintained. Likewise, Canada's status as a dependent capitalist country allowed Canadians to take a defensive nationalist position. To a considerable degree, these environmental factors were not simply external facts of life, but rather reflected past decisions, past struggles, past successes and past failures (1989:64).

In his 1995 analysis, Gindin expands this argument to suggest that the Canadian UAW was shaped by distinct differences between the experiences of the two unions that ultimately affected the spirit and the culture of the union in Canada.

The differences that had emerged between the American and Canadian UAW were rooted in a combination of factors: economically, in the delayed growth of Canada's manufacturing base; politically, in the later development in Canada of supportive labour legislation and the

consequent longer struggle for union recognition; internally in the persistence of a strong left base in strong locals; structurally in the uniqueness of the Canadian Council; and culturally, in the differing role of nationalism in the two countries (1995:278).

According to Gindin, the international structure was not an impediment to Canadians taking a different course with respect to negotiations. What was occurring in the U.S. however, went well beyond what might be considered a temporary setback from which recovery would be possible. It was instead no less than a major strategic change in the direction of collective bargaining and the union's role within it.

Clearly, the breakaway of the Canadian section of the United Auto Workers Union challenged the existing theories relating to breakaways. The Auto Workers, operating in the most highly integrated internationally-based industry that existed in the two countries, and enjoying an unparalleled level of autonomy in the "Canadian Region", had decided to leave the international. Moreover, the new organization that was established would not pursue a fundamentally different or more radical direction as an independent Canadian union, but would go on to operate in much the same manner as before.

Nationalists

Another source of literature that provides insight into the inception of breakaways are trade union journals and related socialist periodicals. In the early to mid-1970's these journals provided a forum for information and discussion of the momentous

developments taking place within the labour movement in Canada (see for example Krawczyk 1973: Independence 1972: Hamilton 1975).

The debate revolved largely around the relative merit of the resources of international unions, especially with respect to opposing the power of multi-national corporations, versus an emerging national unionism. Clearly the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) was concerned about rising nationalist sentiment, while at the same time, it remained dominated by international unions, and had to concern itself with the promotion and defence of their interests.

Nonetheless, the CLC did respond to the increasing pressure from nationalist forces. The 1970 CLC convention set the following minimum standards of self government: election of Canadian officers by Canadians; policies to deal with national affairs to be determined by the elected Canadian officers and/or members; and Canadian elected representatives to have authority to speak for the union in Canada (Canadian Labour 1974:16). By 1973, the CLC, in an apparent response to a rash of union locals breaking away from international unions to join the newly formed nationalist Council of Canadian Unions (CCU), had instituted a campaign to "organize blue collar workers and head off breakaways from international unions" (List: 1973). An escalating effort to stem the tide of rising nationalism, saw delegates to the 1974 CLC convention " vote overwhelmingly to adopt a program broadening the minimum standards of self-government for Canadian sections of international unions. This was coupled with similar approval for a four part

proposal recommending tough new standards for enforcing compliance with such standards" (Labour Review 1974:3).

While the nationalists waged a sustained attack on the international unions and highlighted the negative consequences for Canadian workers associated with them (Finn 1970, 1973: Bauer 1972: Rowley 1973), the internationals responded in defence of their organizations, espousing the benefits of internationalism. They continued to stress the need to compete on an equally powerful footing with multi-national capital and emphasized their ability to mobilize large financial and personnel resources -- an argument that continues to be applied in defence of international unions to the present (Cotterill 1971: Waisglass 1972: MacSween 1973: Williams J. 1973,1974: Williams L. 1975).

Added to the fray was an increasing awareness of the negative consequences of U.S. protectionist measures beginning in 1971, which had ended an era of special status that Canada had enjoyed since the end of WWII. A new era, one which had the potential to have a negative impact on Canadian workers, was apparently beginning. Protectionist policies, by placing Canadian workers in direct competition with their American co-unionists, tended to undermine the traditional arguments in favour of international unions (Catta 1973: Kipling 1974).

Ultimately, the deepening economic crisis of the late 1970's submerged the nationalist debate. With unionists forced to focus their attention on more basic issues, the debate would not be resolved. In fact, it would not be revisited in any significant manner for another decade. The nationalist momentum that had been built in the 1970s did change the character of the labour movement in Canada, although perhaps the change was not of the magnitude envisioned by the radicals of the day. At the very least, when autonomy issues re-emerged with the Auto Workers split in 1984, they appeared in a far less encompassing form (Deverell 1985: Yates 1986).

Industrial Relations Analyses

The largely descriptive analyses produced by the industrial relations school have assessed both the decline of international unionism, and more recently, the striking divergence in union density that began to occur in the mid to late 1980s. These industrial relations analyses have become the most consistent source of information on developments related to unionization in Canada in the 1990s.

More recent empirical studies have attempted to assess the decline of international unions in Canada. In a rare analysis of declining international unionism in Canada, Dawes (1987:71) suggests that both economic and non-economic factors are involved. Through a somewhat narrow empirical analysis, Dawes attributes the decline in international unions to economic circumstances, such as low union growth potential, and declining

industrial sectors. He also identifies non-economic factors such as the growth of public sector unions, the failure of international unions in Canada to organize the unorganized through the 1960's and 1970's, and the disaffiliations of Canadian sections of internationals over issues such as autonomy, concession bargaining, political philosophy, and international union support of the interests of American members over those of Canadian members. He concludes his analysis by suggesting that the future of international unions in their traditional declining sectors is bleak and their potential for expansion in the growing service sector will be poor.

Another study, *Union Growth in Canada: Retrospect and Prospect* (Kumar: 1986), addresses the difficulty of assigning narrow theoretical frameworks to complex multi-dimensional phenomena. Kumar (26) states that "while the wish to be *maitre chez nous* is a common thread running through all breakaways the primary motivation for the Canadian members of international unions to seek autonomy has usually been peculiar to each case." Perhaps more importantly, he goes on to discuss the weakness in statistical applications with respect to union growth in general and concludes with questioning whether the economic modelling of the progress of an institution like the labour movement is particularly insightful or helpful (59).

Finally, one of the most striking features of this literature review is the inadequacy of the theoretical treatment of the phenomenon, particularly with respect to accounting for the occurrence of breakaways or specifying the circumstances under which they are most

likely to occur. Secondly, little consideration is given to the sharp decline suffered by the American labour movement and the impact this has had on Canadian unionists. Clearly, there are differences inherent in the labour movements in the two countries, that have not been adequately identified or addressed by these treatments.

National unions replaced internationals as the dominant force in the Canadian labour movement in the early 1980s. The structure of unions and how they operate, however, has changed little in the face of this development. Secondly, with national unions now the dominant force in the Canadian labour movement, nationalism, once a driving force in the Canadianization of the labour movement through the 1970s, can no longer be considered a significant factor. Theorists who viewed the American domination of the Canadian labour movement as wholly negative and largely immutable have remained strangely silent in the wake of the developments of the last decade and recent analysis of labour movement developments has been left almost exclusively to the descriptive statistical treatments of the economics-trained industrial relations school.

Sociological Implications

Theoretical treatments of both international unionism and breakaways have been undertaken almost exclusively by economists and historians. These types of narrow analyses, as discussed above, are inherently inadequate and have been largely unsuccessful in accounting for breakaways. This review of the literature leads to the

conclusion that it is unlikely that the complex processes and behaviours involved in the development and progress of a labour movement can be adequately described in economic theory, in much the same way that political theory is largely unrelated to voting patterns.

For example, the development of international unions as described by Crispo (1967) provided little more than a functionalist description of what existed at that time. This pragmatic approach describes the benefits, along with some of the negative characteristics of this type of arrangement, but never seriously considers the possibility of a distinct labour movement ever spontaneously arising in Canada. Although Crispo did make reference to rising nationalism and international unions' need to accommodate this factor, it was not made clear how this might be accomplished. Nor was it clear how this model of unionism, even while becoming increasingly unsatisfactory to the subordinate partner, might, as suggested, become the pattern for a worldwide labour movement.

On the other hand, historians appear to have begun their analyses with the assumption that a distinct (if nascent) Canadian labour movement existed at one point in time, only to be lost to a specific event, such as the 1902 TLC Convention, and Gomper's war against dual unionism, or the all out effort against Fascism in 1935. While these were no doubt important events that changed the course of history as it relates to the labour movement in Canada, other equally important events continued to occur, and have arguably had an equally significant impact on the direction and character of the labour movement.

Nonetheless, this type of analysis demonstrates the profound impact that an event or specific conditions (objective or subjective) can have on the direction and development of the labour movement. Unfortunately identifying only one historic event as definitive, proves to severely limit the analysis.

Economic determinists effectively identify the negative impacts of the dependent relationship inherent in the structure of international unions, but again resort to a set of assumptions that renders this type of analysis static. These theories could certainly not have predicted the current situation where international unions have taken over the subordinate position that was previously held by national unions in Canada, and thus exert very little influence over the operation or character of the labour movement in this country. While the debate continues with respect to the merger activity and the extent of the change in character possible for the labour movement in Canada, the American labour movement has perhaps exhibited a more profound transformation over its lifetime and is currently characterized as being in a permanent state of decline. In any event, national unions in Canada function in much the same way as they did as internationals, so either the international structure was not as restrictive as suggested, or alternatively unions operating under a capitalist system, with no strong class-based origins, look quite similar.

So, economic and historical analyses appear to be either too narrow on the one hand, or too static on the other. Economic theory has difficulty accounting for phenomena that are outside of a closed system and are certainly unable to accommodate the behaviour of

actors, or the impact of external events or individuals' impressions of these events.

Although, it seems unlikely that an all-encompassing theory could be developed to explain a complex process of this nature, the failure of broad economic theory to account for breakaway activity specifically, and the profound changes that have occurred in the labour movement generally, suggest that the answer lies elsewhere.

A number of circumstances arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s that would profoundly affect all aspects of the relationship between Canada and the U.S. These events included the discovery of nationhood, rising nationalism/anti-Americanism, opposition to the Vietnam War, race riots, student protests, and finally, economic competition between the two countries. A sociological analysis would seek to assess the relative impact of these factors in an effort to better understand the context in which unions operate, how that context changed over time, and how individuals or groups might respond to, or be influenced by, these events. This type of analysis attempts to identify and assess the contribution of a complex and interactive constellation of factors that played a critical role in defining the labour movement in Canada as it exists today.

Chapter 5 seeks to broaden this discussion by identifying the existing and emerging differences between the two societies and the specific objective and subjective conditions that were associated with breakaway activity.

CHAPTER 5

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAKAWAYS

The development of unions in Canada, particularly through the early years, is a reasonably well documented phenomenon, and, as was discussed in Chapter 3, the specific set of circumstances that gave rise to the development of international unions has received considerable attention. A brief statistical sketch of the impact of this development on the characteristics and patterns of union growth was also presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provided broad theoretical perspectives in which to situate the discussion, along with a critical assessment which illustrated the failure of these theories to account for, or predict, either breakaways of Canadian sections of international unions, or the dramatic change in the composition, if not the character of the Canadian labour movement.

As was discussed, international unions developed in Canada for a variety of reasons. The geographic proximity of the two countries, similar heritage, peoples, culture, labour market and shared economic system, made the development of cross border unions as natural as that of cross border corporations. Canada's economic development followed that of the United States and the labour movement in Canada developed in the presence of a firmly established capitalist system that was dominated first by British and then American capital. Since American unions already existed, it would be reasonable to expect that Canadian workers would seek to join these established unions. Perhaps

equally important was the lack of strong antagonistic nationalism at that time to prevent this development.

In addition, there were clear benefits to be derived from pursuing this approach. It is often argued that joining existing unions allowed Canadians to develop a viable labour movement before one would have otherwise existed and, perhaps more importantly, obtain a superior standard of living than would have been available to them while struggling to develop domestic unions -- no doubt a significant incentive. At the very least, the existing American 'Gomperist' model provided Canadian workers with all that they knew they wanted.

On the other hand, there are powerful arguments to support the contention that the lure of international unions did not come without disadvantages. This perspective suggests that American international unions were imposed on Canada in much the same way that American control of the Canadian economy was secured. It has been suggested that the development of international unions served to layer one form of dependency on another, that they emphasised wage, rather than class consciousness (perhaps even going so far as to thwart the development of class consciousness) and that they produced a fragmented, inefficient labour movement organized along the artificial lines of established American union jurisdictions. Implicit in this perspective is that, in the absence of this influence or domination, a fundamentally different form of labour movement would have emerged in Canada.

More recent developments in the Canadian labour movement would lead one to re-examine both of these positions. The Canadian and American 'homogeneity' that served to explain the development of international unions is perhaps somewhat overstated. As discussed in Chapter 2, there always existed nationalistic pressures and frictions within the Canadian labour movement which were either accommodated or put down.

Moreover, this pervasive homogeneity did not lead to the development of other shared institutions similar to that of the relationship between unions in the two countries.

Likewise, it is also quite likely that the dominant presence of international unions influenced the development and culture of the labour movement in Canada, although it is equally improbable that Canada would have developed a class system like that of Britain in the absence of the American unions and the more recent 'Canadianization' of the labour movement has not produced a radically altered labour movement in this country. While acknowledging that satisfaction with the operation of a union is likely to be somewhat different from the question as to how they developed or survived, there nonetheless emerged a labour movement in Canada that operated with some reasonable level of success and satisfaction to the participants for some 100 years (between approximately 1860 and 1960), at which point distinct cleavages began to occur.

So there are reasonable and perhaps logical explanations for the establishment of international unions. Once they were in place and demonstrated that they operated effectively and, for the most part, met the expectations of the participants, their

persistence seems natural. Something changed this perception, however, and it is this development that has received little attention. This chapter will be concerned with identifying the factors related to this development.

As indicated, this area has rarely been the subject of sociological analysis. The waning interest in sociological analysis of the labour movement has left this area of investigation almost exclusively the domain of the industrial relations/economist school. Their approach is directed towards explaining the divergence in density rates that has occurred between Canada and the U.S. over the same time period.

This analysis will instead identify factors that contributed to breakaways, and to the extent that the phenomena are linked, assess the factors identified as contributing to the divergence between the American and Canadian labour movements.

This discussion begins with the premise that the differences between the labour movements had always existed, as discussed in Chapter 3, and only became apparent (as first reflected in breakaways, and latter in declining American union density) when pressures that could not be accommodated were exerted on the existing system of international unions. The underlying factors, or put another way, objective conditions, that distinguished the context within which unions operated in the two countries are clearly illustrated in the political culture and legal environment. The first part of this chapter discusses those underlying factors and identifies how they contributed to the

distinctiveness of the Canadian labour movement, even while operating within a predominately international structure.

While this may go some way towards explaining divergence, it does not entirely explain breakaways. If this divergence always existed, then, what would cause Canadian unions to take this process one step further and break away from their American 'parent'? In other words what, in addition to the underlying factors, would be necessarily present in order to prompt a breakaway?

As indicated, little information exists on the specifics of breakaways. However, for breakaways to actually occur, there also appears to have been a requirement for specific subjective conditions to arise, or be present. Important conditions appear to be rising nationalist sentiment and economic advantage. This chapter will assess the underlying factors that distinguish the two labour movements and identify the specific condition that led to actual breakaways. Explaining the occurrence of breakaways, and more generally the philosophical direction taken by the Canadian labour movement, has not been accomplished by resorting to broad economic theory. It appears instead that contextual factors, specific events, and individual responses to these are stronger determinants of both breakaways and the direction the labour movement has taken.

Political Culture

Differences in political culture are often identified as an important component of the explanation for the larger divergence trend that is reflected in union density rates in Canada and the United States. Perhaps the leading proponent of this theoretical position is Seymour Martin Lipset who has examined Canadian-American differences at great length. He suggests that the explanation can be traced to the different origins of the two nations, with the Americans favouring a liberal, individualistic, society whereas Canadians produced a more conservative, collectivist environment. This in turn is reflected in the characteristics of the institutions each country constructs. The more favourable political and legal environment produced in Canada is, in his view, an explanation for the relative success of unions in Canada (Lipset:1990). In an introduction to new edition of an earlier work Lipset suggests that:

The very strength of hierarchical status, traditional religion, and governmental authority in Canada has meant that in a variety of ways, Canadian values fall somewhere between those of Britain and the United States, rather than being almost identical with those of the United States, as I had assumed when working on *Agrarian Socialism*. One consequence of the relative conservatism of Canadian society has been that greater emphasis has been placed on particularist group identifications, especially ethnic and regional, but also to some limited degree, class and status. ... Seemingly, one result of a Canadian society more particularist, more European than the United States, is this greater potential for third parties (1971:xv).

Horowitz (1968) also advances the notion that the support for social democracy in Canada is related to the presence of toryism in Canada's early political culture. These

differences are reflected not only in the political system but in other social institutions as well, and this orientation contributed to marked differences in an array of institutions in the two countries including the legal system, industrial relations system, health care system etc.

Industrial relations analyses also view the political system as playing a role in the divergence but in a more direct way. Industrial relations/economics analyses emerged from the post-War affluence and classlessness era with an economic perspective which could not accommodate class issues and thus favoured deterministic or environmental approaches to explain union divergence. Therefore, the political system in Canada is simply described as more accommodating to labour. Nonetheless, both schools of thought acknowledge distinct differences in political culture between the two countries.

The American Political System

The left in the United States was never able to successfully emerge as a viable political alternative. This is at least partially explained by the infighting and disarray among the parties of the left before the turn of the century. A great deal of effort has been spent in trying to explain the failure of the left and the conservative nature of the American working class. It has been attributed to a variety of causes including the existence of the American frontier, relative prosperity, ethnic heterogeneity, and a fluid social structure (Diggins 173:44). In addition, efforts to organize labour along class lines through the late

1800s and early 1900s were put down with exceptional force, as evidenced in the persecution of the Wobblies and the Haymarket Square riots. Lipset (1971:28) suggests that "the destruction of the Socialist Party during and after the First World War [was the result of] a combination of government persecution and Communist splits."

This lesson was not lost on Samuel Gompers, perhaps the single most influential figure in the history of American labour. His philosophy of 'rewarding friends, punishing enemies, but remaining innocent' and 'pure and simple unionism' is often viewed as the most important explanation for the apolitical nature of the labour movement in the United States.

"Although business and social unionism have deep roots in both Canada and the United States, the mainstream American labour movement consistently rejected the broader concept of unionism, in particular the need for an independent labour political party" (Kumar 1993:158). The divergence between the Canadian and American labour movements is not simply a matter of style, but of substance -- it is related to the functions of unionism. The differences are manifested in the approaches and strategies to organizing the unorganized, collective bargaining and social and political issues by the two labour movements (159)

Even the depths of the Depression in the U.S. could not generate or sustain a viable social democratic movement. Most Americans felt the Depression as an individual, rather than

class experience, and considered unemployment a sign of personal not societal failure.

The public's patience and contrition rather than protest and conflict were an indication of how thoroughly America's working classes had absorbed the values of capitalist individualism (Diggins:108).

Nonetheless, legislation to encourage the growth of unions was enacted in the United States in 1935. The crisis brought on by the Great Depression had shaken, though not destroyed, the belief that the economic growth and prosperity produced by capitalism would provide for all. Although this proactive legislation produced nothing short of spectacular union growth in the United States, it would ultimately not change the underlying position of unions in American society.

Lipset (1990:165) goes on to suggest that:

The 'social democratic tinge' declined under the impetus of the post-War economic miracle, which despite the business cycle and occasional recessions, produced a steadily growing economy, greater in terms of job creation than that in other societies given more recognition for their achievements.

In the post-War years Americans came to view unions in an increasingly negative light.

The association between labour unions and organized crime in the U.S., along with the seemingly frequent criminal prosecution of labour leaders throughout this period, left the American public with an unfortunate and enduring perception of organized labour.

The poor public image of unions is in part a legacy of the relative ascendancy of Samuel Gompers and his successors in the AFL over the

broader social unionism of Walter Reuther and a generation of CIO leaders. Under the leadership of George Meany, the labour movement ceased to be perceived as a champion of social and economic justice by much of the public; indeed in the eyes of some, it became an impediment to this end (Edwards and Podgursky in Kumar 1993: 73)

The apolitical nature of the American labour movement may also have played a significant role in its decline. It is not at all clear whether unions can remain a viable entity without political activity. Comments of Ray Marshall, a former U.S. Secretary of Labor reflect this position:

High performance labour organizations are proactive, not merely reactive. They adopt goals and set agendas; they do not merely respond to agendas set by others. These labour movements are particularly aggressive in asserting workers' interests in international negotiations, events, policies and institutions that affect workers (Marshall in Kumar 1993:69).

At the same time, however, Marshall poses an important question as to whether this type of political activity is even possible in the American context, given the political structures of the United States.

While the debate around political support and the necessity for a labour party continued for years, as labour came to be increasingly identified as just another special interest group in the vast sea of American interest group politics, its slide into irrelevance was virtually assured.

There can be little doubt that organized labour's power to protect and enhance its interest through the political process reached low tide with President Reagan's election... . During the first years of the 1980s, every social institution that labour values has been to some degree threatened (Rehmus in Kumar 1993:72)

In tracing the labour movement from the administration of Roosevelt to that of Ronald Reagan, Troy (1986:107) concludes that the American labour movement is in “a permanent state of decline.”

Clearly much had changed from the time Roosevelt supported legislation that encouraged the practice of collective bargaining in 1935, to Reagan's action to privatize the Air Traffic Control function in 1981, which ultimately led to the deunionization of those workers. This act is often cited as the symbolic culmination of a spectacular decline which saw union density fall from 35 per cent to its current level of just under 15 per cent -- a decline from which it has not yet recovered. Perhaps the seeds of its inevitable decline were sown in these early political failures.

The Canadian Political System

It is clear that the political system in Canada is different and that this difference has been relatively fortuitous for labour. The Canadian left, along with the labour movement, reaped the benefits of a parliamentary political system more tolerant of diversity and the concomitant political and social integration that was made possible. Likewise the existence of a viable social democratic party in Canada is both reflective of a collectivist tradition and evidence of continued support for these traditions.

It should be noted that although the New Democratic Party (NDP) is recognized as the

party of organized labour, it has not enjoyed anything approaching majority support of union members. Nonetheless, it has played an important and effective role for labour at both the federal and, perhaps more importantly, provincial level (where the jurisdictional responsibility for labour legislation resides). The NDP has successfully exercised power in the policy interests of labour either directly as the governing party, or, as in the case at the federal level, acting as the party of social conscience -- an important position in a parliamentary system.

It has also been suggested that when the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) was formed in 1956, that unlike the Americans, it was the reformist social democracy of the CIO tradition and not the business unionism of the AFL that came to dominate the Canadian labour movement. Canadian unions appeared willing to assert a class interest in the political arena, and to use politics proactively rather than instrumentally. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the CIO tradition marginalized in the United States after 1955, had taken root and belatedly flowered within the Canadian labour movement (Lipsig-Mumme 1989:239)

There are also important differences in how enabling legislation came about in the two countries. Americans were given the right, indeed encouraged, to organize through the provision of supportive legislation in the Wagner Act, whereas Canadians continued to struggle for some nine years before achieving equivalent rights in 1944. It has been suggested that the struggle provided unionists with the skills and fortitude to weather the

storms of opposition that were to inevitably follow.

Likewise, unlike the experience in the United States, prosperity did not undermine social democratic electoral strength or union membership in Canada. Moreover, there was no return to the values of classic liberalism in Canada, like there was in post-WWII United States, because there has never been the national tradition (Lipset 1990:168). Nor was there any evidence of the economic retrenchment that occurred in the United States when economic difficulties first surfaced in the late 1960s. In Canada, the labour movement's response to 'the new reality' was sustained resistance despite tight economic integration with the United States. Likewise, Canadians did not follow the anti-progressive political path taken up by many Americans. Elections in Canada through the late sixties and early seventies produced a series of victories for left-leaning and left-dependent governments (Gindin 1995:173).

In an assessment of the differences between the labour movements in the two countries Huxley, Kettler & Struthers (1986:132-3) conclude that the most striking difference between the Canadian and American movements during the past two decades was the increasing importance of more adversarial and political unionism in Canada and that, due to differences in the two political cultures, institutional frameworks and major social values, it is unlikely that this experience is instructive for American unionism.

Perhaps a more forthright illustration of the differences in political culture between the

two countries was captured and quoted in Bob White's autobiography (1988:168) " It sure is different in Canada. In the States the union and Chrysler are lined up against the government. Over here the government lines up with the goddamned union."

Clearly, the American affinity for 'business unionism' along with the lack of political integration has led to their increased vulnerability in the face of competing political and economic interests. The Canadian labour movement, on the other hand, developed a type of socially-oriented, more politically integrated, labour movement that has not suffered anything approaching the same level of decline. Certainly the development of our respective political systems, the influence of the British parliamentary system and more direct immigration from the British Isles.

Finally, it is not as simple as an essentially apolitical labour movement in the U.S., versus a politically charged movement in Canada. Both labour movements had elements of business unionism and social unionism. Both pursued, at least for some period of time, a broader union agenda. The deterioration of the position of organized labour in American society is often traced to a shift in the basic political strategy of the AFL/CIO. However, the rejection of the broader concept of unionism and the need for an independent political party are both influenced by political culture, and the product of that culture. It provides an explanation both for why unions were unable to integrate, and for the type of labour movement that developed, which essentially did not see integration as a goal and instead chose a different path. The foundation on which the labour movement is built, and the

support for the institution in an integrated political and cultural sense appears to be the more important component -- a component which appears to be lacking in the United States, now and possibly always. Finally, it is unlikely that business unionism can effectively survive and prosper in the face of the competing interests of a capitalist system, and that in order to survive, unions require broader political and social goals and agendas.

Legislative Advantage

Industrial relations literature has strongly endorsed the differences in both the scope and administration of labour legislation as the primary explanation for the divergence in union density between Canada and the United States over the last number of years, and a seemingly unlimited number of studies stand ready to reveal the difference in legislation as it currently exists.

For example, Riddell (1993:33-4) describes the differences in inter-country union coverage as pervasive rather than confined to specific sectors of the economy or segments of the labour market and attributes the gap in Canada-U.S. density rates to inter-country differences in the legal regime pertaining to unions and collective bargaining. Block (1993) argues that the relatively high rate of unionization in Canada vis à vis the U.S. is due in large part to the industrial relations legal institutions that differ substantially between Canada and the U.S.

Meltz (1985:322) identifies the two factors that are primarily responsible for both the growth and maintenance of union membership in Canada as federal and provincial legislation which supported and often encouraged the organization of public sector workers plus vigorous labour relations board enforcement of regulations against anti-union practices. Although the unions are not different in their basic structures, functions, and general method of operation, they are different in the context in which they are operating, especially in the political environment and to some extent the social environment. The result has been that Canadian society, on balance, appears to have been more supportive of trade unions and collective bargaining than the United States (329).

While these industrial relations analyses effectively describe the current state of regulation and practice in the labour relations environment in the two countries an examination of the development of the legislation would not necessarily lead to the conclusion that Canada would hold the superior position. Indeed, it could be argued that the legislative framework as it exists today is a product of more fundamental differences inherent in the two labour movements which are revealed by an examination of the historical development of legislation governing labour legislation in the two countries.

American Labour Legislation

Although unions existed prior to 1935 they were limited to representing a small segment of the workforce, one that was predominantly employed in the skilled trades. In 1935, proactive legislation that encouraged unionization was enacted in the U.S. as part of the New Deal measures put in place by President Roosevelt to counteract the devastating effects of the Great Depression. These measures were a response to severe economic crisis and concerns for the potentially destabilizing effects this was having on the American social fabric.

It is difficult to overstate the stimulative impact of this legislation on the labour movement in the United States. " The preamble of the Act unambiguously stated that: it is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States to ...[encourage] the practice and procedure of collective bargaining" (Gross in Kumar 1993:119). The years following implementation of the Wagner Act bore the fruit of that intervention. Union membership quadrupled from 4 million members in 1935 to 16 million in 1948 (Kumar 1993:120).

Very shortly after WWII and the return to prosperity in the United States, the pro-labour stance of U.S. public policy as manifested in the Wagner Act was changed to the neutral guarantor of equal rights, or at least reasonably balanced rights, of labour and management under the Taft-Hartley Amendments of 1947. Taft-Hartley was explicitly designed to re-balance the powers of business and labour. Among its provisions were

restrictions on closed shops and union shops (that would subsequently permit States to implement 'right to work' legislation), prohibition of unfair labour practices on the part of a union (including secondary boycotts, sympathy strikes or picketing), national emergency powers for the President to seek a court injunction to stop a strike for an 80-day cooling off period, prohibitions on both political contributions in connection with federal elections, and strikes by government employees. The purpose of the Act was to protect the rights of individual employees and does not mention collective bargaining (Yates in Kumar 1993:121).

The new public policy emphasis on the protection of individual rights was unambiguously reaffirmed in the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959 which includes a Bill of Rights for union members and provides for government 'interference in the internal affairs of unions'. The Act also included a number of amendments to the National Labour Relations Act that reaffirmed restrictions on union activities in Taft-Hartley including a provision for replacement workers to vote with the bargaining unit in certification or decertification elections within twelve months of a strike, and specified an additional unfair labour practice that involved certain types of organizational picketing (Kumar 1993: 120-123). Moreover, over the past twenty-five years, despite a number of attempts, no legislation has been passed that would be viewed as pro-labour.

Taylor and Dow (1988:105) suggested that:

The American movement remained essentially dependent on a political

environment over which it exercised little control. As a result, it was seriously wounded by right wing reaction to the New Deal which developed in the post-WWII period -- even within Roosevelt's Democratic party.

While it did not take long for the Americans to retreat from their legislative 'experiment' with collectivism in the Wagner Act, to their more traditional emphasis on individual rights in Taft-Hartley (1947) and Landrum-Griffin (1959), perhaps of more importance was the marked tilt of labour policy in favour of employers which was revealed most clearly in the decisions of the National Labour Relations Board (NLRB), particularly during the Reagan era. The result of these decisions was essentially tacit permission to engage in anti-union activities. It has been argued that the existing law and its administration has significantly increased the ability of employers to weaken or avoid unions and has frustrated union attempts to both organize the unorganized and pursue collective bargaining activities effectively.

There has been considerable effort expended in documenting these problems. The literature is replete with charges against the NLRB and courts concerning time delays, weak penalties for violations, and politicization of appointments etc. For example, during the late 1960s and 1970s (the Nixon-Ford-Carter Administrations, between 27 and 29 per cent of the unfair labour practices and representation cases were decided in favour of employers. During the Reagan era, sixty per cent of the cases were decided for employers (Kumar 1993:124). Likewise from 1960 to 1980 the number of unfair labour practices rose four fold. In 1957 the NLRB order the reinstatement of 922 militants fired

for union activity. In 1980, 10,000 militants were reinstated (Lipsig-Mumme 1989:242)

Employer recourse to union-avoidance specialists has also risen dramatically:

A study of organizing campaigns in the private sector shows that 95 per cent of employers actively resisted unionization and 75 per cent of all employers hired so-called 'labour-management consultants' to guide their efforts to avoid unionization at an estimated cost of \$1,000,000,000 annually (AFL-CIO in Lipsig-Mumme:241).

By 1985 the AFL-CIO effectively summed up these difficulties;

The norm is that unions now face employers who are bent on avoiding unionization at all costs and who are left largely free to do so by a law that has proven to be impotent and a Labour Board that is inert (AFL-CIO in Kumar 1993:125)

Lipsig-Mumme goes further to suggest that it is not just the failure of the law to fulfil its historic role as facilitator of the unionization of workers who want to be unionized and the failure of legal protection for workers who have opted for unionization, because enforcement of the existing laws would not be sufficient. Equally important is the inability of the unions to secure mechanisms for buttressing and modernizing a legal framework that must, by its nature, evolve if it is to remain effective. In other words, "we are in the presence of more than the failure of the law: this is also the failure of the union movement's ability to influence the state" (1989:242).

Canadian Labour Legislation

The Canadian experience proved to be quite different. Although unionized workers accounted for a similarly small portion of the labour force before 1930, it would be some years before Canadians acquired the type of legislation embodied in the Wagner Act. Nonetheless, the legislative changes in 1935 in the United States were not without their effect on Canadian workers as well.

By 1937, the news of CIO successes was spreading rapidly across the border. This news was particularly relevant to those employed in Canadian branches of U.S. corporations and played an important role in stimulating the growth of unions in these firms. Union membership in Canada increased by nearly 37 per cent between 1935 and 1938 (Taylor and Dow 1988:13). So although:

Canada did not have a New Deal, by way of the CIO, the American working class essentially shared its victory with Canadians. The CIO provided the opening that let Canadians move on to their own victories. When the autoworkers in Flint and across the American Mid-west -- who were in a position to win -- took on General Motors, the Canadian border couldn't block the power, excitement, and implications of that victory (Gindin 1995:45).

Canadians finally achieved a legislative framework that was modelled on the Wagner Act in 1944 with the promulgation of PC 1003. When jurisdiction for labour matters reverted to the provinces following WWII, essentially similar legislation was enacted in all provinces.

Much has been made of the context in which this labour legislation was developed.

Canadians did not acquire this legislation until 1944. Unlike the American experience it was not bestowed on labour as an external act, but was instead acquired through considerable strife and struggle. Moreover, it was not enacted in response to a crisis of capitalism, but was won instead in response to intense labour action in relatively prosperous times towards the end of WWII. It is suggested that these differences are reflected in the nature of the legislation. Canadian legislation was not designed to be facilitative of unionization, rather it was designed to encourage labour peace and Canadian labour legislation is often described as extremely codified and prescribed.

In sharp contrast to the developments in the United States, with few exceptions, public policy in Canada since the promulgation of PC 1003 has been increasingly supportive of collective bargaining and has played an important role in facilitating union representation of workers and the protection of their collective bargaining rights. Recent legislative changes strengthening the role of unions and the practice of collective bargaining include automatic dues check-off at the request of the union, first contract arbitration, and anti-scab provisions. Today, Canadian labour legislation and its administration differs markedly from U.S. legislation in many respects (Meltz:1985). Likewise there is little evidence of the type of concerted effort to avoid legislation that is rampant in the U.S. This has been attributed to cultural differences as well as the lack of opportunity to avoid unions due to union vigilance in actively lobbying for legislative protection and effective government action in enforcing them.

It was probably not just a coincidence that the legislative protection for unions did not survive in the U.S. One could argue that they were never strongly supported, did not correspond with their traditional cultural values, were imposed externally by legislative action in response to economic crisis and in turn were almost immediately retrenched.

The CIO in the United States was the product of this progressive public policy environment -- not its creator. The Canadian CIO on the other hand took root in a hostile climate. One of its primary objectives was to change the political structure -- a necessary condition for its survival and growth. In its ultimately successful pursuit of this goal, the Canadian movement acquired an independent character never realized by its American counterpart and established its legitimacy as an active participant in the political system (Taylor & Dow 1988:104-106).

Finally, as John Calvert (in Kumar 1993:145) emphasises "varying labour laws do not fall from the sky; they reflect the prevailing norms and mores of the wider society" or as Bowden notes, "it can plausibly be argued that Canadian and American differences in labour law reflect differences in underlying values (in Kumar 1993:147). The same argument has been made with respect to corporate behaviour regarding anti-union activities.

Differences between the Canadian and American labour movements were always present. The political culture within which unions developed played an important role in defining or producing structures that encouraged or supported these differences. The influence of socially-oriented British policy in Canadian politics, along with the adoption of a more accommodating parliamentary political system were important components. Likewise, it

has been suggested that the immigration of British trade unionists to Canada played an equally important role in influencing the culture and direction of the developing labour movement in Canada, and perhaps continues to with many of our current trade union leaders hailing from the British Isles. On the other hand, the political failure of the American left and the American labour movement in the face of a dominant and pervasive liberal, individualistic cultural philosophy, produced an ill-fated business unionism that proved unable to withstand adversity. The legislative environment that flowed from the respective political cultures provides clear evidence of the different outcomes that evolved from what originated as substantially similar legislation, clearly the product of and reflective of the dominant political culture.

While the differences between the Canadian and American labour movements were increasingly being revealed in relation to these fundamental underlying factors, it would require a change in subjective conditions to ultimately set the labour movements in the two countries off on separate paths. Two factors that were connected with these events, nationalism and economic advantage, will next be examined.

Nationalism

Although there is not a great deal of information on the specifics of breakaways except in the case of the more recent split of the Autoworkers, the history of the labour movement in Canada has many examples of the expression of nationalist sentiment and indeed

nationalist movements that ultimately faded or failed. The nationalism that emerged in the 1960s, however, would result in profound changes in Canadian society broadly and in the Canadian labour movement specifically.

The mid-1960's, revealed the emergence of a force in Canada that was to have an impact on the existing political, economic and cultural institutions as never before. It is probably not surprising then, that these developments coincided with the period of most intense breakaway activity. The role that nationalism played in the Canadianization of the labour movement, however, is a complicated one.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the period of uninterrupted American prosperity was coming to an abrupt end in the 1960's. On the domestic front, the post-War tranquillity would be broken by the assassination of President Kennedy and both the student and civil rights movements. The War in Vietnam, however, would prove to have perhaps the most enduring negative consequences and would arguably lead to the most profound change in the relationship between Canada and the United States, both directly and indirectly.

Although Canada had probably begun to assess its role as a nation somewhat earlier, the process of self-examination was certainly propelled forward by the obvious decline of the American empire. Concern over the extent of foreign investment was first demonstrated in the pipeline debates in 1956. The birth of nationalism in Canada is often attributed to

the Diefenbaker era which began in 1957⁸. This process of evaluation of foreign, and more particularly, American, investment in Canada would continue for some time and would become the focus of a number of studies commissioned by the governments of the day, including for example the Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (Gordon Report), Foreign Investment Review Committee (Wahn Report), and the Watkins Report.

As the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War and the associated domestic turmoil played itself out, often on Canadian television, Canadians had ample reason to re-examine their relationship with the U.S. Moreover, the financial pressure that supporting this war was placing on the U.S., would see them resort to a series of protectionist trade policies.

Finally in 1971, with the American running their first trade deficit since 1878, Canada failed, for the first time, to obtain an exemption from these policies. Our 'special relationship' with the U.S. was apparently over.

The Centennial year in Canada also played an important role in Canada's collective journey of self-evaluation. The Centennial edition of Maclean's Magazine revealed that 60 per cent of investment was vulnerable to the increasingly restrictive economic policies implemented in the U.S.A. Laxer (1976:111-112) presents evidence of the dramatic change in Canadian's attitudes throughout this period. While only 27 per cent of

⁸ Excellent examples of the concerns of these times are reflected in *Lament for a Nation* by George Grant, that warned of the defeat of Canadian nationalism, perhaps even nationhood, at the feet of the aggressive American empire and *Silent Surrender* in which Kari Levitt raises concerns over Canada's loss of control over its economy to multi-national corporations.

Canadians thought that their way of life was being too heavily influenced by the U.S. in 1956, 53 per cent expressed this opinion ten years latter. 80 per cent of Canadians thought that relations with the U.S. were good or excellent in 1955, whereas by 1974 this had declined to 54 per cent. By 1972, almost as many Canadians considered this country to be a colony of the U.S. as thought it to be a partner. Likewise, in 1969, a Toronto Star survey revealed that 43 per cent of Canadians felt that U.S. ownership was good rather than bad; by 1972 the situation had reversed, 47 per cent to 38 per cent (Hackett 1980:5)

The downward spiral would continue for the Americans for some time to come.

Throughout the 1970s, the U.S. struggled with rampant inflation, largely the result of financing the increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam with public debt rather than current taxation. The first oil shock following the commencement of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 pushed the United States into recession. Difficult economic times would continue under the Carter Administration and the price increases that resulted from the second oil shock would push the U.S. into a spiral of recession after recession that was to continue throughout the late 1970s.

Canada, on the other hand, seemed to be moving in the opposite direction. With the NDP holding the balance of power in Canada following the 1972 election, successive Liberal governments in 1972 and 1974, would respond to deteriorating economic conditions and the nationalist challenge by shifting their focus away from the U.S. towards the so-called 'European option.' Domestic policies such as the establishment of the Foreign Investment

Review Agency (FIRA), and later, the National Energy Program and Petro Canada were the result of this new policy direction.

The Waffle

The nationalist challenge was nowhere more profound than within the New Democratic Party, which with the emergence of the Waffle in 1969, was being pushed even further down the nationalist path. For the Waffle, protection of Canadian independence from American economic, cultural and political penetration was an urgent priority (Hacket 1980:12). The Waffle produced an ideological fusion of nationalism and socialism, and some felt, anti-Americanism.

Hacket (1980) describes the labour movement's reaction to Waffle policy as mixed. Clearly labour had difficulty with what it considered the extreme nationalist, anti-American position advanced by the Waffle. Perhaps more importantly, the Waffle's nationalism, and especially its eventual support for independent Canadian unions, were an anathema to the heads of Canadian sections of international unions, still dominant at the time. It was perhaps more disappointing, however, to realize that, in the end, the majority of rank and file unionists did not support the Waffle and their extreme policies and that more generally unions in English Canadian have never supported a serious political challenge to corporate capitalism.

Perhaps most importantly, Penner suggests that:

The Waffle was possible because of widespread dissent within the U.S. against the war. The sectarian groups in Canada whether Trotskyist or CP, and before them the left liberals of the teach-in movement, brought the anti-war movement to Canada... . The Waffle at the margin of the empire, translated that anti-imperialist sentiment of the centre into nationalism (in Hackett 1980:4).

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Clearly, unions were cognizant of the pressures from nationalist forces within their ranks.

The labour movement also became involved in this process of reexamination and the delegates to the 8th constitutional convention of the CLC in 1970 adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the international unions have contributed to the establishment growth and success of the trade union movement in Canada;

Whereas there is a growing tendency towards a Canadian identity in the social and economic sectors of our society;

Be it resolved that the Canadian Labour Congress adopt a firm policy supporting minimum standards of self-government of the Canadian sections of international unions; and

Be it further resolved that these standards include: election of Canadian officers by Canadians; policies to deal with national affairs to be determined by the elected Canadian officers and/or members; Canadian elected representatives to have authority to speak for the union in Canada; and

Be it further resolved that the Canadian Labour Congress do all in its power to assist the affiliated unions in the attainment of these objectives (Bauer 1972:3).

Following the passage of these resolutions and in the face of the continuing nationalist threat, a survey of membership in the Spring of 1972 revealed that while a majority of Canadian sections of international unions enjoyed an adequate degree of autonomy, several unions still had some way to go. This in turn resulted in further measures being taken at the 10th Constitutional Convention conference where two additions were made to autonomy rules. The standards of self-government were now to include:

Whereas an international union is affiliated to an international trade secretariat, the Canadian section of that union should be affiliated separately to ensure a Canadian presence and voice at the international industry level; and

That the international unions take what ever action is necessary to ensure that the Canadians membership will not be prevented by constitutional requirements or policy decisions from participating in the social cultural, economic and political life of the Canadian community (Canadian Labour June 1974).

The CLC's efforts to stem the tide saw not only the implementation but the strengthening of minimum standards of self-government. It also actively defended against breakaways with the expenditure of \$1,000,000 on a campaign to organize blue collar workers and head off breakaways from international unions. List (Labour Gazette July 1973) suggested that the CLC's campaign was an attempt to ward off the Council of Canadian Unions, a collection of staunchly nationalist unions, which in previous years had gained considerable strength in the west. He also reported that CLC president Donald MacDonald had acknowledged that a strong sense of nationalism has been a major factor in breakaway movements.

Difficult economic times in the U.S. also led to a series of protectionist measures in specific industries that had negative consequences for Canadian members of international unions. Burke-Hartke legislation that was designed to restrict imports for example, fuelled "the controversy over protectionist measures that is dividing the North American labour movement" (Catta 1973:266). More recently, protectionist legislation in the U.S. steel industry from which Canadian members were not exempted sparked much the same response with renewed calls for autonomy for the Canadian section of the USWA (Davie:1993).

The CLC's policies reveal much the same pattern. In an interesting analysis of the CLC's journey from continentalism to economic nationalism, Smith (1992) points to a fundamental transformation that occurred from the 1960s era of relatively high levels of economic growth, high wages, and low levels of unemployment that had worked to ensure union acquiescence in the structure of continentalism, to the early eighties, when workers were being laid off in foreign-owned companies. With the deindustrialization process beginning and the transient nature of multi-national capital becoming increasingly apparent, economic nationalism would prove to be the more appealing option for affiliates.

While in the sixties, protecting union members from job loss had meant defending continentalism; in the eighties, job protection meant economic nationalism. The cost benefit calculus of unions was however similar in both periods (Smith:38).

Leadership of the CLC remained steadfast for sometime however, irrespective of the

increasing challenge to its continentalist perspective. The position of the CLC was well reflected by the often quoted comments of William Dodge, head of the CLC at that time, who, in responding to the rising nationalist forces, both within the labour movement and in the Waffle, stated that "nationalism never put a penny in the workers pockets and it never will." The CLC and the dominant international union influence were convinced that breaking ties with the U.S. would be committing economic suicide. Clearly the CLC could see no benefit in embarking on an esoteric nationalist path and would instead continue its efforts to improve the lot of workers through supporting the expansion of the welfare state.

The deepening economic crisis in Canada would reveal the government's traditional economic policies as inadequate, and in the face of uncontrollable inflation through the early to mid-1970s, the government imposed legislated wage controls for the first time in 1975. This action was not only proof that Labour had insufficient political strength, but it also challenged their traditional policy position of supporting the expansion of a Keynesian welfare state.

Support for the Liberal government's nationalist policies throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, and subsequent opposition to the Conservative government's continentalist agenda, which included the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the dismantling of FIRA, confirmed that the CLC had largely accepted the economic analysis of the nationalists. It was also in direct contrast to their position on the establishment of FIRA in 1973 when

the positive effects of foreign investment were emphasised.

Smith concludes that labour's position on economic nationalism had undergone a dramatic shift over a twenty year period and suggests that:

The 1975 wage intervention [wage and price controls] as the key moment in the transformation of the CLC...although state intervention in collective bargaining was the critical precipitating event that moved the Congress from Keynesianism to post-Key in the seventies, broader issues of economic restructuring, highlighted by the 1981-82 recession, caused the Congress to reevaluate its traditional stand on the issues of continentalism (Smith 1992:56).

She goes on to qualify the CLC's form of economic nationalism as a product of a decentralized and weak confederation allied to an ineffective social democratic party.

Clearly factors other than the 'key moment' played a significant role in the CLC's journey to nationalism. The early breakaways and more importantly the impressive growth of national public sector unions were tipping the balance in favour of national union representation within the CLC. Likewise the comparatively poor performance of American labour throughout this period amplified these effects.

Carla Lipsig-Mumme (1989) also examines the effect of economic crises and details the differences in the American and Canadian response and suggests that the process in Canada was a much more active one. Canadians were not just reacting to government policy and deindustrialization, but were taking an active stance against what they feared was the ossification of 'parent' American unionism in the 1960s. Furthermore, this

Canadianization, which began as a process of restructuring around national priorities, was to have a great effect on the maintaining of Canadian union power during the economic crisis of the 1980s.

Structural decolonization occurred in two waves. First the rapid and sustained growth of public sector unions in the 1960s, which were Canadian national, rather than the United States based international, reduced the proportion and importance of United States affiliation within the CLC. Second, during the 60s and 70s important manufacturing sector union branches in Canada disaffiliated from their United States parents. Likewise competition between Canadian and American members of the same union for disappearing jobs was a further catalyst for Canadian branch unions to declare their independence from the United States parent (Lipsig-Mumme:251-2).

Clearly an array of interactive social and economic factors contributed to the increased autonomy of the Canadian labour movement through this period.

Quebec

The labour movement in Quebec was always different than that in the rest of Canada. Initially the labour movement was dominated by confessional unions that were both nationalistic and religious in orientation, and that were strongly opposed international unions, having defined them as secular, materialistic and foreign.

While the religious orientation of the CSN eventually disappeared, the nationalist orientation remained strong and this focus is reflected in the operation of all unions in

Quebec. Smucker (1980:230) suggests Quebec alone "has been faced with a social movement of nationalism directed not towards traditionalism and rural values, but one tied directly to and allied with the process of industrialization."

The secularization process that occurred as Quebec modernized was equally profound and it produced what has been referred to as "a relatively radical working class and intelligentsia" (Panitch and Swartz 1993:16). The specific historical and cultural environment in which Quebec developed would assure the survival of the nationalist sentiment and this sentiment would find its most ardent expression in the labour movement throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s.

One of the most important differences in the labour movement in Quebec was the successful and enduring link between nationalism and socialism. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s the CSN, with the support of nationalist sentiment both inside and outside the labour movement, pushed an emerging socialist agenda faster and further than the labour movement in the rest of Canada. Although the promise of this nationalistic socialist ground swell would ultimately dissolve in the turmoil of a general strike in 1972, the orientation of unions in Quebec played an important role in encouraging and supporting the expression of nationalism in the rest of the labour movement. Some of the earliest breakaways had a significant portion of their membership in Quebec (e.g. Fraternité interprovincial des ouvriers en Québec in 1972, Canadian Paperworkers Union in 1974). The labour movement in Quebec continues to be an important progressive

influence and its structural characteristics remains unique, even within the CLC.

Public Sector Unionization

The developments in Quebec also influenced the rest of the labour movement. The events that led to the right to organize in the federal public sector in 1967 have in fact been attributed to that same development in Quebec in 1965. What Panitch and Swartz (1993:16) attribute to the belated settlement with labour that occurred at the conclusion of the 'ancien regime', the basis of this settlement was the extension of collective bargaining rights to Quebec's public sector workers in 1965. Pressure from Quebec was a powerful boost to the growing insistence of federal public sector workers for bargaining rights. Collective bargaining rights for federal public sector workers were achieved in 1967 following the recommendation of the Heeny Commission that had been appointed to examine the question.

The rapid growth and growing strength of public sector unionization dramatically changed the composition of the labour movement and would in turn play an important role in the formation of a critical mass that would subsequently allow others in the labour movement to view national affiliation as a viable option.

Public sector bargaining has a longer and more contentious and confrontational history in Canada than in the U.S. at both the federal and provincial levels.

Public sector unionism made a greater quantitative difference in Canada than in the U.S., and it also appears to have made a greater qualitative difference, strengthening the elements of aggressiveness and competitiveness in the movement. The Canadian labour mobilization of the mid-1960s which changed the condition of private sector unionism as well, is unthinkable without the activities of employees in the public sector (Huxley 1986:126).

The Auto Workers

Although perhaps realizing its strongest expression in the public sector and in Quebec, nationalism was also emerging as a potent force in private sector workplaces in English Canada in the 1960s. Although the character of the emerging nationalism reflected anti-Vietnam War and anti-American sentiment, it was expressed mainly in economic terms and the existence and influence of international unions, with respect to both industrial and political strategy was hotly debated.

Gindin (1995:155) suggests that "the nationalism differed from American flag-waving because Canada wasn't a superpower intent on making the world safe for American capitalism. In fact, Canada's sovereignty was based on finding a way to escape the domination of that superpower and to prevent it from stifling Canadian potential."

The effect of nationalism would again be examined in the 1980s with the split of the Canadian Auto Workers. Although circumstances had changed dramatically from what existed in the 1960s, the assessment of the impact of nationalist sentiment at that time

remained strikingly similar. In describing the events leading to the breakaway Gindin concludes that:

The split and nationalist sentiments were a consequence of defending workers, not goals in themselves. Similarly when nationalism was used, it was a tactic designed to isolate the American companies rather than to motivate workers. Or it was extended as a justification for the differences in attitudes towards the bargaining process: Canada was a different country so there were tolerable reasons why it might wish to do things differently. In fact, the Canadian leadership was concerned that a narrow nationalism was a real danger to the Canadian union. (Gindin 1989:77)

So the impact of nationalist sentiment on breakaways was a powerful, but complicated one. It is directly implicated in the breakaways that occurred particularly in the earlier period from the early to mid-1970s. Nationalist sentiment appeared to be a particularly powerful incentive to breakaway in both British Columbia and Quebec, although its impact was felt throughout the labour movement in Canada. The CLC felt compelled to respond to the nationalist pressures on two occasions through this period.

The rise in nationalism in the 1960s played a role in defining Canada as a nation. This was furthered by the events in Quebec as well as the activities of the public sector. In conclusion it could be argued that the nationalism that emerged in the 1960s in concert with the realization of nationhood in Canada contributed to a process that changed the character and composition of the labour movement. National unions were soon to gain enough strength and influence within the Canadian labour to shift the balance of power away from the internationals. The development of this critical mass would henceforth secure the position of national unions as a viable and achievable option. At the same

time, however, it should be noted that the process, coincided with, and was fuelled by the decline of the American empire both in social and economic terms.

Economic Advantage

Economic advantage is also often identified as a primary explanation for breakaways. The perception of relative economic advantage can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. At the local level, friction often occurred over whether Canadians were provided with service judged equal to the level of union dues they were paying.

In the broader sense, economic conditions which were never identical, were at times dramatically different. It can be argued that protecting the relative economic advantage of higher wages that accompanied earlier unionization in the U.S. had a direct effect on international organization in Canada, as an effort to protect American wage levels from low wage competition. At various points in the economic history of the two countries, these relative advantages would have an impact on the development of unionization.

It is difficult to make direct linkages between union behaviour and the general economic conditions prevailing in either country, although it is possible to suggest that these conditions played a role in the decisions individuals made with respect to their economic welfare. On the other hand, the more detailed analysis of the Auto Workers split from the international has provided evidence that strongly suggests that relative economic

advantage was the primary consideration. Nonetheless, economic frictions arose with some frequency throughout the history of the relationship between the labour movements in the two countries and had some considerable effect on breakaways.

Union Services Issues

At a more basic level, there is evidence to suggest that dissatisfaction with the international structure of unions in Canada was often expressed at the local or membership level over the issues of some failing on the part of the international that was almost always related to the control or usage of the financial assets of the unions. This would apply to what service was received for dues paid and became critical when it applied to the use of the strike fund. Another important aspect was the use of trusteeships to control 'renegade' Canadian locals of international unions.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s disputes over dues were, at the least an expression of dissatisfaction, at most the direct cause of disaffiliations.

Indeed, poor representation service, not just at the bargaining table, but in regard to all aspects of contract administration, is frequently the reason given by breakaway groups. Other resentments -- over dues increases, staff appointments, personality clashes or ideological infighting -- also figure prominently in breakaway movements. Nevertheless lack of service is the fundamental catalyst (Rotstien & Lax 1974:161).

Likewise a great deal of effort was put into attempting to calculate the net worth of the

services provided for dues paid and indeed what should be part of the equation. Not surprisingly, the Americans favoured a broad calculation that included substantial indirect costs including in most instances the substantial cost of the initial organizing campaign. Canadians, on the other hand, favoured a narrower approach that restricted cost benefit analyses to current expenditures on identifiable services. The Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act (CALURA) report that provided details on union financial status was introduced in 1961. Although disputed from their inception, the statistics were frequently used by opponents of American unionism -- notably the Canadian Council of Unions -- to encourage breakaways and the formation of independent unions.

Articles documenting union dues collected from Canadian locals compared to expenditures in Canada were frequent. Finn reported that "In the six years for which records have been kept, the internationals are reported to have collected \$166,322,000 in Canada, while pumping back \$98,253,000" (1970:770), and later concluded that, "The fact is that, in the aggregate, the flow of dues money across the border is substantially in favour of the American unions" (Finn 1973:9). Likewise (Slotnick in Dawes 1988:46) in examining this issue concludes that "it does appear that during the period from 1962 to 1984, international unions have taken more resources out of Canada than they have put in." Although considerable effort has been directed towards the proper calculation of these expenditures, it should be emphasized that the perception is far more significant than the actual number, and clearly this information was having an impact on international union members' assessment of their union status. The two efforts to stem

the tide of rising nationalism and breakaways that the CLC undertook in the early 1970s, as discussed earlier, were in part, directed at addressing these financial concerns.

Concession Bargaining

With Canadian and American union members both benefitting from strong economic performance up to the mid-1970s, financial concerns were largely focussed on service issues. Differences with respect to broader economic goals were becoming apparent, however, as the economic crisis deepened throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. The arguably more important component of relative economic advantage, that is to be in a position to negotiate richer contracts, would soon emerge and this aspect received a great deal of attention with respect to the Auto Workers split.

The integrated nature of the auto industry has led to comparative analyses of costs and benefits over a long period of time, and industrial relations analyses have examined a wide range of elements that are part of this equation, such as currency exchange rates, labour costs etc. The divergence in collective bargaining 'approaches and outcomes' which 'precipitated' the split are analyzed in great depth, for example in Holmes and Kumar (1991) and Katz and Holmes (1993), where the relative advantages of the Canadian position are highlighted. The general conclusions reached are reflected as follows:

However we maintain that the principal factor, which both enabled and

shaped the development of a distinct bargaining agenda in Canada and gave the Canadian membership the strength and confidence to achieve their goals was the different economic conditions faced by the industry on both sides of the border. In turn, these different economic conditions were the result of uneven development within the industry during a period of fundamental and far-reaching industrial change (Holmes and Rusonik 1990:31).

While these types of analyses are limited by their failure to examine how the union arrived at this point, they identify a quantifiable element implicated in the breakaway phenomenon. Moreover, these analyses cannot be generalized to account for other instances because, over the history of the operation of international unions, one or the other party often found itself in a position of relative economic strength. Bob White, for example, indicates that the Auto Workers could have and did pursue different bargaining agendas in the past while within the international structure. The changes that were occurring within the two unions were greater than that, however, and they revealed something about the differences in character between the two labour movements that would prove to be fundamentally incompatible (White: 1988).

There is no question that the United States had, since the late sixties, experienced a relative loss in stature as international competition eroded its once dominant status, and that through the 1970s it struggled with the worst economic and social crisis in its history. Although this was no doubt apparent to Canadian unionists at the time, little is written on whether the decline in American economic standing played a role in early breakaways. There are some indications, that the rising Canadian nationalism in the early 1970s, particularly for a union with a significant Quebec membership, coupled with the poor

performance of the American union in contract negotiations, had some influence over the decision of the Canadian Paperworkers to split from the international in 1974 (Hamilton 1974: Duff 1994). However, when difficult economic circumstances were once again dramatically evident in the U.S. in the 1980s:

The most important unions in the private sector embraced decentralization and defensive accommodation, identifying with the crisis of domestic capital and preparing to concede working conditions and acquired rights in order to make national capital competitive once again (Lipsig-Mumme:244).

The extent and effect of concession bargaining in the United States was quite remarkable. All told in 1982, in eight major manufacturing sectors, 30 to 50 per cent of the collective agreements included some kind of 'give back'. A Business Week survey in 1982 concluded that "11 per cent of the employers successfully negotiating concessions had not needed them to remain competitive" (Kochan in Lipsig-Mumme:244-5). Likewise, a number of studies have concluded that the incidence of concessions has been much less in Canada than in the U.S. In a thorough examination of union concessions in the U.S., (Bell in Kumar 1993:94-5) concludes that " by 1985 concessionary bargaining had spread from a few troubled industries to virtually all industries... [and that] concessionary contracts in the mid-1980s exceeded 'normal' levels." Bell goes on to suggest that a possible interpretation of these results is that "the continuation of union concessions into the late stages of the economy's expansion reflects a weakening of union influence in the face of longer term changes in the bargaining environment".

It was within this environment that Canadian members of the Auto Workers found themselves in the early 1980s. It was the different response to this crisis and, more specifically the factors that allowed the Canadians to have a different response, that are important, and these factors go well beyond a position of economic strength in relation to a particular round of bargaining. Although it was an economic crisis and the Canadian's superior economic position in relation to that crisis that led to the immediate frictions, it was a whole series of quite distinct historical, cultural, political and social differences, along with past choices on the part of Canadians that created the conditions that allowed them to exercise different options when faced with this crisis.

It would certainly have been extremely difficult for the UAW to avoid losses in this period. But losses are one thing -- workers don't always have the strength to win their demands -- and concession bargaining is another. This new direction was not defined by its defeats, but by the refusal to fight, and the rationalization of those defeats as "victories." The UAW had over the years, suffered a major decline in its ability to act as a social movement; now it was surrendering its most basic role as a bargaining agent. A temporary defeat (lower wages) therefore became a long-term change in direction (selling concessions) (Gindin 1995:185).

There is no doubt that the Canadians were in a position of relative economic advantage vis à vis their American counterparts in the auto industry. It did not, however, exempt them from the path towards concessions. While establishing what level of concessions were required, if they were required at all, proved difficult to do with any degree of certainty, it was clear that an atmosphere of profound and pervasive resignation was present in the American labour movement. Concession bargaining had moved well beyond an event based on exceptional and temporary circumstances and, moreover, concessions were being endorsed by the UAW as part a 'strategy towards strength'.

In the end, identification with capitalist interests and participation in concession bargaining proved to be a less than successful strategy. The subsequent significant job loss and massive deunionization in the U.S. throughout the 1980s appeared to confirm that. Moreover, if the concessions strategy was simply a temporary response to a serious economic crisis, the losses should have subsided with the improved American economic performance of the late 1980s. Since this has clearly not occurred, it is indeed likely that while economic advantage could be considered a precipitating event with respect to breakaways, something larger was occurring.

Finally, the factors that precipitated breakaways are at one level specific to each event. At another level, however, they can be linked to a number of contextual factors, including rising nationalist sentiment in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the first series of breakaways began to occur, and later to the relative economic position that Canadian union members enjoyed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At the same time, these events are grounded in broader underlying factors that have profoundly influenced the relative development and strength of the labour movement in each country; the more supportive political culture and political system in Canada, and related to this, the more supportive legislative framework that flowed from this political system.

Clearly there were different objective conditions in the two countries and it could be argued that these differences had grown more profound over time. Unions in the two countries had been operating in different political and legislative milieux from the

beginning. While this would play a role in the development of the relative strengths and resources of the American and Canadian labour movements, it would not produce a serious challenge to the international union structure. Rather, it would take a change in subjective conditions. Canadian's perception of their association with the Americans; concerns over foreign control, opposition to American politics and society, and such disturbing displays as the Vietnam War, race riots, the assassination of President Kennedy, served to convince Canadians generally of the disadvantages of association with the U.S. The nationalist sentiment generated throughout the 1960s went further to challenge the very basis for social and economic linkages with the U.S. Canadians began to view themselves as separate and more or less distinctive for the first time.

Nationalist interests would be submerged by deteriorating economic conditions in Canada as the late 1970s and early 1980s unfolded. By the time the Auto Workers split in 1985, economic considerations had become more significant role while the role of nationalism had become as Gindin suggests "defensive" -- merely a rationale for a different approach. For a number of reasons, including union membership strength and political strength, unions in Canada played a far more important role than in the U.S. and were more fully integrated, both politically and socially. The American unionists under siege, were almost entirely without resources to defend against the challenges that the economic crisis would present.

Therefore, while the structure of international national unions were similar in the two

countries, the context in which they evolved and operated was different and became increasingly different over time. This was due in part to the existence of different political systems, as well as to the legislation that flowed from this. Nonetheless, these factors always existed, and it was not until specific more subjective conditions emerged that breakaways began to occur. The labour movements in Canada and the U.S. were somewhat different from their inception and these differences generated conflicts from time to time. These factors, however, were not enough to endanger the international structure. The pressure caused by rising nationalism through the early 1970s, and economic advantage through the 1980s apparently were.

The next and final chapter will summarize the historical factors that gave rise to international unions and the factors associated with their decline. A broader sociological perspective will address the inherent weakness in the theoretical treatments of both international unions and more specifically breakaways. Finally, the chapter will comment briefly on the influences and pressure on unions today, what this is likely to produce, and what type of future research might best illuminate the changes under way in this area.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This analysis had traced the historical development of the labour movement in Canada and more particularly, the rise to prominence, and subsequent decline, of international unions. The development of the labour movement in Canada is, of course, closely tied to that of the American labour movement. Labour legislation in Canada was modelled first on British, and later on American legislation. Thus, one might expect the labour movement that developed in this country to exhibit a high degree of similarity to these models.

It should also be noted that the growth of unionization beyond a small portion of the labour force coincided with Britain's declining influence following the First World War, rising American interest in the Canadian economy, increased support for broad continentalist policies and, finally, the development of industrial unions. The established American labour movement undoubtedly exerted a strong influence on the development, operation and, perhaps, the philosophy of Canada's nascent labour movement and the similar peoples, cultures, and economies that existed in the two countries served to encourage this process.

The process, however, was not an altogether smooth one. Chapter 2 presented evidence of numerous conflicts that arose between the two labour movements practically from the

inception of the institution of international unions. Moreover, these conflicts arose, with respect to goals and expectations, as well as in relation to political systems and culture. This in turn suggests that analyses of international unionism have tended to reflect a greater degree of homogeneity between the parties than actually existed.

At the same time, these differences were apparently not incompatible with the successful operation of international unions such that until end of the 1960s, the integrity of the international union structure was never seriously challenged. However, between 1970 and 1990, the relative positions of international and national unions would almost completely reverse. In a twenty year span, national union representation would overtake and replace international unions as the dominant form of representation of union members in Canada. This analysis has been primarily concerned with accounting for this development.

Clearly, as discussed in the introduction to this analysis, a number of factors played important roles with respect to the transformation of the labour movement in this country, including deindustrialization, growth in public sector employment and breakaways of the Canadian membership of international unions. While the first, and perhaps especially the second, factor played important roles in transforming the labour movement from an international to a national one, only breakaways suggest the existence of some fundamental difference between what appeared on the surface to be, and what was often described as, a singular and essentially identical labour movement operating in both

Canada and the U.S. Thus, this analysis undertook to examine and explain breakaways and discuss the broader significance of this phenomenon to the labour movement in Canada as it exists today.

International Unionism

International unions are a structure unique to Canada, and their development and persistence has been the subject of some interest. Indeed a great deal of effort has been spent in developing economic theories that seek to present international unions as they exist(ed) in Canada as a natural and positive occurrence, or conversely, a wholly negative aberration. This takes one of two forms, 1) international unions are seen as natural and positive in that they effectively oppose international capital and potentially set the standard for a worldwide truly international labour movement or 2) Canada's more British, collectivist, traditions would have seen it develop a more class-based, less wage-conscious, union structure in the absence of the overwhelming American influence. Although both of these theoretical positions are viable, they have not been particularly useful or informative as applied to the phenomenon of international unions in Canada. For example, the development of 'Gomperist' internationalism, encouraged by proximity, similar peoples, markets and a lack of nationalistic antagonism, would only be advantageous in terms of gaining organizational size-efficiencies and preventing wage competition within industries or sectors and could only exist under very narrow circumstances. On the other hand, that unions were superimposed in Canada on an

existing capitalist structure in the absence of a strong-class based tradition, makes the development of cross-national, class-based, socialist associations unlikely, here or elsewhere. So, while there is little evidence (although considerable conjecture) to support the assertion that a unique and presumably different Canadian labour movement was either consciously or unconsciously thwarted in the process of the development of international unions in Canada, it was quite definitely influenced by the dominant partner to the relationship and there were both benefits and costs that flowed from the association with the Americans. Furthermore, the theories that exist have not been entirely successful in accounting for either the development or decline of international unions in Canada.

Thus, rather than engage in debate as to whether the process of unionization in Canada was an aberration or not, or what might have happened had Canada not been geographically situated next to the U.S., this paper has taken a more direct approach in examining the history of international unions in Canada and the U.S. to identify which factors are critical to the phenomenon arising, and which are likely to have the opposite effect, as reflected in breakaways. Certainly, existing theories would not have successfully predicted the level of autonomy that the Canadian labour movement has achieved, or the extent of the recent decline of the American labour movement.

Economic theories have failed to provide an adequate description of this complex, multi-dimensional process. As discussed in Chapter 5, Kumar (1986:59) questions the utility of

economic modelling as applied to the progress of an institution like the labour movement. Certainly, it would appear that insufficient weight has been given to the context in which unions operate and the impact that individual actors can have on these institutions.

Although very little has been written on early breakaways, union journals, as indicated in Chapter 3, do suggest that at least those at the executive level were openly advocating autonomy. Contextual factors have proven to be very important. This analysis considered three broad questions: given that international unions operated for some period of time to at least some degree of satisfaction to the participants, when and why did this change? Secondly, why, and under what circumstances did particular breakaways occur and finally, what do breakaways suggest with respect to the differences in the labour movements?

Differences in objective conditions, as they related to unions operating in Canada and the United States, appear to have existed from the beginning, and moreover, it appears likely that these differences grew over time, at least in part due to the interactive nature of the political and legal institutions and their impact on the industrial relations system.

However, these differences were not necessarily incompatible with the operation of the narrow type of 'Gomperist' international unions that were dominant in Canada. History reveals that these unions operated successfully until the end of the 1960s when more serious frictions, which could not be accommodated, began to develop. Moreover, the labour movement in the two countries appeared to be embarking on separate and fundamentally different paths.

The Canadian Experience

As indicated, it would appear that the homogeneity factor often used to explain the development of international unions, was at least to some degree exaggerated. At the same time, although unions were slower to develop in Canada and did not gain legitimacy for some time after American unions, once in place, the political culture, the parliamentary political system, and especially the existence of a third (labour-oriented) party and the legislation that flowed from this, appears to have produced a more effective and ultimately stronger labour movement in Canada. Following the successful operation of the international union structure for many years breakaways appear to have occurred in two distinct waves in the presence of two quite different sets of circumstances.

The First Wave of Breakaways

The first breakaways began to occur in the early 1970s and continued into the mid-1970s. This era was marked by a sharp rise in Canadian nationalism, the genesis of which can perhaps be found in the pipeline debates in 1957, that pushed the notion of Canadian sovereignty and nationhood to the forefront. By 1967, the Canadian Centennial year, this sentiment was capturing popular Canadian imagination as never before. As discussed in Chapter 5, public opinion surveys conducted around that time, saw Canadians expressing considerable concern with the level of American investment and control of the Canadian economy. This was coupled with an increasing uneasiness with American foreign and

domestic policy through the late 1960s and early 1970s. While there were a series of events that contributed to this uneasiness, including race riots, student protests and the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War was to have the single most profound negative effect. This effect was felt directly, in terms of changing Canadian's attitudes towards the Americans, in the face of the obvious incivility of the war in which they were involved, and indirectly, through the negative effect that the related protectionist trade policies were having on the Canadian economy. Frictions that had existed with respect to service issues, union dues and the general functioning of international unions were now seen in a new and increasingly negative light throughout this period; one in which our relationship with the Americans, including our institutional arrangements such international unions, were coloured by our new and growing perception of the Americans as an aggressive, oppressive and generally negative force.

There were other contextual factors that played important roles as well. Events in Quebec that served to push a more extreme form of nationalism to the forefront, was having an impact on Canadian attitudes generally. More specifically, the first breakaway, as indicated in Table 4 in Chapter 3 was that of the Quebec section of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the first large scale breakaway in 1974, from which the Canadian Paperworkers Union was formed, occurred in a union with a considerable Quebec membership.

The other significant influence that activities in Quebec generated was a more indirect

one. In what has been described as a part of the settlement with labour following the end of the 'ancien regime', Quebec was the first to grant public sector workers bargaining rights in 1965 (again with the exception of Saskatchewan where public sector workers were not excluded from coverage under labour legislation). This in turn paved the way for collective bargaining rights for federal public sector workers in 1966. The significance of these events with respect to a labour movement dominated by international unions, was that the granting of bargaining rights to public sector workers, who were almost exclusively organized into national unions, both greatly increased the relative proportion of national union members, and we can assume, contributed to the development of a critical mass that ultimately made the existence of, and the possibility of joining an independent Canadian labour movement viable.

So, the first wave of breakaways occurred in the context of rising nationalism, both in a pro-Canadian discovery of national identity sense, but of equal or greater importance, in a reactive anti-American sense. Economic considerations had not yet begun to play an important role in breakaways. Another decade would pass before the results of differences in these underlying factors would manifest themselves in a severely weakened American labour movement, and the impact that this weakness would have on Canadian unionists would become untenable.

The Second Wave of Breakaways

This early wave of breakaways, at least those caused by nationalistic fervour, tailed off in the late 1970s in the face of a steadily deteriorating economic climate. However, when breakaways began to occur in more significant numbers again in the 1980s, culminating with the breakaway of the Canadian Auto Workers in 1985, circumstances were fundamentally different. Again, although little information exists on the other cases, analyses of the Auto Workers split suggested that economic considerations played a much more significant role, whereas the role of nationalism was far less important. In fact, a number of economic analyses of this event identify differences in bargaining strength, that stemmed from distinctly different economic conditions, as the primary factor. It was, however, a complex process that led to this end.

The United States was under siege economically in the 1980s in the face of what seemed to be an unending series of failed foreign and domestic policies. Likewise, the American labour movement had attached itself to a somewhat different and more narrow union philosophy and these differences were, to some extent, cumulative over time. Choosing this business union path would ultimately limit the range of strategies available to the American when faced with circumstances that would seriously challenge their labour movement (Gindin 1989; Lipsig-Mumme 1989). In the presence of a severely deteriorating economic climate, unions in U.S. were almost entirely unable to defend against losses. They were in fact reaping the results of this narrow pursuit of business

unionism goals, with poor legislation, little political support, poor organizing performance, and ultimately, virtually non-existent public support.

With a viable national labour movement already operating in Canada, in no small part attributable to the organization of all levels of public sector workers throughout the intervening period, nationalism would play only what Gindin (1989) refers to as a 'defensive' role in the breakaway of the Auto Workers, that is, simply being Canadian would provide a sufficient rationale for choosing a different path. Instead, the breakaways in the mid-1980s appear to have been driven largely by economic considerations. The economic advantage that Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) enjoyed in the 1980s, however, was neither a unique nor singular phenomenon. Canadian unionists had been in a superior bargaining position on past occasions, in both the auto industry and elsewhere and certainly had had the opportunity to define and pursue separate bargaining agendas within an international union structure. Gindin makes reference to the differences inherent in the Auto Workers experience in the following:

For what was really happening in the United States was not, in fact, merely a temporary collective bargaining setback. Temporary defeats for workers are, after all, nothing new. The significance of the American developments was that the union leadership was itself accepting a strategic change in the direction of collective bargaining and of their own role within it (1989:78).

The second wave of breakaways, as exemplified by the Auto Workers split, although not the result of differences in a particular round of bargaining, were undoubtedly influenced by economic advantage. This advantage however was both broader than, and not specific

to, this particular instance. It was derived instead from exercising the strength that the Canadian labour movement had built on a number of levels over the years. This included the political strength engendered by supporting (at least at the official level) a labour-oriented third party in a parliamentary system (which proved to be particularly successful at the provincial level where jurisdiction for the bulk of labour legislation rests) and the favourable labour legislation produced by this, along with the existence of a more collectivist, British-influenced tradition, that appears to generate more support generally for particularist causes including unions.

With respect to the difficulties at Chrysler in the early 1980s, Gindin suggests that the more general ideological and political differences between the U.S. and Canada were reflected in the way the governments of the two countries responded to Chrysler's request for loan guarantees: "in the U.S., the government agreed to the scheme on condition that Chrysler get concessions from its workforce. In Canada, Chrysler was pressured into guaranteeing a certain number of jobs for Canadians" (1989:66). The differences that were inherent in the context in which the two labour relations systems operated, and that had grown over time, had become particularly evident in the face of the American divergence, or more precisely American decline into concessions, cooptation and ultimately, defeat. That the Canadians would no longer want to be associated with American unions under these conditions was not at all surprising and that this situation had presented itself to other unions on other occasions was not at all unlikely.

The Decline of the American Labour Movement

The decline of the American labour movement is a separate, but related phenomenon. This analysis argues, that the differences inherent in the labour movements in the two countries, although not of a radical nature had always existed, but were not incompatible with the functioning of international unions. As these differences became more pronounced over time, however, it became clear that the Americans were of a different mind with respect to the place of unions in their society, a perspective obviously not shared by the Canadians.

A considerable amount of industrial relations literature has been produced on the decline of the American labour movement, both in the United States, and in Canada, particularly with respect to the increasingly apparent divergence in union density between the two countries⁹. Whether the decline is a severe but temporary setback or a permanent decline remains debatable. Nonetheless, a lengthy discussion of this is beyond the scope of this analysis and consideration will be limited to the impact that this decline had on the Canadian labour movement.

A great deal of emphasis has been placed on the failure of the American labour

⁹ For a thorough review of the literature on Canadian and American union divergence, see Pradeep Kumar, *From Uniformity to Divergence: Industrial Relations in Canada and the United States* (1993).

movement in political terms, particularly its failure to support a party to act in the interests of labour and the proactive legislation that would naturally have flowed from this development. It is often suggested that American attachment to narrow business union goals was the reason for this failure and the labour movement's uneasy and inconsistent historical alliance with the Democratic Party would seem to support this assertion. However, it is not at all clear that their attachment to broad-based unionism was ever strongly established.

The American attachment to a collectivist cause during the crisis of capitalism generated by the Great Depression was weak, and temporary. Moreover, it led to the externalized implementation of legislation that perhaps could not be supported within the existing and historic political culture. When the conditions that generated this response changed, what Lipset (1990) refers to as the 'social-democratic tinge' quickly disappeared. As economic prosperity returned, the collectivist rights established in the Wagner Act were followed by the rapid and continued retrenchment in Taft-Hartley (1947) and Landrum-Griffin (1959), which effectively reestablished the United State's traditional emphasis on individual rights. This pattern is clearly evident in what is widely referred to as 'anti-labour' National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decisions that have been registered in the U.S. over the last 30 years.

Moreover, for reasons both interactive and complex, American unionists soon found themselves without the foundations to ensure the survivability of an effective labour

movement, whether through the loss of legislative protection, the failure to develop an effective political strategy or identify a party to represent labour, and the failure to move beyond interest group status both in political terms and in real terms, as the movement became more isolated and defensive. This somewhat lengthy passage provides an excellent descriptive summary of this process:

The decline of the United States movement was the result of years of refusal by the union structure at both the peak council and the affiliate level -- refusal to use the margin of strategic choice open to them to protect legislation, political influence and workplace credibility, refusal to leave a place for militancy, refusal to maintain class issues in electoral politics, refusal to do the hard work of organizing the unorganized in a rapidly changing labour market. In sum, the United States union movement was constrained to reap the harvest that the strategic tradition of business unionism had sown. Union action had contributed greatly to the environment that was now so effectively anti-union. And union strategies for the future would be limited by the strategic choices of the past (Lipsig-Mumme 1989:256).

It was not just a lack of interest or refusal to act, however, that devastated the American labour movement. Activities such as those suggested by Lipsig-Mumme were unlikely to spontaneously emerge as a possible response in a political culture dominated by a near religious attachment to individualism.

Finally, this analysis argues that although as Kumar (1986:26) suggests, "the primary motivation for the Canadian members of international unions to seek autonomy has usually been peculiar to each case", there are discernable patterns in these events. While acknowledging that the development of an all encompassing theory of breakaways is unlikely, this analysis suggests that the context in which the labour movement operates is

critically important. More specifically, there are both underlying factors (or objective conditions) and precipitating events (or subjective conditions) that appear to have contributed to a series of breakaways such that these are not a series of random, unrelated events peculiar to each case. Unions operating in the two countries were perhaps more different than alike, and these differences, particularly in terms of the context in which they operated, became increasingly acute over time. Both political culture and the legislative environment generated by that culture played an important role in defining these differences. It also appears that the differences could be accommodated fairly effectively within the international union structure for some period of time -- a period of time that coincided with or was characterized by relative economic prosperity in the two countries.

Events that were to change that situation emerged in the 1960s. The diverging cultures of the two countries and emerging nationalism in Canada, coupled with economic decline in the U.S., led Canada to question her role in relation to the U.S. in a new and profound way. The first round of breakaways that occurred in the 1970s appear to have been a product of this emerging nationalism, with economic issues only a secondary consideration. The later series of breakaways in the 1980s, and particularly that of the Auto Workers, were the result of increasingly apparent differences in economic strength as expressed in the prevalence of concession bargaining and the apparent failure of the American labour movement. Nationalism would play only a secondary role in these events.

What Breakaways Reveal About the Labour Movement

The unions that developed in Canada, while the product of American culture, do not appear to have been as oppressive an influence on what would have been the 'real' Canadian labour movement as has been suggested. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that breakaways should be interpreted as some fundamental rejection of American-style unionism, at least as it was originally construed. That is not to say that there were not differences in the approach to collective bargaining or representation on both sides of the border that became increasingly evident as differing circumstances presented themselves. Still, there were and are as many inter-union differences within the Canadian labour movement as without. Unions in the U.S. were also changing, moving in a different, and not altogether positive direction:

Concessions, at first interpreted as temporary setbacks, were now being dressed up and sold to the membership as 'victories' and 'innovative breakthroughs.' The union was coming perilously close to sounding and acting like an industrial relations arm of the corporation (Gindin 1989:78).

Moreover re-nationalizing the Canadian labour movement has not produced the results that were predicted. Canadian unions, both those that were originally established as national unions, and perhaps more importantly, those that broke away, do not operate in a fashion that is fundamentally different from those unions that continue as international organizations. Earlier theories apparently misunderstood (or were overly optimistic about) the nature of the Canadianization process, because they expected the outcome to

be a totally different labour movement. This outcome was unlikely in the presence of an established capitalist system. Instead, the difference appears to be manifest in vitality -- survival rather than decline, and this appears to have little to do with the international structure of unions, since in many instances, Canadian branches of international unions appear to have performed better than their parent organizations in the United States.

While international unions in the United States suffered a huge decline in membership in the 1980s, their Canadian counterparts appear to have been better able to cope with the adversities and the challenge; they have not only maintained their organizational strength but in many cases have added to their membership (Kumar 1993:22-3).

In fact, broad-based unionism emerged in Canada in a fundamentally different context than the experience in the U.S. Legislation was not retrenched as prosperity returned as in the U.S. following WWII, but was initially enacted at that time in Canada; not in response to a crisis of Capitalism, but instead in response to the relatively prosperity and labour unrest generated by WWII. Legislation was not applied externally to an inhospitable political culture, but was instead gained through struggle in what became an increasingly supportive political environment. Moreover, legislation became increasingly supportive over time and unions became increasingly integrated into the political and social fabric in Canada, rather than isolated and defensive as in the U.S.

With that being said, it is important to note that labour movements generally do not exist or cease to exist on the basis of particular specific decisions. Weakness in the American labour movement does appear to be related to past strategic choices. Perhaps these choice were the product of a culture that could not support the structures necessary for unions to

survive and prosper except in the narrowest of circumstances. The American experience does suggest that if unions are not integrated into broader social or political fabric they are unlikely to prosper, and when faced with a difficult competitive economic environment, are unlikely to survive.

At the same time, as the labour movement in this country has become increasingly national, there is no evidence of a radical shift in philosophy or operation. Perhaps it is instead the fulfilment of what the American movement might have become as Lipsig-Mumme suggests: "Might it be argued that the CIO tradition, marginalized in the United States after 1955, has taken root and belatedly flowered within the Canadian movement?" (1989:239)

Future of the Labour Movement in Canada

Finally, what does this suggest about the future of the labour movement in Canada? It reveals that unions in Canada are unlikely to operate as national unions in a fundamentally different way than they did as internationals. Nonetheless, unions operating in Canada appear to have avoided the decline experienced by their American counterparts.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the labour movement in Canada became more national as it matured. Bob White who played an instrumental role in the breakaway of the Canadian

Auto Workers summed up the differences as follows:

We're certainly not the carbon copy of the American labour movement that we used to be, and we're not going to be the British or European trade union movement. We're going to be somewhere in between -- we're going to be the Canadian labour movement. (White in Kumar and Ryan, 1988:192)

While this analysis rejects the contention that we were ever the carbon copy of the American labour movement, it does seem clear that neither have we moved in the direction of the British or European labour movements. Gindin went on to suggest that "it was not the breakaway, that made the [CAW] union truly Canadian. It was the mergers, which nationalized the union by involving all regions of the country" (Gindin 1995:239). And indeed the most striking change in the labour movement in Canada is the increase in merger activity, particularly between the national unions within Canada. Kumar noted in 1988 (44) "that since 1985, there had been 24 mergers with almost one-half occurring in the past year." Likewise, between 1990 and 1994, 44 smaller union were absorbed into larger collective bargaining units representing nearly 300,000 workers. The biggest merger in Canadian history was the 1992 amalgamation of the Canadian Paperworkers Union, the Communication and Electrical Workers Union and the Energy and Chemical Workers Union to form the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) with some 145,000 members (Winnipeg Free Press 04/25/94). Interestingly, all three unions involved in this merger were former breakaway unions. The Canadian Auto Workers Union is today the largest private sector union in Canada due to its vigorous merger activity with other national unions. This type of

activity is likely to continue to produce the most significant developments in regards to the labour movement in Canada. This is largely because the dynamic has now changed such that forces that were once important, American imperialism versus Canadian nationalism, are no longer as powerful in the face of a labour movement now dominated by Canadian unions and, sadly, an American labour movement described as being in a permanent state of decline.

Finally, with nationalization of the Canadian labour movement largely complete, what can we expect for the future of international unions? Broadly speaking in terms of sectors, unions were national or nationalized first in the primary sector. This was followed by manufacturing sector unions that are primarily national today with the notable exception of the Steelworkers. With the exception of the building trades, the sector where internationals remain relatively important is the private sector services. For example, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) is today the second largest private sector union in Canada. While these developments reflect the pattern of industrial development, the factors that have been identified as important to breakaways are much less evident today. Since nationalism is no longer a compelling issue either within a largely national labour movement or in society more generally, it is unlikely to again be a precipitating factor in breakaways. Moreover, economic advantage would play a much less important role with respect to service employment since these workers do not compete with one another in an international market place.

Thus, the factors that encouraged breakaways and ultimately played a role in the nationalization of the labour movement in Canada no longer hold the power they once did in the face of an established national labour movement, and the nature of the employment in the remaining international unions operating in Canada. Simply put, the necessary ingredients for the most part are no longer there. International unions will likely continue to play this considerably less important role in the labour movement in Canada for the foreseeable future.

Suggestion for Further Research

The conclusions drawn in this thesis suggest that a number of broad socio-economic factors influenced the movement away from international union representation to national union representation in Canada. As indicated, more precise analysis is constrained by the lack of documentation of these events and still fewer sociological analyses, despite the significant number of breakaways that have occurred. This is particularly evident with respect to examining breakaways as other than singular, unrelated events. Because of this, events surrounding breakaways can only be understood in a general way and analyses attempting to account for these developments are based on a limited amount of available information.

Although beyond the scope of this thesis, developing and examining data emanating from individual cases of breakaways would contribute greatly to our understanding of this

phenomenon. It would allow us to examine to what extent individual union members were engaged in the process and what their perceptions of the events surrounding particular breakaways were. For example, interviews with individuals who were members of the Paperworkers union at the time of the breakaway in 1974, would reveal to what extent nationalism and autonomy issues were important in their decision to establish a Canadian union. Likewise, interviews with individuals who were members of the Auto Workers in 1984, might reveal to what extent bargaining power and economic considerations influenced their decisions.

Other interesting aspects of this phenomenon might be illuminated by examining those cases where, despite some level of related activity, breakaways were never actually realized, as, for example, in the case of the Steelworkers. There is much to be learned about what sets this process into motion, what fuels it, and, ultimately, how it is brought to fruition or conversely, how it ends.

Thus, research in three areas would prove useful: 1) contrasting the Auto Workers with the Paperworkers to see if differences in the perception of union members could be established regarding the role of socio-economic factors, such as nationalism and economic considerations, with respect to these breakaways, and 2) contrasting the experiences of the Auto Workers with the Steelworkers might reveal what factors are critical to the breakaway process by examining industries with similar characteristics, operating in similar circumstances that have chosen different paths.

Pursuing research in these areas would produce a valuable contribution to a little understood process that has played an important role in shaping the labour movement in Canada today.

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