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## Labour and the Waffle

# Unions Confront Canadian Left Nationalism in the New Democratic Party

David Blocker

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Article abstract

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Waffle movement in the New Democratic Party (ndp) emerged as a leading proponent of Canadian left economic nationalism. The Waffle, which formed around the “Manifesto for an Independent and Socialist Canada” and challenged the leadership of the ndp from 1969 to 1973, represents a dynamic convergence of many of the social movements that comprised the New Left in Canada. This article examines the evolution of the Waffle’s position on international unionism alongside the reaction of pro-ndp labour leaders to this New Left incursion into the party. ndp-allied labour leaders expressed suspicion and concern for the group’s agenda almost from its inception. The Waffle’s success in appealing to younger and nationalist-minded members of international unions turned suspicion into active opposition. As polarization within the ndp increased, workers’ support for the Waffle within the Canadian labour movement led moderate union leaders to conclude the group must be expunged from the Ontario ndp. Ironically, after the Waffle’s departure from the party the group largely repudiated nationalist breakaways from international unions while, in the ensuing decades, the mainstream labour movement embraced Canadian nationalism.

## ARTICLE

# Labour and the Waffle: Unions Confront Canadian Left Nationalism in the New Democratic Party

David Blocker, Huron University College

**Abstract:** In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Waffle movement in the New Democratic Party (NDP) emerged as a leading proponent of Canadian left economic nationalism. The Waffle, which formed around the “Manifesto for an Independent and Socialist Canada” and challenged the leadership of the NDP from 1969 to 1973, represents a dynamic convergence of many of the social movements that comprised the New Left in Canada. This article examines the evolution of the Waffle’s position on international unionism alongside the reaction of pro-NDP labour leaders to this New Left incursion into the party. NDP-allied labour leaders expressed suspicion and concern for the group’s agenda almost from its inception. The Waffle’s success in appealing to younger and nationalist-minded members of international unions turned suspicion into active opposition. As polarization within the NDP increased, workers’ support for the Waffle within the Canadian labour movement led moderate union leaders to conclude the group must be expunged from the Ontario NDP. Ironically, after the Waffle’s departure from the party the group largely repudiated nationalist breakaways from international unions while, in the ensuing decades, the mainstream labour movement embraced Canadian nationalism.

**Keywords:** New Left, New Democratic Party (NDP), nationalism, sixties, international unions, Canadian labour movement, Marxism, radicalism

**Résumé :** À la fin des années soixante et au début des années soixante-dix, le mouvement Waffle se définit au sein du Nouveau Parti Démocratique (NPD) en tant que promoteur principal d’un nationalisme économique de gauche canadien. Fondé sur les idées mises de l’avant dans son «Manifeste pour un Canada indépendant et socialiste», le Waffle illustre la convergence de plusieurs mouvements sociaux qui caractérisent la nouvelle gauche canadienne et se fait critique du leadership néo-démocrate de 1969 à 1973. Le présent article propose d’examiner l’évolution de la position du Waffle en ce qui a trait au syndicalisme international, en parallèle aux réactions des leaders syndicaux pro-NPD face à l’incursion de la nouvelle gauche au sein du parti. Ceux-ci expriment leurs préoccupations à l’égard des intentions du groupe, qu’ils voient d’un mauvais œil depuis sa constitution. L’attrait qu’exerce le Waffle auprès des plus jeunes membres des syndicats internationaux transforme ces préoccupations en opposition active. Alors que le NPD se trouve de plus en plus polarisé, l’appui des travailleurs à l’égard du Waffle au sein du mouvement syndical canadien pousse les leaders syndicaux modérés à chercher son expulsion du NPD ontarien. Ironiquement, après son départ du parti,

le Waffle dénonce en grande partie les nationalistes rompant avec les syndicats internationaux, tandis que dans les décennies qui suivent, le mouvement syndical se fait sympatisant du nationalisme canadien.

**Mots-clés:** nouvelle gauche, Nouveau parti démocratique (NDP), nationalisme, années 1960, syndicats internationaux, mouvement syndical canadien, marxisme, radicalisme

IN THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s, economic nationalism pervaded the Canadian left. Supporters of the Waffle movement in the New Democratic Party (NDP) emerged as leading proponents of Canadian economic nationalism, harshly criticizing American-owned multinational corporations for closing plants in Canada. The Waffle advocated for large-scale public ownership as a nationalist alternative to US domination of the Canadian economy, thereby linking socialism to Canadian economic independence. The Waffle movement, which formed around the “Manifesto for an Independent and Socialist Canada” and challenged the leadership of the NDP from 1969 to 1973, represents a dynamic convergence of many of the social movements that comprised the New Left in Canada.<sup>1</sup> NDP and allied trade-union leaders, reluctant to adopt such a radical approach, expelled the Waffle from the Ontario NDP (ONDP) in 1972. Despite its short life-span the Waffle had a considerable influence on Canadian politics, and the issues that it raised – Canadian economic dependency, Québec’s right to self-determination, women’s equality, and the decline of the manufacturing sector, among others – continue to resonate to this day. Furthermore, the Waffle’s impact on Canadian nationalism and its legacy in the NDP, labour and women’s movements, radical left, and academia remain contested.

This article addresses important changes in the Canadian labour movement that set the stage for the Waffle conflict in the NDP, including young workers’ challenge to the postwar compromise and the appeal of nationalism within Canadian locals of American-dominated international unions. Connecting workers’ militancy to the rebelliousness of the New Left, this article contributes to a growing body of transnational literature that revises a prominent but inaccurate narrative contrasting radical students with conservative workers.<sup>2</sup> My primary focus is on two interwoven threads in the history of the New

1. For more on the Waffle as a New Left movement: see David G. Blocker, “To Waffle to the Left: The Waffle, the New Democratic Party, and Canada’s New Left during the Long Sixties,” PhD thesis, Western University, 2019, from which this article is drawn.

2. See Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of ’68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. 93–122, 151–152. In the Canadian context, this article builds on the work of Joan Sangster and Ian Milligan, who have examined New Leftists’ connections to workers and support for striking workers, including by Wafflers. However, neither the Waffle conflict within the NDP nor the group’s evolving position on international unions are focal points. See Sangster, “Remembering Texpack: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Militancy in Canadian Unions in the 1970s,” *Studies in Political Economy* 78, 1 (2006): 41–66; Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).

Left and the NDP: specifically, the evolution of the Waffle's attitude toward international unions closely linked with the NDP leadership and, simultaneously, the reaction of pro-NDP labour leaders to this New Left incursion into the party. I argue that although criticism of international unions was not a focal point of the early Waffle, NDP-allied union leadership reacted with suspicion to its emergence and sought to temper the group's influence within the party from its inception. As the group increased its activism within the labour movement and allied itself both with left opposition caucuses within major international unions and with a small Canadian nationalist rival to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the Waffle increasingly criticized international union leaders for failing Canadian workers and for restraining the NDP from adopting a clear position in favour of independence and socialism. At the same time, NDP-friendly labour leaders organized within the party to curb support for the Waffle's policies and, in 1972, coordinated with party leaders to ensure the group would be effectively expelled from the Ontario NDP. Ironically, in the aftermath of the Waffle's ouster from the NDP, the positions of both the radical group and the moderate union leadership evolved in unexpected directions. The Waffle's relationship with independent Canadian unions suffered when its conviction that Ontario was experiencing rapid deindustrialization led the Waffle to reject nationalist breakaways from international unions as a counterproductive strategy. And, in an even sharper turn from its rigid opposition to the Waffle, the labour movement's leadership embraced Canadian nationalism in the late 1970s in order to address long-term structural weaknesses in Canada's manufacturing economy.

### Rethinking the Waffle

EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP ON THE TOPIC considers the Waffle within the frame of long-standing ideological conflict in the NDP and its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Two studies of the Ontario Waffle, published soon after the group's demise, assess the group's capacity to transform the NDP.<sup>3</sup> John Bullen's master's thesis, which he published in condensed form in the *Canadian Historical Review* in 1983, concludes that the Waffle "overestimated the immediate potential for radicalism ... and recklessly disregarded the consequences of its own continued existence within the NDP."

3. John Bullen, "The Ontario Waffle and the Struggle for an Independent Socialist Canada: A Study in Radical Nationalism," MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 1979; Robert Hackett, "Pie in the Sky: A History of the Ontario Waffle," *Canadian Dimension*, October–November 1980, 2–71. See also Bullen, "The Ontario Waffle and the Struggle for an Independent Socialist Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, 2 (1983): 188–215; Hackett, "The Waffle Conflict in the NDP," in Hugh Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada*, 4th ed. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1985), 188–205. For histories of the Waffle beyond Ontario, see Peter Borch, "The Rise and Decline of the Saskatchewan Waffle, 1966–1973," MA thesis, University of Regina, 2005; Patrick Webber, "For a Socialist New Brunswick: The New Brunswick Waffle, 1967–1972," MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 2008.

He suggests that the Waffle underestimated the extent of the ideological gap separating the NDP's moderate leadership from the party's "radical left wing."<sup>4</sup> Robert Hackett's account of the Waffle, titled "Pie in the Sky" and first published as a special issue of *Canadian Dimension* in 1980, concludes that the NDP – and indeed all "social democratic parties in advanced capitalist countries" – could not be a vehicle for a socialist, anti-imperialist Left such as the Waffle.<sup>5</sup> Although Hackett claims the Waffle "represented the best organized and most sustained leftist attempt to transform the parent party," he argues that the group, lacking a Marxist analysis, was doomed in its struggle within the NDP.<sup>6</sup> According to Hackett, social-democratic parties, committed to change through electoral means, are incapable of embracing a socially transformative ideology. Furthermore, the structure of social-democratic parties – including the power of the party leader, the importance and autonomy of the legislative caucus, and the veto power of affiliated unions, both as a voting bloc and as financial supporters – makes fundamental change impossible without a mass mobilization of the working class.<sup>7</sup>

Despite writing from a different ideological perspective, historians of the NDP have likewise concluded that the Waffle had no place in a mature social-democratic party like the NDP.<sup>8</sup> Desmond Morton, an adviser to Tommy Douglas, assistant secretary of the NDP in the mid-1960s, and contemporary opponent of the Waffle, is especially harsh in his assessment, concluding that the group's leaders, having opted to persist in challenging the NDP status quo instead of ascending to "positions of prestige and influence

4. Bullen, "Ontario Waffle" (1983), 189–190, 213.

5. Hackett, "Pie in the Sky," 66.

6. Hackett, "Waffle Conflict," 190.

7. Hackett in particular draws on the extensive theoretical work on union leadership, democracy, bureaucracy, and oligarchy, a subject influenced especially by Robert Michels and Leon Trotsky. Stephanie Ross, in her survey of these leading interpretative frameworks, argues that Michelsians' and Trotskyists' "shared condemnation of union leadership ... provides many with an easily-digested answer to trade union problems." Indeed, there is much accuracy in depictions of union "leaders [who] come to see themselves as powerful, indispensable and in possession of a right to [their] leadership position" to the point that "leaders increasingly collapse the distinction between themselves and the union." Nevertheless, I concur with her criticism of both interpretations as "deterministic in a reductionist fashion" and for their failure to account for the specificity of historical context or the complexity of human motivation and behaviour, as this article explores. Ross, "The Making of CUPE: Structure, Democracy and Class Formation," PhD thesis, York University, Toronto, 2005, 49, 42, 50.

8. Desmond Morton, NDP: *The Dream of Power* (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1974); J. T. Morley, *Secular Socialists: The CCF/NDP in Ontario, a Biography* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984). Morley stretches psychological categories of human development to the "party personality" and equates the Waffle with previously expelled Communist and Trotskyist groups.

in the party,” were quite simply “losers.”<sup>9</sup> Despite their differences in ideology and assessments of the Waffle, historians have viewed the conflict as part of a long-standing and little-changing intraparty struggle between radicals and moderates within the CCF/NDP, in which the moderates always and inevitably emerge victorious.<sup>10</sup> This article, instead of viewing the Waffle as one manifestation of an ongoing but largely unchanging ideological struggle within the NDP, presents the Waffle as a product of a unique historical period and uniquely Canadian manifestation of the New Left.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, existing scholarship does not adequately address the combative relationship between the Waffle and the leadership of NDP-allied trade unions or the Waffle’s evolving position on the contentious issue of international unions.<sup>12</sup>

### Labour, the NDP, and the New Left

THE NDP’S CLOSE CONNECTION to the labour movement was pivotal to the party’s formation in 1961. Although some unions had supported the NDP’s predecessor, the CCF, internal divisions within the labour movement prevented pro-CCF union leaders from procuring greater support.<sup>13</sup> Major developments

9. Morton, *NDP: The Dream of Power*, 135. Morton’s accusation, oft-repeated during the intraparty debates of the early 1970s, is that the Waffle simply mimicked the rhetoric and demands of the American New Left. Yet Morton ignores the Waffle’s importance in directing the Canadian New Left away from issues that dominated the American movement – the Vietnam War, in particular – and focusing attention on Canadian independence and the role of the state. Jill Vickers has demonstrated how the Waffle’s feminism, driven by increased demands on the welfare state, differed dramatically from its American counterparts. Vickers, “The Intellectual Origins of the Women’s Movement in Canada,” in Constance Backhouse & David H. Flaherty, eds., *Challenging Times: The Women’s Movement in Canada and the United States* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 39–60.

10. To pick but one example, Ivan Avakumovic equates the radicals at the 1933 CCF convention who criticized the Regina Manifesto as being insufficiently socialist with the Wafflers at the 1969 NDP convention who criticized the party for veering too far from the Regina Manifesto’s socialism. Avakumovic, *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), 66.

11. My method is heavily influenced by Ian McKay’s concept of a “horizontal” rather than a “vertical” approach to studying the Canadian left. See McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 33–34.

12. Robert M. Laxer, the father of Waffle leader James Laxer, provides a history of international unions in Canada from a left nationalist perspective; see Laxer, *Canada’s Unions* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1976). See also James Laxer, *Red Diaper Baby: A Boyhood in the Age of McCarthyism* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004).

13. See Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 203. He explains that CCF leaders always desired a “large affiliated union wing.” David Lewis, arguably the most significant figure in the history of the CCF/NDP, advocated for union affiliation to the party. Lewis is rightly acknowledged as the guiding force of the CCF and chief architect of its successor, the NDP. A Rhodes scholar and labour lawyer who developed a healthy respect for the British Labour Party while at Oxford, Lewis returned to Canada in

in the labour movement during the 1940s and 1950s had important repercussions for the CCF. Massive industrial expansion during World War II resulted in the rapid growth of industrial unions, and the membership of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) grew from 77,000 at its formation in 1940 to 200,000 in just two years.<sup>14</sup> The widespread acceptance of collective bargaining and automatic dues check-off contributed to lessening spontaneous protests and “wildcat strikes,” while enhancing the power of unions and their leadership in negotiating labour relations.<sup>15</sup> Purges of communist activists and their unions from the mainstream labour movement were conducted with especial vigour by CCF partisans and ultimately allowed senior union leaders to alter significantly the political direction of the Canadian labour movement.<sup>16</sup> The merger of the CCL and the Trades and Labour Congress into the Canadian Labour Congress in 1956, with Claude Jodoin as president, set the stage for the establishment of a new “broadly based political movement” to replace the struggling CCF.<sup>17</sup> Recently defeated CCF MP Stanley Knowles was elected CLC vice-president in 1958 to work with David Lewis, CCF national president, in developing a new political party, and the NDP was founded in 1961 with Tommy

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1935 to serve as the CCF’s national secretary. Serving in that position until 1950, Lewis strove to build a party organization with limited resources while imposing discipline and solidarity on the oft-divided party. Furthermore, Lewis worked closely with union leaders, especially in the Steelworkers, to expel Communists from the labour movement, take over Communist dominated unions, and affiliate unions to the CCF. Cameron Smith, *Unfinished Journey: The Lewis Family* (Toronto: Summerhill, 1989), 184–200, 236–253; James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 245; David Lewis, *The Good Fight: Political Memoirs 1909–1958* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 296–303.

14. Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 70.

15. Craig Heron perceptively points out that the contemporary social-democratic thinking emphasized planning and expertise, a tendency that encouraged centralization and bureaucratization. Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Brief History* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1996), 75–83.

16. On struggles within the labour movement, see Irving Martin Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935–1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); Reg Whitaker & Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945–1957* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 310–341; Benjamin Isitt, *Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948–1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 44–108.

17. The CLC passed such a resolution at its 1958 convention. Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 192. In addition to their anticommunism, CCF leaders responded to Cold War anxieties by moderating the party’s rhetoric and policy, adopting the Winnipeg Declaration, which contained few condemnations of capitalism and proposed only a limited program of public ownership alongside extensive economic planning and social welfare reforms, as a statement of principles in 1956.

Douglas as its first leader.<sup>18</sup> The NDP's constitution allowed for union locals to affiliate to the party and granted representation at party conventions based on the size of a local's membership.<sup>19</sup> Large industrial unions, including the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), the United Auto Workers (UAW), the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA), and the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA) were the most enthusiastic supporters of the NDP in the 1960s, with nearly three-quarters of those four unions' members affiliated with the party in 1965–66.<sup>20</sup>

The 1961 creation of the NDP stemmed the electoral decline of the CCF but failed to catapult the social democrats into power. As the decade wore on, a youthful, aggressive, and exciting new form of leftism attracted activists, leaving the new party to appear old, timid, and dull by comparison. The concept of the New Left, which was international in scope, is inseparably linked to the rebellious political, social, and cultural ferment of the “long sixties,” and its emergence in Canada challenged the monopoly over left politics hitherto exercised by the NDP, the Communist Party, and their allies in the labour movement. Although defining such a pluralist “movement of movements” is difficult, in general New Leftists shared certain characteristics: they de-emphasized traditional political structures, such as Parliament, political parties, and union hierarchies in favour of direct action and participatory decision making; they saw social movements of various social groupings (“intellectuals, students, Third World peasants, disadvantaged ethnic minorities, and youth in general”)<sup>21</sup> as agents for social change instead of focusing exclusively on workers; they were open to revolutionary tactics and opportunities; and they stressed the consequences of cultural alienation in addition to economic exploitation. Most importantly, New Leftists defined themselves against the limitations of the Old Left – in Canada most associated with the CCF/NDP – which had severed its “umbilical cord to actually existing social movements” in the postwar era.<sup>22</sup> Canadian New Left activists criticized the

18. Avakumovic, *Socialism in Canada*, 189.

19. Affiliated union locals were allocated “one delegate for each 1,000 members of major fraction thereof, with a minimum of one delegate,” while federal constituency associations were granted “one delegate for each fifty members or major fraction thereof for the first 200 members and, thereafter, one delegate for each additional 100 members of major fraction thereof, with a minimum of one delegate.” Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 221.

20. Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 256–257. In contrast, just over 11 per cent of union members in CLC-affiliated unions outside these four unions were affiliated to the NDP.

21. Horn, *Spirit of '68*, 153.

22. The description of the New Left is drawn from Horn, *Spirit of '68*, 152–155. The phrase “movement of movements” is from Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 5. Some historians emphasize the continuities between Old and New Lefts – for an example focusing on British Columbia, see Isitt, *Militant Minority* – while others focus on the ruptures, as does this article. See Joan Sangster, “Radical Ruptures: Feminism, Labor and the Left in the Long Sixties in Canada,” *American Review of*



NDP's "top-down" approach to social change for "failing to create a popular movement for a democratic and socialist Canada" and claimed "the present rationale of the NDP stands in contrast to the position of the new left."<sup>23</sup> Seeking revolutionary social change, participatory democracy, and humanism alongside equality, New Leftists looked askance at the NDP and its allies in the union leadership.

The institutions of the Canadian Old Left – that is, the NDP and the unions – did not immediately recognize the impact of the rise of the New Left in the 1960s. A decade after the NDP's formation, on the surface the Canadian labour movement looked very similar to that which had joined with the CCF to create the new party. In 1971 almost one-third of non-agricultural paid workers were unionized and nearly three-quarters of unions were affiliated with the CLC. Most unionized Canadian workers continued to be represented by international unions whose membership and leadership resided primarily in the United States. Seventy-seven per cent of CLC union affiliates also belonged to the American Federation of Labour–Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).<sup>24</sup>

Significant changes bubbled just beneath the surface of the union landscape. The dramatic growth of public-sector unions, necessarily organized as Canadian, changed the labour landscape significantly in the mid-1970s.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, young workers in the 1960s were not immune to the spirit of protest and unrest that gripped many of their counterparts on campus, as the wave of illegal wildcat strikes that swept the country in 1965 and 1966 attests.<sup>26</sup>

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*Canadian Studies* 40, 1 (2010): 1–21.

23. Stanley Gray, "New Left, Old Left," *Canadian Dimension*, November–December 1965, 11–13; James Harding, "The NDP, the Regina Manifesto and the New Left," *Canadian Dimension*, November–December 1966, 19.

24. Canadian Department of Labour Economics and Research Branch, *Labour Organizations in Canada* (Ottawa 1971). The United Auto Workers (UAW), the fourth-largest union in Canada, had disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO as a result of a dispute between UAW president Walter Reuther and AFL-CIO president George Meany in 1968. Many of the unions not affiliated with the CLC were affiliated with the Quebec labour federation, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux. The largest non-affiliated union was the Teamsters.

25. The largest unions in Canada in 1971 were USWA (156,000 members), CUPE (138,088 members), PSAC (121,877 members), and UAW (111,219 members). Canadian Department of Labour Economics and Research Branch, *Labour Organizations in Canada*. However, public-sector unions such as the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) and associations of provincial government workers were initially wary of political involvement. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) was the exception, but a jurisdictional rivalry between CUPE and the provincial associations and CUPE's extensive organizing and rapid expansion occupied most of its energies in the early 1970s.

26. Peter S. McInnis, "Hothead Troubles: 1960s-Era Wildcat Strike Culture in Canada," in Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément & Gregory S. Kealey, eds., *Debating Dissent: Canada and the Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 155–170; Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009),

Exact numbers are difficult to determine, but historians estimate that between 20 and 50 per cent of the 1,100 strikes that occurred over those two years were wildcats, many of them initiated by younger workers.<sup>27</sup> By rejecting their union leaders and participating in these informal wildcat strikes, workers challenged the postwar compromise for workplace stability that had been reached among the Old Left union leadership, management, and the state.

In labour relations this postwar compromise provided unions with the security of formalized collective bargaining and automatic dues check-off.<sup>28</sup> However, the compromise largely reserved for management the right to make major decisions involving production and technology, while unions often limited themselves to negotiating wages and benefits.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, strikes were permitted only between contracts, while shop-floor issues – staffing, overtime, discipline, and technological change – were addressed through a formal grievance process between union representatives and management.<sup>30</sup> By the mid-1960s, frustration over the formalized, bureaucratic, and often plodding means for negotiating contracts and resolving shop-floor issues frequently erupted as walkouts and illegal strikes.

Young workers, who were flooding into the general labour force at the time, were undoubtedly central to the mid-1960s wildcat wave.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the youngest low-seniority workers were often clustered together in less

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211–241.

27. McInnis, “Hothead Troubles,” 157; Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 223. McInnis estimates 53 per cent were wildcats, while Palmer suggests “anywhere from 20 to 50 per cent” were wildcats.

28. An important component of the postwar compromise in labour relations was the 1946 Rand Formula, which did not require employees to join a union that had been certified as the employees’ bargaining agent but did require them to pay union dues since they benefitted from the union’s negotiated agreement. The Industrial Relations and Disputes Act (1948) enshrined PC 1003, introduced in 1944 to ensure compulsory collective bargaining, eliminate the need to strike for union recognition and establish a framework for industrial relations and, in combination with similar provincial legislation, created an industrial regime that lasted for the next three decades.

29. Unions could negotiate on work speed-up and the use of technology but were limited in their capacity to do so. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) fought aggressively against speed-up and automation in the 1960s, leading to a national wildcat strike in 1965. See Blair Laidlaw & Bruce Curtis, “Inside Postal Workers: The Labour Process, State Policy, and the Workers’ Response,” *Labour/Le Travail* 18 (1986): 139–162.

30. Heron, *Canadian Labour Movement*, 76–80. See also Judy Fudge & Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers’ Collective Action in Canada, 1900–1948* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001); Danny Drache & Harry Glasbeek, *The Changing Workplace: Reshaping Canada’s Industrial Relations System* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1992); Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800–1991* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992).

31. Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 216.

desirable jobs or locations.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps most importantly, young workers often shared a similar cultural outlook with other youths of the 1960s. Ian Milligan has identified a mass culture of the time that, although interpreted somewhat differently by working-class and middle-class youth, nevertheless resulted in a “shared youth consciousness.”<sup>33</sup> Emphasizing personal liberties, individual expression, and anti-authoritarianism, this common youth culture was primed to protest on the factory shop floor and campus courtyard alike during the 1960s.

Older workers obviously led and participated in wildcat strikes as well, but “the new militancy” clearly “signaled a rejection of the ‘old left’ unionism of the previous decades.”<sup>34</sup> Most of the wildcat wave occurred at individual union locals in spontaneous expressions of anger and frustration. For example, workers represented by UAW Local 444 conducted 55 brief wildcat strikes at Chrysler’s Windsor plant in 1966 alone.<sup>35</sup> Buzz Hargrove, a shop steward at the Chrysler plant while still in his twenties, recalled the rebellious atmosphere: “The Chrysler plant was overrun with young hotheads full of their own ideas and not willing to take orders from authority figures – company or union. We were rebellious and took advantage of our collective power and the protection the union offered us. Between 1965 and 1968 we had more wildcat strikes in our section – the cushion room – than at any other time in the plant’s history.”<sup>36</sup> Huge wildcat strikes of 16,000 workers at the International Nickel Company of Canada (Inco) in Sudbury and of 11,000 workers at the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco) in Hamilton in 1966 ground operations to a halt and challenged the established authority of both union leadership and management.<sup>37</sup> Just as the student protest movements provided a breeding ground for future Wafflers, so too did the wildcat wave create fertile territory for young workers to become politicized and radicalized.

## Enter the Waffle

THE ROLE THAT YOUTH, workers, and unions would play in a Canadian socialist revolution was foremost in the minds of a group of New Left and NDP activists who met at a “little subversive gathering” over an April 1969 weekend in Toronto.<sup>38</sup> The handful of young leftists who wrote and revised a manifesto,

32. Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 45, 47; Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 216.

33. Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 20, 23.

34. McInnis, “Hothead Troubles,” 165.

35. Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 45.

36. Buzz Hargrove, *Labour of Love: The Fight to Create a More Humane Canada* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1998), 57.

37. Milligan, *Rebel Youth*, 48–53; Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 226–233.

38. The meeting, hosted by Gerald Caplan, also included Krista Maeots, Mel Watkins, John

titled “Manifesto for an Independent and Socialist Canada,” and formed the Waffle initially assigned James Laxer, a Queen’s University graduate student and New Left activist, to compose a statement encapsulating their frustrations with the NDP’s timidity over the “growing domination of the United States” in Canada.<sup>39</sup> A month later, a second meeting with an enlarged group further debated the proposed manifesto and charged Mel Watkins, a University of Toronto economist, with incorporating the group’s ideas into a second version of Laxer’s statement. Watkins’ draft considerably improved Laxer’s. He added stirring introductory and concluding paragraphs, reworked some of Laxer’s awkward phrasing, and included three paragraphs on industrial democracy – a major preoccupation of NDP MP and early Waffler Ed Broadbent – that highlighted the need to redistribute managerial power to workers and concluded that the labour movement was crucial to the struggle for Canadian independence and socialism.<sup>40</sup> The draft acknowledged that “concern is sometimes expressed in Canada about the role of international unions and there are some who call for national unions” before rejecting such an approach for fear of “weakening unionism and the condition of the working man.”<sup>41</sup> As Watkins later explained, “Although we were nationalists, we did not want to take a stand denouncing international unions, despite urgings from some of our friends on the Left. We felt that taking that stand would have been political suicide. For one, it would have made it impossible for us to stay in the NDP. Also it would have put our supporters who are militant members of international unions, in an intolerable position.”<sup>42</sup>

The mild references to international unions were eventually removed, and the final version of the manifesto remained silent on the issue. According to union researcher and Waffle secretary Giles Endicott, the discussion over international unions inspired the group’s odd name: “We agreed that the case was very different from that of multinational corporations, since the corporations have real power to initiate and control economic development whereas the unions do not. But in the course of this discussion it was argued that if we were going to waffle, it would be better to waffle to the left than waffle to the

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and Pat Smart, Doug and Carol Myers, Giles Endicott, and Ed Broadbent, the NDP MP for Oshawa, in addition to Laxer and Caplan. Gerald Caplan to Gang, 14 April 1969, Giles Endicott fonds, box 2009-047/001 (hereafter Endicott fonds), file 2 Waffle – Correspondence, 1969, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Toronto (hereafter YUA).

39. Gerald Caplan, Giles Endicott & Don Taylor, “My draft of letter from Caplan’s – never put out after I had second thoughts, 1971 Fed. Convention,” Endicott fonds, file 7 Waffle – History, YUA.

40. Second Draft of Waffle Manifesto, 8 June 1969, Endicott fonds, file 9 Waffle – Manifesto, 1969, YUA. A note by Endicott on the 14 May version of the statement suggests that Broadbent had already written a section on industrial democracy.

41. Second Draft of Waffle Manifesto.

42. Mel Watkins, “Learning to Move Left,” *This Magazine Is about Schools*, Spring 1972, 88.

right.<sup>43</sup> After the *Globe and Mail* used the term in a September 1969 editorial, “The Waffle Manifesto,” the group quickly adopted the “Waffle” name publicly.<sup>44</sup> Laxer recalled that “we might not have had it without the editorial. ... We knew it would be a problem to have a left-wing group that was seen as too serious, so to have a name that was humorous was just great. We knew right away that it was a great name.”<sup>45</sup>

Over the summer the nascent Waffle rallied support for its manifesto and a series of related policy resolutions in the hope of pushing the upcoming NDP federal convention, planned for Winnipeg in October 1969, to the left. Although the Waffle Manifesto was endorsed by 21 riding associations and a number of prominent New Democratic politicians, activists, and academics, it gained little traction with either the labour movement or the federal NDP leadership.<sup>46</sup> Don Taylor, the USWA’s assistant research director and early member of the Waffle executive committee, resigned from the group before the convention. Taylor explained that he no longer wished to defend “the workers’ participation section with which I never really agreed and from some superfluous anti-Americanism; none of which is really essential to the manifesto” but which triggered “almost automatic distrust” among his colleagues in the labour movement.<sup>47</sup> The philosopher Charles Taylor, who had signed but subsequently rejected the Waffle Manifesto, collaborated with NDP deputy leader David Lewis in producing a statement, “For a United and Independent Canada,” that both acknowledged the manifesto’s popularity within the party and attempted a repudiation of its more radical elements.<sup>48</sup> Endicott alerted other Wafflers to the existence of a “competing statement” that union officials such as Morden Lazarus of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and Lorne Ingle of the USWA distributed to labour leaders prior to the convention.<sup>49</sup> Labelled the “Marshmallow Manifesto” by convention delegates for its

43. Caplan, Endicott & Taylor, “My draft of letter from Caplan’s.”

44. Hugh Winsor, a *Globe and Mail* reporter and signatory of the manifesto, described the comment to Jean Horwath, the *Globe’s* chief editorial writer. See Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 579; “The Waffle Manifesto,” editorial, *Globe and Mail*, 6 September 1969.

45. Laxer quotation in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 579.

46. “Union Establishment Voices Opposition,” *Waffle Weekly*, 20 October 1969, Endicott fonds, file 10 Waffle – Newsletter, YUA.

47. Don Taylor to Giles Endicott, 7 October 1969, Endicott fonds, file 2 Waffle – Correspondence, 1969, YUA.

48. In response to widely shared concerns about expanding foreign ownership, the Taylor/Lewis document called for the creation of a Canada Development Corporation but, in contrast to the Waffle Manifesto, described public ownership as one important, but not exclusive, means of limiting and regulating foreign ownership of the Canadian economy. See “The Marshmallow Manifesto,” in Michael S. Cross, ed., *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974), 46–47.

49. Giles Endicott to Mel Watkins, James Laxer & Gerald Caplan, 9 October 1969, Endicott

moderate tone, the Taylor-Lewis statement criticized anti-Americanism as a “barren and negative” concept and was adopted by the party’s federal council.<sup>50</sup> Eventually it was decided that both manifestos would be debated simultaneously on the final night of the convention.

The media interest generated by the Waffle, the ideological and generational differences between Waffle supporters and long-time New Democrats, and the convention’s plenary structure combined to create an often frantic atmosphere. Several days of policy panels open to all delegates found Waffle supporters and party moderates alike rushing from one panel session to another in an effort to win crucial votes. Former ONDP assistant secretary and historian Desmond Morton described it as “a nightmare for party regulars” as “rival clutches of delegates were sent panting through the corridors of Winnipeg’s Civic Auditorium.”<sup>51</sup> Laxer recalled a similar scenario of “young, long-haired and often bearded Waffle supporters ... racing from one workshop session to another, being pursued by older, and often paunchy, trade union delegates.”<sup>52</sup> The Waffle arranged for its own space at the convention, which proved fortuitous since its meetings regularly drew 300 to 400 delegates, although the Waffle was not intended to operate as a “binding caucus” whose members would vote in concert, in contrast to the expectation of solidarity among union delegates on all party policy votes.<sup>53</sup>

The 75-minute televised debate between supporters of the Waffle and Marshmallow manifestos proved a highlight of the convention. NDP deputy leader Lewis warned that endorsing the Waffle Manifesto’s “arid nationalism or anti-Americanism” would place the party in an “ideological straitjacket,” and Douglas, the NDP leader, criticized the manifesto as “ambiguous and ambivalent.” Dennis McDermott, Canadian director of the UAW, urged New Democrats to reject the Waffle Manifesto and reminded delegates that “we belong to a political party not a pseudo-intellectual debating society.”

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fonds, file 2 Waffle – Correspondence, 1969, YUA.

50. Michael S. Cross, “Introduction,” in Cross, ed., *Decline and Fall*, 16; Roger Newman, “Watkins Manifesto Countered by Lewis, Party Establishment,” *Globe and Mail*, 28 October 1969.

51. Morton, NDP: *The Dream of Power*, 94.

52. James Laxer, *In Search of a New Left: Canadian Politics after the Neoconservative Assault* (Toronto: Viking, 1996), 153.

53. Giles Endicott to George Cadbury, 9 October 1969, Giles Endicott fonds, box 2009-047/001, file 2 Waffle – Correspondence, 1969, YUA. Giles Endicott had experienced the ramifications of breaching the principle of union “caucus solidarity” as a result of his participation in a “Young Turks” revolt at the 1967 NDP convention. He recalled that he was “attacked” by other union officials for “selling out the glory of the Packinghouse workers, and ... for being an intellectual. ... I said that I had been stupid in not following through the labour caucus, but objected to being regarded as a traitor.” Endicott, “Account of ‘Young Turks’ at NDP Convention,” 1967, Endicott fonds, file 3 Waffle – History – Prior Documents leading to the Waffle Manifesto – ca. 1964–1967 (1 of 2), YUA.

In response, Waffler Watkins claimed, “in this century Canada has been absorbed into the American system, and has become a resource base and consumer market for the American economic empire.” He called on the NDP to support socialist measures, including extensive public ownership, in order to roll back “the dangerous extent to which our economy is owned and controlled by the American corporate elite.” Referring to the rapidly changing politics of the 1960s, Watkins implored the NDP to “relate itself as a Party to these new undercurrents of radicalism. ... It must become the parliamentary wing of a broad social movement.” After lengthy and boisterous debate, delegates defeated the Waffle Manifesto by a vote of 499 to 268 and passed the Marshmallow Manifesto by a wide margin in an unrecorded vote.<sup>54</sup>

After the convention, delighted with the enthusiasm the manifesto and their radical policy positions had generated, the Wafflers committed to continue organizing as a distinct group within the NDP.<sup>55</sup> Before travelling to Winnipeg, as Endicott had acknowledged, “we cannot expect to change the whole party at one convention. ... [I]t really matters more what the delegates go away thinking than what they go away having endorsed.”<sup>56</sup> Despite the manifesto’s failure to win support among a majority of the convention delegates, the Wafflers “were ecstatic about their success in drawing national attention to their cause.”<sup>57</sup> In the year following the convention, the Waffle pursued its goals from inside the NDP, at provincial party conventions in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, and Manitoba, and through extraparliamentary activism including participation in the Abortion Caravan and rallies opposing the federal government’s use of the War Measures Act during the October Crisis. The Waffle’s activism in the labour movement, however, proved a source of contention between the New Leftists and pro-NDP union leaders.

Signs of tension were first apparent at a two-day public forum in March 1970 dubbed “Teach-In: The Americanization of Canada,” sponsored by the Toronto Waffle, that attracted 800 participants to hear speakers including Grace Hartman, secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Hartman, utilizing a report prepared by the union’s research director and Waffler Gil Levine, informed the crowd that \$35 million of Canadian

54. The above description is drawn primarily from Debate on the Resolutions: “For a United and Independent Canada” (C-17) and “For an Independent and Socialist Canada” (R-133), Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-7, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (hereafter LAC), as well as Murray Goldblatt & Roger Newman, “NDP Delegates Reject Watkins Manifesto by Margin of Nearly 2 to 1,” *Globe and Mail*, 31 October 1969; Jack Cahill, “NDP Rejects ‘Anti-American’ Watkins Manifesto,” *Toronto Star*, 31 October 1969. Media reports conflict over the size of the opposition to the Marshmallow Manifesto. The *Globe* reported about 100 voting against, while the *Star* only recorded 40.

55. Watkins, “Learning to Move Left,” 86.

56. Giles Endicott to Jeremy Akerman, 12 September 1969, Endicott fonds, file 2 Waffle – Correspondence, 1969, YUA.

57. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 154.

workers' union dues were sent annually to the head offices of international unions in the United States, for which little benefit was received in return. Chris Trower of the USWA countered that unions cut across national, racial, and continental barriers.<sup>58</sup>

Further disagreements arose later that month when, at the invitation of Local 132 of the United Rubber Workers of America, the Toronto Waffle offered assistance to the 600 workers then fighting closure of the Dunlop Tire plant on Queen Street East in Toronto. Wafflers attended union meetings, helped the local create and distribute a newspaper, aided in circulating a petition throughout the adjacent community, and helped organize a demonstration at Queen's Park.<sup>59</sup> However, the Waffle and the NDP differed on how best to support the Dunlop workers. Despite local NDP MPP James Renwick's efforts in the legislature to require Dunlop to keep the plant open for three months, to allow for a study of its economic feasibility, he eventually concluded that the plant could not be saved and advised the union to take legal action to secure the best severance pay deal possible.<sup>60</sup>

Although the NDP's Community Action Committee members declared themselves "generally satisfied" with the party's participation in the campaign to save the plant, Watkins recalled that the Waffle "would have liked to throw our support behind the more militant workers of the plant who were contemplating direct industrial action, such as sit-ins or work-ins."<sup>61</sup> In his critique of both the union leadership and MPP Renwick, Waffler Steve Penner argued that "the potential militancy of the Dunlop workers and the rank and file of Toronto's labour movement was never really tested."<sup>62</sup> NDP member Michael Prue defended Renwick and the union leadership from Penner's criticisms and argued that Penner's "doctrinaire truth ... was not that of the workers."<sup>63</sup> But Wafflers believed that many union activists viewed their efforts on behalf of the Dunlop workers favourably. As Watkins saw it, "labour people were

58. "Canadian Unions Send \$35 Million a Year to U.S., Teach-In Told," *Globe and Mail*, 9 March 1970; Susan Crean, *Grace Hartman: A Woman for Her Time* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1995), 127; *Waffle News*, April 1970, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-18, LAC.

59. Watkins, "Learning to Move Left," 86; Wilfred List, "Scuffles Mar Parade by Dunlop Protesters outside Legislature," *Globe and Mail*, 2 April 1970.

60. "Robarts Rejects Bid for Study of Dunlop," *Globe and Mail*, 18 March 1970.

61. Minutes of Provincial Executive, 30 May 1970, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 3 Executive and Council Minutes 1968-70, Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario (hereafter QUA); Watkins, "Learning to Move Left," 87. See also Steve Penner, "A Case History of Dunlop: How the Workers Were Sold Out," *Waffle News*, May 1970, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-18, LAC.

62. Steve Penner, "Potential Worker Militancy Was Never Really Tested," *New Democrat*, March-April 1970.

63. Michael Prue, "Letter," *Waffle News*, July 1970, Waffle-NDP fonds, File 446-18, LAC.



beginning to lose some of their suspicions of us as impractical intellectuals and long-hairs when we actually did some of this practical work.”<sup>64</sup>

A Waffle influence within the labour movement was also apparent at the May 1970 CLC convention in Edmonton. A “Reform Caucus” of younger union activists presented a five-point program urging the CLC “to establish a team of organizers who could be assigned on short notice to help underprivileged groups – slum dwellers, native people, working poor and the unemployed.”<sup>65</sup> The program also called for the creation of a CLC youth department to counter younger workers’ tendency to feel alienated from unions, the adoption of a policy supporting equal rights and opportunities for women, the creation of aid and information centres for the poor and unemployed, and the use of multi-union teams to organize the unorganized.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the Reform Caucus demanded that Canadian sections of international unions be allowed to operate independently, with domestic offices, policy conferences, staffs, funds specifically earmarked for Canadian projects, and complete autonomy over their political involvement.<sup>67</sup> Much of what the Reform Caucus proposed did not come to fruition. Although Waffler Gil Levine later acknowledged that only a few among the “odd lot” who comprised the Reform Caucus had “had any direct connection to the Waffle” besides himself, commentators described the caucus as the “counterpart within the union movement of the Waffle,” and members acknowledged the influence of the Waffle on its program.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to its efforts within the labour movement, the Waffle’s endeavours to transform the NDP had borne some fruit and the group had secured endorsement for several of its left-wing policy positions at provincial party conventions in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. But the Waffle’s plans to run a candidate to succeed Douglas as leader of the federal NDP brought the group into direct conflict with established party and union leaders and set the stage for open struggle within the NDP. By the time Laxer entered the race in November 1970, former Waffler Broadbent, NDP deputy leader Lewis, and former ONDP provincial secretary John Harney had already declared their candidacies, to be joined by BC MP Frank Howard in January 1971. The Waffle’s goal in running Laxer as a leadership candidate was to demonstrate the extent of the group’s support within the party and influence the tone of the leadership

64. Watkins, “Learning to Move Left,” 88.

65. Wilfred List, “Canadian Labor Congress Faces Debate over Policy Position on Social Issues,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 March 1970.

66. “A Program for Reform – CLC Convention,” 1970, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-8, LAC.

67. Wilfred List, “Youth Rebels,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 May 1970.

68. Gil Levine, “The Waffle and the Labour Movement,” *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (Autumn 1990): 186–187; Wilfred List, “Canadian Labor Congress faces debate over policy position on social issues,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 March 1970; Levine, “CLC’s Reformers: Victorious or Co-opted?” *Canadian Dimension*, June–July 1970, 11.

campaign by focusing on “issues” over the “cult of personality.”<sup>69</sup> The Waffle committed to a collectively run campaign, and Laxer recalls that he “was as much the representative of the Waffle movement’s ideas as an actual candidate for the leadership of the party.”<sup>70</sup> The group’s “most expensive piece of campaign literature” to support Laxer’s leadership bid was a 30-page booklet of resolutions distributed to riding associations, affiliated union locals, and youth clubs prior to the convention.<sup>71</sup>

Party moderates, determined to prevent the Waffle from dominating the leadership convention’s policy agenda in the manner that the group’s manifesto had two years prior, organized ahead of the NDP gathering. Founded by Morton and ONDP research director Marion Bryden, the group NDP Now drew much of its support from the unusually large bloc of union delegates at the convention.<sup>72</sup> The CLC had established a steering committee of key union leaders to coordinate labour’s role at the convention and, in particular, to oppose Waffle policy positions.<sup>73</sup> Lynn Williams, a USWA official, acted as liaison between the CLC steering committee and NDP Now.<sup>74</sup> Speaking at a USWA conference in Hamilton, Morton attacked the Waffle, alleging that it contributed nothing to the NDP “that is not archaic, opportunistic or irrelevant” and adding that “indulging youth, as the NDP regularly does, may be emotionally satisfying but it is politically stupid if it turns off hard-working, sensible people with mortgages.”<sup>75</sup> For its part, the Waffle’s steering committee acknowledged NDP Now’s success in electing anti-Waffle delegates at riding association meetings across Toronto ahead of the convention.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to promoting anti-Waffle candidates at riding association delegate selection meetings, Morton produced a pamphlet criticizing the “Americanization of the Canadian left” and calling on delegates to reject

69. Thomas Claridge, “Wafflers Waffle on Selecting National Leadership Candidate,” *Globe and Mail*, 4 August 1970.

70. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 157.

71. “For an Independent Socialist Canada: Resolutions,” April 1971, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-7, LAC; minutes of National Housekeeping and Steering Committees, 30 January 1971, Kim Malcolmson & Paul Barber fonds, box 2008-017/001, file 5, YUA.

72. Keith Archer finds that 32.3 per cent of the 1971 convention delegates were from organized labour (a larger percentage than any subsequent convention). Archer, *Political Choices and Electoral Consequences: A Study of Organized Labour and the New Democratic Party* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990).

73. Wilfred List, “CLC Presence at NDP Convention to Assure Labor’s Voice Is Heard,” *Globe and Mail*, 21 April 1971.

74. “NDP ‘Unity’ Group Is Out to Crush Party’s Wafflers,” *Toronto Star*, 21 April 1971.

75. Desmond Morton, “The Waffle within the ONDP,” speech at USWA Political Conference, Hamilton, Ontario, 28 February 1971, Waffle-NDP fonds, 446-16, LAC.

76. Minutes of National Housekeeping and Steering Committees, 28 February 1971, Kim Malcolmson & Paul Barber fonds, box 2008-017/001, file 5, YUA.

Waffle positions.<sup>77</sup> Ontario NDP provincial secretary Gordon Brigden assisted Morton's efforts by securing prominent endorsements for the pamphlet. Brigden wrote to Manitoba cabinet minister Howard Pawley, for example, explaining that "a number of NDPers are concerned that we have positive policies for the forthcoming federal convention rather than go to the convention and swat down ideas we don't like."<sup>78</sup> Marc Eliesen, the federal party's research director and NDP Now member, wrote to Lewis in an effort to ensure the convention schedule favoured their union supporters: "I suggest we attempt to seek Federal Council approval for the position that votes on resolution matters be taken at certain times during or at the end of the day. Because of the hardcore dedication of the Waffle group, it is imperative that the anti-Waffle forces be there at all times when votes are taken on important policy matters. A large number of labour delegates do not participate in these policy matters and are therefore very difficult to round up for the final votes."<sup>79</sup>

NDP Now successfully challenged the Waffle for positions on the party's crucial Resolutions Committee, which selected, drafted, and prioritized from among the hundreds of submissions by riding associations, affiliated unions, and youth groups the resolutions for debate at the convention. With Wafflers making up only a quarter of the Resolutions Committee membership, Morton and his allies ensured that resolutions that made it to the convention floor reflected moderate policies.<sup>80</sup> As a result, during debates on the convention floor the Waffle was forced to refer resolutions back to the committee with specific instructions to redraft the policy.<sup>81</sup> This approach signalled to NDP Now and their union allies that all motions to refer must be defeated.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, some delegates received written instructions from USWA official Bob Mackenzie to "push through – defeat those marked Waffle."<sup>83</sup> But not all union delegates opposed the Waffle. Harry Greenwood, secretary of USWA Local 1005, stated before the convention that some unionists supported the Waffle and warned that labour leaders should not automatically expect all union delegates to fall into line behind them. At the same time, Greenwood noted that

77. Desmond Morton, *NDP Now: A Convention of Crucial Choices* (Toronto: Thistle Printing, 1971).

78. Gordon Brigden to Howard Pawley, 25 March 1971, New Democratic Party of Ontario fonds, series 20 File, file 570 Manitoba NDP, 1970-73, QUA.

79. Marc Eliesen to David Lewis, Confidential, 20 January 1971, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-4, LAC.

80. Morton, *NDP: The Dream of Power*, 125–126.

81. Stephen Clarkson, "Policy in the NDP: Power vs. Participation," *Canadian Forum*, April–May 1971, 7–9.

82. Morton, *NDP: The Dream of Power*, 126; Clarkson, "Policy in the NDP," 8.

83. "Proposed Allotment of Time for Policy Session," 1971 Fed. Conv., Endicott fonds, file 7 Waffle – History (2 of 2), YUA.

not all Waffle unionists necessarily supported Laxer for leader; four of the eleven delegates from Local 1005, for instance, backed Laxer, but Greenwood favoured Broadbent.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, union leaders were among the leading critics of the Waffle during divisive policy debates over women's equality, enhanced foreign aid, nationalization of natural resources, and Québec's right to self-determination. Laxer's speech in support of the Waffle position on nationalization was attacked by Art Kube, a CLC director and former Steelworker, who announced, "I'm sick and tired of those people in Kingston, led by Laxer. It's time we had people who did some work rather than professors who write resolutions. ... No one has refused to join the NDP because we're not radical enough."<sup>85</sup> Criticizing the Waffle's support for Québec's right to self-determination, Murray Cotterill, director of public relations for the USWA, denounced "bloody academic labels" and warned that Québec independence would divide bargaining teams, cripple workers' negotiating power, and harm organized labour.<sup>86</sup>

The *Globe and Mail* neatly summarized the alignment of forces that had successfully opposed the Waffle at the 1971 NDP convention: "labor supplied the muscle in these crucial votes but the ideas were developed by the NDP Now group."<sup>87</sup> This was quite close to the truth: union delegates had indeed literally "supplied the muscle" on at least one occasion. After the Waffle motion to refer the resource resolution back to committee was defeated in a vote by show of hands, Waffler Gilles Teasdale lunged for a microphone to demand a recorded vote. According to the *Globe and Mail* report of the incident, "He was thrown back from the podium by three trade union delegates acting as convention ushers. When Mr. Teasdale again attempted to climb onto the podium, the ushers pushed him back and a fight almost resulted."<sup>88</sup> When Penner, chair of the Ontario Waffle, tried to reach a microphone to suggest a standing vote, he too was rebuffed by union delegates when Terry Meagher, the secretary-treasurer of the OFL, noted Penner was not wearing a delegate badge. Near bedlam ensued as Waffle and trade-union delegates "cursed and pushed at each other," Mel Watkins screaming that Meagher was "a fascist" and unionists retorting that Watkins was a "commie." Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis intervened, telling the union delegates to "cool it," while Watkins urged the

84. Marc Zwelling, "Waffle-Leaning Unionists Deny Anti-Laxer Move," *Toronto Telegram*, 13 April 1971.

85. Wilfred List, "Complete Public Ownership of Oil, Mines Is Rejected 3-1 by New Democratic Convention," *Globe and Mail*, 24 April 1971.

86. Lewis Seale, "Quebec NDP Concept Rejected in Debate on Self-Determination," *Globe and Mail*, 24 April 1971.

87. "Ad Hoc Policy Committee Calls on Radical Waffle Group to Dissolve," *Globe and Mail*, 26 April 1971.

88. "Union Delegates Scuffle with Radical Faction," *Globe and Mail*, 24 April 1971.

Wafflers to calm down and asked Penner to leave the podium.<sup>89</sup> The Wafflers were justifiably upset over the actions of some union delegates to the convention. According to Cy Gonick and Jack Warnock, “union muscle intimidation was let loose throughout the convention floor.” They continued:

A Manitoba cabinet minister who, in the final ballot, was refusing to wear a Lewis button was surrounded by representatives of the Manitoba steelworkers and told, “You vote for Laxer and we’ll fix you.” He didn’t buckle, and that little exchange cost David a few more votes. A union man who put on a Laxer button was grabbed by three others, pressed against a wall and threatened if he didn’t remove the button. One of us was grabbed and threatened by a union delegate for cheering one of the Waffle’s few procedural victories.<sup>90</sup>

Although NDP Now and its union allies had thwarted the Waffle’s attempt to have their policies adopted by the convention, Laxer’s surprising second-place finish to David Lewis in the leadership contest indicated a strong level of support for the group among delegates from riding associations and youth clubs.<sup>91</sup> Laxer described his second-place showing as a great victory, making it “impossible for the left ever again to be ignored by the NDP.”<sup>92</sup> However, the outcome dismayed many party moderates. Supporter (and former Waffler) Gerald Caplan described the Lewis victory celebration at the Château Laurier hotel as “one of the worst celebrations I’ve ever been at. It was like a wake. ... I’ve never been to a place at which the winner felt so much like a victim.”<sup>93</sup>

Lewis, in his leadership acceptance speech to the convention, commented, “I look forward to working with Jim Laxer and his friends. There is no difference of purpose in this party.”<sup>94</sup> But during the press conference that followed, he was unequivocal and uncompromising in his stance on the Waffle, describing it as an “organization of its own” and pledging he would focus on NDP policy, not the Waffle. When asked how he would react if the Waffle continued organizing the workers and the oppressed, Lewis replied, “Well, if they do organize the workers and the oppressed I would be a great deal happier. So far they’ve organized the students and the oppressing.”<sup>95</sup>

89. “Union Delegates Scuffle”; Michael Cross, “Third Class on the Titanic: The NDP Convention,” *Canadian Forum*, April–May 1971, 5.

90. Cy Gonick & Jack Warnock, “Sour Winners: Notes on the NDP Convention,” *Canadian Dimension*, June 1971, 4.

91. “NDP Requires 4 Ballots to Elect Lewis as Leader,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 April 1971. Lewis finally prevailed over Laxer on the fourth ballot, by a vote of 1,046 to 612.

92. John Zaritsky, “The Jubilant Waffle Sees Victory in ndp Convention Defeat,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 April 1971.

93. Caplan quoted in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 471. Caplan, close to Stephen Lewis and uncomfortable participating in a continuous opposition within the party, left the Waffle soon after the 1969 federal NDP convention to organized Stephen Lewis’ leadership bid for the Ontario NDP.

94. “NDP Requires 4 Ballots.”

95. Murray Goldblatt, “Lewis Asserts His Command, No Pandering to the Waffle,” *Globe and*

## Labour Confronts the Waffle

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST unionized workers arose in the fall of 1971 when the Ontario Waffle supported members of the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union (CTCU) Local 520 on strike at the Texpack textile plant in Brantford.<sup>96</sup> However, the CTCU's popular leaders, Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent, were perceived by the CLC as communists and barred from the federation. The union was not a CLC affiliate; instead, it was among the founding members of an alternative national labour federation, the Council of Canadian Unions (CCU), established in July 1969 by Rowley and Parent.<sup>97</sup> The creation of a small, nationalist rival to the CLC did not endear Rowley and Parent to the leadership of the labour movement.

Texpack was owned by the American Hospital Supply Corporation, which had begun phasing out manufacturing at Brantford and was using the plant as a warehouse for repackaging surplus US army bandages labelled "Made in Canada." The company paid low wages to a workforce that was 80 per cent female. The union local hoped an improved wage and benefit package would force the company to maintain manufacturing operations in Brantford. Strike tensions were exacerbated by the company's hiring of replacement workers and a court injunction restricting picket lines at the plant. The strikers' frustration

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*Mail*, 26 April 1971.

96. The CTCU represented the remnants of the Canadian Textile Council of the United Textile Workers of America (UTWA) that had split from the parent union when the UTWA expelled Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent, the popular organizers and leaders of the council, amid accusations of communism. Despite rumours that Parent was a Soviet spy, she and Rowley had organized textile plants around Montréal in the 1940s and led a successful strike for union recognition at Dominion Mills in Montréal and Valleyfield in the face of determined opposition from the company, the provincial government, and the Catholic Church. However, Québec premier Maurice Duplessis insisted that Rowley and Parent be arrested and tried for "seditious conspiracy," and the UTWA leadership, accusing them of communist sympathies, expelled Rowley and Parent from the union in 1952. They continued organizing and representing textile workers in Ontario and Québec through the Canadian Textile Council, and Parent eventually joined Rowley in Brantford in 1967. She had assisted the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union in the battles against USWA for the Inco and Falconbridge locals in Sudbury in 1961, 1962, and 1965, resulting in Steelworker officials portraying her as a red witch atop a broomstick during the bitter campaigns. See Denyse Baillargeon, "Textile Strikes in Quebec: 1946, 1947, 1952," in Andrée Levesque, ed. and trans., *Madeleine Parent: Activist* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2005), 59–70; Rick Salutin, *Kent Rowley, The Organizer: A Canadian Union Life* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1980), 99; John Lang, "Carrying On the Struggle in Ontario, 1952–1973," in Levesque, ed. and trans., *Madeleine Parent*, 72.

97. In addition to the CTCU, the CCU included two unions, the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada and the Canadian Association of Industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers, that had seceded from their international parent unions in 1963 and 1964, respectively, and the remnants of Mine-Mill Local 598, which continued to represent workers at Falconbridge in Sudbury.

occasionally boiled over into violent confrontations with police who were protecting buses of scab labour entering the plant.<sup>98</sup>

The CTCU, which contested on principle the use of court injunctions limiting pickets as a means of easing the use of replacement workers, initially received little support for the Texpack strike. The Brantford and District Labour Council waited two months before endorsing the strike in August and did so then only grudgingly, refusing to provide financial support because the CTCU was not affiliated with the CLC.<sup>99</sup> Worse still, the Textile Workers Union of America conducted a CLC-endorsed raid of the CTCU local at Harding Carpets in Collingwood, claiming the Texpack strike was destined to fail.<sup>100</sup> Adding insult to injury, the TWUA crossed CTCU picket lines at Texpack's Rexdale plant to sign up replacement workers and applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for bargaining rights before the predictable backlash forced them to drop the application.<sup>101</sup> Texpack workers did receive support, however, from Wafflers and dissident unionists at USWA Local 1005 at Stelco in Hamilton and UAW Local 439 at Brantford's Massey-Ferguson plant. By late August the Brantford and District Labour Council had eased its earlier reticence and helped to organize a demonstration in aid of the striking Texpack workers.

The Ontario Waffle organized a conference in Brantford in early September to highlight the strike that drew trade unionists and pledges of support from the USWA, UAW, and CUPE. Wafflers from Hamilton, London, and Toronto joined the picket lines at Texpack, and several, including Watkins, Penner, Robert Laxer, and Daniel Drache, were arrested following a confrontation with replacement workers and their police protectors.<sup>102</sup> Toronto Wafflers also joined CTCU members picketing the company's Rexdale plant and scuffled with police while attempting to prevent scabs from crossing their lines.<sup>103</sup> The Waffle organized a rally at Queen's Park and continued to defy the court injunction limiting picketing. Texpack, under pressure from government mediators and the union, agreed to a settlement including a wage increase

98. For a detailed discussion of the strike, see Sangster, "Remembering Texpack."

99. Marion Harris & Christine Sylvester, with Malcolm Levin, *On Strike!* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1973), 11.

100. Salutin, *Kent Rowley*, 102.

101. "Striking Union Says Rival Aids Texpack," *Toronto Star*, 12 October 1971.

102. "Watkins, 13 Others Arrested at Texpack during Demonstration by Waffle Members," *Globe and Mail*, 10 September 1971. The charges were withdrawn in January 1972 by a special Crown attorney who argued that the dismissed injunction negated the charges.

103. "Student, 20, Is Arrested in Scuffle as Texpack Reopens in Rexdale," *Globe and Mail*, 30 September 1971.

of seventeen cents an hour on 15 October, which the striking workers ratified three days later.<sup>104</sup>

The Waffle's stance on the role of international unions in the Canadian labour movement hardened after the experience of the bitter Texpack strike and its support for Rowley and Parent's CCU. John Lang, a York University researcher and CCU organizer, recalled that the Texpack strike "challenged the Wafflers to include the domination of Canada's labour movement as an important aspect of the US control of our economy."<sup>105</sup> In an analysis that appealed to the Waffle, Marc Zwelling concluded in *Canadian Dimension*, "The Canadian Textile & Chemical Union has now given the lie to the myth that independent Canadian unions can never win against powerful multinational corporations. ... It is not the existence of international unions that gives labour its strength – but a dedicated union leadership, a militant membership and strong support from the rest of the labour movement."<sup>106</sup>

At the Ontario Federation of Labour convention in November 1971, Cecil Taylor and George Gilks, Wafflers in USWA Local 1005, submitted an emergency resolution calling on the OFL to condemn the TWUA for its "collusion with the company" in signing up scab workers but were ruled out of order.<sup>107</sup> OFL president David Archer declared, "we'll not allow anyone to attack affiliates of this group."<sup>108</sup> Unlike the previous year's Reform Caucus at the CLC convention, a newly formed Waffle Labour Committee appeared at the OFL convention, leading the *Globe and Mail* to report that the Waffle "is out to defeat the right-wing bureaucracy it says dominates major Canadian unions."<sup>109</sup> The Waffle Labour Committee also sponsored a hospitality suite, distributing a leaflet that called for "completely sovereign and independent Canadian unions." The leaflet outlined a program for achieving such independence that largely aped the CLC Reform Caucus' program for autonomy, including ensuring that Canadian union officers were elected by Canadians,

104. "Texpack Workers Get Package of 44 Cents," *Globe and Mail*, 19 October 1971. The Ontario Supreme Court ruled in the union's favour and dismissed the injunction after the strike ended. A special Crown attorney withdrew 64 of the charges laid during the strike as a result of the injunction's dismissal.

105. Lang, "Carrying On the Struggle," 82.

106. 101. Marc Zwelling, "The Strike at Texpack's Vanishing Plant," *Canadian Dimension*, November 1971, 11.

107. "Emergency Resolution," November 1971, New Democratic Party Waffle collection (hereafter NDP Waffle collection), box 2, file 12, William Ready Division of Archives, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario (hereafter MUA); Paul Gartlan, "Labor's Failure to Back Texpack Strikers Undermines Solidarity," *London Free Press*, 12 November 1971. Sangster describes how "Wafflers tried to take the floor ... only to find their microphones turned off." Sangster, "Remembering Texpack," 56–57.

108. Gartlan, "Labor's Failure."

109. "Waffle Seeks Militant Steps for Unions," *Globe and Mail*, 29 October 1971.



having union dues paid in Canada remain in Canada, and making specific acknowledgement of Canadian autonomy in the constitutions of international unions based in the United States.<sup>110</sup> However, in an internal discussion paper soon after the convention Waffle leader Krista Maeots warned that “the labour leadership no longer sees us as a force that will quickly die away; instead they see us beginning to carry anti-imperialist, socialist politics and the demand for a Canadian trade union movement into their back yards.”<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, union leaders did grow increasingly concerned as the Waffle built a support base within the labour movement. The Waffle allied with existing factions in some of the largest and most powerful locals in the two biggest unions affiliated with the NDP – USWA Locals 1005 (Stelco in Hamilton) and 6500 (Inco in Sudbury) and the UAW Left Caucus, which included leaders of powerful UAW locals across southern Ontario – whose membership was becoming increasingly antagonistic toward its international leadership.<sup>112</sup> As James Laxer explained, “the fact that dissident Steelworkers and Auto Workers were becoming involved with the Waffle was highly alarming to the regional and national leadership of the USWA and the UAW. ... [T]hey feared the Waffle might be gaining a foothold in their very organizations.”<sup>113</sup>

Lingering bitterness over the USWA’s successful 1962 raid on the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill), the communist-linked union that had long represented Inco workers, and the USWA’s handling of the 1966 wildcat strike at Inco, helped the Waffle attract support at USWA Local 6500 in Sudbury. As well, as James Laxer recalled, “leading figures in Local 1005 at Stelco in Hamilton ... gravitated to the Waffle.”<sup>114</sup> Political conflict within the massive USWA Local 1005 dated back to the union’s formation, but by the late 1960s a growing influx of young workers had further altered that local’s political dynamics. After the 1966 wildcat strike at Stelco two groups of union activists gained support in opposition to the “Right Wing Group” that supported the international union and was closely aligned with USWA staff. The long-standing “Left Wing Group” included older workers who had been active in the 1950s opposing USWA raids on communist-friendly unions but gained new supporters in the late 1960s. The “Autonomy Group,” formed in 1965–66, criticized Steelworker staffers such as Hamilton area supervisor Stewart Cooke and District Six director Larry Sefton and pushed for the Canadian sections of the USWA to break away from the international union. Leaders of both the

110. *Waffle Labour News*, November 1971, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA.

111. Krista Maeots, “A Socialist Strategy for the Waffle,” 11 December 1971, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-11, LAC.

112. The UAW Left Caucus had supporters in Local 200 (Ford in Windsor), Local 444 (Chrysler in Windsor), Local 222 (GM in Oshawa), Local 707 (Ford in Oakville), Local 199 (GM in St. Catharine’s), Local 27 (Amalgamated in London), and Local 28 (Amalgamated in Oshawa).

113. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 159.

114. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 159.

Left Wing Group, like Greenwood, and the Autonomy Group, like Cec Taylor, supported the Waffle.<sup>115</sup> Greenwood challenged Sefton's handpicked successor and NDP stalwart, Lynn Williams, for election as district director for District Six in February 1972, promising "Canadian control through a Canadian Constitution."<sup>116</sup> Although Williams won, Greenwood's challenge was the first time the USWA District Six director had not been acclaimed, an indication of increasing polarization within the Steelworkers during the early 1970s.

The other major industrial union closely linked with the NDP, the UAW, had a Left Caucus in its Canadian section that had included both Communists and left-wing CCFers since before World War II until the 1950s.<sup>117</sup> In the 1960s the Canadian UAW became divided over the direction the continental auto industry was taking. Beginning in 1960, a minority in the Canadian UAW opposed the formalized integration of the Canadian and American auto industries and advocated instead for automobiles designed and manufactured entirely in Canada.<sup>118</sup> Charlie Brooks, president of Local 444 (Chrysler in Windsor) from 1956 to 1977, and Abe Taylor, president of Local 222 (GM in Oshawa) from 1963 to 1978, were among the most vocal critics of the Auto Pact, which allowed for duty-free trade in vehicles and auto parts between Canada and the United States while establishing minimum Canadian content safeguards.<sup>119</sup> However, UAW president Walter Reuther, Canadian UAW director George Burt, and the Canadian Council of the UAW all supported the Auto Pact, believing a fully integrated continental auto industry to be in their members' best interests.<sup>120</sup> Laxer recalled that Waffle support in the UAW "included left wingers and nationalists who had been opposed to the Canada-United States Auto Pact during the 1960s."<sup>121</sup>

Demographic changes among the UAW's membership further enhanced the union's rebelliousness and support for the Waffle. The Ontario New Democratic Youth reported that their Oshawa club consisted mainly of young

115. Bill Freeman, *1005: Political Life in a Union Local* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1982), 126.

116. Harry Greenwood for District 6 Director, n.d. [1972], NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 5, MUA.

117. Charlotte A. B. Yates, *From Plant to Politics: The Autoworkers Union in Postwar Canada* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 67, 77, 99.

118. Sam Gindin, *The Canadian Auto Workers: The Birth and Transformation of a Union* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1995), 155–156.

119. Buzz Hargrove, who began his union career as a shop steward at UAW Local 444, remembered Brooks as "a real progressive. He believed workers had a responsibility to agitate for social change as readily as we fought for improved wages and benefits." Hargrove, *Labour of Love*, 56. Taylor, elected as Local president at 36, was an early supporter of Ed Broadbent. Judy Steed, *Ed Broadbent: The Pursuit of Power* (Markham: Viking, 1988), 113–116.

120. Dimitry Anastakis, *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960–1971* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 114–116.

121. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 159.

workers from UAW 222 who acted as a “left grouping with the NDP, and to some extent, within their unions.”<sup>122</sup> As was happening in the steel industry, in the mid- to late 1960s auto plants experienced an increase in young workers whose expectations differed from those of their older peers. For example, they insisted that working conditions as well as wage gains be up for negotiation. When the UAW struck GM in the fall of 1970 at the outset of the “Big Three” bargaining round, members in the United States returned to work before their Canadian counterparts, who remained out on strike until December in an attempt to win additional demands that included voluntary overtime and the primacy of the French language at GM’s plant in Sainte-Thérèse, Québec. The international union leadership, including UAW president Leonard Woodcock, intervened to reach a settlement that included a generous wage increase but dropped the Canadian membership’s secondary demands, fuelling opposition to the UAW leadership in Canada.<sup>123</sup> Concessionary agreements at UAW locals representing workers at Acme Screw and Gear and Massey-Ferguson in January and February 1971 further angered leftists in the Canadian UAW frustrated by their union’s timidity. As a result, a group of UAW radicals met in June 1971 to establish a new Left Caucus and elect a steering committee.<sup>124</sup> With members drawn from the old Left Caucus such as Gordie Lambert and Bill Rutherford, aligning with younger activists such as Pat Clancy and Waffler Al Campbell, the new Left Caucus advocated a strategy including mass demonstrations and wildcat strikes to combat work speed-ups, imposed overtime, and threatened plant closures. Also highlighted was increased activism within the NDP and, most importantly, recognition of Canadian autonomy within the UAW.<sup>125</sup>

The UAW strike at Douglas Aircraft in Malton, Ontario, in the fall of 1971 gave both the Waffle and the new Left Caucus further ammunition in demanding Canadian autonomy.<sup>126</sup> When the workers represented by UAW Local 1967 decided to remain on strike after their American counterparts had settled for salary increases dictated by President Nixon’s recently introduced

122. Clubs Report, Ontario Young New Democrats Newsletter, New Democratic Party of Ontario fonds, May 1970, series 20 File, file 657 ONDY, 1970-73, QUA.

123. Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 147–148.

124. The new Left Caucus steering committee consisted of Gordie Lambert (vice-president, Local 199), Al Campbell (president, Local 27), Reg Screen (president, Local 28), Bill Rutherford (vice-president, Local 222), Pat Clancy (president, Local 707), and Lyle Dotzert (committeeman, Local 200).

125. Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 149–150. Measures to achieve Canadian autonomy within the UAW included an end to international collective agreements, a Canadian constitution, separate national policy and bargaining goals for Canada and the United States, and a separate Canadian newspaper.

126. “Fighting Nixon’s Wage Freeze in Canada,” *Waffle Labour News*, November 1971, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-8, LAC.

wage controls, the international and Canadian UAW leadership intervened to end the strike and force the striking members back to work.<sup>127</sup> In response to reports that Canadian safeguards in the Auto Pact were at risk from Nixon's New Economic Plan, the Left Caucus pushed for a one-day strategy conference at the Canadian District Council meeting in September 1971, but the majority of council delegates rejected the proposal. In contrast to the militant strategy of a one-day walkout and mass demonstration that the new Left Caucus advocated, Canadian UAW director Dennis McDermott initiated a letter-writing campaign aimed at MPs to protest against Auto Pact revisions that might disadvantage Canadian workers.<sup>128</sup> When the Waffle organized and cosponsored a conference on the Auto Pact with its UAW allies from the Windsor and District Labour Council in January 1972 – shortly after the Left Caucus' proposal for a similar conference had been defeated by the Canadian UAW – McDermott saw the move as an affront to internal union democracy and the all-important principle of solidarity.<sup>129</sup>

The Waffle conference, which attracted 230 autoworkers, was addressed by Charlie Brooks, president of the UAW Canadian District Council, Ed Baillargeon, president of the Windsor and District Labour Council, and Ed Broadbent. McDermott did not attend. Attracting front-page coverage in the *Windsor Star*, the conference called for an independent Canadian auto industry and attacked the UAW leadership for failing to adequately defend Canadian production safeguards in the Auto Pact.<sup>130</sup> The conference also called for a one-day walkout and a demonstration by autoworkers in Ottawa.<sup>131</sup> Two days later the Windsor and District Labour Council likewise endorsed a resolution calling for a one-day strike in the auto industry to oppose the rumoured elimination of safeguards.<sup>132</sup> As Laxer later realized, the Windsor conference – the “highly successful event in the heart of UAW country” – “was the last straw” for labour leaders.<sup>133</sup>

McDermott, at a meeting of the UAW Canadian District Council the following weekend, assailed the Waffle at the same time he accused the new Left Caucus of disrupting internal union democracy. He warned that the Waffle was behaving like an independent political party and seeking to infiltrate the

127. Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 148–149; Gindin, *Canadian Auto Workers*, 150.

128. Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 151.

129. Wilfred List, “Auto Union Censures Waffle for ‘Interference in Affairs,’” *Globe and Mail*, 17 January 1972; “Auto Workers Chief Tells NDP to Kick Out Waffle Group,” *Toronto Star*, 17 January 1972.

130. Spiros De Bono, “All-Canada Car Makers Waffle Aim,” *Windsor Star*, 10 January 1972; “Waffle Wants Auto Industry to Be Separate,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 January 1972.

131. “230 Car Workers Urge Nationalization,” *Toronto Star*, 10 January 1972.

132. “One Day Auto Strike Resolution Backed,” *Windsor Star*, 12 January 1972.

133. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 160.

labour movement. "This union has dissociated itself from the activities of the Waffle," McDermott claimed, "and in my view the NDP will have to do the same thing." He labelled Laxer "an irresponsible academic, accountable to no one, a headline-hunter, and an ego-tripper par excellence. His solution to every industrial problem is to first seize the plant and then nationalize the industry." Clearly on a roll, McDermott suggested that Waffle leaders start their revolution in the universities, where "they draw their fat salaries for lecturing a couple of hours a week, and have all kinds of free time on their hands to meddle in other people's business. Meanwhile, why don't they ... for want of a better expression ... get lost."<sup>134</sup> The new Left Caucus' resolutions criticizing the UAW leadership for the timidity of the letter-writing campaign and for its handling of the Douglas Aircraft strike were defeated decisively by the Canadian District Council.<sup>135</sup> Watkins and Laxer responded in a statement released the following day. Calling McDermott's attack "beneath contempt," the Wafflers suggested that he was "more concerned about the heads of his union in Detroit than he is about the sellout of the auto pact safeguards."<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, they described their own relationship with the NDP as cordial. Laxer commented, "I don't expect any tension over the next few months. We are all working together for the next election."<sup>137</sup> He could not have been more mistaken.

The labour movement leadership monitored Waffler and leftist activity in the major union locals, sharing their findings with senior party officials. Morden Lazarus, public relations director of the OFL, wrote to NDP federal secretary Cliff Scotton about Laxer and Watkins, informing him that a pro-McDermott slate had ousted the "Abe Taylor group" in UAW Local 222 in the aftermath of the Auto Pact Conference and the UAW Canadian Council.<sup>138</sup> The CLC maintained a confidential collection of documents and press clippings recording Wafflers' statements about the Canadian labour movement.<sup>139</sup> Jean Beaudry, executive vice-president of the CLC, told a Saskatchewan Federation

134. List, "Auto Union Censures Waffle"; "Auto Workers Chief Tells NDP."

135. Yates, *From Plant to Politics*, 154.

136. Wilfred List, "Waffle Leader Says UAW Head Avoiding Auto Pact Confrontation," *Globe and Mail*, 18 January 1972.

137. List, "Waffle Leader Says."

138. Morden Lazarus to Cliff Scotton, 8 February 1972, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-4, LAC.

139. "Confidential: Chronological Survey of Documents dealing with the Waffle Group within the NDP and also Public Comments based on Their Activity," Giles Endicott fonds, box 2009-047/001, file Waffle - CLC Chronology, YUA. For example, the collection highlights *Toronto Star* columnist Anthony Westell's comment: "the NDP's rapidly growing left-wing waffle group, which now has more than 700 names on its mailing list, is quietly working to radicalize one of the most conservative elements in society, the trade unions, by encouraging young activists to overthrow aged leaders." The quote is from Westell, "New Style of Grass-Roots Politics in Stealing Parliament's Thunder," column, *Toronto Star*, 17 April 1970.

of Labour convention that the Waffle should not try to “capture unions for their own particular purposes or political motives.” Beaudry defended international unions and “served notice” that “the labour movement is well able to look after itself,” before hinting ominously, “I don’t like to see people get their fingers burned unnecessarily.”<sup>140</sup>

Union activists and NDP members in the Hamilton Mountain riding association, angered by the Waffle’s role in the recent Ontario election and unwelcome interventions in the labour movement, passed a resolution in late November 1971 for debate at the ONDP Provincial Council in March 1972 calling for “those who adhere to any clearly identifiable ongoing political group” to be removed from the party’s membership rolls.<sup>141</sup> Ian Deans, MPP for the Hamilton-area riding of Wentworth and House leader of the ONDP caucus, supported the motion, arguing that the Waffle was damaging the NDP’s ability to speak clearly for itself. Deans alleged that the Waffle had become “a political organization unto yourself” and its presence meant “continuous harangues and battles that go on between the two factions.”<sup>142</sup> Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis took a clear stand on the Waffle’s position within the NDP during his speech to the party’s provincial council. Declaring that “we, as a political party, can no longer proceed in our present state,” Lewis criticized the Waffle for generating “acrimony and bitterness” in the party, for its harsh attacks on union leadership, and for publicly promoting policies contrary to the NDP’s; he argued, “it seems to me indisputable that the Waffle has already virtually become – certainly verges on – a party within a party.”<sup>143</sup> Rather than following up Lewis’ speech with the scheduled debate on the Hamilton Mountain riding association’s resolution to expel the Waffle, ONDP provincial secretary Gordon Brigden introduced an alternative resolution acknowledging “the grave anxiety among our membership at the emergence of a distinct group within the Party” and calling on the party executive to “prepare a statement outlining the responsibilities and obligations of members of the party.” The motion passed by a vote of 157 to 62.<sup>144</sup> A committee was established comprising Gordon Vichert, the party’s president, John Brewin, its treasurer,

140. Jean Beaudry, speech to Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Convention, 15 October 1971, Giles Endicott fonds, box 2009-047/001, file Waffle – CLC Chronology, YUA.

141. “The Action,” *New Democrat*, March–April 1972. Morden Lazarus of the OFL, for example, attributed former NDP MPP Mac Makarchuk’s loss in Brantford to his association with the Waffle’s support for the controversial Texpack strike. “The Election: What Happened?,” *Waffle Labour News*, November 1971, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA.

142. John Slinger, “NDP MPP Favors Outlawing Waffle as Organization,” *Globe and Mail*, 30 November 1971.

143. Stephen Lewis, “I Want to Meet the Issue Head-On,” *New Democrat*, March–April 1972.

144. Minutes of Provincial Council, 18–19 March 1972, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 3 Executive and Council Minutes 1968–70, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, QUA.

and Gerald Caplan, tasked with drafting a statement to be discussed at the next provincial council.

The Ontario Waffle's submission to the Vichert committee recognized the intraparty tensions but accused Stephen Lewis of escalating them into a full-blown crisis with his speech to the ONDP Provincial Council. The Waffle contended instead that the greater crises with which the party needed to be concerned were "the increasing contradictions that manifest themselves in a dependent capitalist Canada," namely, the dangers to the country's economy posed by foreign ownership and the growing appeal of a progressive Québécois nationalism. The Waffle brief also claimed that Lewis' criticism of the Waffle for maintaining its own mailing list and conducting independent fundraising efforts was just a ploy to disguise his true ideological objections to the group. The brief defended Waffle support of unions and proposed several changes to the party's governance, including a provision for allowing only ONDP members to sit as delegates at the party's councils and conventions.<sup>145</sup>

Although the Ontario Waffle's message to the Vichert committee was combative in defending its right to exist within the NDP, the group was taking measures to limit its conflicts with the party and union leadership by disassociating from more radical left-nationalist groups. Laxer explained that "behind the scenes, a few efforts were made to find common ground between the Waffle and the party leadership. At one point, Stephen Lewis asked me to have dinner with him, and the pleasant evening we spent discussing the future of the party gave me a false sense of hope that compromise could be possible."<sup>146</sup> Meanwhile, the Ottawa Waffle had initially partnered with the Canadian Liberation Movement (CLM) on the Committee against the Nixon Visit to protest the US president's trip to Canada and speech to a joint session of Parliament in April. But barely a week before Nixon's arrival the Waffle withdrew from the committee and chose to hold an educational event rather than participate in the protest. Its erstwhile partners alleged that the Ottawa group had been threatened with expulsion from the NDP if it went ahead with the protest alongside the radical CLM and accused Wafflers Laxer and Watkins, who refused to speak publicly alongside Gary Perly, the CLM's outspoken leader, of submitting to pressure from David Lewis and Stephen Lewis.<sup>147</sup>

Internal strife within the Council of Canadian Unions provided more fuel to the CLM charge that the Waffle leadership was yielding to party demands. Jim Tester, a Waffle supporter and president of the only remaining Mine-Mill

145. A statement by the Ontario Waffle to the Ontario Executive of the New Democratic Party, 1972, personal files. This stipulation would preclude union members or staff who were not New Democrats from sitting as delegates at the ONDP's councils and conventions.

146. Laxer, *In Search of a New Left*, 161.

147. "The NDP, the Waffle and the US-Run Unions," n.d. [1972] and "CLM Statement regarding the Withdrawal of the Ottawa Waffle Group from the Committee against the Nixon Visit," April 1972, both in Canadian Liberation Movements fonds, box 1A Leaflets A-H, file 139, MUA.

local (Local 598), representing workers at Falconbridge in Sudbury, sought advice from Waffler Bill Walsh, a union arbitrator, consultant, and long-time member of the Communist Party before joining the NDP in 1969 and helping to establish the Waffle Labour Caucus in 1971. Although Mine-Mill had a long relationship of mutual support with Kent Rowley and Madeleine Parent, including hosting the CCU's founding convention in Sudbury in July 1969, that relationship began to unravel. Simultaneous strikes at Inco and Falconbridge in the fall of 1969 led to cooperation between the old rivals, USWA and Mine-Mill, despite Parent's advice to the contrary. Furthermore, Mine-Mill had downplayed its CCU connection during the strike in order to solicit support from international unions that the CCU had loudly criticized. When Rowley requested Mine-Mill Local 598's assistance in the CCU's attempted raids on Steel locals at Trail, Kitimat, Thompson, and Hamilton, Tester and Walsh declined. Concerned that the CCU connection might invite another raid by the USWA, they pushed for disaffiliation from the CCU, a move the membership supported in April 1972.<sup>148</sup> The CLM in turn interpreted the push for CCU disaffiliation as further evidence of the Waffle acquiescing to the NDP and labour leadership in order to avoid a purge. According to the CLM, Walsh, Tester, and the Ontario Waffle leadership were seeking "to prove to the NDP leaders and to the all-powerful Steelworkers, who would just love to have the Mine Mill membership, just how good and trustworthy the Waffle leadership is."<sup>149</sup> Ontario Waffle leaders also faced questions over their pressuring the Ottawa Waffle to "back off" from the anti-Nixon protest at a meeting of Wafflers from Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba held in Winnipeg in April 1972. Saskatchewan Wafflers expressed frustration after the meeting with what they perceived as the Ontario Waffle's timidity. John Warnock, Carol Gudmundson, and Jill Sargent complained to the Saskatchewan steering committee that the Ontario group was "on the defensive – or so it appears, and at a time when they by rights should be on the offensive because of the disastrous showing that the right-wing approach made in the past Ontario election."<sup>150</sup>

While the Saskatchewan Wafflers urged their Ontario confreres to take the offensive, the Vichert committee contended the Waffle had become too offensive. In its report the committee deemed the Waffle "a group organized on a continuing basis for the expressed purpose of securing fundamental changes in the strategies, structure, leadership, policies and principles of the party" and that, as such, must either dissolve or face disciplinary action. The report described the party's relationship with the labour movement as a "defining

148. Cy Gonick, *A Very Red Life: The Story of Bill Walsh* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2001), 245–246.

149. "The NDP, the Waffle."

150. Jack Warnock, Carol Gudmundson & Jill Sargent to Saskatchewan Waffle Steering Committee, 12 June 1972, Saskatchewan Waffle fonds, file II.16 Correspondence, 1973–1981, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina (hereafter SAB, Regina).



characteristic” of the NDP and accused the Waffle of treating that relationship “with more ignorant abuse ... than it usually receives from the old-line parties.”<sup>151</sup> The ONDP’s Provincial Executive adopted the Vichert committee report when it met on 6 May 1972, setting the stage for a showdown with the Waffle at the party’s upcoming provincial council meeting in Orillia.<sup>152</sup>

Under pressure from New Democrats across the country to find a compromise, federal NDP leader David Lewis wrote to Vichert recommending informal discussions between the federal and Ontario NDP leaderships to address how “federal aspects of the problem may be taken into consideration in discussions and preparations” for the ONDP Provincial Council scheduled for June in Orillia. Although Lewis’ tone suggested concern that a showdown with the Waffle might harm the party’s chances in the upcoming federal election, he reassured Vichert, “I do not have any hesitation about the fact that an appropriate and decisive step has to be taken with respect to the Waffle.”<sup>153</sup> Stephen Lewis later recalled the tactical disagreement with his father over dealing with the Waffle:

There were two meetings at the Ontario Federation of Labour building which I would sooner forget at which father and son were at bitter loggerheads. ... There was one meeting attended by David, by [Bill] Mahoney, by [Fred] Dowling, by Larry Sefton, by Lynn [Williams], by Don Taylor, by [Don] Montgomery, by Bud Clark, Sam Fox, David Archer, Dennis [McDermott], Vichert, and myself at which David made a strong appeal that we shouldn’t do it, that we should lay off. I was taking an absolutely intransigent line; so was Sefton; so was Williams. McDermott was touch and go. McDermott wasn’t sure – he wanted to move

151. “The Executive Committee report,” *New Democrat*, May–June 1972.

152. Minutes of the Provincial Executive, 6 May 1972, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970–72, QUA. Five days after the ONDP executive meeting Mel Watkins, Kelly Crichton, and James Laxer met with moderate party activists, primarily from the St. David riding association in Toronto, including former Waffler Giles Endicott and Toronto alderman Karl Jaffary. MPPs Elie Martel (Sudbury East), Michael Cassidy (Ottawa), Janusz Duksza (Parkdale), and Jim Foulds (Port Arthur) also attended the meeting at Watkins’ home. Endicott chaired and explained how St. David activists had met with Stephen Lewis to tell him the provincial council in Oshawa “was a hell of a way to run the party” and that he should “cool it.” Endicott urged the Wafflers to do the same and clarified to Watkins, Crichton, and Laxer that “this meeting may seem like an attacking session – it is.” The moderates criticized the Waffle for making personal attacks on NDP and labour leaders, conducting independent fundraising efforts, and operating separate from internal party structures. They urged Wafflers to begin making positive statements about the NDP to demonstrate their loyalty. The Wafflers indicated a willingness to compromise on some of these issues. Laxer explained they were prepared to “cool it on personal attacks,” work within the party structure, stop publicizing Waffle statements as “NDP-Waffle,” and curb their fundraising. However, Watkins, Crichton, and Laxer rejected Duksza’s suggestion “that the Waffle should disband formally and continue to do what it does.” Watkins indicated that the Waffle was considering Morton’s idea of seeking affiliation status with the NDP but it preferred the status quo and certainly had no intention of disbanding. See “Notes: Meeting at Mel’s place,” 11 May 1972, Endicott fonds, file 3 Waffle – History, see “manifesto” for first drafts (1 of 2), YUA.

153. David Lewis to Gordon Vichert, 23 May 1972, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-4, LAC.

the Waffle out but he didn't want to offend the old man – none of them did.<sup>154</sup>

Kenneth Bagnell reported in the *Globe and Mail* that Archer, McDermott, and Mahoney were approaching a compromise position, since they preferred to have the Waffle remain inside the NDP rather than witness the departure of hundreds of party activists, leaving a divided and demoralized party in their wake.<sup>155</sup> Media reports of this development led Ontario Wafflers to believe the party and union leadership were debating the withdrawal of the Vichert committee's report. Although willing to make some compromises, leading Wafflers resisted agreeing to any restrictions on their group's activities beyond the concessions already granted. Confident that it could count on support from party members in the various riding associations, the Waffle intended to force Stephen Lewis and the party leadership to drop all threats of expulsion and postpone any decisions on the Waffle's right to exist until the ONDP convention met in the fall of 1972.<sup>156</sup>

In their discussions with the Ontario NDP leadership about the Waffle and the Vichert committee report, labour leaders were resolute. The administrative committee of the Provincial Executive rejected a compromise resolution crafted by Vichert and Caplan, a decision "strongly influenced by Lynn Williams."<sup>157</sup> The Waffle's connection to left-nationalist caucuses within the USWA and UAW in the unions' heartland of southern Ontario threatened labour leaders who could not help being reminded of their struggles against communist unionists in the recent past. Although Stephen Lewis remembered being "persuaded that the Waffle was destroying the party," he also recalled an "unstated ultimatum" from the trade-union movement intimating that labour would rescind its financial support of the NDP unless the Waffle was removed. Lewis worried that the Vichert committee report was "engendering so much antagonism" within the NDP that it would produce an irrevocable

154. Stephen Lewis quoted in Morley, *Secular Socialists*, 217. Morley records the participants as Bill Mahoney, national director, USWA; Fred Dowling, Canadian director, Canadian Food and Allied Workers; Larry Sefton, District Six director, USWA; Lynn Williams, Sefton's assistant and vice-president of the Ontario NDP; Don Taylor, Mahoney's assistant; Don Montgomery, Toronto area supervisor, USWA, and president, Toronto and District Labour Council; David Archer, president, OFL; Dennis McDermott, Canadian director, UAW; Bud Clark, assistant to the Canadian director, TWUA; Sam Fox, Canadian vice-president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; David Lewis; Stephen Lewis; and Gordon Vichert. Morley, 257n41.

155. Kenneth Bagnell, "The Waffle," *Globe and Mail*, 6 June 1972.

156. Description of conversation with Krista Maeots, 8 June 1972, John Warnock Papers, file I.22 Saskatchewan-NDP 1972, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Saskatoon (hereafter SAB, Saskatoon); Richard Comber to John Richards, 18 April 1972, John Richards Papers, file II.7 Job Applications, 1972-73, SAB, Saskatoon.

157. Peterborough resolution, Minutes of the Provincial Council, 24-25 June 1972, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970-72, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, QUA; Morley, *Secular Socialists*, 216.

rupture between party and union activists. He therefore had no choice but to “persuade the trade unionists that alternative wording had to be found” in order to retain the support of moderate party members, even while he personally bore the brunt of labour’s displeasure. As Lewis explained, “Lynn Williams, who was the bargainer for the trade union movement, was treating me like Inco and he just wasn’t moving an inch.”<sup>158</sup> Sefton, the USWA District Six director, who was then dying of cancer, expressed deep displeasure over Lewis’ request to compromise on the Waffle when Sefton himself had devoted his life to building up the CCF and NDP.<sup>159</sup> Williams does not recall threatening to withdraw Steelworker support from the NDP but explained, “My sense of myself was built around indignation that the Waffle was going to destroy my party not that I was going to destroy my party. And my whole focus was that we had to win this argument. ... I can’t imagine ever threatening that we were going to leave. Where would we go?”<sup>160</sup> As Williams described in his memoirs, Sefton was “strong and unequivocal” on the existence of the Waffle. At a meeting between Sefton, Williams, and Lewis, Sefton “made it clear where the Steelworkers stood and that there would be no change in that position.”<sup>161</sup> Williams maintained that the Waffle’s presence in the NDP “would jeopardize the union support the party enjoyed” and was “certain that I would have argued that the trade union membership represented much more of a cut of what Ontario citizens thought than did a meeting of the council of the party.”<sup>162</sup> Moreover, as Bob Mackenzie, another Steelworker official deeply involved with the NDP, explained in a letter to David Lewis, his support for the NDP was conditional on the Waffle’s departure. Mackenzie warned Lewis that “it is not a time for Neville Chamberlain tactics,” and predicted “that the so-called middle of the Party would not last, or be effective, three months if the Waffle were in control and that the Unions certainly would not stay under this kind of situation.” Mackenzie reminded Lewis that “you and the Party still need many of us who have become labelled the sell-outs and lunatic right wing fringe. David, that support is no longer automatic.” Mackenzie warned that a forced compromise with the Waffle would lead union leaders to conclude “some of us don’t belong and we have to find another political way.”<sup>163</sup>

158. Lewis quoted in Morley, *Secular Socialists*, 216–217.

159. Morley, 217. Stephen Lewis described the situation: “I can remember an absolutely impossible meeting with Larry and Lynn one afternoon, with Larry, who I knew was dying of cancer, saying ‘you have no right to come to me as leader of the party and ask me to jettison everything that is important about the party and about my life.’”

160. Williams quoted in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 440.

161. Lynn Williams, *One Day Longer: A Memoir* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 129.

162. Williams quoted in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 440.

163. Bob Mackenzie to David Lewis, Cliff Scotton & Larry Sefton, 7 June 1972, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-4, LAC.

Not long before, David Lewis had chided the Waffle over its failure to organize “the workers and the oppressed.” Ironically, the Waffle’s modicum of success in attracting support from workers in international unions had now generated a backlash that threatened to whip the group out of the NDP.

Moderates among the party leadership, including John Harney, Walter Pitman, and Ed Broadbent, desperately sought a solution to the impasse. Broadbent developed an alternative that they believed would accomplish the goal of ridding the ONDP of the Waffle challenge while still affirming the right of dissenting caucuses to exist within the party.<sup>164</sup> Brewin explained, “a form of compromise was accepted which was no compromise at all. ... There was a change in wording which meant that my father and a whole bunch of people who fell in the centre could say that they accepted it. And yet the trade union caucus at the council could be persuaded that the compromise didn’t water down the fundamental recommendation at all.”<sup>165</sup> The Riverdale riding association passed Broadbent’s resolution three days before the Provincial Council meeting:

(1) The present structure and behavior of the Waffle cannot continue; (2) It is contrary to the spirit and meaning of the constitution of the ONDP for any group within the party to assume a public identity with a name distinct from that of the party. The Waffle is such a group and has such a name; (3) Groups of members within the party are, of course, free as they have always been, to co-operate and caucus so long as their role remains non-public and consistent with the principles of the NDP.<sup>166</sup>

Despite the forceful language of points one and two, Stephen Lewis had to work hard to persuade Williams and the USWA leaders that the Riverdale resolution could actually force the Waffle’s ouster from the Ontario NDP. The Provincial Executive obliged by placing the Riverdale resolution first in the order of debate, ahead of compromise resolutions from the Peterborough, Beaches-Woodbine, and Carleton-East riding associations.<sup>167</sup> An increased number of Steelworker delegates resulted in a union delegation larger than usually attended the provincial council.<sup>168</sup> Lewis described meeting with

164. Morley, *Secular Socialists*, 218; Morton, *The New Democrats, 1961–1986: The Politics of Change* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), 134.

165. Brewin quoted in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 441.

166. Riverdale resolution, Minutes of the Provincial Council, 24–25 June 1972, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970–72, QUA.

167. Minutes of the Provincial Executive, 23 June 1972, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970–72, QUA.

168. The delegates to the June provincial council consisted of executive (26), riding (152), youth (8), caucus (2), area council (7), and union (113) representatives. Of the union delegates, 50 were from the USWA and 20 from the UAW. The number of union delegates had jumped considerably at the previous provincial council in March at Oshawa in anticipation of a showdown with the Waffle over the Hamilton-Mountain resolution, but their numbers swelled further at Orillia. The delegates to the March provincial council consisted of executive (26), riding (124),

union delegates on the eve of the vote: “The night before the council meeting, at the beer-drinking hall where the dance was after the executive meeting, the trade union delegates were brought into the backroom in groups of between fifteen and twenty. [Cliff] Pilkey was there, Lynn was there, Bob Mackenzie was there. They would talk to the delegates to explain the change in the report and why it was acceptable to them. ... I was at the hall from 9:00 PM until 3:00 in the morning.”<sup>169</sup> In a desperate appeal to delegates prior to the meeting, Mel Watkins expressed the Waffle’s willingness to compromise with party moderates, addressed tensions between union leaders and the Waffle, expressed regret at the Waffle’s contributions over the “present impasse,” and clarified that the group’s support for Canadian autonomy in the labour movement “did not intend to split or damage any existing labour organizations that have the support of their members.”<sup>170</sup>

Nevertheless, union leaders were among the Waffle’s leading critics in the lengthy debate over the Riverdale resolution. Mackenzie explicitly condemned the Waffle as a “cancer” and interpreted the Riverdale resolution as the means to remove it, noting that “it will give us the tools to do the job.”<sup>171</sup> Stephen Lewis’ speech proved to be the final nail in the Waffle’s coffin. Described by Waffle sympathizer Michael Cross as “a masterful performance, an affirmation of his socialist credentials, a persuasive argument, a threat of resignation, all wrapped up in a rhetorical *tour du force*,” Lewis’ speech attacked the Waffle for existing in clear violation of the party’s constitution.<sup>172</sup> In it Lewis declared, “I, too am a socialist who wishes to fight for a free Canada, but without the Waffle forever an encumbrance around my neck.”<sup>173</sup> The question was called and the Riverdale resolution passed by a vote of 217 to 88.<sup>174</sup> The majority of

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youth (8), caucus (2), area council (4), and union (94) representatives. Of the union delegates, 38 were from the USWA and 24 from the UAW. This represented a considerable increase from the number of union delegates who attended the provincial councils held in December 1971 (23 union delegates) and February 1971 (21 union delegates); in comparison, there were 97 delegates from riding associations at the December 1971 Council. See Minutes of the Provincial Council, 20–21 February 1971, 4–5 December 1971, 18–19 March 1971, and 24–25 June 1972, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970–72, QUA.

169. Stephen Lewis quoted in Morley, *Secular Socialists*, 218.

170. Mel Watkins to Provincial Council Delegates, 19 June 1972, Waffle-NDP fonds, file 446-4, LAC.

171. “Proposals for Limiting Radical Faction Were Too Conservative, Ex-Liberal Says,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 June 1972.

172. Michael S. Cross, “Sunless Sketches,” *Canadian Forum*, July–August 1972, 4–6.

173. John Slinger, “Ontario New Democrats Expel Waffle Movement,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 June 1972.

174. Minutes of the Provincial Council, 24–25 June 1972, New Democratic Party Ontario fonds, series 13 Executive and Council Minutes, file 4 Executive and Council Minutes 1970–72, QUA.

delegates at an Ontario Waffle conference two months later voted to leave the NDP and establish the Movement for an Independent and Socialist Canada (MISC), although they continued to be known as the Waffle.<sup>175</sup>

## Conclusion: Whither the Waffle

THE DETERMINATION OF David and Stephen Lewis' opposition to the Waffle warrants added comment. Their role in opposing the Waffle earned them a special enmity from some leftists, as Watkins' description of "how to identify a Waffler" in *Maclean's* attests: "You walk right up to him and whisper,

175. The Saskatchewan Waffle, by this point the only other functioning provincial section of the group, remained in the NDP until leaving of its own accord in 1973. The decision to leave the Ontario NDP and form MISC was, unsurprisingly, contentious. Two irreconcilable positions came to dominate the Ontario Waffle's summer 1972 conference in Delaware. Advocates of splitting from the NDP and creating MISC, dubbed "Option Three," deemed it no longer viable to remain part of the NDP because, despite the Waffle's best efforts, the ONDP "decisively rejected ... the politics of independence and socialism." As the internal debate over the Waffle's response to the NDP ultimatum crystallized around the MISC plan, Trotskyists, including Steve Penner and Jackie Larkin, championed a "stay and fight" proposal known as "Option Five." Convinced the Ontario Waffle continued to garner support from rank-and-file New Democrats, they urged the group to persist until at least the next provincial convention. Furthermore, they argued that MISC as envisioned would result in the group's separation from workers in "politicized union locals" who remained affiliated with the NDP. Trotskyists were active in the Waffle almost from its inception. The tactic of entryism, embraced by the long-standing League for Socialist Action/Young Socialists (LSA/Ys), entailed Trotskyist activists entering social-democratic parties and social movements with the aim of winning new adherents to revolutionary socialism. Trotskyist influence on the Waffle was not limited to the LSA/Ys. The appeal of an ideology providing a revolutionary Marxist framework that nevertheless engaged with mainstream social-democratic political parties and unions and simultaneously connected New Left activists to an international socialist movement with a credible anti-Stalinist history proved strong. After losing the internal Waffle debate and following a year of frustration acting as the "Left Caucus" within the NDP, disillusioned ex-Wafflers including Penner, Joe Flexer, Bret Smiley, and Barry Weisleder joined with "Old Mole" student activists at the University of Toronto to form the Revolutionary Marxist Group (RMG). Although the clandestine nature of Trotskyist organizations makes determining their impact difficult, both the RMG's successor, the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), and the Trotskyist International Socialists (IS) played a notable role in the Canadian left in the decades following the Waffle's disintegration and have thus far been "understudied," although a recent book on the New Left in Toronto provides an excellent overview. See "The Movement Option: Towards the Building of Canadian Independence and Socialism," file 32-3, Ross Dowson fonds, LAC; Gary Porter, "Re: Developments in the NDP and Waffle," 12 July 1972, file 32-1, Ross Dowson fonds, LAC; Bryan Palmer, "A Tate Gallery for the New Left: Portraits, Landscapes, and Abstracts in the Revolutionary Activism of the 1950s and 1960s," *Labour/Le Travail* 75 (Spring 2015): 231–261; Joe Flexer, Varda Burstyn (Kidd), Jackie Larkin, Harold Lavender, Susan Kent, Donna McCombs, Mike Ornstein, Steve Penner & Bret Smiley, "The Argument for Option Five," box 1, file 4, NDP Waffle collection, MUA; London Conference Minutes, 19–20 August 1972, box 1, file 4, NDP Waffle collection, MUA; Judy Rebeck, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005); Sangster, "Radical Ruptures," 11; Peter Graham with Ian McKay, *Radical Ambition: The New Left in Toronto* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2019), 333–380.

‘Stephen Lewis.’ If his eyes go all slitty, he’s Waffle.”<sup>176</sup> Two particular factors likely account for the Lewises’ determination to oppose the Waffle.

First, a history of conflict with communists loomed large in the Lewis family, and in the polarized political atmosphere of the Cold War the Waffle likely appeared as a proverbial phoenix rising from the ashes. Cameron Smith emphasizes this aspect in his biography of the Lewis family. One of the three quotations with which Smith opens his book is from Doris Andras, David’s sister: “We fought communists all the time.” Smith emphasizes the importance of David’s father’s involvement in the Jewish Labour Bund in the early 20th century. During his farewell speech to the 1975 NDP convention David Lewis passionately described the experience of his father, Moishe, being arrested and threatened with execution by the Bolsheviks in 1919 during the Polish-Soviet War “for no other reason” than being a Menshevik.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, communists in unions were, in David Lewis’ view, one of the major obstacles to union affiliation with the CCF, and he worked tirelessly to rid the labour movement of communist rivals.<sup>178</sup> Their defeat and ostracization was a key factor in the establishment of the CLC in 1956 and the NDP in 1961. Cliff Scotton explained, “I think David saw the Waffle as another manifestation of the Trots, the Commies, or whatever, so he would go back to the old battle. David felt that you were either with us or against us.”<sup>179</sup> The presence of “red diaper babies” such as James Laxer and Steve Penner alongside ex-communists such as Bill Walsh and Al Campbell and other like-minded Trotskyists certainly sounded alarm bells for David Lewis. The Lewises’ biographer argues that “what the Waffle did was touch a nerve still raw with memories of thirty years of bruising struggle.”<sup>180</sup> David Lewis explained that the Waffle reminded him of the 1950 struggle with the Socialist Fellowship in the BC CCF and noted “the consequences were not new or surprising, but they were none the less painful.” He

176. Walter Stewart, “David Lewis and Sophie and Michael and Stephen and Janet and Nina and...,” *Maclean’s*, 1 April 1971, 22.

177. “David Lewis Says Farewell at the 1975 NDP Convention,” video of speech by David Lewis, 15:27, CBC Television news special, broadcast July 5, 1975, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/david-lewis-says-farewell-at-the-1975-ndp-convention>. Cameron Smith explains that Lewis was “virulently opposed to the Moscow line of communism – after all, these were the people who almost killed his father, who instituted the Red Terror.” Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 236.

178. David Lewis describes himself as “in the forefront against communist disruption.” Lewis, *Good Fight*, 298. Smith writes that “in all the battles against Communists David was centrally involved” and describes Lewis’ pivotal role in the twenty-year-long struggle between the pro-CCF USWA and the communist Mine-Mill in Sudbury. Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 306–326. See also Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 85–131.

179. Quoted in Smith, *Unfinished Journey*, 426. John Brewin concurred, saying, “David and my father and others tended to see the Waffle as the old-style type of Communist assault on the party ... it was yet another impulse of the left that needed to be put down.” Quoted in Smith, 426.

180. Smith, 427.

also suggested that his son Stephen, unaccustomed to “the poisonous antagonisms of internal strife on an organized scale,” was “outraged by the fratricidal animosities which deformed relationships and crippled the will to constructive thought and work during the Waffle period.”<sup>181</sup>

Second, in addition to the Lewises’ concern that the Waffle was a recurrence of past internal struggles, it is clear that both David and Stephen Lewis also faced considerable pressure – essentially an ultimatum – from labour leaders to rid the party of the Waffle. David Lewis’ determination to secure union affiliations to the CCF and the joint CLC-CCF effort to create the NDP drew on his knowledge of the British Labour Party. He viewed the labour connection as essential to the NDP’s future prospects. Stephen realized the importance of union leaders and delegates to the party’s internal power structure prior to his successful leadership run in 1971, when labour support proved crucial to his victory. It is unlikely that either could have imagined the NDP without its union allies.

The Waffle position on international unions evolved in the aftermath of the group’s ouster from the ONDP. Based on their analysis of Ontario’s trend toward deindustrialization, over the course of 1973 the group’s leaders emphasized a Marxist approach that prioritized the working class and especially the members of large industrial international unions, such as the UAW and USWA, whom the Waffle predicted would be harmed most by deindustrialization.<sup>182</sup> A pamphlet released shortly after MISC’s formation explained, “The Canadian labour movement is dominated by American-based international unions. As the US leadership of the internationals takes an increasingly protectionist stance in support of President Nixon’s trade policies, Canadian workers find their jobs threatened by the very organizations they built to protect them. For this reason the development of Canadian control of the Canadian trade union movement is of the utmost importance. Wafflers in and out of the union movement in Canada seek the best means of achieving this control.”<sup>183</sup> However, considerable uncertainty existed within the Ontario Waffle over whether to

181. Lewis, *Good Fight*, 387.

182. A faction based in the West Metro Waffle instead urged the group to adopt a strong stance in favour of “workers’ control” and to focus on local, grassroots-based campaigns instead of a large-scale province-wide campaign on the issue of deindustrialization. See Dan Meany, Margaret Rolfe, Roger Rolfe, John Watson & Brian Tomlinson, “The Waffle and Workers’ Control,” n.d., box 1, file 10; Joey Noble, Roger Rolfe, Margaret Rolfe, Graham Lowe, Suzanne Noble, Paul Craven, Gladys Watson, John Watson, Brian Smith, Helen Smith & Fay McLeod, “A Multi-Level Strategy for Building the Waffle Movement,” n.d., box 1, file 4; “Minutes of the Provincial Council Meeting of the Ontario Waffle,” 25–26 November 1972, box 1, file 4; West Metro Waffle, “A Letter of Resignation to All Ontario Wafflers,” n.d., box 1, file 6; Ontario Waffle Executive Meeting Minutes, 24 March 1973, box 1, file 5, all in NDP Waffle collection, MUA.

183. *Movement for an Independent Socialist Canada*, pamphlet, n.d., NDP Waffle collection, Box 1, File 5, MUA.



organize opposition caucuses within large international unions to advocate for greater Canadian autonomy or to push for locals to break away and join an independent Canadian union movement such as the CCU, causing one letter-writer to *Canadian Dimension* to complain about the group's "flip-flopping" over the question of nationalist breakaways.<sup>184</sup> As the Waffle debated the best route to an independent Canadian labour movement, events overtook them. The CCU actively supported workers at the Alcan aluminum plant in Kitimat, British Columbia, when they broke away from the USWA to form an independent union, the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASAW), but the Ontario Waffle Labour Committee adopted a more cautious approach.<sup>185</sup>

The Ontario Waffle sought to continue to engage with workers in the aftermath of the group's ouster from the NDP. Wafflers supported striking workers on the picket line at Dare, Inc., in Kitchener in early 1973 and at the Artistic Woodwork plant in north Toronto in late 1973. The workers at Artistic Woodwork were represented by the CTCU, and clashes between picketers and police attracted significant media attention.<sup>186</sup> The experience of supporting striking workers at Artistic Woodwork also proved pivotal in the political development of a group of York University students active in the Waffle. Tired of the perceived "family compact" leadership of James Laxer and his father, Robert, but attracted by the Waffle's membership including "steel workers, auto workers, health care workers, nurses and so on ... many of them very well rooted trade union activists," the York students along with disgruntled members of the Waffle Labour Committee created a study group, open by

184. Dan Sunstrom, "Trade Union Organizing," 1972, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA; Robin Matthews, "On Labour," 1972, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA. The unidentified author of another paper, presented in October 1972, argues that the Waffle should avoid both "left caucuses" within international unions and "narrow sectarian or ego-inflated moves leading to adventurism or arid rhetoric, eg. the generalized call for Canadian workers to leave US dominated unions en masse without providing a serious alternative; raiding of existing unions or shrill abstract calls for Canadian unionism." "Prospects and Strategy for Canadian Labour," 1972, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA; Paul Knox, "Letter to the Editor," *Canadian Dimension*, July 1973, 2.

185. Ontario Waffle Labour Committee, "Summary of Meeting," 12 May 1973, NDP Waffle collection, box 1, file 4, MUA. The minutes indicate only that an "informal exchange of views took place" over the issue of breakaways and the CLC response. The controversial Kitimat breakaway was among the reasons for Mine-Mill's departure from the CCU.

186. Ian Milligan, "'The Force of All Our Numbers': New Leftists, Labour, and the 1973 Artistic Woodwork Strike," *Labour/Le Travail* 66 (Fall 2010): 37–71. Rowley and Parent had recruited several student activists to work for the CCU, including sometime Wafflers John Lang and Danny Drache, and the students drew on their extensive contacts in the Toronto New Left to popularize the striking workers' cause. The strike attracted so many supporters from among the broader New Left in Toronto that the numbers picketing eventually dwarfed striking workers.

invitation only and determined to operate “underground” within the Waffle.<sup>187</sup> Following the failure of the Ontario Waffle’s 1974 federal election campaign to garner significant support, the members of the York-based study group grew particularly vocal in their denunciation of Waffle electoral strategy and its nationalism; their plan to take control of the Ontario Waffle came to fruition when its leadership, including James Laxer, resigned en masse in October 1974. Furthermore, in 1974 the Waffle Labour Committee began publishing *North Country*, a news magazine for Ontario workers. Three issues were produced before the Waffle’s dissolution, with each edition featuring articles by Wafflers and union activists on strikes and workers’ struggles around the province.

Despite Wafflers’ support for striking members of the CCU-affiliated CTCU, the Ontario Waffle, in contrast to the CCU’s approach, grew increasingly circumspect about the potential for union locals to break away from international unions in order to transform the labour movement in Canada into one fully independent of the United States. Waffle Labour Committee leader Robert Laxer condemned “short-cut organizational solutions” to the dominance of international unions, such as local breakaways, as “mechanical and uncreative.”<sup>188</sup> The Ontario Waffle Labour Committee’s policy, adopted at the larger group’s 1973 convention, categorically stated, “While the Waffle recognizes the frustrations that lead rank-and-file members to support local breakaways, it acknowledges that the preferable route for the Canadian members of so-called international unions is to remain united while they carry out the transformation of their unions into independent Canadian unions.”<sup>189</sup> Although the complex internal politics of the Canadian labour movement clearly influenced the Ontario Waffle’s labour policy and strategy, the position adopted by the Labour Committee in 1973 reflected the group’s emphasis on the Canadian working class in the “key manufacturing and resource based industries of Ontario” as the critical figures in the creation of an independent and socialist Canada.<sup>190</sup> As a result of the Waffle’s internal confusion and eventual commitment to working within international unions rather than endorsing local Canadian breakaways outright, Rowley and Parent rejected the Waffle’s suggestion that it and the CCU establish formal ties.<sup>191</sup> By the time the Waffle dissolved in 1975 its connections with union activists were few and far between.

187. Murray Cooke, “To Interpret the World and to Change It: Interview with David McNally,” *Socialist Studies* 7, 1/2 (2011): 5; Abbie Bakan & Philip Murton, “The Origins of the International Socialists,” originally published in *Marxism: A Socialist Annual* 4 (2006), Socialist History Project, <http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/History/IS-Origins.htm>.

188. Robert Laxer, “Trade Unions as Working Class Organizations,” February 1973, box 1, file 4, NDP Waffle collection, MUA.

189. “Labour Policy of the Ontario Waffle,” 1973, box 1, file 5, MUA.

190. “Prospects and Strategy.”

191. Ontario Waffle Executive Meeting Minutes, 24 March 1973.

Although the Waffle conflict in the NDP and Canadian labour movement did not result in the transformation of either into the outspoken proponents of independence and socialism that the Wafflers desired, the ramifications of this New Left incursion into the country's leading social-democratic organizations continued to reverberate in the ensuing decades. Only four years after Canadian UAW director Dennis McDermott had dismissed James Laxer as a "headline-hunter and an ego-tripper par excellence" eager to nationalize every industry in sight, McDermott's assistant Frank Fairchild happily cited that "irresponsible academic" in support of the UAW's testimony at the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. Quoting from Laxer's recent book, Fairchild urged the Canadian government to "terminate the export of our natural resources in the national interest" and "take over one of the large petroleum corporations by nationalization."<sup>192</sup> Nor was the UAW's testimony out of step with the mainstream labour movement. As Christo Aivalis describes, "there was ... in the ranks of labour a fairly broad constituency in favour of increased nationalization and Canadianization." Indeed, Aivalis explains, "Canadian labour in the Trudeau era was undergoing a shift from continentalism to nationalism."<sup>193</sup> Many of the measures Wafflers demanded to protect the autonomy of Canadian sections of international unions were eventually accepted as the labour movement underwent a gradual process of Canadianization and, even more significantly, union leaders adopted nationalist rhetoric in defence of Canadian workers.<sup>194</sup> As Waffler Gil Levine argued in retrospect, the "Canadianization issues raised by the Waffle and the Reform Caucus have had some effect" in the Canadian labour movement.<sup>195</sup>

Certainly the Canadian labour movement's leadership embraced nationalism in the late 1970s and 1980s. Miriam Smith contends that the labour movement underwent a "fundamental reappraisal of strategy and policy" in the late 1970s, culminating in the CLC's 1982 economic program that "stressed economic nationalism, an understanding of the distorted character of the

192. Frank Fairchild submission, *Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Transcripts of Community Hearings*, Toronto, vol. 58, 25 May 1976, 6336–6347, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website, <https://www.pwnhc.ca/exhibitions/berger/documentation/#tab-id-2>. In a "revealing, if schizophrenic" 1973 speech McDermott denounced nationalists and Canadian unions before decrying international unions' treatment of their Canadian sections. See Sangster, "Remembering Texpack," 56.

193. Christo Aivalis, *The Constant Liberal: Pierre Trudeau, Organized Labour and the Canadian Social Democratic Left* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 103, 99. See also Miriam Smith, "The Canadian Labour Congress: From Continentalism to Economic Nationalism," *Studies in Political Economy* 38 (1992): 35–60.

194. See Robert Laxer's account of the "reform movement that wasn't" at the 1974 CLC convention, which nevertheless endorsed a watered-down proposal from the CLC executive for measures to ensure the autonomy of Canadian sections of international unions despite vocal opposition from the building-trades unions. Laxer, *Canada's Unions*, 138–142.

195. Levine, "Waffle and the Labour Movement," 189.

Canadian economy, and a preference for strong state policies” and its outspoken opposition to the free trade agreement with the United States during the 1980s.<sup>196</sup> The CLC’s embrace of nationalism thus represented a significant shift from its steadfast opposition to the Waffle. At the local level, Stephen High maintains that Canadian unions achieved greater success in the 1980s in implementing worker-friendly responses to plant shutdowns, such as advance notice of closures and severance pay, than did their counterparts in the United States, largely because they proclaimed a nationalist ideology and sought a political solution. As High explains, “despite tensions between the sometimes dogmatic left-nationalists in the NDP and internationalist-minded trade union leaders, both groups eventually came to draw on Robert Laxer’s concept of deindustrialization.” He further demonstrates that union leaders “increasingly relied on nationalist oratory and the deindustrialization thesis to legitimize their demands for increased legislative protection for Canadian workers.”<sup>197</sup> Large Canadian sections of international unions in the years to follow also embraced nationalist rhetoric to justify splitting from their American comrades. In 1985, the Canadian section of the UAW broke away to form the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).<sup>198</sup> Sam Gindin, a researcher for the CAW, in explaining the “pre-history” of the split wrote that the “Waffle ... could be defeated, but it could not be ignored.”<sup>199</sup>

Despite the Waffle’s brief and tumultuous existence, the incursion of the New Left into the social-democratic NDP challenged the party, shocked union leaders, and profoundly influenced the future direction of both party and labour movement. The Waffle’s position on international unionism evolved from 1969 to 1974. Despite the Waffle Manifesto’s avoiding direct criticism of the role played by international unions in the Canadian labour movement, NDP-allied labour leaders expressed suspicion of and concern for the group’s agenda almost from its inception. With the Waffle’s success in appealing to younger and nationalist-minded members of international unions, suspicion turned into active opposition. As polarization within the NDP increased, the Waffle’s allies in opposition caucuses within the USWA and UAW and in the independent Canadian labour movement led moderate union leaders to conclude that the group must be expunged from the Ontario NDP. Ironically, after the Waffle’s departure from the party the group largely repudiated nationalist

196. Smith, “Canadian Labour Congress,” 37, 50.

197. Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America’s Rust Belt, 1969–1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 178, 169.

198. See Gindin, *Canadian Auto Workers*; Bob White, *Hard Bargains: My Life on the Line* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1987), 267–318. Increased public-sector unionization has been primarily responsible for the larger proportion of Canadian unions within the national labour movement.

199. Sam Gindin, “Breaking Away: The Formation of the Canadian Auto Workers,” *Studies in Political Economy* 29 (1989): 69.

breakaways from international unions while, in the ensuing decades, the mainstream labour movement embraced Canadian nationalism.

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