

# The National Archives and Left-Wing Sources from Russia: Records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Communist Party of Canada and Left-Wing Internationals

George Bolotenko

Volume 37, 1996

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/llt37rr01>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN

0700-3862 (imprimé)

1911-4842 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Bolotenko, G. (1996). The National Archives and Left-Wing Sources from Russia: Records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Communist Party of Canada and Left-Wing Internationals. *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 37, 179–204.

# RESEARCH REPORTS / NOTES DE RECHERCHE

## The National Archives and Left-Wing Sources from Russia: Records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, the Communist Party of Canada and Left-Wing Internationals

George Bolotenko

### I. Introduction

AS THE COMMUNIST ORDER in Russia and the other Union Republics began unravelling, its bonds critically weakened by Gorbachev's efforts to humanize and modernize that order both in theory and structure, one of the countless side-effects of Gorbachev's ministrations was, in the realm of archives, a loosening of extraordinarily strict controls over records in the Soviet archival system, and in access to them. This phenomenon manifested itself by 1989. By the time that Gorbachev was finally stripped of any nominal, residual authority in late 1990- early 1991, Russian archives were revealing riches whose existence had been suspected by many, but experienced by very, very few.

Among the records of interest to many Western countries were the fonds of the *Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii* (the "Centre for the Preservation and Study of Records of Contemporary History"),

George Bolotenko, "The National Archives and Left-Wing Sources from Russia: Records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, The Communist Party of Canada, and Left-Wing Internationals," *Labour/Le Travail*, 37 (Spring 1996), 179-203.

formerly the Central Party Archives in Moscow which housed, inter alia, the historical-archival documentation of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). (Henceforth, I will call this institution simply "the Comintern Archives"). In this institution were located the records documenting the relationship between the CPSU and the Communist parties of other countries, as well as the records of the left international movement in general, the various "-interns" of the inter-war years.

The National Archives, in late 1992, initiated an effort to acquire the records of the Canadian left from the Comintern Archives.<sup>1</sup> After preliminary reviews of Canada-related material in a number of Russian archives, effected in 1993, the National Archives purchased, from the Centre, copies of records deemed to be of extraordinary interest to Canadian researchers. In early July of 1994, the National Archives acquired microfilm copies of approximately 10,000 pages of material on the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, and in July of 1995, approximately 22,000 pages of material on the CPC, the Comintern, and other Internationals. What follows is intended to acquaint the reader with the scope and nature of these records.

## II. *Records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*

THESE DOCUMENTS are all drawn from Fonds 545 of the Comintern archives.<sup>2</sup> This fonds holds the records of the International Brigades (1936-1939) which fought in defence of the Spanish Republic against Franco's fascist Falange. Of all outside powers, only Soviet Russia supported Republican Spain, playing the leading role in organizing resistance against Franco through the Comintern. Once Republican forces were defeated, Comintern officials left Spain in 1939, taking all records — including the records of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion — with them to the Soviet Union. Hence the location of these largely Canadian-content records in Moscow.

A number of Canadians, most of them inclined politically to the left, volunteered to defend the Spanish Republic. Many, though not all, fought in the ranks of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, a distinctly Canadian unit formed in mid-1937. Other Canadian volunteers fought in the ranks of the American "Abe Lincoln Battalion," the British Battalion, or in other specialized army services (medical, artillery, transportation, armoured, etc) of the regular Spanish Defence Force. The Mackenzie-Papineau (or 60th) Battalion, when formed, came to constitute a unit of the XVth International ("English-Speaking") Brigade, which was itself attached

<sup>1</sup>The Department of External Affairs kindly financed the early stages of this endeavour, which went far beyond acquisition alone. Acquisition of left-wing material was only one part of an overall package of archival co-operation between Canada and Russia, which included the training of Russian archivists here in Ottawa.

<sup>2</sup>The Mac-Pap records constitute a single, discrete fonds at the NA. The fonds is officially titled "The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion Fonds," and its call number is MG10 K2. The Finding Aid to this fonds is No.1996.

to the 35th Division of the Spanish Republican Army/Spanish Defence Force. In all, about 1,300 Canadians participated in the defence of the Spanish Republic and, regardless of what unit they may have served in, they are more-or-less collectively known as the "Mac-Paps."

The early files in these Mac-Pap records acquired by the National Archives deal with matters of the International Brigades (especially the XVth "English-Speaking" Brigade) in general, and provide the context in which the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion operated. However, subsequent records (from File List 3, File 507, Reel K-260) onwards, deal systematically and almost exclusively with Mac-Paps and their affairs. Additionally, it should be noted that from the earlier files in the Comintern Archives, the National Archives selected only those records which make mention of a Mac-Pap or a Canadian in the International Brigades. With these partially-copied files, file titles have been changed or shortened from the original title as given in the file lists of the Comintern Archives in Moscow.

A boon to Canadian researchers, the Mac-Pap documents acquired by the National Archives are preponderantly in the English language. The non-English records are largely in Spanish and French, with occasional documents in Italian, German, or one of several Slavic languages. It should be noted that the records captured in the Mac-Pap fonds are those which, within a variety of constraints, were deemed the most important to acquire. Consequently, far from all the Mac-Pap records in the Comintern Archives have been copied, and much of the substance and the detail of the Mac-Pap story continue to reside in Moscow. For example, the actual battle history of the Mac-Paps is buried in a 50,000-page record sub-group consisting of battle orders, instructions and reports; the National Archives simply could not fund either the time or the filming expense to process this material and identify what related specifically to the Mac-Paps. This notwithstanding, the material acquired by the National Archives should prove useful in filling in many of the blank spots which continue to surround, perhaps becloud, the history of this legendary Canadian group.

The records acquired by the National Archives, and later described in this article, are all drawn from Fonds 545 of the Comintern Archives; the fonds is titled "Documentary Materials of the International Brigades' Base and the Central War Administration of the Ministry of National Defence of the Spanish Republic, (1936-1939)." It consists of twelve sub-units, each with a separate file list. The archivist responsible for organizing and describing these records, drawn from four of the sub-units of this fonds, adhered to the original structure and description of the fonds, and grouped the material exactly as in the original fonds in the Comintern Archives.

Now on to the records themselves.

*i. Records from Fonds 545, File List 1, "Documentary Material of the Commissariat of War of the International Brigades and of the Commissar-Inspector of the International Brigades (L. Longo), 1936-1939."*

As mentioned above, these records are all drawn from the Centre's Fonds 545, the body of records dealing with the International Brigades. From *Opis* (File List) 1, the National Archives selected for filming only the occasional pages from a number of files which dealt specifically with Canadian volunteers. The title of File No. 3 gives some idea of the nature of these records, and follows: "Documents on political work; orders of the day to the International Brigades from the War Commissariat; press and propaganda material; documents on press and propaganda; measures against desertion and indiscipline; lists of commissars, officers, officials, and records on ill and wounded in hospitals; material dealing with inspections, brigade armaments and munitions and roster strengths; decisions of meetings; battle/engagement reports; monthly lists of volunteers entering Spain; situation reports on the International Brigades (provisions, armaments, supplies, morale, recreation, troop strength, political activity, etc.). 407 pages, 1937-1938."

Selections of pages were also drawn from thirteen other files, most of them containing personnel information. File No. 25 is titled "Documents of the Spanish Ministry of Defence, the International Brigades Inspectorate and medical/sanitary agencies dealing with health services. Include reports, lists of personnel, lists of names, statistics, reports of political work in hospitals, etc. 140 pages, 1938." File Nos. 56 and 57 are identified as "Correspondence of volunteers, denunciations, repatriation, demobilization, proofs of identity, letters taken by war censors, complaints of ill treatment, etc. 200 pages, 1937; 139 pages, 1937-1938," while File Nos. 58-60 read as "Personal matters; family aid to volunteers; complaints regarding theft, unfair punishment and harsh treatment; problems of lost baggage and personal effects; requests for search and location of individuals; requests for information; replies to individuals wishing to volunteer services; information on evacuations, etc. 241 pages, 1938; 180 pages, 1938; 269 pages, 1936-1939."

In general, as the reader can sense from the file titles given above, the records from this sub-unit (i.e. File List 1) are drawn from various areas of activity. However, in the main they deal with the daily administrative concerns of the International Brigades, with all the many, and at times petty, individual and organizational difficulties which crop up to complicate the lives of an organization's members and impede its operations.

*ii. Records from Fonds 545, File List 2, "Documentary Materials of the International Brigades' Base and the Central War Administration of the Ministry of National Defence of the Spanish Republic, 1936-1939."*

The records copied from this sub-unit are of a different order. Some of them deal with the actual formation/reorganization of the International Brigades, and were copied so that researchers could better assess the purpose, rationale, and

institutional nature of these entities. Files No. 1 to 3 deal with this matter: "Project of the formation [reorganization] of the International Brigades. 18 pages, 1937"; "Spanish Defence Ministry Decree on International Brigades [September 1937], on organization of the Brigades and their relationship with the Army of the Spanish Republic. 20 pages, 1937"; and "Spanish Defence Ministry's organization of the International Brigades by section: orders-of-the-day, officer complements, formation of units (batteries and companies), etc. Includes lists of names with notations of nationality, names of repatriates. 240 pages, 1937-1938."

Other files, (File Nos. 114 to 117 inclusive), consist of various rosters and lists of names — of individuals on leave, of notes on personnel, of volunteers in training camps and in hospitals, and so on. File No. 118 bears separate mention; titled "Roster of members of XVth Brigade, with name and nationality given. 14 pages, n/d," it lists substantial numbers of Canadian volunteers in Spain. Other files, Nos. 120 and 124-127 inclusive, provide still more name lists, of volunteers in the Republican Army tank units, on battle readiness of wounded volunteers, on volunteers drowned in the sinking of the *Ciudad de Barcelona* and lists of deserters, wounded, and on volunteers killed and missing in action.

The last type of record located in this sub-unit consists of a melange of intriguing documents, what could be called the literary and spiritual bequest of the volunteers to future generations. The National Archives filmed two files of this nature: File No. 199, "[File originally titled 'Commissariat of the International Brigades. Various diaries of Artillery Men']. Includes notebook/diaries of Sandor Dorosh, a Canadian, with his notations on personnel, equipment, military actions, training camp, problems of logistics and supply, etc., as well as his recollections of meetings and speakers, and his assessments and impressions of individuals and events. 139 pages. 1937-1938"; and File No. 266, "Articles, recollections, correspondence, accounts of meetings, inspirational writings, propaganda, poetry, military limericks and ditties, memoirs and drawings of volunteers in the educational battalion of the International Brigades, dealing with life as a volunteer in the Brigades, and the cause of Republican Spain and the world-wide struggle of the Left against Fascism. 182 pages, 1936-1937." Most of the material is by members of the American Abe Lincoln Battalion; however, there is some material here by Canadians serving in the Spanish Republican Army.

*iii. Records from Fonds 545, File List 3, "Documentary Material of the 35th and 45th Divisions, Mixed Brigades of the Republican Army, Interbrigades and Other Formations, 1937-1939."*

The documents from this sub-unit are much more unit-specific, less general than records dealt with to this point. There are files on the International Brigades Commissariat, on the work of political commissars at brigade and unit level; and files on Brigade members' correspondence of various sorts. More directly bearing on the Mac-Paps are files numbered 507 and 508, titled as follows: "Reports of the

## 184 LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL

Commander of the 60th (Mac-Paps) Battalion to XVth Brigade Command on military preparedness of Battalion, on armaments, personnel and battle assessments. Orders-of-the day, reports, logs and orders and directives of Brigade Command. Personnel lists and other material, such as preliminary notes for a history of the Battalion, sniper training and biographies of the medical personnel of the unit. 120 pages, 1 November 1937 - 2 September 1938"; and "Lists of personnel and statistical information on 60th Battalion (Mac-Paps) of XVth Brigade. Includes lists of full Battalion complement as of 13 October 1937 (468 non-Spaniards), Battalion Command, distribution of ranks, transfers to the Abe Lincoln Battalion, lists of replacements (as of 20 October 1937), lists of killed, wounded and missing in action (as of 13 October 1937), and other such lists. 47 pages, 13 September 1937 - 17 November 1937." The titles themselves speak of the significance of this material to an understanding of the history of the Mac-Paps, of its activities as a unit, of its personnel and human composition.

On the question of personnel, the following four files could prove to be nearly priceless from a research point-of-view. Files numbered 509 to 512 inclusive consist of "Detailed questionnaires of the Historical Commission of the International Brigades, filled out by volunteers of the 60th Battalion (Mac-Paps) of the XVth Brigade" in August 1937. The questionnaires are filed in alphabetical order by surnames. File No. 509 consists of questionnaires completed by Mac-Paps with surnames beginning A to E (184 pages); File 510, F to L (175 pages); File No. 511, M to R, (191 pages); and File No. 512, S to Z (197 pages). Allowing one page per individual, in these four files we have personal/biographical information on 729 Mac-Paps, collected in a systematic, standardized format. Historians, sociologists, and genealogists, to name but some, could surely do some most interesting research with these files.

*iv. Records from Fonds 545, File List 6, "Documents on Volunteers of the Interbrigades, Participants of the National-Revolutionary War in Spain, 1936-1939."*

As one moves deeper into the Mac-Pap materials now held at the National Archives, the personal/autobiographical/biographical material grows richer. Again, it is best to let some of the file titles speak of the records from this sub-unit of Fonds 545.

File No. 534, "Correspondence of Communist Party of Spain and Commission on Foreign Volunteers of the Central Committee regarding repatriation of Canadian volunteers, and various other material, such as recommendations for promotions, requests for transfers, arrests, desertions, deaths, various depositions, biographies, a typescript article on the history of the Mac-Paps and Canadian doctors and the blood transfusion service of the Spanish Defence Forces. 73 pages, 1937-1941"; File No. 535, "Commission on Foreign Volunteers of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain, and representative in Spain of the Friends of the

Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, on aid to Mac-Paps and their repatriation. 22 pages, 1939"; File No. 536, "Various alphabetical lists with detailed information on Canadian volunteers in Spain. Information fields include name, nationality, profession, education, family status, address, political affiliation, service in Spain, unit, etc. 58 pages, 1938"; File No. 537, "Various lists holding information on Canadian Mac-Paps. There are lists on prisoners, MIA's, casualties, repatriates, trouble-makers and insubordinates, traitors and deserters, especially the substantial number of deserters who went to Paris. Some lists are name only; most, however, consist of several fields of information. There are many short biographies and character/reliability assessments; on trouble-makers, suspects and demoralized elements, there are relatively detailed reports. 166 pages, 1937-1939"; File No. 538, "On Canadian volunteers, captured or missing in action. 12 pages, 1938"; File No. 539, "Various lists of Mac-Paps, consisting of several information fields (name, age, military unit, ethnic origin, whence came, etc). Lists of Mac-Pap members of the Communist Party (with characterizations regarding dependability)." Perhaps most significant are the following two roster lists: 1) roster from the "General Inventory of the Index Card Library of the XVth Brigade, of Canadian Nationality," listing 825 Canadians who served in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion; and 2) roster from the "Inventory of the Index Card Library of Comrades of Canadian Nationality in Various Units," listing 314 Canadians. 106 pages, 1938"; and File No. 540, "Brief biographies of Canadian volunteers released from Franco's prisons. 18 pages, n/d."

The last block of Mac-Pap records acquired by the National Archives, files numbered 541 to 576 inclusively, consist of a series of personnel files, arranged nominally in alphabetical order by surname; they constitute, in most cases, the most detailed personal information about Mac-Pap volunteers found in this fonds. This said, though, the researcher should note that files vary dramatically in extent. Some may consist of several multi-page service questionnaires filled out in full with additional biographical material, amounting to ten-twelve pages, while others are no more than a name entry.

These files consist of the following types of records, maintained about Mac-Paps or Canadians serving with other units, especially the Abe Lincoln Battalion:

- personal information from of the War Commissariat of the International Brigades
- military biography from of the Communist Party of Spain, Central Commission on Cadres — Foreign Section
- political reliability and military abilities forms completed by commissars of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain
- freehand assessments by officers and commissars of volunteers' character, reliability, and contributions to the Republican cause
- appreciations of service issued by the War Commissariat of the International Brigades
- ms or typescript vitae/biographies/statements by Canadian volunteers in Spain

- correspondence, notations, and various other records
- proofs of membership in the Communist Party and questionnaire for transfer to membership in the Communist Party of Spain
- occasional photograph and Communist Party of Spain membership books.

Much of this information was collected in 1938, when the Republic's fortunes were visibly on the wane. This information was used for repatriation purposes, and to secure volunteers some kind of support from their domestic left-wing parties once they returned home. It could also have been perceived as a data base for future purposes, holding service records and character reliability assessments of Canadian volunteers which could prove useful later on.

In sum, in this record block there are 36 files, amounting to 4,571 pages; the first name entry is Abramovich, George, while the last name is Ziensky, J. There is a brief file on Bethune in this record block. Another unique file, numbered 573, is the Jack Taylor file of 1938, 163 pages in extent, consisting of personal information, much correspondence with, and about, other Mac-Paps and with Friends of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Toronto, reports on engagements and the political situation in Spain, and writings for the left-wing press.

The Mac-Pap material at the National Archives is fully open to research. Unfortunately, there are severe copying and citation restrictions in place, a condition set by the Centre in Moscow. Citation is limited to what fair academic use allows; there can be no extensive citation. Additionally, any mechanical or electronic reproduction of these records is forbidden. The upshot of these restrictions is that the Mac-Pap fonds cannot circulate freely by way of inter-library loan; the finding aid, however, can circulate. This situation poses no small burden to researchers in so geographically extensive a country as Canada. Again, these strictures are imposed by the Centre, and beyond the National Archives's control. However, in the event that a researcher wishes to reproduce some of the Mac-Pap records *in extenso*, he or she can contact the Centre, and negotiate permission for such.

Despite the restriction on off-site access, the Mac-Pap fonds at the National Archives should prove useful in revisiting and revising the history of the Canadian volunteers and their role in the defence of the Spanish Republic. At all events, it has provided Canadians with a heretofore inaccessible body of material on a subject which still continues to engross the imagination and fire hearts almost 60 years after the fact.

### III. *Records of the Communist Party of Canada, the Communist Youth League, and CPC Affiliation with Various Internationals.*

IN EARLY JULY of 1995, the National Archives received from the Comintern archives approximately 21,000 pages of material, selected by its representative in February of 1995, dealing with the Communist Party of Canada.<sup>3</sup> This material has not yet been reviewed and verified, nor has its finding aid been prepared. The various administrative steps necessary to prepare this material for public consultation will require some time; the earliest target date for release of this material into the public domain is late December 1995.

There are six component elements to the block of CPC and related records acquired by the National Archives. They are as follow:

1. The Anglo-American Secretariat of the Comintern
2. The Communist Party of Canada and the Comintern
3. The Communist Youth League of Canada and the Comintern
4. The Communist Party of Canada (the League for Union Propaganda/League for the Defence of Labour) and the *Profintern* (Red Unions International)
5. The Communist Party of Canada and the *Krestintern* (the Peasants' International)
6. The Canadian Section of the International Organization in Aid of Revolutionaries (Red Aid)

#### *1. The Anglo-American Secretariat of the Comintern*

The files copied in this sub-unit are from Fonds 495, File List 72 of the Comintern Archives. The whole fonds consists of 289 files and 22,700 pages, with outside dates of 1921-1937. Since copying such a large extent of pages in its entirety was beyond the financial capacity of the National Archives, only a selection of files was ordered, fifteen in all, which either had "Canada" in the file title, or were titled in such a way as to suggest that a substantial number of Canadian-related documents could, in all likelihood, be found in that file. Obviously Canadian-related material, or a record of developments that bore on Canada, can be found in greater or lesser degree in virtually every one of the Secretariat's files; again, though, financial strictures made a complete copy of the Secretariat's material impossible.

Files numbered 1 to 3, (74, 72 and 135 pages respectively from the period 1921-1922), consisting of bulletins of the Anglo-American Colonial Group of the *Comintern*, as well as minutes of the sessions of this group, were copied for several reasons. They detail the earliest period of activity of this Secretariat. Additionally, in analyzing these files, which are dedicated largely to American and British

<sup>3</sup>The National Archives would like to expressly and publicly thank the CPC and its representative, Mr. Miguel Figueroa, for their permission to acquire these records. Without their concurrence in this venture, this acquisition of material would not have been possible.

activity, it may be possible to determine to what degree information on Canada might be located in files of such a general nature, which can be found for each year of this agency's existence. There may very well be significantly valuable information on Canada, even if between the interstices of the bulk of the record, which deals with states of much more international import than Canada, such as the United Kingdom and the United States.

Files numbered 11 and 13 have a direct connection with Canada. File No. 11 is titled "Minutes of the sessions of the American-Canadian Secretariat" (107 pages, 1926), and File No. 13 is titled "Projects, copies of letters outgoing from the American-Canadian Secretariat to the Executive Committee-Comintern, personnel of the Secretariat" (37 pages, 1926). File No. 21 also consists of material of a similar nature, titled "Minutes of sessions of the American-Canadian, British, Japanese and American Secretariats" (50 pages, 1927), as does File 34, titled "Minutes of meetings of the Anglo-American Secretariat: of the Communist Parties of Korea, Canada ..." (108 pages, 1928). Even more directly focused on Canada are files 176 and 190. File No. 176 is headed "A stenogram of the sessions of the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Executive-Committee-Comintern, of 7 February 1932: 'The Canadian Question'" (76 pages, 1932); File No. 190 is titled "On the situation in Canada" (51 pages, 1932). All of these files have such obvious research value as to require no further comment.

The "situation" of the CPC proper finds comment in File No. 206, "A stenogram of the sessions of the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Central Committee-Comintern of 4 May 1933. On the Situation of the Communist Party of Canada" (18 pages, 1933). More on the CPC, specifically its membership, can be found in File No. 289, "Membership lists of the Communist Parties of the United States, Canada, England..." (102 pages, 1937). There is membership information in File No. 26 as well, which is titled "Membership lists of the Anglo-American Secretariat, copies of letters and relations of the Anglo-American Secretariat" (20 pages, 1927).

One of the most significant questions concerning the international left movement is the degree to which national parties exercised independence of policy and action, even though within the Comintern, and to what degree common action was the result of agreement or central direction from Moscow. The above files should render some help in addressing this issue. Additional clarification might come from the following Secretariat files: "The VIIth Extended Plenum of the Executive Committee-Comintern: Report on the international situation and a co-report on the tasks on the Comintern" (File No. 19, 10 pages, 1926); "Correspondence of the Anglo-American Secretariat with the secretariats of the Executive Committee-Comintern, with the International Organization in Aid of Revolutionaries, and with national organizations in the United States, Canada and England and with other correspondents" (File No. 55, 125 pages, 1929); and "Instructions concerning the work of cadres, lists of documents, received from Communist parties, various plans

of work and preparations for the XIIIth plenum of the Executive Committee-Comintern" (File No. 200, 34 pages, 1932). Given the critical dates of several of these files, 1929 and 1932, they may very well provide some interesting revelations about the Comintern-national parties relationship.

## 2. *The Communist Party of Canada.*

The Comintern Archives generously copied all its CPC files (Fonds 495, File List 98) for the National Archives. This is a rare event in archival release of information; most archival repositories hold to the convention of not more than a 90 per cent release of information in a distinct archival unit. There are 176 CPC files in all, amounting to 13,000 pages; approximately 30 files, consisting of duplicate material, were not copied. The material is almost wholly in the English language. The outside dates of the material are 1920-1942; thus, most of the party records are from the 1920s and 1930s, the period least well reflected in existing left-wing archival sources in Canada. In a sense, the acquisition of this material is a completion of a circular journey for these records, for they were in very large part created here in Canada, then sent on to Moscow; by their return, they may very well help fill in large gaps which have developed, for various reasons, in Canada's own record of its left-wing movement.

It is difficult to capture, in few words, the nature and scope of this material. The following can only suggest what wealth awaits the researcher who will work with these files. The origins of the CPC are reflected in the first file of this fonds, titled "Materials of representatives of Executive Committee of the Communist International in Canada, working to establish Communist Party of Canada: minority protocols of meeting, brief report on situation in country and work of party groups, letters to Executive Committee of the Communist International, etc. 31 pages. 1921-1922." Records of conferences can be found here, such as File No. 13, "Materials of II Conferences of Workers' Party of Canada (Toronto, 22-25 February 1923): final reports of Central Executive Committee of Party and its sections to the conference, resolutions of conference. 51 pages, 1923." Many files hold minutes and proceedings of various party organs, as demonstrated by File No. 14, "Minutes of meetings of Central Executive Committee of the Workers' Party of Canada, program of party for political school and other materials of Central Executive Committee. 74 pages, 1923."

File after file reflects the Comintern-CPC connection, and will help to resolve the question of the Comintern-CPC relationship. Examples of such files are: "Reports and informational reports to Executive Committee of the Communist International by representatives of Communist Party of Canada attached to Executive Committee of the Communist International, and delegates of the Party at the Comintern Congress on economic and political situation in country; works, tasks, structure of Communist Party of Canada and other questions. (File No. 3, 122 pages, 1922)"; "Letters and telegrams of Executive Committee of the Communist

## 190 LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL

International and its units to Vth Conference and Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada on organizational tasks and organizational work of the party, on tactics of the United Front, questions of Canadian independence and other matters. (File No. 46, 183 pages, 1927)"; and "Letters of Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada and its sections to Executive Committee of the Communist International and representative of the party attached to Executive Committee of the Communist International, and letters of regional commissions and individuals to Central Executive Committee on situation in Communist Party of Canada and on its activity (T. Buck letters). (File No. 103, 25 pages, 1930)."

The structure of the CPC, and consequently its functioning, will be clarified by files such as No. 61, titled "Letters of Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada and its units to Executive Committee of the Communist International, to representative of Communist Party in Executive Committee of the Communist International and circulars to local organizations on situation of party and its work, on conference of tailors, on congress of Labourite Party: issue of central newspaper of Communist Party of Canada, 'Worker.' (25 pages, 1928)"; and File No. 122, titled "Minutes of meetings, organizational letters, circulars and special bulletin of Organizational Section of Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada to lower organizations of party on organizational questions. (156 pages, 1931)."

The operations of the CPC at the regional and local level are also captured in this fonds, as exemplified by dossiers such as File No. 141, "Letters and representations of regional organizations of Communist Party of Canada to Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party on organizational situation of regional organizations, their work and tasks. 64 pages, 1932," and in File No. 163, "Materials of regional organisations of Communist Party of Canada: minutes of meetings and resolutions of regional bureaux and committees, their reports (to Central Committee of the Communist Party), circular letters to local organizations, etc. 174 pages, 1934." In the operational sphere, various files address major shifts in legal/illegal status and activity, such as File No. 136, "Informal announcements (researchers of the Anglo-American Leninist School) of Executive Committee of the Communist International on questions of work of Communist Party of Canada and League of Young Communists of Canada, on tactics and organizational tasks of Communist Party in connection with transition into an illegal status. 218 pages, 1932."

Yet other themes are reflected in the CPC records. For example, there are files on education along Marxist-Leninist lines, such as File No. 34, "Circulars and thematic studies for a course in historical materialism, prepared by Agitation and Propaganda Section of Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada. 98 pages, 1925" and File No. 97, "Letters of Tim Buck, Canadian students of the International Leninist School and other Canadian Communists, then in the

USSR, to Executive Committee of the Communist International and to Communist Party of Canada, on party and personal matters; resolutions of American-Canadian delegation to Marxist-Leninist School and remarks on situation in the Communist Party of Canada. 78 pages, 1930."

Policy formulation and decisions are reflected in file after file, such as No. 131, "Resolutions of Political Secretariat of Executive Committee of the Communist International on tasks of Communist Party of Canada. 139 pages, 1932." In connection with policy, there are files on significant policy debates and shifts. Major policy shifts, particularly, can be assessed through files such as File No. 147, "Letter with proposal of Executive Committee of the Communist International and Anglo-American Leninist School to Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada on tactics of United Front and conducting the upcoming conference of the Communist Party. 56 pages, 1933." Those policy shifts which led to party factionalism are reflected in files such as No. 84, "Materials on opposition in Communist Party of Canada: resolutions, announcements, representatives and articles of Central Executive Committee and (plenipotentiaries of Central Executive Committee of) Communist Party of Canada, of national and local organizations of Communist Party, on opposition and collation of correspondence of the Oppositional-Trotskyists in Canada and the United States. 58 pages, 1929" and in File No. 108, "Materials of regional organizations of Communist Party of Canada on exclusion from party of Stokaliuk and group of right fractionists, on work of regional organizations, voluntary workers societies of Canada, etc. 17 pages, 1930."

Many files highlight the activity of the CPC in the area of agitational and propaganda work, especially amongst various unions. For example, there is File No. 111, "Draft resolution and letters of Union International to Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, to League of Union Propaganda and to other union organizations of Canada, on questions of work of labour unions. Charter of One Big Union of Canada, letters to separate unions in Canada, etc. 63 pages, 1930"; and File No. 125, "Circulars and letters of Agitation and Propaganda Section of Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada to local organizations of party on matters of agitation and propaganda work and conduct of political campaigns. Information on Canadian revolutionary press. 55 pages, 1931."

The role of ethnics in the CPC, which often caused unease and stress within the movement, finds comment in many, many files, such as: "Draft of open letters of Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine to Communist Party of Canada and the labouring mass of Ukrainians in Canada. File No. 89, 20 pages, 1929"; "Resolution of Political Secretariat of Executive Committee of the Communist International on work of Communist Party of Canada in Ukrainian mass organizations and draft resolutions. File 92, 179 pages, 1930"; "Resolutions and declarations of Ukrainian Party Fraction of Communist Party of Canada, letters to

## 192 LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL

members and bureau of party fraction (to Central Executive Committee) of Communist Party of Canada on the situation in the party fraction. File No. 110, 49 pages, 1930"; and "Reports (Bureau of National Fractions in Canada) on work of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian Fractions and fraction of European nations. File No. 164, 46 pages, 1934)."

Many, many files in this record body deal with the CPC's connection with various other left-wing groups throughout Canada, and with its attempts to win adherents from various social classes and establish relations with various organizations. By way of example, there are: File No. 53, titled "Draft letters of the Peasant International to Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada on work among farmers and agricultural workers and informational material on farmers, and bulletin of Women's Federation of Canada. 59 pages, 1927"; File No. 153, "Materials of "League of Workers Unity" — Canadian section of Union International — United Farmers' League and Co-operative Federation: Charter of "League of Workers Unity," resolutions, announcements, circular letters of League, information on union formation in Canada, on battle of unemployed etc. 109 pages, 1933"; and File No. 168, "Materials of Social Democratic party of Canadian -KKF [CCF]: program, minutes of meetings of regional council of KKF [CCF], extract from newspaper and activity of the KKF club [CCF].5 pages, 1934." The women's movement is prominently reflected in these records, in files such as File No. 199, "Summons of Women's Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada and of League of Young Communists of Canada, of Women's Section of the "League of Worker's Unity," Association of Unemployed and the Canadian Federation of Women's Labour League, to women labourers; informational announcements and articles on workers' movement amongst Canadian women, youth and children. 32 pages, n/d."

In summation, while the CPC records described above bear on the Party itself, and on the Party's Comintern connection, they also reflect developments along a far broader spectrum, such as the history of the whole left in Canada throughout the 1920s and 1930s; hence their special utility to researchers. Additionally, interspersed throughout this fonds there is the occasional issue of the *Clarion*, and certainly very much correspondence among Party members, all of which will again prove very useful to researchers, especially for the period that the CPC was an illegal organization, from which relatively few records survive.

### *3. The Communist Youth League of Canada and the Communist Youth International of the Comintern*

As with the CPC records, the Comintern Archives copied for the National Archives the complete fonds of the Communist Youth League of Canada (Fonds 533, File List 10, Part 2). The CYL records consist of 172 files, with outside dates of 1922-1943; they number approximately 8,200 pages.

## LEFT-WING SOURCES FROM RUSSIA 193

As with the CPC material, files here detail the origins of the movement, such as: "Letter to member of the Communist Youth League of Canada, A. Franklin (in Executive Committee of KIM [Communist Youth International]), with request for political literature. File No. 1605, 4 pages, 1922"; and "Minutes and resolutions of 1st Congress of Communist Youth League-Canada: charter, reports, telegram to the Executive Committee-Communist Youth International, etc. File No. 1606, 32 pages, 1923."

Other files reflect the CYL's international connections, such as File No. 1612, "Minutes of meetings, letters of Executive Committee-Communist Youth League-Canada to Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International, to Central Committee-Communist Youth League-United Kingdom and Sweden, on work in Canada, etc. 32 pages, 1924." At the same time, files capture regional situations in Canada, such as File No. 1672, "Reports of regional Communist Youth League organizations on the situation in the regions and on work of the organization; instructional letter, flyers and bulletins of local organizations of the Communist Youth League-Canada. 1931."

Many files deal with protocols and minutes of meetings, reflecting discussions and determination of policy, such as File No. 1647, "Protocols of meetings and resolutions of the Politburo of the Executive Committee-Communist Youth League-Canada. 1929." Further on policy-making, material of congresses is captured in these fonds, such as File No. 1624, "Minutes of meetings, resolution, report on work and other documents of IVth Congress Communist Youth League-Canada. 49 pages, 1927." Many records deal with organizational matters, such as File No. 1623, "Draft charter of Pioneer Organization of Canada and bulletin, *Young Comrade*, organization of children of workers and farmers of Canada. 8 pages, 1926."

There are files on agitational and propaganda activity, an example of which is File No. 1615, "Minutes of meetings, plan of organizational activity of Executive Committee and Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Executive Committee-Communist Youth League-Canada. 67 pages, 1925."

Relations with labour unions are a prominent aspect of the YCL files, as in File No. 1639, "Minutes of meetings, and letters of labour-economic unit of the Executive Committee-Communist Youth League-Canada to Labour Union Section of the Executive Committee-Communist Youth International, and to local organizations on labour union conferences, on economic problems of youth, etc. 1928."

Factionalism is reflected in some records, such as in File No. 1642, "Announcement of opposition group to Political Committee of the Executive Committee-Communist Youth League-Canada in connection with its announcement of the rejection of the Political Committee's decision on Trotskyism. 1928."

A number of files reflect the Communist Youth League's activities against Fascism, such as File No. 1720, "Bulletins of the Communist Youth League

Against War and Fascism, and the Canadian Youth Council Against War and Fascism. 1936.”

In all, as with the CPC block of records, the CYL files detail all the salient areas of left-wing activity in Canada, reveal the organization's structure and operations within the domestic and international contexts, and reflect all the major concerns of the left wing in Canada during the 1920s and 1930s — organization of labour, search for unity, opposition to fascism, and so on. Additionally, as with the CPC records, there seems to be as complete a run as possible of appeals, flyers, bulletins, announcements, and other informational records of this type, which also has no small research value, reflecting as it does official Party positions on a multitude of developments throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

*4. The Communist Party of Canada and the Profintern (International of the Red Workers' Unions)*

This material is drawn from Fonds 534, File List 7 of the Comintern Archives. It consists of 8 files, is approximately 900 pages in extent, and has the outside dates 1920-1935. The files are very densely packed, each file covering a number of years and including material on all sorts of topics. To give the reader some idea of contents, it would be best to provide first several file titles, which follow: “Reports and letters of the leaders of the League for Union Propaganda (Canada and the USA), Workers' Party, Union of Forest Workers et al in Canada, to European Bureau and Central European Bureau of the Workers' International, on their activities, affiliation with the Workers' International, strike movement, work amongst Italian immigrants, exchange of union literature, etc. Program of action, resolutions, appeals, bulletins and other material of the League for Union Propaganda. (File No. 329, 129 pages, 1921-1923)”; “Reports, letters and telegrams of Communist Party of Canada leadership, Workers' Party of Canada, League for Union Propaganda and other organizations of Canada to the Executive Bureau and the International Committee on Propaganda, on their activity, economic situation in country, on strike of miners in Nova Scotia, on national union conference and other questions. (File No. 331, 91 pages, 1924-1924)”; and “Reports and letters of Central Committee, Union Section of the Communist Party-Central Committee and leadership of the League for Union Propaganda of Canada, to the Executive Bureau and to the Pacific Ocean Secretariat of the Union International, on condition of the union movement in the country, strike movement, organization of auto workers and textile workers, work amongst Ukrainian and Chinese immigrant-labourers, dispute with the American Federation of Labour, delegation to IVth Congress of the Union International and other questions, with appendices. (File No. 334, 132 pages, 1928).”

As is evident from the above, many themes and sub-themes are reflected in these files. They make manifest the role of the CPC in union activity in general, and Party relations with various unions in specific. They place unions, workers'

political activity, and the CPC in the North American and international contexts. There is information here on CPC-union activity amongst specific ethnic groups in Canada. Key events in labour history — such as the Nova Scotia coal miners' strike of 1923 and the dispute with the AFL — are reflected in these records. Regular union organizational and strike activity, and the left's perception of the economic situation in Canada are also aspects on which these records comment. In sum, the labour historian could find the records in this unit of more than passing utility.

*5. The Communist Party of Canada and the Krestintern (the Peasants' [Farmers'] International)*

There are six files in this sub-unit, drawn from Fonds 535, File List 2 of the Comintern Archives. It is approximately 460 pages in extent, with outside dates of 1923-1930. As the *Profintern* files record the CPC's attempts to organize labour, the *Krestintern* files reflect its attempts to establish for itself a leading role in the agrarian sector. Much as with the *Profintern* files, the *Krestintern* files are also each packed with diverse information. Again, as with the *Profintern* files, several titles of *Krestintern* files will be instructive in providing the reader with an idea of the nature of information amassed in these records.

Some examples of *Krestintern* files are: "Correspondence of Secretariat of Peasant International with Central Committee-Communist Party, of Farmers' Union of Canada and its local organizations, on situation of farmers in Canada, on development of agriculture in Canada, on farmers' movement in Canada, on founding an organization for Doukhobors and its entry into Peasant International, on publishing literature for farmers. (File No. 81, 128 pages, 1925)"; "Correspondence of Secretariat of Peasant International with Central Committee, Ukrainian Section of Communist Party and the Farmers' Union of Canada, on situation of farmers in the country, on work of the Communist Party amongst farmers, on farmers' movement in Canada, on relations with farm organizations in USA, on publication and dissemination of propaganda literature, and other questions. (File No. 82, 32 pages, 1926)"; and "Correspondence of Secretariat of Peasant International with Central Committee-Communist Party, Farmers' Union of Canada, on development of agriculture in Canada, on situation of farmers, on farmers' movement in Canada, on unequal distribution of income among farmers, on preparation of cadres to work with peasants [farmers], on publishing and disseminating literature for farmers, on financial matters, and other questions. (File No. 84, 49 pages, 1928-1929)."

The above titles show the CPC in communication both with international agrarian agencies and with Canadian farmers' organizations, speak of specific ethnic group interests in the agrarian sector (Doukhobor and Ukrainian), on the preparation of literature to influence farmers and their organizations and bring them into the international agrarian movement. They evidence left-wing perceptions of the economic situation of farmers in Canada, and the CPC's attempt to prepare

cadres to work in the agrarian sector. No further comment is necessary to demonstrate the usefulness of this material to students of both the left wing in Canada and agrarian history.

*6. The International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries*

This sub-unit, seventeen files in all, is drawn from Fonds 539, File List 2 of the Comintern Archives. Consisting of approximately 1,000 pages, the material's outside dates are 1924-1937.

This sub-unit details the CPC's attempts, through the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, to provide support to representatives of the political left in various countries, wherever they were persecuted or abused by local authorities. As with the above units, some file titles will be instructive in providing the reader with an appreciation of the file contents in this group of records.

As examples, there are the following three files: "Correspondence of the Executive Committee of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries with the Central Committee-Communist Party of Canada and with Canadian Section of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, regarding the White Terror in Europe and Asia, on establishment and work of a section of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries in Canada, on aid to political prisoners, on agitational-propaganda work. Charter of Canadian Section of International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, and its appeal for aid to political prisoners. (File No. 716, 31 pages, 1924-1925)"; "Correspondence of Executive Committee-International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries with the Canadian League for the Defence of Labour (a section of International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries) and the Section's letters to the Berlin Bureau of the Executive Committee-International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, on the Section's work, on campaigns against the Sacco and Vanzetti verdict, on leadership work, on aid to political prisoners, etc. (File No. 718, 55 pages, 1927-1928)"; and "Letters of Executive Committee of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries to and on the work of the Section, on a national conference of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries of Canada, on the growth of the organization, on work amongst the French population of Canada and among immigrants, on donations, on legal and financial aid to political prisoners; reports of Canadian Section of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries on its work, on conferences held in the Section; informational bulletin of Canadian Section of the International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries. (File No. 722, 56 pages, 1930)."

A quick perusal of these file titles indicates that they illuminate the CPC's efforts to organize in Canada a structure to oppose violence and abuse of left-wing representatives throughout the world, and to provide them with relief. There is information here on various signal cases, such as Sacco and Vanzetti; other files (titles not given here) deal with E. Telman and V. Dimitrov and with left-wing

prisoners in Poland, Greece, China, Yugoslavia, Italy, and Germany. Obviously, the left opposition to fascism is a significant aspect of these files. Many of the files hold unique commentary on discrete and unique issues, such as File No. 722 given above, which provides information on the interesting matter of "work amongst the French population of Canada."

\*\*\*\*\*

THE ABOVE is a brief overview of the six component elements of the CPC-Comintern and related material, which the National Archives acquired in mid-1995, its second acquisition from Russian archives. All indications suggest that it should prove useful in better understanding the history of the left in Canada. Even if it does not constitute the foundation for a full revision of the history of the Canadian left, it can certainly lead to a substantial reappraisal, and by providing a richer background context it will help clarify no few issues still under debate in the history of the left in Canada.

#### *IV. Canadian Left-Wing Records Remaining in Moscow*

WHILE THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES has acquired from Moscow, over the last 2 years, something in the region of 32,000 pages of records on the history of the Canadian left, many records still remain in Moscow.

##### *1. Records at the Comintern Archives.*

There are still many records of interest at the Comintern Archives. Prime amongst these are dossiers in several Secretariats, such as Comintern records out of the office of a given General Secretary of the Comintern during his tenure of office. This is the case with Fonds 494, Opus 7, "Secretariat of the General-Secretary of the Comintern G. Dimitrov (1935-1944)." Examples of noteworthy files follow: "Letters and reports, CPC, on situation of Party in Canada; report of Wayne on 8th Congress of the CPC; Tim Buck's note on Party school, 1937-1938 (File No. 266)"; "Membership of CC and Politburo of the CPC, biographical information; discussions with Tim Buck in the Comintern's Office of Cadres; letter of the CC of the CPC on the matter of verifying cadres in the struggle against provocation; affidavit on the Secretary of the Control Commission of the CPC, Fred Rose, 1938-1939, (File No. 267)"; "Letters, information and official reports of Canada's permanent representative at the Comintern, Tom Wayne, dealing with Finnish immigration from Canada to Soviet Karelia, 1939 (File No. 268)"; "Reports and information on the situation in Canada, on work of the CPC, on the Party's position on the question of war, on the counter-revolutionary activity of Ukrainians in Canada; Comintern Secretariat decisions on Canada, and Secretariat letters to the CC of the CPC, 1938-1939 (File No. 269)"; "Report (signed by A. Marti) on federal elections in Canada in March 1940; letter of General Secretary, CPC, to the Comintern, 1940-1941 (File No. 270);" and "Informational material on CPC

prepared by Secretariat member Aerova; inquiry by NKGB into Carr Seme and others, and Dmitrov's response, 1942-1943 (File No. 271)."

In Fonds 495, File List 10a, "Communist International — the Secretariat under Secretary D.Z. Manuilskii," there are three Canadian-content files for the period 1938-1939, largely reports of the CPC to the Comintern, on Canadian volunteers in Spain, on the counter-revolutionary activity of Ukrainians in Canada, and on Soviet Karelia.

There is also Fonds 495, File List 14, entitled "Communist International — the Secretariat under Secretary Marti," in which there are approximately 25 files of CPC- and Canada-content material, spanning the years 1934-1940. A number of files (Nos. 275, 276, and 286) deal with Party congresses of 1934 and 1937. There is a block of files (Nos. 282 to 285) from 1935, informational in nature, which comment on trade with the USSR, Soviet Karelia, the struggle against fascism, National Fronts, aid to Spain, and Trotskyism. Several files, Nos. 278 and 290, from 1934 and 1937 respectively, feature personnel concerns. File Nos. 279 to 280, 289, 291 to 292, and 294 to 299 are CPC material, dealing with the creation of a central organ for the CPC, reports and proceedings of national federations in Canada, CPC platform, labour unions and congresses, Trotskyism, and the situation in Europe.

Some files, which seem to promise much on the dynamics and structure of the CPC at home and its relationship with the Comintern, are titled as follows: "Proceedings of the December plenum of the CC [concerns Canada], correspondence on administrative, publishing and personnel matters, 1934 (File No. 278)"; "Reports of provincial organizations of CPC (Maritimes, Western Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec), 1935 (File No. 281)"; "Reports to Comintern, provincial organizations, reports, CPC resolutions, 1937 (File No. 287)"; "National federations, battalion in Spain, activity of political schools, CPC membership, Finnish organizations, situation of labour, 1937 (File No. 288)"; and "CPC membership in Comintern, press matters, provincial elections in Canada, struggle for national unity in Canada, agriculture, Trotskyists, 1938 (File No. 293)."

The Comintern Archives also holds hundreds of thousands of personnel files, including dossiers on prominent Communists overseas, as well as files on foreign Communists who visited the USSR in any capacity (as tourists, cadres sent for training, etc). These files may be accessed, but only with a letter authorizing access to a personal file prepared and signed by a next-of-kin of the individual concerned, accompanied by a notarized letter attesting to the veracity of the letter of permission. This may seem a stringent requirement for access, but it is fully consonant with norms established in western societies for access to personal and private information.

On the matter of access generally, the situation at the Comintern Archives, and in Russian archives in general, has turned for the worse. For example, the records

described above in the fonds of the General-Secretaries of the Comintern have been re-closed, pending final determination of their status. There is some logic to this. With Yeltsin's accession to power, stunning extents of archival material, including the fonds of the General-Secretaries of the Comintern as well as material of relatively recent vintage, came open to research and copying. In the process, very personal information about individuals, still living or but recently deceased, was disclosed. Individuals were harmed by such disclosure, done in utter disregard of their right to privacy, which, incidentally, is secured by law in western societies. Additionally, third party and state security interests were harmed by such inordinate disclosure. Hence the recent limitations on access to much material in the Comintern Archives, pending final determination of access status by the Presidential Commission on Declassification. These limitations, in and of themselves, do not necessarily presage a return to old ways, and the unreasonable exclusion of researchers from archival records which should, according to basic archival norms, be opened.

What is disturbing, however, in this matter of access to records in Russian archives, is the uncertainty which characterizes the archival status determination process. The Presidential Commission on Declassification, while consisting of archivists, is appointed by the Executive, and answers to it. In fact, *Rosarkhiv*, the ministry-level agency in charge of Russia's central archives, is one of but very few ministries under the direct control of the President's Office. Hence, decisions of *Rosarkhiv* in general, and of the Commission on specific issues of access to any given fonds, may very well be influenced by political imperatives, rather than archival and legal norms. Also, a recent statute of 1993, on the protection of state secrets and privacy of personal information, has rendered access more difficult by the broadness of its prescriptions; it is on the basis of this statute that the Commission brought recently-opened fonds under closure. Finally, there is no independent avenue of appeal of decisions taken by the Presidential Commission, no allowance for independent commissioners or other officials with power to intervene in contested instances of access and take the matter before the courts. It is this broad avenue for potential Executive intervention — and not the actual recent closures themselves — which constitute the Achilles' heel of access to the information in Russia's archives. Frankly and simply speaking, too much had been opened too quickly; one can only hope now that, just as quickly, too much is not closed off.

## *2. Records at the Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD).*

This archives is the successor to the former Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and is located in the same building in central Moscow which houses the administrative agency in charge of Russian archives, *Rosarkhiv*. It houses the records of the highest policy-making organ of Soviet Russia, whose records would be akin to, say, cabinet material in western democracies.

## 200 LABOUR/LE TRAVAIL

While the National Archives has not made any concentrated effort to obtain material from this institution, there is no doubt that records of the CPC and its organs, and the Party's connection with Moscow, are highlighted in *TsKhSD* records. These records would not only complement the documents of the Comintern period acquired from the Centre and provide a true context to them; they would also take us virtually into the present day, and illuminate the history of the CPC from 1942-1989.

In a staggeringly extensive undertaking, the Hoover Institution has recently completed one phase of a multi-year project of filming in Russian archives. *TsKhSD* records were one of Hoover's priorities, and the institution filmed both a portion of the original materials (largely U.S.A.-connected), as well as file lists to the unfiled records. Conceivably, Canadian content material may be located among either the records or the file lists filmed. The interested researcher can contact Hoover to determine what CPC/Canadian-related material has come into Stanford through the Hoover drift-net.<sup>4</sup>

### *3. Records at the State Central Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF)*

At the flagship repository of the Russian archival system, namely the State Archives of the Russian Federation, there are many Canadian left-wing records of interest. Fonds 5459, for example, the "Central Committee [of the CPSU] Files," holds 22 files on worker contacts at international meetings, on aid to strikers, on labour and working-class co-operation and so forth, during the (1920s, 1930s, and 1940s). Several files hold information on the Nova Scotia coal miners' strike of 1925, and the decision of the Praesidium of the Central Committee to extend aid to the striking miners in the amount of \$3,000.

Except for the above fonds, most of the Canadian-related material in *GARF* addresses cultural relations. There is Fonds 5283, for example, the records of "The All-Russian Society for Cultural Relations Abroad." It holds information on the visits of prominent Canadians to the Soviet Union. In some cases, the visitors were Canadian "fellow-travellers," sympathizers with the Soviet government, and were prominent leaders of the left-wing movements back home in Canada. In other cases, they were government officials. In yet other cases, these individuals were significant Canadians who had achieved stature and fame at home, and in some cases abroad as well. Most of these files date from the 1930s, which adds to their historical interest. Information on such visitors, varying in extent from a paragraph to a page, can be located in 66 files of this fonds. There is information on visits by Professor Banting (1933, 1935), Dyson Carter (1950), F. R. Scott (1935), E. Forsey (1982), and by others (journalists, priests, MPs, teachers, etc) over the period 1928-1980 (although most are concentrated in the 1930s).

<sup>4</sup>Various communications channels through to the Hoover are: Telephone 415/723-3563; Fax 415/723-1687; E-mail "Archives@Hoover.Stanford.Edu".

Another fourteen files, in the same fonds, deal with institutional relations and the professional exchange of scientific information, largely during the 1930s. "Correspondence with intellectual institutions in [North] America and with individuals working in the sphere of culture, 1925-1926. (File List 3, File No. 25, 417 pages)"; "Correspondence of George William and G.[J.?]S. Woodsworth in Ottawa on the establishment of cultural relations with intellectual forces in Canada, with lists of professors, 1935. (File List 3, File No. 796, 19 pages)"; and "Correspondence with the University of Toronto and its request for information of a meteorological character, 1936. (File List 3, File No. 984)."

Fonds 9567, "The Union of Soviet Friendship Societies and Cultural Relations with Nations Abroad," also holds much material dealing with Canada and Soviet-Canadian cultural relations. The dossiers, from year to year, are archetypal, consisting of five to six record types. The fond commences with records on Canada from 1958 onwards, with files arranged chronologically by year. Within each year there, again, are four to five archetypal fonds, with permutations on them from time to time. The files for 1959, for example, are as follows: "Correspondence with the Ambassador of the USSR in Canada, with institutions and individuals in Canada, regarding exchange of literature, artists, on tourism, etc. 1959 (File List 7, File No. 48, 292 pages)"; "Correspondence with the Ambassador of the USSR in Canada and the Union of Soviet Friendship societies, regarding literature, photographs, etc. 1959 (File List 7, File No. 49, 155 pages)"; "Correspondence with editors of *Northern Neighbours*, on questions of culture, 1959 (File List 7, File No. 50, 56 pages)"; "Correspondence with organizations and individuals in establishing cultural ties with Canada, 1959 (File List 7, File No. 51, 51 pages)."

The files in this fonds constitute a voluminous record detailing Canadian-Soviet relations. For example, for 1960 there are 1,100 pages of material on Canada-Soviet cultural activities; 1,030 pages for 1962; 700 pages for 1965. However, throughout the 1970s and 1980s the extents seem to decrease. While for 1979 we have 804 pages, the years 1973-1978 averaged approximately 360 pages yearly. For the 4-year period 1982-1985 there is a total of 720 pages. A fair estimate of the extent of Canadian-related material in this fonds is 15,000 pages.

#### 4. *Records at the Russian State Archives of the Economy (RGAE)*

This archival repository preserves the records of defunct Soviet-era economic ministries and agencies.

The record block titled "The All-Union Central Soviet of Professional Unions," Fonds 5451, holds eleven files on relations with Canadian unions, spanning the years 1935-1979. There are 8 very substantial files (File List 72, File Nos. 1232-1239), about 1,200 pages in all, on union activity and labour in Canada, and on Soviet-Canadian relations, over the years 1943-1979.

Since most unions in the Soviet Union were industry- or sector-specific, and largely centrally-managed, the economic records of any given ministry also hold

records of an appropriate union. Amongst each block of union records is a series of dossiers detailing that union's relations with foreign unions, including Canadian. Thus, in Fonds 5458, "The Central Committees of the Professional Unions of Textile Workers," there are three files from 1930-1931 on Soviet-Canadian textile union relations. "Correspondence of the International Committee of Tailors with the industrial union of textile workers of Canada on broadening international relations, on the establishment of a revolutionary opposition in the union and the strike movement in Canada, 1931 (File List 15, File No. 77)" gives some idea of the contents of one of these files.

Fonds 5459, "The Central Committee of the All-Union Professional Union of Miners," holds several files of interest with information on the Nova Scotia coal miners' strike of 1925. They are: "Information on the aid extended by the Central Committee of the union of miners of the USSR to the workers of Canada in 1925, with indications of the extent of aid, 1925 (File List File No. 7, 261)"; and "Presentation of a member of the delegation of Canadian miners at the IXth International Conference of Miners in Moscow, 1930 (File List 11, File No. 373)."

As mentioned above, such files concerning Soviet-Canadian union relations can be located in virtually every economic ministry fonds of *RGAE*. Additionally, this archives holds the records of a most interesting body of records, Fonds 8581, "The Soviet Information Bureau (Sovinformburo) of the Council of Ministers of the USSR." Some files from this fonds are as follows: "Reports of Sovinformburo representatives in the USA and Canada on published material for 1955, 1955 (File List 1, File No. 714)"; and "Reports of Sovinformburo representatives in Canada and the USA on articles published in 1956, 1956-1958 (File List 1, File Nos. 781, 840, 896 and 905; 278, 167, 106, and 241 pages respectively).

\*\*\*\*\*

THE ABOVE is not a comprehensive listing of Canadian-related left-wing and labour material remaining in Moscow archives. The above discussion has dealt with the major untapped sources — but far, far more material of this nature exists and, with the aid of Russian archivists, can be located and copied for utilization by Canadians interested in the Canadian left and in Russo-Canadian relations.

As indicated at the beginning of this article, the National Archives has taken the first steps along the road of recovery from Russia of archival information of value to Canadians. The continuation of this program, however, depends on several factors. From the Russian side, access is the prime consideration. To this point, our requests have received a generously favourable response. In what degree this will continue is difficult to predict, given recent developments, however justified, which have restricted access to material opened earlier. From the Canadian side, funding for further acquisition is the operative concern. The National Archives has expended a considerable amount of money in the acquisition of the Mac-Pap and CPC/Comintern materials; in the present climate of retrenchment and restraint,

further acquisition in the immediate future is highly unlikely. Partnerships with other interested organizations might open an avenue for further repatriation of left-wing material to Canada. Hopefully, this article will stimulate just such a response from quarters across Canada, which will allow the National Archives to complete the work it has begun.

# TELOS

## A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

Since its appearance May 1968, *Telos* has introduced the best of continental thought and tackled major international issues. Committed to the development of an American Critical Theory, *Telos* analyzes American and international questions from a broad geopolitical perspective.

*Issue No. 102 Winter 1993*

<b>Gary Ulmen:</b>	Julien Freund (1921-1993)
<b>Julien Freund:</b>	Schmitt's Political Thought
<b>Wolfgang Palaver:</b>	Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism
<b>Alain de Benoist:</b>	The End of the Left-Right Dichotomy
<b>Béla Greskovits:</b>	Demagogic Populism in Eastern Europe?
<b>Sergio Benvenuto:</b>	Paul K. Feyerabend (1924-1994)
<b>Parascandalo &amp; Hösle:</b>	3 Interviews with Feyerabend
<b>Aviezer Tucker:</b>	Western Aid to Eastern Europe
<b>Thomas O. Hueglin:</b>	Federalism as Balance
<b>Gus diZerega:</b>	Reply to Ulmen & Piccone
<b>Piccone &amp; Ulmen:</b>	Federalism in the Age of Postmodernity
<b>Seth Farber:</b>	Undermining Community

Subscriptions cost \$35 per year (four issues) for individuals; \$90 for institutions. Foreign and Canadian orders add 15%. Checks must be in US funds drawn on US banks. No Canadian checks will be accepted. Back issues are \$13 each (institutions pay \$30). Back issues available: 13, 17-18, 20-51, 53-100. For subscription, back issues or information, write:

***Telos Press Ltd., 431 E. 12th Street, New York NY 10009***

## Eugene A. Forsey Prize in Canadian Labour and Working-Class History

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the Canadian Committee on Labour History is pleased to announce the first Eugene A. Forsey Prize competition. The CCLH, with the consent of the late Dr. Forsey's family, chose to name it in his honour because of his pioneering work in the field of Canadian labour history. Dr. Forsey, Research Director of the Canadian Congress of Labour and later the Canadian Labour Congress, also served on the committee which founded *Labour/Le Travail*.

The CCLH would like to invite submissions for the new Forsey prize competition for graduate and undergraduate work on Canadian labour and working-class history.

Three prizes will be awarded annually: two prizes of \$250 each for the best undergraduate essays, or their equivalents, written in the past year, and one prize of \$500 for the best graduate thesis completed in the past three years. Separate committees, established by the executive of the CCLH, will award the prizes.

The committees, like *Labour/Le Travail* itself, intend to interpret widely the definition of Canadian labour and working-class history. Undergraduate essays may be nominated by course instructors, but nominators are limited to one essay per competition. Additionally, authors may submit their own work. Essays not written at a university or college may be considered for the undergraduate awards.

For the graduate prize, supervisors may nominate one thesis per competition or an author of a thesis may submit a copy. Submissions of both MA and PhD theses are welcome. Theses defended on or after 1 May 1993 are eligible for consideration in the initial competition.

The deadline for submissions is 1 June 1996. Prizes will be announced in the Fall 1996 issue of *Labour/Le Travail*. Four copies of essays and theses must be submitted for consideration to Forsey Prize, Canadian Committee on Labour History, Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF A1C 5S7.