

Twin City Ethnopolitics Urban Rivalry, Ethnic Radicalism and Assimilation in the Lakehead, 1900-70

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Résumé de l'article

La politique urbaine et l'ethnie ont été intimement liées à l'histoire des villes jumelles de Port Arthur et de Fort William qui, plus tard, ont formé Thunder Bay en 1970. Le rapport historique entre l'expansion politique et urbaine et l'ethnie a pu être observé sur trois phases distinctes : 1) Père de l'exclusion ethnique et du factionnalisme pendant la période de 1900 à 1930, lorsque les groupes ethniques se sont établis dans des enclaves « étrangères » ou des « quartiers » et se sont grandement séparés des partis politiques populaires, surtout les groupes comme les Ukrainiens et les Finlandais qui prenaient une part active à la gauche radicale; 2) les deux décennies de protestation radicale et d'activisme ethnopolitique émergent de 1930 à 1950, qui ont observé la naissance de la règle municipale de « patron » à Port Arthur sous la direction du maire C. W. Cox (1934-49) et la dominance fédérale libérale de C. D. Howe et du Rév. Dan McIvor; 3) l'ère d'après-guerre (1950-70) de l'assimilation ethnique et de la vaste participation ethnique à tous les échelons de la politique municipale et à tous les partis aux échelons provinciaux et fédéral.

***Twin City Ethnopolitics :
Urban Rivalry, Ethnic Radicalism and Assimilation in the Lakehead, 1900 -70****

Anthony W. Rasporich

Abstract

Urban politics and ethnicity have been intimately linked in the history of the twin cities, Port Arthur and Fort William, later amalgamated into Thunder Bay in 1970. The historic relationship between political and urban development and ethnicity may be seen in three distinct phases: (1) the era of ethnic exclusion and factionalism in the period 1900-30, when ethnic groups settled into "foreign" enclaves, or "quarters," and largely stood apart from mainstream political parties, particularly those groups like the Ukrainians and Finns who were active on the radical left; (2) the two decades of radical protest and emergent ethnopolitical activism from 1930-50, which saw the flowering of city "boss" rule in Port Arthur under Mayor C. W. Cox (1934-49), and federal Liberal dominance by C. D. Howe and Rev. Dan McIvor; (3) the postwar era (1950-70) of ethnic assimilation and broad ethnic participation at all levels of civic politics, and among all parties at the provincial and federal levels.

Résumé

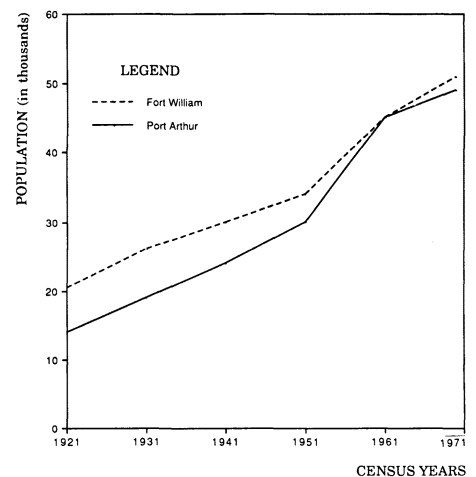
La politique urbaine et l'ethnie ont été intimement liées à l'histoire des villes jumelles de Port Arthur et de Fort William qui, plus tard, ont formé Thunder Bay en 1970. Le rapport historique entre l'expansion politique et urbaine et l'ethnie a pu être observé sur trois phases distinctes: 1) l'ère de l'exclusion ethnique et du factionnalisme pendant la période de 1900 à 1930, lorsque les groupes ethniques se sont établis dans des enclaves "étrangères" ou des

Ethnicity has long been a salient feature of Lakehead politics in the twentieth century. Indeed, the two dominant features of these twin cities have been their working-class and ethnic character. Woven through the political fabric of the two cities of Port Arthur and Fort William have been violent strike actions, radical political parties and movements. Their economy has been based on primary-product refining and transportation, and occasionally secondary manufacturing as during the two world wars; at key intervals, they functioned as a construction depot for transcontinental transportation projects such as the railways and pipelines. In sum, they have been predominantly frontier resource centres with populations which expanded only in the boom period of immigration from 1900-1910, from 6,500 to 38,000, and since then have grown only modestly to slightly over 100,000 after their amalgamation into the City of Thunder Bay in 1970 (see Figure 1). With an ethnic population hovering in the region of 30 to 40 percent of the total (with significant minorities of Finns, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Italians, and lesser numbers of Poles, Greeks, South Slavs, Swedes, and Chinese), the ethnic social mix in the Lakehead has been both prominent and persistent; but in percentage terms it has been more like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary than Edmonton, Winnipeg or Kitchener. Yet, its historic reputation for ethnic radicalism has been somewhat outsized, as has its reputation for ethnic participation at all political levels.¹

Whether ethnic radicalism and participation in the political process in Thunder Bay is above or below average for Canadian urban experience is

difficult to determine since we know relatively little of the recent urban political experience - Steve Juba's Winnipeg or Bill Hawrelak's Edmonton in the 1950s - to make adequate historical comparisons.² That lack of an urban western Canadian context notwithstanding, it is possible to venture some hypotheses on the political aspect of ethnicity in the Lakehead community. The proposed chronology here is tripartite: (1) from 1900 to 1930 as an era of ethnic exclusion and factionalism; (2) from 1930 to 1950 as one of class protest and emergent integration of the 'ethnic vote,'; and (3) from 1950 to 1970 as a period of upward ethnic mobility, assimilation and penetration of the three dominant Anglo-Canadian parties. Each

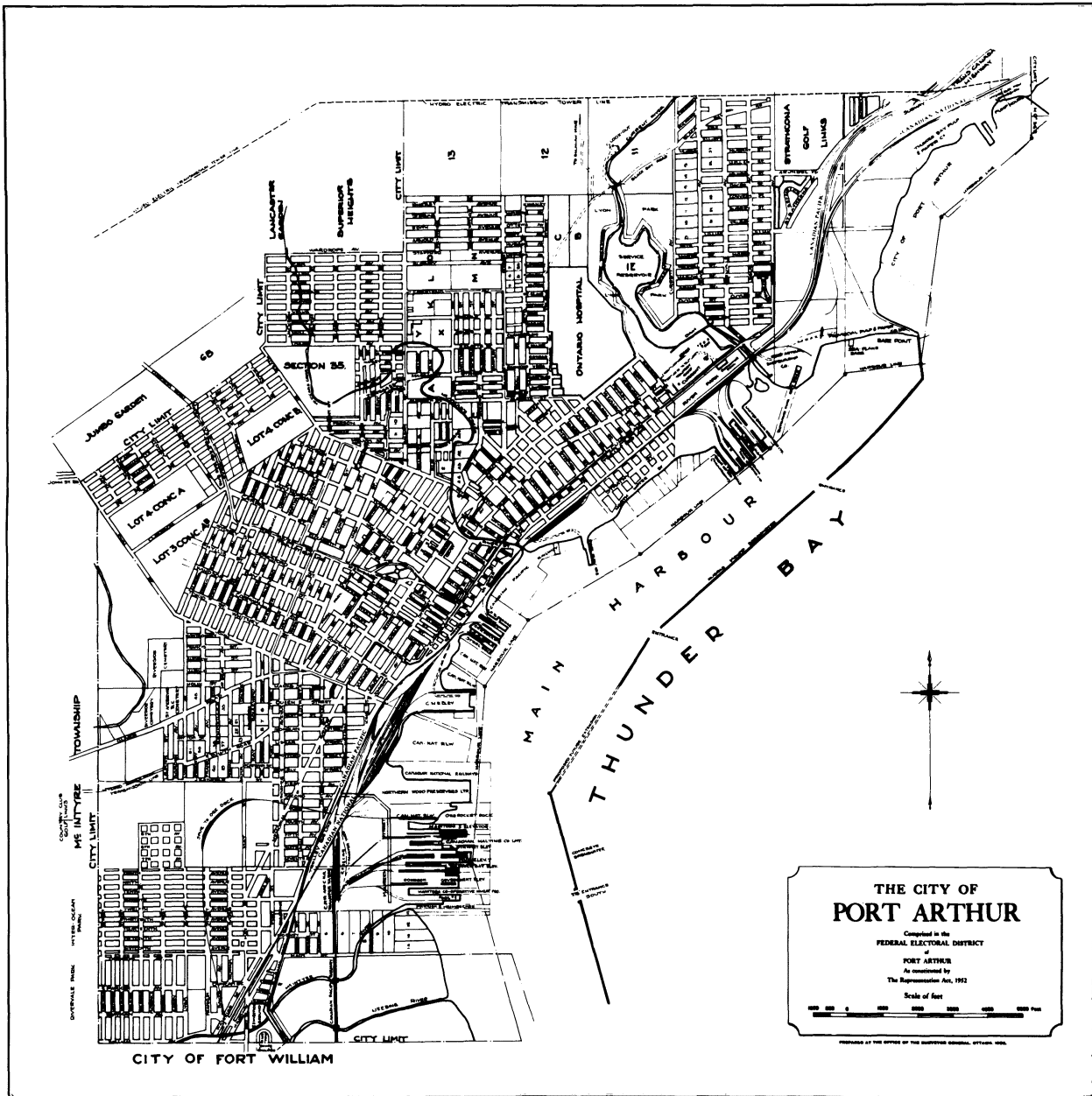
**Figure 1
Population of Fort William and Port Arthur**



Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1921 to 1961, City of Thunder Bay, Planning Office.

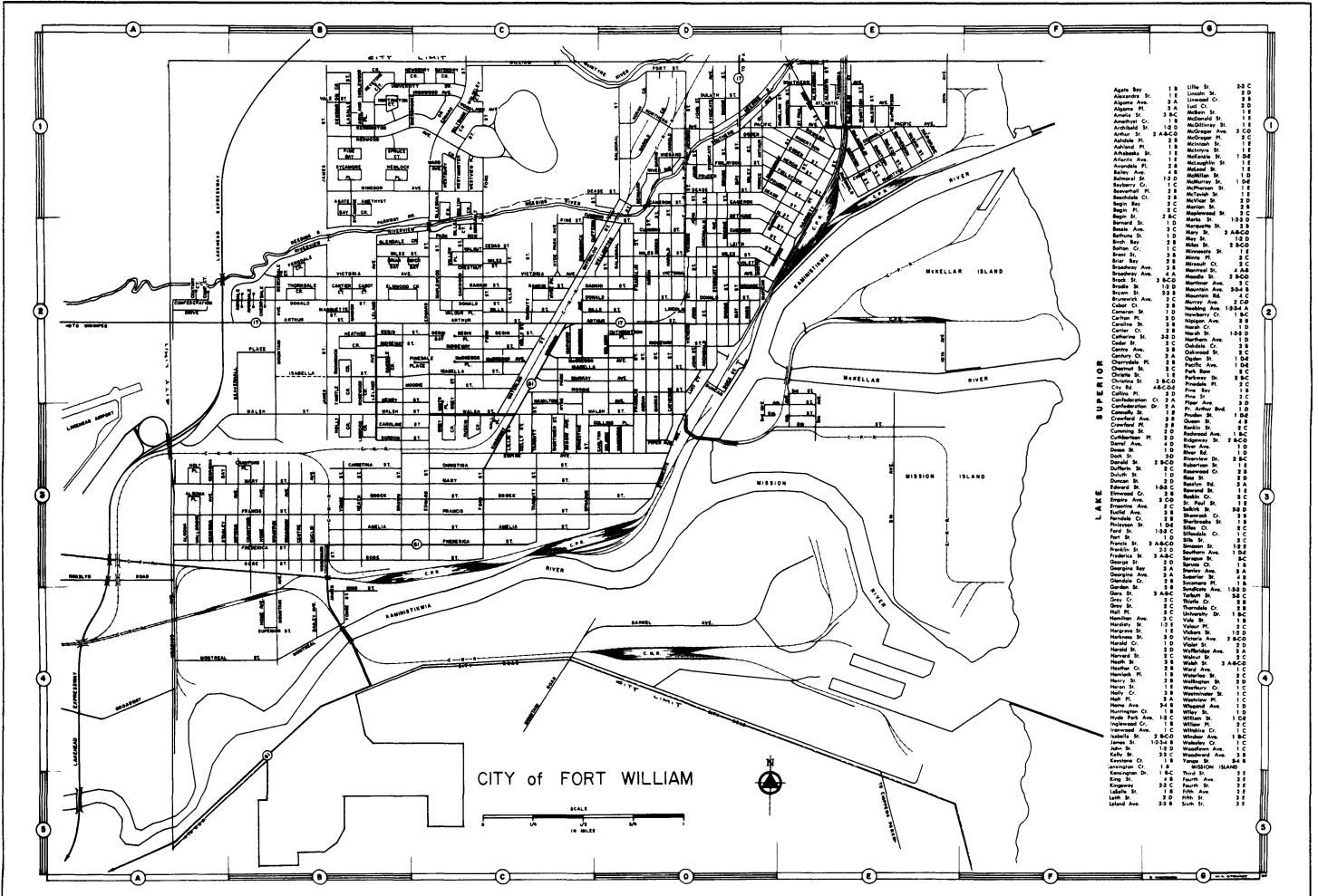
Adapted from Marc J. Metsaranta, "Ethnic Residential Concentration and Succession in a Section of the Former City of Port Arthur," Unpublished Honours Thesis, Lakehead University, 1972, p.21.

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Port Arthur, 1952 (National Archives of Canada NML 117298)

Twin City Ethnopolitics



Fort William, 1967 (National Archives of Canada NML 3820)

“quartiers” et se sont grandement séparés des partis politiques populaires, surtout les groupes comme les Ukrainiens et les Finlandais qui prenaient une part active à la gauche radicale; 2) les deux décennies de protestation radicale et d’activisme ethnopolitique émergent de 1930 à 1950, qui ont observé la naissance de la règle municipale de “patron” à Port Arthur sous la direction du maire C. W. Cox (1934-49) et la dominance fédérale libérale de C. D. Howe et du Rév. Dan McIvor; 3) l’ère d’après-guerre (1950-70) de l’assimilation ethnique et de la vaste participation ethnique à tous les échelons de la politique municipale et à tous les partis aux échelons provinciaux et fédéral.

period was characterized by minor contradictory movements in other directions, as the waves of national and international politics lapped up on the far northwestern shore of Lake Superior.

It is tempting to make liberal-frontierist or environmentalist assumptions about the uniqueness of forest-born democracy, or to advance Marxian hypotheses on class relationships in resource-extractive communities in terms of Northwestern Ontario exceptionalism; but to do so would ignore the central facts of Canadian and North American history which impacted upon this relatively isolated region. The virtue of selecting this microcosm of ethnic politicization is that its central features are more discernible and understandable on a smaller urban scale. Its pitfalls are, however, that the historical observer becomes seduced by the myths that persist on any frontier, particularly one which is so isolated from the main lines of Canadian settlement, both to the east and west. For example, inter-city rivalry, the querulous twins of the North, is less myth than a reality in the minds of the citizens of Port Arthur and Fort William going back to the days of railway building, urban boosterism and civic competition for federal and provincial funding. Yet, how far did that boosterism reach into these urban ethnic communities? Anthony Pucci, for example, suggests that there were two distinct Italian communities in the two cities.³ Jean Morrison has also stated that the historical expression of ethnicity and class-consciousness tended to be locally derived in the violent strike actions stemming from the Italians and Greeks in Fort William’s East End, or from radical left-wing ideology among the Finns of south end Port Arthur and

the radical British-born labour spokesman who spoke to both labour communities.⁴ Both authors stress the unitary nature of class protest by workers from all ethnic communities, particularly in the pre-1914 railway and dockers’ strikes. Thus various myths converge and compete for historical validity -- those of localism and urban and ethnic distinctiveness, versus those of class-consciousness and international working-class solidarity.

Ethnic Exclusion and Factionalism, 1900-1930

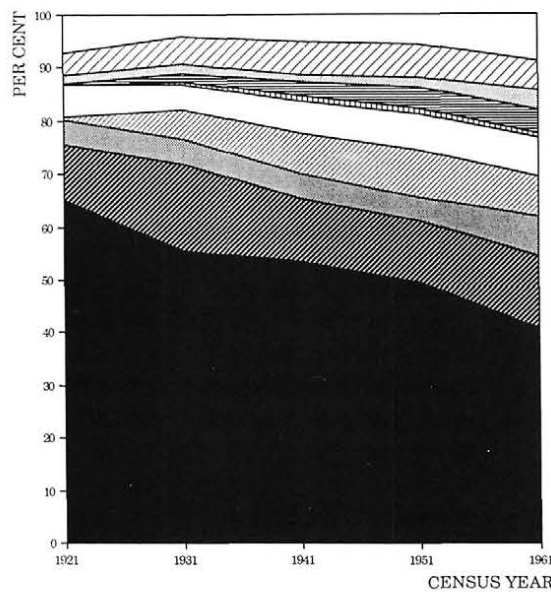
This first period conforms roughly with that described by Howard Palmer as one of “Anglo Conformity,” or by David Millet as the era of “British Ideology,” and by several others as the dark ages of ethnic relations in Canada.⁵ Evidences of racism and extreme ethnic prejudice are most evident in this period of Canadian history, which saw racial stereotypes abound in the ideology of British and Anglo-Saxon imperialism, from Ralph Connor’s *The Foreigner* to the hierarchical ethnic preferences of J. S. Woodsworth’s in *Strangers Within Our Gates*. In this respect, the social surveys commissioned by the Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and the Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church on Fort William and Port Arthur in 1912-1913 were no different in the racial and ethnic stereotype and condescension which leaped from its pages.⁶ References to the “Immigrant Problem,” to immigrant overcrowding, intemperate drinking habits, “foreigners’” criminality rates, and lack of sanitation were liberally sprinkled throughout. And even when admission was made of cultural institutions such as

churches and libraries among the "immigrant colonies," objection was made that "these serve to perpetuate old world conditions in a New Ontario city."⁷ While such comments did not approach in virulence the comments by the local press on the Italian workers in 1906 as "ignorant and low-down mongrel swashbucklers and peanut vendors,"⁸ they did nevertheless convey generally held views of the dominant Anglo-Canadian community.

Rough aggregate statistics between two sample years, 1912 and 1929, demonstrate that 32 per cent of Port Arthur's population of 15,634 were non-English speaking immigrants and 35.5 per cent of Fort William's population of 22,800 were non-English speakers, and identified as "immigrants" (See Figure 2-1). In 1929, the figures were higher still, fuelled by the large immigration of the late 1920s, so that nearly 40 per cent of each city were non-English speaking immigrants, 40.3 per cent in Port Arthur and 39.2 per cent for Fort William's (See Figure 2-2). Geographically, the ethnic populations were concentrated mainly in the south "end" of Port Arthur, and the east and west (Westfort) "end" of Fort William, most often in residentially segregated ethnic neighbourhoods not unlike those of North Winnipeg and Regina's East End in their spatial and social character.

Politically, they were generally powerless, lacking even in civic councillors to represent their ethnic interests. City council rosters for the two cities from 1900-30 reveal only a very small number of francophone and Irish ethnic names and only two clearly European ethnic representatives. These were S. Enborg and W. A. Kyro, who sat

Figure 2-1
The Ethnic Composition of the Population of Port Arthur

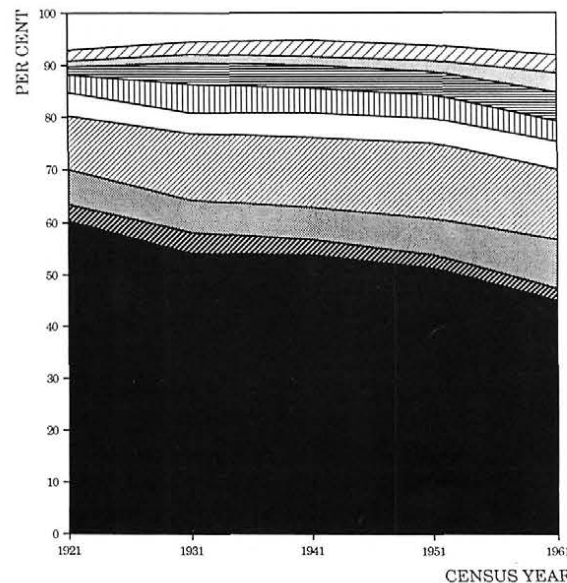


Legend

- Others
- ▨ Scandinavian
- German
- ▨ Polish
- ▨ Czech and Slovak
- French
- ▨ Ukrainian
- ▨ Italian
- ▨ Finnish
- British Isles

Source: D.B.S. Census of Canada, 1921 to 1961.

Figure 2-2
The Ethnic Composition of the Population of Fort William



Adapted from Marc J. Metsaranta, "Ethnic Residential Concentration and Succession in a Section of the Former City of Port Arthur," Unpublished Honours Thesis, Lakehead University, 1972, p.21.

on the Port Arthur Council in 1907 and 1913 respectively, and S. Barabe and Emilio Marino, the Italian consular agent, who were on the Fort William Council of 1919 and 1922.¹⁰

The year 1919 seems to present an anomaly to the main pattern of under-representation as well, for postwar radicalism seemed to thrust, temporarily at least, European ethnic groups into civic or partisan provincial politics. A list of Liberal delegates to a local convention contained several prominent ethnic names such as Marino, Belluz, Tamanocy, Kalick, Abdou, and Palleck; and the Port Arthur list contained at least two, A. Mauro, and H. Niemmaki.¹¹ But, the "ethnic vote," such as it was, could find expression via the numerous Anglo-Canadian labour candidates such as F. J. Urry, A. H. Dennis, Harry Mills, J. R. Pattison and J. W. Looney who often sat for the working-class wards of the two cities where immigrants were concentrated.¹²

Beyond these slim evidences of local political success, one must look into the ethnic groups themselves for evidence of participation in civic politics dominated by Anglo-Canadians. In 1908, there were seven Finnish aldermanic candidates and a Finnish candidate for mayor of Port Arthur. While the hopeful aldermen totalled a meagre 182 of 5,878 votes, and the mayoral candidate, Matt Ulvila, garnered a miniscule 43 votes of a total 1,104 votes cast,¹³ it was apparent that political candidates had begun to court the immigrant vote, particularly at the civic level, with the occasional speech at the Finnish Labor Temple in Port Arthur¹⁴ and the Ruthenian Hall in Fort William.¹⁵ But, the courtship was neither systematic nor ardent before World War One.

The essence of ethnic political and economic activity prior to the Great War then was one of alienation and exclusion from the political process. Indeed, the labour explosions by the CPR freight handlers before World War One documented in A. Pucci's fine article on the Italian contadini, bear ample witness to the perceptions of the Italians by Anglo-Canadians as "people of a baser type ... and ... a threat to the British ideals of law and order."¹⁶ Similarly, the expulsion of the "clannish" Finnish socialists from the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) in 1910,¹⁷ was the direct result of English-speaking members' suspicion of the Finnish socialists and their competition in the Canadian labour market.¹⁸ The subsequent formation by the Finns of a separate Finnish Socialist Organization of Canada (FSOC), and their affiliation to the new Social Democratic Party of Canada (SPDC) in 1911, did not ensure a solution to the Anglo-Finnish tensions on the left.

The FSOC's role in the new left, the Communist Party in the 1920s, produced similar manifestations of longstanding ethnic tensions.¹⁹ With the final ouster of Port Arthur's A. T. Hill from the FOC (Finnish Organization of Canada), and the further expulsion of prominent Finns from Communist ranks, both extra- and intra-ethnic group tensions escalated within the Finnish radical movement. This is acutely visible in the frustration of Alf Hautamaki, organizer for the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union of Canada (LWIUC) in the early 1930s. He condemned the work of two Anglo-Canadian organizers with the Workers' Unity League for the destruction of the ethnic solidarity protest which had been building in 1929-30 after the supposed "murder" of two Finnish labour

organizers, Rosval and Voutilainen. His statement appeared to sum up two decades of intra-party factionalism between Finns and Anglo-Saxons on the left:

Now about Federalism. The Finnish and Ukrainian Organizations in Port Arthur boast of members, whom we cannot even call "leftists." After the funeral of Rosevere and Roten (Rosval and Voutilainen), the lumber-jacks, the real proletarian elements, joined the Party. Then went to the Hall in masses. Even at the dances they filled the hall and had their meetings there. What did that mean? That after three or four months of activity among the unemployed, the Finnish Organization itself and the Party members are becoming familiar with the organized work of the Communist Party. And those masses, mainly Finns, then Danes, Norwegians and Swedes, whom we were unable to organize in any way, are coming in flocks, 800 and 900, although they could not speak a word of English. They were going on not in a federalistic way, but as unemployed workers of Canada. The question came up of how to organize the Anglo-Saxons, and they said: "To hell with the Anglo-Saxons. If they won't come with us, we will go on alone." Today we see that even the Anglo-Saxons are coming in.²⁰

For his driving out of the Anglo-Canadian organizers, Hautamaki was relieved of party organizational duties in 1930. Even more tragic for the Finnish community of Port Arthur was the deep wedge that was driven between Finns of the far left, and the left-centre by the Rosval-Voutilainen incident in the decades which followed.²¹

The Finns were not alone in their exclusion and factionalism during this period. The Fort William Ukrainians in 1923 caught the public eye when the Brylinski group in the Prosvita Society of East End Fort William sued the local members of the Ukrainian Labor Temple Association (ULTA), "who now seek to wrest its purpose from that of culture into the promulgation of the doctrines of Sovietism and Communism and to make it a branch of the International Organization." The latter were perceived as agents of the Winnipeg-based Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA) seeking to undermine the Prosvita Society by "boring from within."²² Press and local opinion favoured the cause of the "pioneering conservatives" who had been forced out of the society by the "bolshheviki" conducting its Canadian campaign under the name of the Ruthenian Labor Council.²³

Such incidents occurred with increasing regularity as Anglo-Canadian opinion mobilized against the Communist threat during the early 1920s. Fears that Bolshevism was undermining the Canadian social fabric in Northwestern Ontario were rampant in majoritarian expressions of contempt and loathing. Even local educational institutions were perceived in imminent danger of takeover as reports to educational authorities in Toronto described in lurid terms the school activities of left-wing Finns in Port Arthur:

Red literature runs in this vein. Don't listen to your teacher, he's only a tool working for the bosses. All honour to our brave comrades who would not salute the Union Jack. The young pioneers, and organization started in

Russia. ... Branches of this organization are numerous in the North. Its meetings close with the Red Flag and a pledge of readiness for world revolution... The teacher alone cannot overcome the home influence. The Red has been drilled in before he gets a chance. This is evident among the Finns more than any other class. If the government continues to dump them into the North it should see that they obey our laws ...

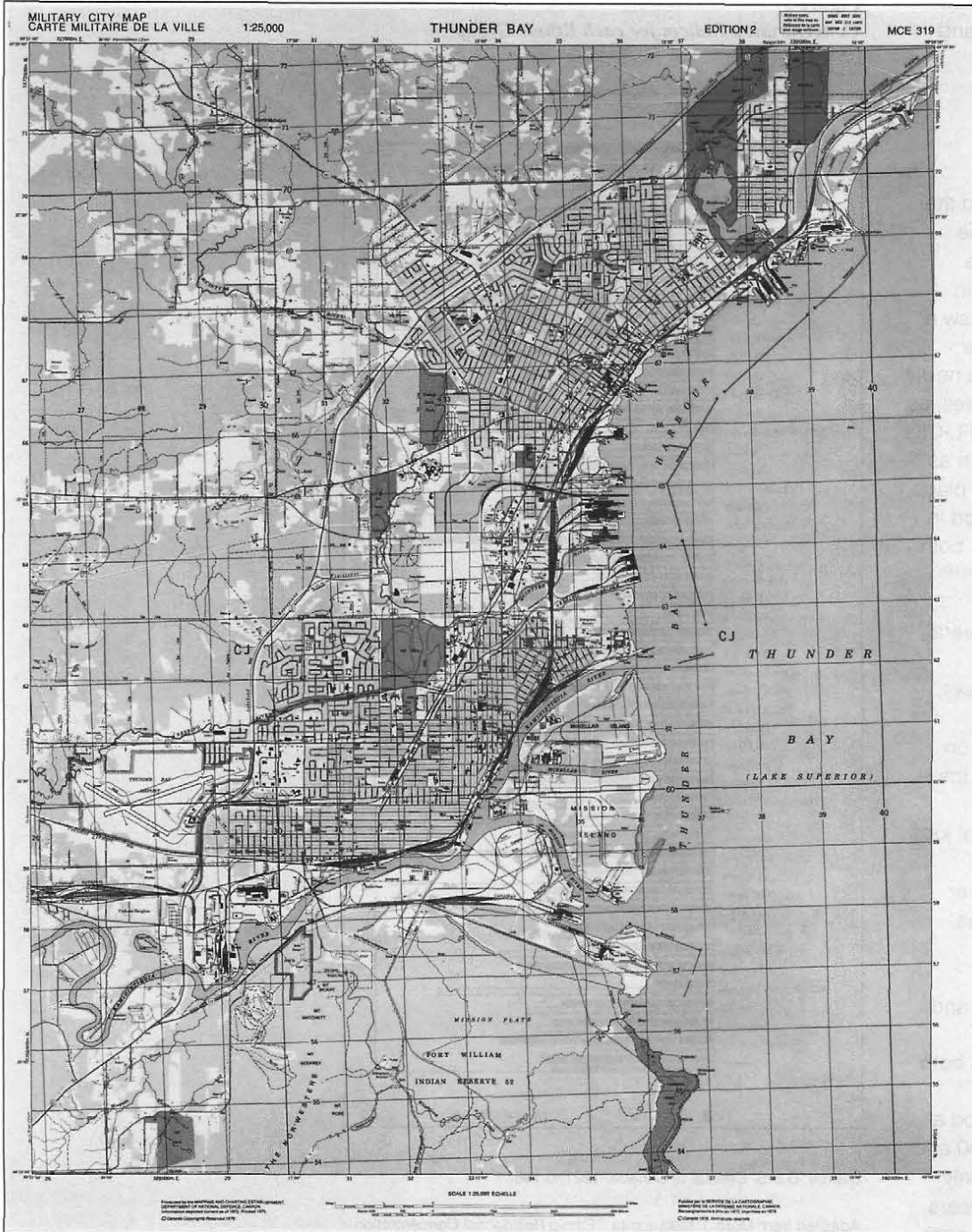
...The May Day festival will be held on May 1st and ... the school will be closed that day. The school trustees are Communists of course, they run the school as they wish and hold their meetings nearly every day.²⁴

Concern for the symbols of monarchy and Empire ran deep, and when the editor of the Sudbury-based newspaper, *Vapaus*, Arvo Vaara announced that on 4 Dec. 1928, he didn't care much whether King George V "had caught the whooping cough by standing outside for two minutes at some festivity," or indeed, if the king should even die from his malady. The Fort William press was outraged in its reporting of the sedition trial which followed for the Finnish Communist editor, counselling that such despicable characters who "eat into the moral vitals of our nation" provided ample evidence that "Canada is piling up trouble by bringing in people who read foreign language newspapers, defy her institutions and create a revolutionary hotbed. It is time to call a halt on bringing in more of them, and it is time to step heavily on those now here ..."²⁵ Support for Vaara's ultimate deportation was assumed, but perhaps no more virulent opinion of what should be done with Finnish radicals was expressed by a

former Barr colonist from Saskatchewan who had long observed the clannish habits of the rural Finns of Finmark, due west of Port Arthur. Disgusted by their clannishness, unassimilability and hostility to British institutions, he advocated the final solution, - "If these people were only good enough to be shot in Finland, I ask why not shoot them here? ... Kindness to a Finlander should be avoided at all costs, he is not human ..."²⁶ While genocide was clearly not a normative response to the problems posed by the increasing Finnish community, it appears that some were also prepared to offer brutal lessons in Anglo-Canadian manners, such as one Colonel Little, a prominent local Tory timber-baron in Port Arthur, who caned his Finnish gardener insensible for perceived insolence.²⁷

Clearly the first three decades of this century emerge as a time of troubles for labour and ethnic groups in Thunder Bay. They were times of repression and violence, followed by distrust, factionalism and even paranoia. In that respect, their history during this period was not unlike the trials and tribulations of ethnic groups in the nearest urban centres - Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie and Winnipeg.²⁸ For example, the Communist Party was able to elect its first official candidate in the Winnipeg civic elections of 1926,²⁹ but similar evidence exists of the emerging radicalism of the radical Port Arthur radical vote during the mid 1920s. In the federal election of 1925, Rev. A. E. Smith, the Communist candidate, polled 1,271 votes of a total 9,068 votes cast and in 1926, 1,382 of a total 8,761.³⁰ Near majorities were, in fact, recorded over the Conservative, Liberal and independent candidates in Port Arthur's south-end polls dominated

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Thunder Bay, 1976 (National Archives of Canada NML 78726)

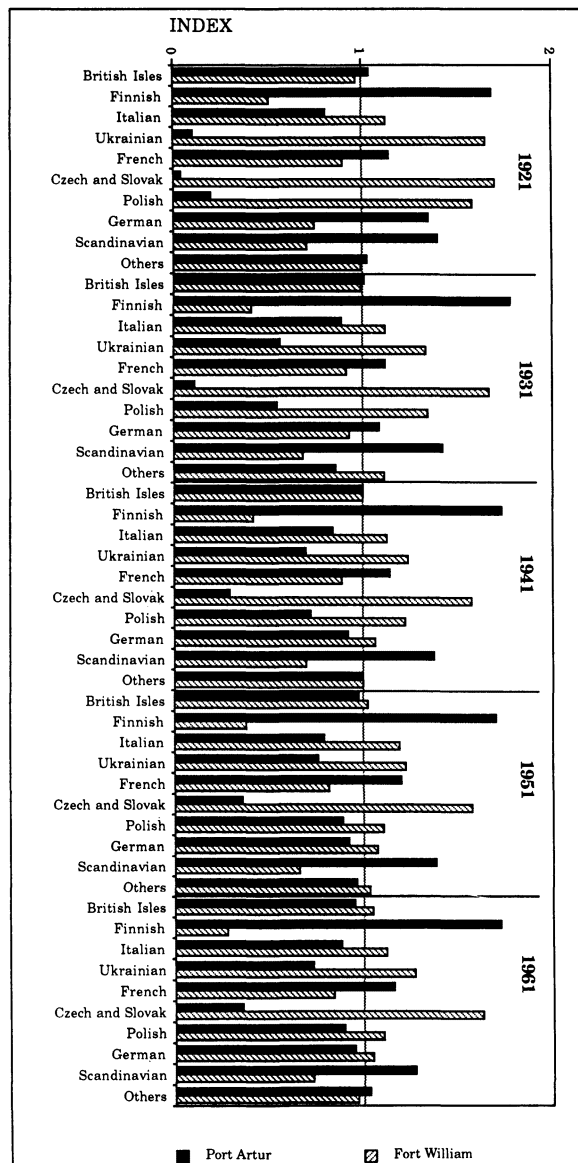
by the Slavs and Finns, and in radical rural pockets of Finns to the north and west of that city.

Radical Protest and the Emerging Ethnic Vote, 1930-1950

These two decades which spanned the Depression, World War Two and the beginning of the Cold War, saw the radicalization of the working-class in northwestern Ontario. The region saw a wide spectrum of activities from the Communist Party of Canada, to the newly formed CCF and Social Credit parties, as well as a host of unions from the AFL-CIO to short-lived Canadian unions such as the ACCL's Bushmen's Union. The place of ethnic groups markedly increased in the calculations of political parties, both major and minor, and the union movements whether national or international. The reasons were several, in that many more voters of ethnic backgrounds, whether Finns, Slovaks, Italians or Ukrainians were now naturalized citizens and appeared on voters' lists for the first time during the 1930s. Ethnic workers traditionally present in resource-sector seasonal jobs also had begun to penetrate the shipyards, elevators, pulp and paper mills, and the railway running trades, particularly during the war years.³¹

In short, the decades of the 1930s and 1940s saw the maturation and stabilization of urban communities, both in size, population and ethnic composition. Population which stood at nearly 20,000 for Port Arthur in 1930 and 25,000 for Fort William increased only marginally during the depression years, and by about a thousand a year in each city in the decade which followed.³² The ethnic profile remained relatively the

Figure 3
Concentration Indices for each Ethnic Group



Source: D.B.S. Census of Canada, 1921 to 1961.

Adapted from Marc J. Metsaranta, "Ethnic Residential Concentration and Succession in a Section of the Former City of Port Arthur," Unpublished Honours Thesis, Lakehead University, 1972, p.23.

same as it had prior to 1930, with Italians (1,700), Ukrainians (3,000), and Slovaks (900) only marginally increasing their numbers in Fort William's east and west ends, with only a slight increase in Finnish population over the 20 years³³ (See Figure 2-1, 2-2).

The returns for all ethnic groups appear to be marginally higher in comparable census years; for example the Fort William census in 1940 lists Italians at 1,850, Czechoslovaks at 1,297, Ukrainians at 3,320, Poles at 844, Finns at 666, while comparable federal figures for 1941 list Italians at 1,902, Czechs and Slovaks at 1,418, Poles at 1,376, Ukrainians at 4,009, and Finns at 884.³⁴ Port Arthur, according to the Dominion Census of 1951 had a population of 31,161 with ethnic concentrations as follows: French 2,114, Finns 3,720, Italians 1,368, Poles 1,136, Ukrainians 2,770, Czechs and Slovaks 323, and Scandinavians (Danes, Icelanders, Norwegians and Swedes) 1,962³⁵ (See Figure 3).

Such a relatively stable demographic profile of ethnic population distribution belied the enormous qualitative shift which occurred during these troubled decades of class protest, war and reconstruction. Radicalization of the working class which had occurred in fits and starts during the First World War and the 1920s, was evident in the two major bushworkers' strikes of 1933 and 1935 and the response to the Spanish Civil War in the mid 1930s.³⁶ The emergence during this period of labour leaders of ethnic backgrounds, such as the Swedish-Canadian Communist, Bruce Magnuson, local leader of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union and the Communist Party was indicative of

the radicalization of the bushworkers in the 1930s.

By the late 1940s the membership rolls and executive of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union began to assume an entirely ethnic character, with Slavic and Finnish names like Rajcevich, Norlock, Timchishin, Puzak, Pompura, Bajuk, Soldach, Zajachowski, Mandryk, Weyho, Magnuson and Toivo Hill.³⁷ They had become so numerous in the aftermath of the war, that purges of various union executives as suspected Communists began to occur during the anti-Communist hysteria prompted by the Gouzenko affair in Canada, and the McCarthy hearings in the United States. Purges of the Trades and Labor Council of Communist members like Eli Bro,³⁸ and a similar assault upon the left-wing of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union executive occurred on a regular basis in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

By 1953, after a considerable power struggle, a new executive, with more conservative leanings, and under the trusteeship of the AFL United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America had taken over the LSWU Local 2693. But this executive, too, was equally ethnic in its composition - Andre Welsby (President), Helmer Borg (Vice-President), Tulio Mior (Secretary), Lothar Bode (Treasurer), Elmer Tourigny (Financial Secretary), Walter Peltonen (Warden), and Robert Levasseur (Trustee).³⁹ The historical issue of ethnic dominance was in fact addressed in a letter by the new union treasurer, Lothar Bode in a letter to the Carpenters' international union office in Indiana in 1954:

One of the main problems of the local should be mentioned in this place. Only about twenty per cent (20%) of our members speak English as their mother tongue. About thirty-five to forty-five per cent (35 - 45%) of our membership speaks and understands the English language well. About thirty per cent (30%) of our members are of Finnish descent, and only a very few of them speak English. We have about fifteen per cent (15%) French Canadians who do not speak English, and ten per cent (10%) French Canadians who do speak English, the rest of the membership speaks all kinds of European languages but only very few understand English well. As a consequence of this language problem, it is a must that all our Organizers are multi-lingual. All the present Organizers speak at least two (2) languages, and as for myself, I was hired out of the bush, mainly because I speak German, and about one-third of our membership, mostly the Displaced Persons and other postwar immigrants understand German better than English, due to the fact that they spent considerable time in Germany during and after the war.⁴⁰

Despite assurances that the Communists had been effectively routed from the union, and that the postwar immigrants who constituted about one-third of the membership were virulently anti-Communist, they were still perceived to be a potential problem for the future.

The Depression and World War II era was also the seedtime of ethnic dissemination in the greater ground of politics, and its germination appeared to

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be first in Port Arthur civic politics. Its seminal figure, the father of ethnic politics in Thunder Bay, was a timber entrepreneur, Charles Winnans Cox, who had already discovered the virtues of strong ethnic backs for his timber company's operations. First elected to Port Arthur's city council as an alderman in 1931, Cox tried unsuccessfully for the mayor's chair in 1932; but then, in a daring gambit in 1934, simultaneously secured the Provincial seat as a Liberal MLA and the office of Mayor of Port Arthur. While he only held the provincial seat until the demise of the Hepburn



Charles W. Cox, Apr. 1936, Mayor of Port Arthur (National Archives of Canada, PA 53452)4

Liberals during the Second World War, he successfully held the office of Mayor of Port Arthur from 1934 to 1948. Charlie Cox was by all odds the most colorful politician of this era, a classic urban political boss, who depended heavily on the ethnic vote for his annual anointment

by the electors of Port Arthur. A mainstreeter par excellence, "Call me Charlie" could be regularly seen in his straw boater gladhanding at annual civic exhibitions and ethnic banquets, hall dedications and political picnics.⁴¹

Cox regularly opposed unpopular rate increases which would have given sewers to ethnic neighbourhoods in the Coal Docks area of the south ward and the Current River suburb in the north ward. Streetcar fares were religiously held to a nickel even during the wartime rise in prices, and patronage was skilfully doled out in classic "ward-heeler" fashion. Even his mistresses appeared to be carefully chosen from various ethnic groups. If his civic opponents can be believed, a diverse feminine ethnic clique appeared regularly at civic council meetings to cheer on the handsome mayor. However, he did suffer a minor disfigurement in 1937 when a disappointed lover threw a bottle of acid in his face. Nothing, it appeared, deterred the irrepressible Cox, who simply turned the other cheek to the press after plastic surgery, and practised his winning ways for the next decade.

His major political mistake did not occur until a decade later when he attempted to capture the mayoralty of Fort William in 1948, campaigning openly on a ticket of amalgamation of the two cities. Ironically he was beaten in Fort William by an ascendant Italian-Canadian, Hubert Badani, who had been first elected in 1940 as a civic councillor. Crushed by the election of "an excellent man, perhaps as good as I am," Cox also withdrew from the next civic election in Port Arthur, and after a brief return in 1952, found he could not match the popular CCF workhorse, Fred Robinson.



Hubert Badani, MP, Former Mayor of Fort William, with Senator Norman Paterson, 1965 (Thunder Bay Historical Museum 984.80.2)

He died a pauper in the basement of his former office building in Port Arthur in 1958.⁴²

The Cox method of ethnic electioneering among Port Arthur's population soon spread, and was in vogue until the 1950s. C. D. Howe successfully emulated this technique with his election in 1935 to the federal house, where he sat for the next 22 years, until his defeat by Douglas Fisher in 1957. Howe's organization, at first dependent upon Cox's Liberal machine, developed its own power, as ethnic workers were lured to Howe in the late 1930s. Soon, Mrs. Anna Koivu was delivering the Finn vote in the rural McIntyre Township and, as "Log Cabin Granny", was writing a regular column in the Finnish newspaper, *Canadaan/Uutiset*. The Styffe brothers, sons of the local Norwegian consul,

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Royal Visit, 1939, Mrs. C.D. Howe, C.W. Cox, C.D. Howe, Queen Elizabeth, King George VI, Mackenzie King (Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 980.42.2)

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Oscar Styffe, were also heavily involved in the postwar federal Liberal organization. The Port Arthur Liberals had an impressive list of party workers reaching into every major ethnic group by the 1940s, and on occasion even penetrated former strongholds reserved to the Communist Party in the 1940s. Perhaps most revealing of the crucial weakness which the Howe machine later manifested in the 1950s, was the dominance of the party executive, poll captainties and low-level patronage by anglophones and a few local francophones, reflecting a careful balance of Protestant and Catholic interests.⁴³

Even third-party movements and organizations became sensitive to the ethnic fact, although with considerably less to show by way of visible success at the polls. Despite its general reliance upon the English-speaking working-class vote, the Port Arthur CCF did succeed in attracting numerous ethnic volunteers after its Ontario sweep in 1943, which saw the seat go from C. W. Cox to F. O. Robinson. Party lists for the CCF in its halcyon days from 1943-1948 reveal a considerable number of Italians, Ukrainians, Poles, and Finns who made their way into the postwar socialist camp.⁴⁴ It is clearly this ethnic and labour base which was to build and deliver for Mayor Fred Robinson and federal candidate, Douglas Fisher, in the 1950s. Relatively unsuccessful third-party movements, such as Social Credit, also saw that they must attract the ethnic vote, and in 1949 party officials persuaded a Norwegian-Canadian contractor, John Dagsvik, to run against C. D. Howe in the federal election. Dagsvik, however, garnered even fewer votes (623) than the Swedish-Canadian

Communist, Bruce Magnuson, did in 1953.⁴⁵ Even the efforts of a popular local Italian priest, Rev. Father R. F. Venti, who supported the Socreds over the radio, and at the local Italian Hall, were to no avail, as Port Arthur's Italians voted for the Liberals, the CCF and Conservatives, in descending order.⁴⁶

Elections to civic councils in the two cities also revealed that individual ethnics, albeit assimilated, had begun to penetrate the largely anglophone councils of the 1940s. In Port Arthur, Oscar Styffe made a brief appearance as alderman in 1935; but then, as the long shadow of C. W. Cox dominated the ethnic vote, no others were elected until Dr. E. V. Anten and A. H. Knutson during the latter part of the war. Both enjoyed considerable ward strength in the south-end Coal Docks and north-end Current River wards.⁴⁷ Dr. "Eddie" Anten perhaps deserves particular mention because of his domination of the polls and his continuing role as the vice-president of the Port Arthur Liberal Association from 1944 to 1957. Born of Polish and Ukrainian parents, he attended local schools before going to the University of Toronto medical school during the 1930s, and briefly served as a bush doctor in Geraldton before returning to medical and political life in Port Arthur. In a sense, Anten may be seen as a transitional figure who anticipated the socially and politically ascendant immigrant in the politics of the 1950s and 1960s - a fact reflected in his absence from council after 1951, and then his return for three terms in the late 1950s, and several consecutive terms thereafter in the 1960s.⁴⁸

Politics in Fort William, which in some ways had led in ethnic visibility prior to World War One, appears to have lagged

somewhat during the 1930s. The labour movement, which had traditionally been strong in both the east and west-end wards was dominated by Anglo-Canadians and British trade unionists in the Independent Labour Party and the emergent CCF in the 1930s.⁴⁹ If anything, political factionalism along religious rather than ethnic and class lines appeared to persist longer at the provincial level during the depression years in Fort William. Certainly, federal politics, as practised by the Conservative Party and its leader (1938-40), Dr. Robert Manion, appeared to be dominated more by Catholic-Protestant considerations rather than ethnicity. This may also have been due to Manion's political and personal sensitivity to the Anglo-French fact in the nation by virtue of his marriage to Yvonne Desaulniers, and close family ties with J. Placide Bertrand, Thunder Bay's first local historian.⁵⁰ Yet it was the Liberals who appeared to be most sensitive to the ethnic potential in the working-class districts of Fort William, and on two occasions the Reverend Dan McIvor upset Manion in 1935 and 1940, largely by virtue of the former's dominance in the working-class wards of the east and west ends.⁵¹ McIvor himself was a product of the social gospel and author of an M.A. thesis from Manitoba College in 1908 on "Work and the Working Man of Winnipeg."⁵² He was also a student of working-class politics, and must have relished those Manion election broadsides which accused him of speaking in "Communist halls where the Union Jack is prohibited and where the Communist insignia of the 'hammer and sickle' is proudly displayed, thus encouraging the Red element and the subversive influences in this British country."⁵³ On another occasion he took great delight in hectoring the



Rev. Dan McIvor, MP, Fort William, 1935 (National Archives of Canada, PA 47408)

Conservatives for criticizing his compassionate hospital visit with a convalescent Tim Buck, and for their opposing the prohibitions of Communist literature through the mails.⁵⁴ McIvor was always ready and available to speak at Ukrainian halls, rural Finn gatherings, or to dispense minor patronage to ethnic petitioners.⁵⁵ Substantial proof of his careful cultivation of the 'ethnic vote' lay in the extensive mailing lists of the Fort William Liberals which were largely composed of Slovak, Italian, and other nationalities from the east-end ward.⁵⁶

At the civic level, no Fort William peer of C. W. Cox, and his ethnic machine-politics, appeared in the depression, since the war and postwar years were dominated by the presence of the CCF's Garfield Anderson. At the aldermanic level, however, there were some signs of

ethnic activity with the election of Ira N. Gerry, a local merchant in Ward Two, Frank Charry (Cerra) in Ward One, and Sigurd Orstad in Ward Three.⁵⁷ More than this, some solid evidence of opposition to German anti-Semitism surfaced during the depression, when city council considered a motion condemning Nazi Germany for its inhumane treatment of German Jews.⁵⁸ Then, after amalgamation of the wards in the late 1930s, Hubert Badani, an Italian immigrant, Canadian Army veteran and automobile dealer, emerged as a regular on the city councils of the 1940s.⁵⁹ In December 1948, Badani heralded a new era in Fort William politics with his victory over C. W. Cox, the ethnic boss of the rival city, and proponent of the ultimate anathema, amalgamation of the two cities.

Thus, the depression and war had worked a fundamental revolution upon politics in the Lakehead from which it would appear difficult to turn back. The 1930s had wrought their catalyzing effect on the working-class vote via the strike actions of the left; and the war years intervened to involve second-generation Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Italians and Finns in vital wartime munitions industries at Canada Car in west-end Fort William. Also, immigrant workers of the first generation were increasingly involved in urban labor on the railways, dockyards and pulp mills, and during the war years suffered from some nativist feeling against their industrial presence while Anglo-Canadians were away in the services. With the close of the war, and the importation of increasing numbers of displaced persons and ex-German servicemen in northern Ontario, the demographic tensions had once again escalated in the woods industry of the

Lakehead hinterland. The dynamics of such social and political changes had not then been without their impact upon Lakehead politics, the very least of which was a clear acknowledgment of the presence of ethnicity as a major political factor by 1950.

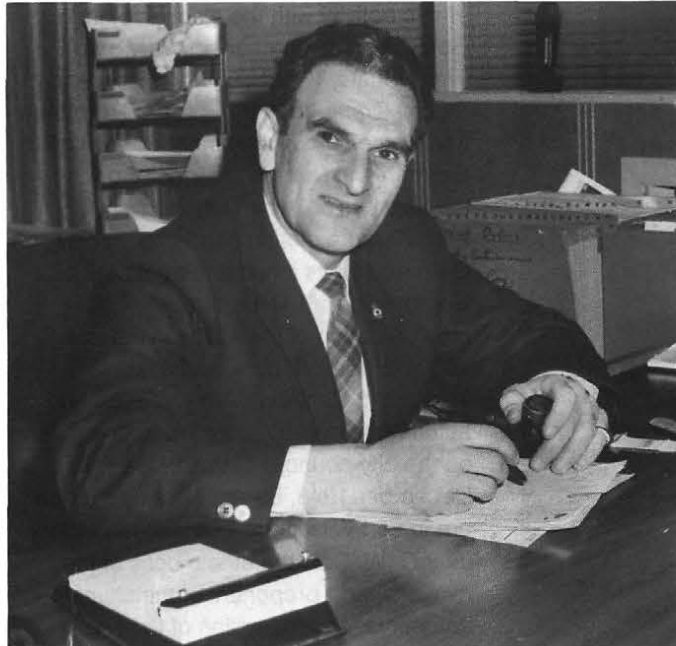
Post War Assimilation and the Upward Ethnic, 1950-1970

These two postwar decades were a period of considerable upward mobility for the ethnic populations of the twin cities, both in occupational and spatial relocation to the suburbs, and politically in their participation at all levels. The unintended irony of this social movement, however, was that the upwardly mobile were often less ethnic at the end of these two dynamic decades than they were at its beginning, for these were the decades when the pervasiveness of a North American popular culture imposed a newer, and lower mass cultural standard upon Canada. In short, cultural and political models became American rather than British, and Lakehead citizens became largely obsessed with sport, television and the American way: from suburban shopping malls, to sexual puritanism and its obverse, libertinism. The Lakehead, as an isolated enclave of local political culture, eagerly followed and sometimes emulated the cultural mores of their American neighbours - from the McCarthy witch-hunts and Eisenhower 'normalcy' of the fifties, to the Kennedy Camelot and hippie/yippie frenzy of the 1960s.⁶⁰

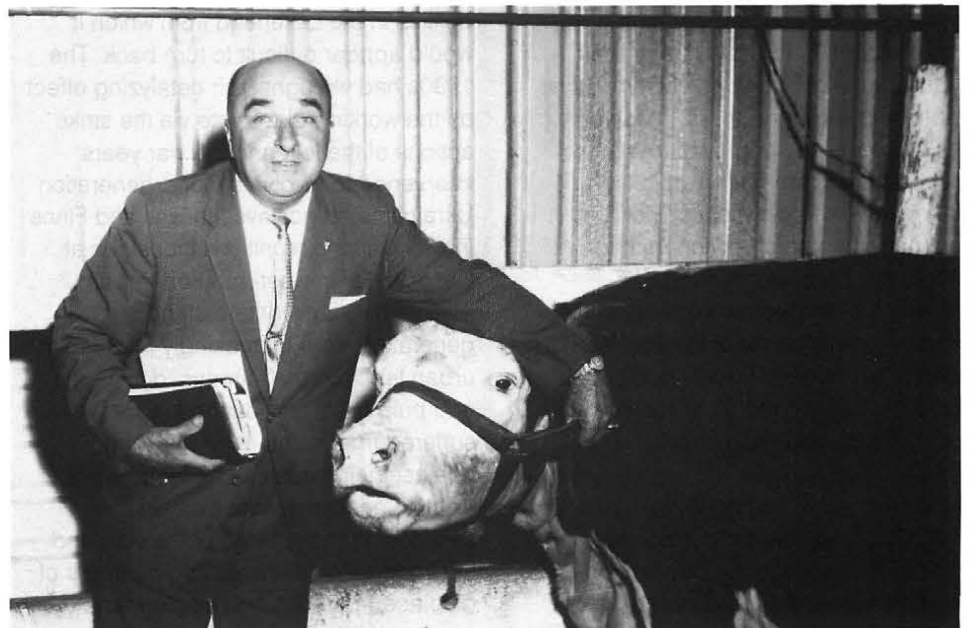
There is abundant evidence to support the visible presence of ethnics in postwar civic politics, as it became a standard feature of both cities' politics to have

both ethnic aldermen and mayors. Mayor Badani became Fort William's urbane version of a *civic maitre d'*, and was succeeded briefly by Catherine Seppala, whose main claim to national fame was civic censorship from the local library of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. Fort William residents likely recoiled at their national notoriety, and soon headed back to uncontroversial Anglo-Canadianism with Ernie Reed as mayor during the 1960s. In Port Arthur, consensual democracy of the 1950s, after C. W. Cox's ethnic circus took on the Scots-Canadian shape of Fred Robinson, who had courageously dissented against C. D. Howe, the federal cabinet minister, on the oil pipeline in 1949. At the city council level, Port Arthur's voters now routinely elected ascendant ethnic merchants as aldermen in the 1950s: Angelo Mauro, handsome Italian restaurateur of the south ward; Jack Stitt, Jewish haberdasher; and Mike Zale, Slavic hotelier; Waino Laakso, Finnish podiatrist, whose catchy radio advertisements in Finnish and English caught the ear of Port Arthurites.⁶¹ In Fort William, similarly ascendant labouring men and merchants such as Jim Colosimo, Alex Pupeza, Steve Lukinuk, Mike Chicorli and Walter Assef were learning their craft as aldermen in the 1950s and early 1960s. Then in 1962, Port Arthur elected Saul Laskin, a local Jewish furniture merchant, and two-term alderman in the late 1950s, for its mayor from 1962 to 1970. It is indeed unlikely that any other urban place in Canada, with perhaps the exception of Winnipeg, experienced such a diversity of ethnic civic politicians during this period.

In the federal arena, the fundamental revolution of this era was the upset in 1957 of C. D. Howe by Douglas Fisher, a



Saul Laskin, Last Mayor of Port Arthur, First Mayor of the Amalgamated City of Thunder Bay, 1970 (Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 984.80.1468)



Walter Assef, Alderman, Fort William at Lakehead Exhibition 1966 (Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 984.80.941)

Port Arthur high-school teacher of history. The traditionally powerful ethnic strongholds of the Liberals in the south and north ends gave way, as Fisher rolled up heavy gains in these and even in the Finnish rural polls and the radical bush camps.⁶² To be sure, a national swing against the Liberals accounted for much of Fisher's plurality of 1,600 or so votes over Howe, and the absence of a local Communist candidate and a weak Conservative candidate all helped the CCF cause. Much of the vote in the ethnic working-class polls can, however, be interpreted as stemming from the successful television "chalk talks" by Doug Fisher, which were easily understandable to the layman. Moreover, many of the 800 students who attended the Port Arthur Collegiate, where Fisher taught history, were active in persuading parents and kinfolk of his virtues. Indeed, informal straw-votes among students revealed Fisher to be in the lead, well before the June 1957, Liberal debacle. That the ethnic vote had deserted Howe was apparent in the fact that it did not desert the incumbent Reverend Dan McIvor in Fort William, and that several ethnic working-class polls returned for the Liberals in 1958, when the popular Dr. "Eddie" Anten ran for the Liberals.⁶³ Fisher's real test, however, came in his election run of 1963, against Liberal candidate Saul Laskin. Despite a final winning margin of 3,000 votes, he was severely tested, and found wanting in the south end as ethnic voters there began to return to the Liberal fold. Students of politics will, of course, never know how Fisher would have fared against Bob Andras, who returned the seat to the Liberals after Fisher's retirement from the House of Commons in 1965. The Fisher phenomenon may then be seen to some degree as a periodic CCF interlude in

local politics, largely attributable to a charismatic personality appealing to a younger generation in search of a change.

The other salient factor in the ethnic politics of Port Arthur was the previously unheard of shift of ethnic votes into the Conservative party during the late 1950s. To be sure, John Diefenbaker's vision of the North and of "one Canada" had some impact on the ethnic voter, and had the Conservatives been able to mobilize ethnic candidates in the Diefenbaker years, they may have done considerably better in Port Arthur. Certainly some second-generation ethnics had begun to make their way into the party in the mid-1960s, but they were still too young to coincide with the Diefenbaker years. Provincially there was now no difficulty in hewing to the party, given the dominance the Ontario Tories, and George Wardrope, who proved adept at using every technique of his old Liberal mayoral nemesis, Charlie Cox. The voters indeed gave Wardrope "another chance" in 1953 after sixteen years of rejection, and he never looked back until his voluntary retirement in the late 1960s. The ethnic voters and nearly everyone else loved "Gorgeous" George's circus-barker performances at the midsummer Lakehead Exhibition - his sonorous baritone voice delivering the impression that it was he personally who was giving away all those cars selected by lottery.

The integration of the upwardly mobile ethnic population of Fort William is equally evident in the 1950s and 1960s. Mayor Hubert Badani naturally displaced the aging Dan McIvor as the federal member for Fort William, and was elected time and again from 1958 until his own



Douglas Fisher, MP, Port Arthur, 1960 (National Archives of Canada, PA 117106)

retirement in 1972.⁶⁴ Membership association lists for the Liberals in the 1950s also reveal a considerable ethnic participation by Finns, Poles, Ukrainians, and Italians in the urban and rural areas of the Fort William riding. A typical announcement revealing of ethnic acceptance into the political parlour of Anglo-Canadian gentility appeared in the Fort William *Times-Journal* in 1955:

"Mrs. Hresko Hostess to Liberal Groups"

Mrs. F. Hresko opened her home at 127 McVicar Street, Fort William, for a tea sponsored by the Liberal Women's Association Tuesday afternoon. Guest speakers were Irvin Rechtshaffen, Liberal candidate in the forthcoming provincial election, Rev.

Dan McIvor, Dr. R. K. Dewar and Mrs. G. Delpino, president of the Liberal Women's Auxiliary. Receiving with Mrs. Hresko and Mrs. Delpino were Mrs. H. Bishop, past president and Mrs. D. McIvor and Mrs. Rechtshaffen, mother of the candidate. The tea table was covered with a white hand-crocheted cloth and centred with a cut glass bowl of lilacs and bleeding hearts on a mirror plaque, offset by pink tapers in silver candelabra. Spring blossoms decked the drawing room and tea room.⁶⁵

Such assimilative political events became a political commonplace throughout the Thunder Bay District among the Liberals in the mid 1950s.⁶⁶ But as the decade ended, and Tory hegemony strengthened provincially, it was apparent that Conservative constituency associations also had found solid support among ethnic voters in Fort William. Characteristically, they were found to a lesser degree than in Port Arthur, but ethnic aldermen began to appear on Fort William's council, led by Walter Assef and Mickey Hennessy, formerly visible in local hockey and Tory circles.

That a new age of Lakehead politics had indeed been ushered in during the 1970s was apparent in the events and personalities surrounding amalgamation of the two cities. Originally supported by Mayors Reed and Laskin of the two cities, amalgamation was recommended by the *Hardy Report* in 1968 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, D'Arcy McKeough, who enforced the union in January 1970.⁶⁷ Port Arthur's Saul Laskin became its first mayor from 1970-72, only to be followed by Walter Assef from 1973-78 -- a Port Arthur, Jewish Liberal



Saul Laskin, Mayor of Port Arthur; Premier John Roberts; George Wardrope, MPP, Port Arthur; and Roberson, Alderman, Port Arthur; 1960s (Thunder Bay Historical Museum, 986.939.34MM)

merchant -- balanced off by his Fort William, Syrian Conservative counterpart!⁶⁸ At the same time, ethnic membership on council hovered between about 30 to 40 per cent of 12 aldermen elected at large. Perhaps more revealing of the new informality of Lakehead civic politics was the apparent North American populist-style of mayor, Walter Assef, who caused Anglo-Canadian sensibilities to shudder when he introduced the Queen on a Royal Visit by announcing - "Prince Philip, your Royal Highness, we're so pleased you and your gracious wife could be here today." The mayoral folkways of "Wally" Assef included other populist expressions such as the one explaining his political longevity through the 1970s as mayor of the amalgamated city of

Thunder Bay: - "I never use paper - that way you know what I say is from the heart."⁶⁹

Conclusion

Lakehead politics had come full circle by 1970 from the public outrage at the insult of George V by the Finnish Communist editor of *Vapaus* in 1928 to the local public acceptability of ignoring royal protocols and publicly insulting the Queen 50 years later. Such a reversal followed national trends beginning with Anglo-Canadian conformity and ethnic exclusions in the first decades of the century. Later, in the post-1945 era, the northwestern Ontario region emulated attitudinal norms of North American political culture, in imitation of the

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national political style, as Roger Gibbins and others have argued generally of the Canadian West.⁷⁰ The argument of increasing political homogeneity in the modern era is a compelling argument in some respects, and no doubt the political sanctions provided by patronage and one-party dominance both federally and provincially reinforce this hypothesis.⁷¹ It is no doubt reinforced further by the upward and outward mobility of non-British, non-French population of ethnic origin to the suburbs of the new city of Thunder Bay, and even more likely outward into the Canadian West, or to Toronto.

The ebb and flow of urban competition in the twin cities, however, had been the source of considerable variation and difference from 1900 to 1970, and the creation of the amalgamated city of Thunder Bay. Although very similar in their histories and in the demographic size and variety of ethnic groupings, there had been palpable differences in the quality and style of ethnic participation in politics in Fort William and Port Arthur. Several of these have been suggested above, such as the relatively greater impact of Finnish and Scandinavian presence upon the woods industry, and in their social concentration in the south end of Port Arthur and in the rural hinterland immediately adjacent to that city. Radical political action via the IWW and OBU, and later the Communist Party and LPP, largely emanated from the northern city, and were relatively unknown to Fort William except in the earliest years of the century in the freighthandlers' strikes of 1905-6 by the Italians and Greeks.

Except for these early actions, radical ethnic politics in Fort William were less

evident overall in the period under discussion. At the same time, the relative impact of Italian and Slavic groups - Ukrainian, Czech and Slovak - was somewhat greater on the whole in Fort William because of their greater concentration in the east and west ends of that city.⁷² The greater concentration of these groups as industrial labour in the railway running trades, dock and freight handling, and in the Canada Car plant, gave the Fort William working class an urban-industrial profile more like that of Hamilton or north-end Winnipeg. On the other hand, the greater preponderance of the woods industry and pulp mills in the economy of Port Arthur gave a primary resource-extractive element to its economy and a more radical political dimension as well.

Political leadership at all levels of urban, provincial and federal politics had reflected these subtle demographic differences. The salient presence of timber entrepreneurs, first the Tory timber barons, like Colonel Little, and later Liberal timber-jobbers, like C. W. Cox and Oscar Styffe, were predominantly an expression of the close economic relationship of Port Arthur with its forest hinterland. Even the grain trade reflected the tendency of Port Arthur to a more rugged, entrepreneurial style in the two prominent Liberals of the interwar generation - Senator Norman Paterson of Fort William, the owner of a major grain-handling enterprise, and C. D. Howe of Port Arthur, the builder and contractor for the large majority of grain-elevator systems stretched out along the Lakehead harbour. The former was the political insider and trader par excellence; the other the more visible risk-taker at all levels of business and political activity. Even the socialist

parties had subtle differences of character, since in Fort William no socialist emerged with charisma to match that of Douglas Fisher of the CCF or Bruce Magnuson of the Communist Party in Port Arthur. More characteristically, working-class politicians from Fort William tended to be class-based workingmen, with little appeal beyond their union or ward in the wider urban community. On the labour front, Fort William's Reverend Dan McIvor as a proponent of the social gospel proved able, like his Liberal mentor Mackenzie King, at "stealing the thunder of the left" on the local federal scene from 1935 to 1958 and attracting large numbers of working-class voters to the Liberal Party. Both the CCF and the Conservatives, under Dr. Robert Manion, were to suffer from McIvor's persistent ability to hold the political middle and to attract ethnic voters the east and west-end wards.

At yet another more subtle level of political innovation, the cutting edge of ethnic group participation in politics often appeared to have its invention or forging in Port Arthur, even if its later honing as a political instrument was in Fort William. With the exception of the early radicalism of Fort William's Italians, as expressed in the freighthandlers' strike, ethnic radicalism most often found its first and sharpest political expression in Port Arthur's ethnic groups' votes for Communist candidates, in IWW-OBU protest in the post World War One era, and in the radical activities of the Depression era. Similarly, C. W. Cox, as an urban political entrepreneur was the first to mobilize ethnic support in the early 1930s as both mayor and Liberal MLA in Port Arthur. Subsequently, Hubert Badani perfected these political techniques as the highly successful

mayor of Fort William in the 1940s, and perennial federal MP in the late 1950s and 1960s. Similarly, C. D. Howe's federal political organization, based upon that of C. W. Cox by the mid 1930s in Port Arthur, was successfully emulated by Dan McIvor in Fort William. The latter as a second-rank political figure, ultimately outlasted Howe, who by the late 1950s was dependent upon McIvor's organization to deliver both political favours and organizational effort in his own riding.⁷³ Ironically, Port Arthur's ethnic vote deserted Howe to a new political innovator on the left, Douglas Fisher of the CCF in 1957, who built up impressive support in heavily ethnic districts of the south and north wards.⁷⁴ Lastly, the emergence of Saul Laskin as mayor of Port Arthur in the 1960s marked the emergence of the first "ethnic" mayor of that city, and of the amalgamated city of Thunder Bay, to be followed by Walter Assef of the southern twin city from 1973 to 1978.

This symbiotic relationship between these two northern gemini thus remains a complex one, arising from the interplay between historical circumstances and the social forces of demography and urban geography. The early complications dictated by urban boosterism necessarily forced a civic distinctiveness upon the two communities and upon the sub-groups within the two cities, a distinctiveness which gradually blurred with their institutional and political integration over the historic period in question here. At the same time, the larger historical forces of two world wars, a common economic depression, and post-war expansion forced commonalities of experience upon the ethnic groups and influenced their rate of political acculturation and

assimilation. Thus, while the persistence of individual personality, ethnic as well as urban, in these fraternal twin cities remain, their commonalities have become steadily greater over time.



Bruce Magnuson, Labour Organizer among Bushworkers in the 1930s, later Secretary of Community Party of Canada (National Archives of Canada, PA 126379)

Notes

* An earlier version of this paper was delivered to the meetings of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association in Thunder Bay, October 22, 1983. This paper is dedicated to the memory of Robert Harney, former president of Canadian Ethnic Studies Association (1983-5) and Director of The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, who encouraged its publication.

¹ This theme of ethnic radicalism is further developed in A. W. Rasporich, "Faction and Class in Modern Lakehead Politics," *Lakehead University Review*, VII, no. 1, (Summer, 1974) 31-65. It is also developed in Geoffrey Weller, "Hinterland Politics: The Case of Northwestern Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, X.4, (Dec. 1977), pp. 746-48. It is variously developed in R. F. Harney, ed., "Thunder Bay's People," *Polyphony*, vol. IX, No.2 (1987), 114 pp.

² A recent collection of essays partially addresses this gap in Canadian urban political history. See Allan Levine, ed., *Your Worship: The Lives of Canada's Most Unforgettable Mayors*, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989), 205 pp.

³ Antonio Pucci, "Canadian Industrialization versus the Italian Contadini in a Decade of Brutality 1902-1912," in Robert Harney and J. V. Scarpaci, eds., *Little Italies in North America*, (Toronto, 1981) 185.

⁴ Jean Morrison, "Ethnicity and Class Consciousness in the Lakehead," *Lakehead University Review* special issue, "The Finnish Experience," IX, no. 1, (Spring, 1976) 41-54. See also her fine thesis, "Community and Conflict: A Study of the Working Class and Its Relationships at the Canadian Lakehead," (MA Thesis, Lakehead University, 1974).

⁵ See Howard Palmer, ed. *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto, 1975) 112-21. David Millett, "Defining the Dominant Group," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIII, no. 3, (1981) 70-76.

⁶ Reverend Bryce M. Stewart, *Report of a Preliminary and General Social Survey of Port Arthur*, (The Department of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and the Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church, March, 1913).

⁷ IBID, 18.

⁸ Antonio Pucci, "The Italian Community in Fort William's East End in the Early Twentieth Century," (unpublished MA Thesis, Lakehead University, 1977), citing *Port Arthur Daily News*, 1 October 1906. See also Jean Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Lakehead Freight Handlers Before World War I," in G. S. Kealey, P. Warrian, eds. *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, (Toronto, 1976) 143-160.

⁹ In Port Arthur's civic census figures approximately 1,150 were listed as "unknown," while in Fort William none were listed as such. See Thunder Bay Civic Archives, Fort William City Clerk's Papers, "Annual Report of the Assessment Department, 1928." *Port Arthur News-Chronicle*, 11 December 1929, reporting the Assessment Commissioner's Annual Report for 1928, by C. W. Colvin.

- ¹⁰ Similar reports were commissioned by J. S. Woodsworth for several Canadian cities in 1913, and were modelled on his own study of Winnipeg in 1911. J. S. Woodsworth, *My Neighbour*, (Toronto, 1972). See also, Antonio Pucci, "The Italian Community in Fort William's East End," 267-300.
- ¹¹ See lists of mayors and councillors published in Joseph M. Mauro, *Thunder Bay, A History*, (Thunder Bay, 1981) 385-400. These names did not recur at later Liberal conventions during the 1920s.
- ¹² *Fort William Times-Journal*, 25 September 1919, 11 November 1926. See also, Jean Morrison, "Frederick Urry, Architect: The Wage Earner's Advocate," Thunder Bay Museum Historical Society, Papers and Records, XIV, (1986) 8-22.
- ¹³ Christine Kouhi, "Labour and Finnish Immigration to Thunder Bay, 1876-1914," *Lakehead University Review*, special issue, "The Finnish Experience," IX no. 1, (Spring, 1976) 32; *Port Arthur Daily News*, 7 January 1908, re: "Municipal Election of 1908," in Project Bay Street, (Thunder Bay, 1974). Ahti Tolvanen, "Finns in Port Arthur in the Interwar Period," in M. G. Karni, ed., *Finnish Diaspora I*, (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981).
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ¹⁵ *Fort William Times-Journal*, 20 June 1914.
- ¹⁶ Antonio Pucci, "Canadian Industrialization versus the Italian Contadini..." 204.
- ¹⁷ Edward Laine, "Finnish Canadian Radicalism and Canadian Politics: The First Forty Years, 1900-1940," in J. Dahlie and T. Fernando, *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, VIII, (Toronto, 1981) 97.
- ¹⁸ Christine Kouhi, "Labour and Finnish Immigration....," *Lakehead University Review*, 33.
- ¹⁹ Edward Laine, "Finnish Canadian Radicalism," 100.
- ²⁰ Public Archives of Ontario, Communist Party of Canada Papers, Box 8. ff. 7, Pol. Com. minutes, 1930-1931. "A Hotomaki (sic) on the I.W.W. and Communism in Port Arthur."
- ²¹ See Satu Repo, "Rosvall and Voutilainen: Two Union Men Who Never Died," in *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8/9, (Autumn/Spring, 1981/2) 79-103. See also a more recent discussion of ethnic radicalism among the bushworkers, Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-80* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 110-133.
- ²² *Fort William Times-Journal*, 7 April 1923. For parallel events in Winnipeg, See Donald Avery, "Ethnic Loyalties and Proletarian Revolution: A Case Study of Communist Political Activity in Winnipeg, 1923-1936," in J. Dahlie and T. Fernando, *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, 71.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ See Public Archives of Ontario, E.D.R., George Gault to Colquhoun, January 2, 1928; Unsigned to unsigned, Finland, Ontario, April 10, 1928. Documents kindly provided to the author by Dr. R. M. Stamp, of Toronto, formerly of the University of Calgary.
- ²⁵ *Fort William Times-Journal*, 22, 29 December 1928; 29 January; 7 March 1929.
- ²⁶ National Archives of Canada, RG 70, vol. 47; R. G. Manion to W. A. Gordon, Acting Minister of Immigration and Colonization, 20 April 1932, with a notation which read, "The attached is a copy of a letter from a very fine citizen, dealing with the question of deportation of Finlanders, who are rather obnoxious in his neighbourhood, which is part of my constituency. Will you please hand it to one of your officers to see what there is in it."
- ²⁷ *Fort William Times-Journal*, 3 November 1922.
- ²⁸ See Donald Avery, "Ethnic Loyalties and Proletarian Revolution..." in J. Dahlie and T. Fernando, 72-78; Ian Radforth, "Finnish Lumber Workers in Ontario, 1919-1946," *Polyphony*, special issue, "Finns in Ontario," Vol. 3, no. 2, (Fall, 1981) 23-25; *Fifty Years of Labour in Algoma*, (Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University College, 1978) 1-57.
- ²⁹ See D. Avery, "Ethnic Loyalties and Proletarian Revolution," pp. 73.
- ³⁰ *Fort William Times-Journal*, 30 October 1925.
- ³¹ See A. W. Rasporich, "Faction and Class in Modern Lakehead Politics," *Lakehead University Review*, VII, no. 1, (Summer, 1974) 45-46.
- ³² Thunder Bay Civic Archives. Port Arthur Assessment Commissioner's Report, 1952. Estimates therein indicate Port Arthur's population stood at just over 30,000 in 1951, as compared with Fort William which was just under 35,000 in 1951.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 1952 report.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* 1935, 1946.
- ³⁵ See also: Census of Canada, 1931, vol. 1, 35-5. Interestingly the Dominion census figures for urban Fort William record higher Finnish populations there as well. See Census, 1931, II, 436-37 -- 995 Finns; Census, 1941, vol. 1, 207 -- 884 Finns; Census, 1951, I, 35-2 -- 933 Finns. Figures for Port Arthur Finns were apparently not reported in the 1941 Census. Census of Canada, 1941, IV, 141. Graphic representation of these figures is presented in John Uliana, "The East End: A Study in Ethnic Residential Concentration," (Unpublished BA Honours Thesis, Lakehead University, 1971) 19-33
- ³⁶ See A. W. Rasporich, "Faction and Class in Modern Lakehead Politics," 45-46. Victor Hoar, *The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion*, (Toronto, 1969) 35, records that Port Arthur supplied 51 of the volunteers, fifth among Canadian cities for the total 465 volunteers.
- ³⁷ Lothar Bode Miscellany re: Lumber and Sawmill Workers, minutes of the Third Annual Convention, March 19, 1949, and membership lists in the author's possession. William and Kathleen Repka, *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War*, (Vancouver, 1982) 121-26. Further discussion of the postwar struggle for control of the Lumber and Saw locals is contained in Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 148-58.
- ³⁸ *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, 7 September 1949. *The Ontario Timber Worker*, 15 April 1948, "Government to 'Adjust' D.P.'s."
- ³⁹ Lothar Bode miscellaneous, Andre Welsby to M. A. Hutcheson, Pres., Indiana, dated Port Arthur, December 1, 1953.

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- ⁴⁰ Ibid. Lothar Bode to Frank Chapman, Port Arthur, April 15, 1954.
- ⁴¹ See e.g. *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, 31 October 1935, Charles Cox at the Croatian Hall Opening.
- ⁴² See Trent Frayne, "Lakehead Twins," *Maclean's*, 15 September 1952; Joseph Mauro, *Thunder Bay: A History*, 351-54. See also letter to editor by Dale A. Morrow, *Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal*, 31 January 1986, in response to two articles in *ibid.*, 9 January 1986, "The Cox Syndrome," and *ibid.*, 1 October 1984, "The Legacy of Charlie Cox."
- ⁴³ National Archives of Canada, National Liberal Federation Files, Port Arthur Liberal Riding Association, 1951, vol. 669. Also, "Minutes of the Port Arthur Liberal Association, 1934-58," copies of originals in the possession of Mrs. J. Spooner, Thunder Bay.
- ⁴⁴ Lakehead University Archives, Fred O. Robinson Papers, "Membership Lists for Port Arthur," 1948.
- ⁴⁵ See Canada, Electoral Office Returns, Federal Elections of 1949, 1953.
- ⁴⁶ *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, 16, 20 June 1949.
- ⁴⁷ Port Arthur Civic Poll Lists, 1943, 1944.
- ⁴⁸ National Archives of Canada, National Liberal Federation Files, vol. 669, biographical sketch of Dr. E V Anten, 1958.
- ⁴⁹ See A. W. Rasporich, "Faction and Class in Modern Lakehead Politics," 46.
- ⁵⁰ National Archives of Canada, Manion Papers, vol. 73, ff. iii, personal biography of Manion; also vol. 57, letters to and from J. P. Bertrand.⁵¹ See. Canada Electoral Office Returns, 1935, 1940, eighteenth and nineteenth general elections.
- ⁵² Rev. Dan McIvor Scrapbooks, copies of original clippings in author's possession.
- ⁵³ *Fort William Times Journal*, 23 March 1940.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 3 February, 6 March 1940. Also McIvor Scrapbooks, copy of a letter from a Mrs. J. Hayduck to Rev. Dan McIvor, Fort William, April 28, 1942, regarding the selling of radio licenses.
- ⁵⁶ McIvor Scrapbooks, Fort William Liberal Mailing List, n.d., likely 1949.
- ⁵⁷ J. M. Mauro, *Thunder Bay: A History*, 394-95. See further particulars on Frank Charry. [Cerra], as president of the Italian benevolent society, Principe di Piemonte in Antonio Pucci, "The Italian Community in Fort William's East End ...," 283-4.
- ⁵⁸ Thunder Bay Civic Archives, Fort William Council Minutes, 3 January 1934. The author was unable to trace the council's action on the matter after it went to committee.
- ⁵⁹ See also, *Fort William Times-Journal*, 8 January 1935, for lists of aldermanic contestants which indicate among the unsuccessful contestants, Calan, Marцениuk and Pajunen in Ward One. Also the Fort William Council Minutes of 8 January 1934, indicate a Mr Pulak and A. Nayda as contestants in Ward One for 1933.
- ⁶⁰ For a description of the political culture of Canada in the 1950s and 1960s, see Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics and Regionalism in Decline*, (Toronto, 1981) 165-75, 253-311.
- ⁶¹ Thunder Bay Civic Archives, Port Arthur City, Council Minutes, passed for the 1940s Committee of the Whole. Also, J. M. Mauro, *Thunder Bay: A History*, 389-90.
- ⁶² See Canada, Election Returns, Port Arthur, 1957. Also reported in *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, June 11, 1957.
- ⁶³ Canada, Election Returns, 1957 and 1958 general election. For example in Port Arthur's southend Court Street Poll 5, the comparative figures for 1957 and 1958 were: Liberals 97/117; Conservatives 33/57; CCF 109/125.
- ⁶⁴ National Archives of Canada, National Liberal Federation, vol. 669, biography of H. Badani.
- ⁶⁵ *Fort William Times-Journal*, 31 May 1955.
- ⁶⁶ *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, 4 June 1955, "Mrs. Dan Rudiak Elected Head of (Geraldton) Liberal Group;" *ibid.*, 25 May 1955, "Young Liberals Organize Group at Terrace Bay."
- ⁶⁷ See Eric Hardy, *Lakehead Local Government Review, Report and Recommendations*, (Toronto: March 11, 1968) 116.
- ⁶⁸ On the theme of mercantile participation at all levels of Lakehead politics, see K. L. Morrison, "The Businessman Voter in Thunder Bay: The Catalyst to the Federal Provincial Voting Split," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, V.1, no. 2, (June, 1973).
- ⁶⁹ See Chris Zelkovich, "And Fort William and Port Arthur Begat Thunder Bay," *Weekend Magazine*, 23 September 1974, vol. 24, no. 38, 24-28.
- ⁷⁰ See Roger Gibbins, *Prairie Politics and Society: Regionalism in Decline*. (Toronto, 1980), Ch. 3, 65-123.
- ⁷¹ See A. W. Rasporich, "Faction and Class in Modern Lakehead Politics," 64-65.
- ⁷² See John Uliana, "The East End: A Study in Ethnic Residential Concentration," 31-33, and ff.33 supra.
- ⁷³ Interview, Douglas Fisher, Ottawa, 24 October 1989.
- ⁷⁴ Canada, Election Returns, 1957.