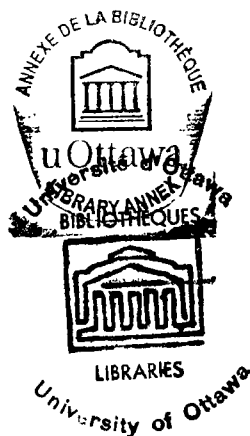


THE CULTIVATION OF HEALTHY IDEAS:
LABOR DAY IN THE MONTREAL PRESS 1886-1950



A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies
at the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in
History

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INTRODUCTION

Labor Day in Montreal was not always what it has become, just another trip to the country and a bulge in the accident statistics. From its origin in 1886 until at least the late 1920's, the festival enjoyed the enthusiastic participation of a large segment of the city's population. Based on a study of contemporary newspaper accounts, this thesis suggests that for its first few decades at least, Labor Day provided an ideal forum for strengthening trade union consciousness and encouraging fraternity within the working class.

The thesis' major attention, however, is reserved for the opinions about labor and class relations expressed by the five Montreal newspapers, La Presse, the Star, La Patrie, the Gazette and Le Devoir, on or around Labor Day over the sixty-five year period from 1886 to 1950. As an important annual festival, Labor Day demanded editorial recognition. Because the celebration's peaceful character precluded any need for stern disapproval of the holiday itself, the press was free to deal with labor issues in a general framework. In discharging their annual duties, editorialists concentrated on flattery and admonition: they wrote both what they felt their readers wanted to hear and what they felt their readers ought to hear. These two categories of opinion were frequently interwoven, with the flattery providing a rhetorical license for the admonition.

With only a few exceptions, one message inspired the sixty-five years of editorials and articles which are analyzed

in this thesis. It may be summarized as follows: Canada's skilled and diligent workers are fortunate because of the tremendous opportunities provided by the country's limitless potential. Although they have an unquestioned right to organize into unions, it is counterproductive to engage in strikes, or any form of militancy. If Canadian workers would only labor ever harder in a spirit of compromise with their employers, they would be the first to benefit from the resulting increased wealth. Because of their hard work and their peacefulness, Canadian workers deserve honor and recognition on Labor Day. In short, the workers would be better off to recognize their place and stay in it rather than to take action which might undermine the entire economic structure on which prosperity depends.

Three themes emerge from the development of the Labor Day editorialists' basic argument. First, the press praised the nobility of work itself as the basis of material well-being and even spiritual maturity. Second, the papers denounced the destructiveness of strikes which could only injure employer and employee alike, as well as the innocent public. Third, the press advocated friendly class collaboration as the prerequisite for hard work to achieve its salutary results. Over time, however, the emphasis placed on each of these themes varied according to changing circumstances. Moreover, each of the newspapers possessed its own style which governed the ways in which these themes and the overall message were expressed. This thesis, therefore, focuses on the development of middle-class press opinion in Montreal about the workers

and their role in society. It analyzes the evolution of ideas within the framework of an overriding commitment to maintenance of the status quo in class relations.

The newspapers were chosen from among the largest and most famous Montreal dailies of the period. La Presse, the Star and the Gazette were naturals since they were published throughout the sixty-five years. Two other newspapers, La Patrie and Le Devoir, were chosen in order to improve the balance between French and English, as well as between Conservative, Liberal and Independent newspapers. The Herald was rejected in order to limit the number of English-language papers in the sample. La Patrie was selected over Le Canada because of its rivalry with La Presse and because it was published during the early years of the festival. Although Le Devoir did not begin publication until 1910, it was included because of its reputation as an independent, articulate paper. The entire sample was limited to five newspapers in order to keep it manageable.

The amount of material published relating to Labor Day was quite irregular from year to year. There might be a temptation to regard this as an index of press interest. Only in the crudest sense can such an hypothesis be true, however, since several factors not directly related to press interest influence the extent and quality of coverage of a recurring event such as Labor Day. For example, preoccupation with an important transient item such as the Eucharistic Congress of 1910, or the Quebec bridge collapse of 1907, may push Labor Day copy into the back pages. Moreover, it seems

impossible to devise a formula which could measure all the other relevant indicators of press interest in an event such as location, headline and emphasis. Therefore, a simple list of the number of editorials published each year by the five newspapers in the study is included in Appendix 1 only as a gross indicator of press interest.

The opening year of the analysis, 1886, was dictated by the timing of Montreal's first reported Labor Day celebration. Nineteen-fifty was selected as a convenient terminal date, ensuring a lengthy period for study, but preventing the inclusion of any time when it could be argued that large segments of the Montreal working class enjoyed real prosperity. In order to avoid the sense of vertigo which might result from sweeping through the entire sixty-five year time span several times in treating the three themes outlined above, the editorial analysis has been divided into four chapters covering the periods 1886-1913, 1914-1929, 1930-1938 and 1939-1950 respectively. The breaking points, 1914, 1929, and 1939 obviously reflect the most crucial world events of those sixty-five years, the two World Wars and the Great Depression. These breaking points also corresponded to significant alterations in the press' Labor Day editorial concerns. The coincidence of these changes with major historical turning points explains the boundaries used to divide the sixty-five years into manageable portions. In each chapter the themes of the nobility of work, the destructiveness of strikes, and the necessity of friendly class collaboration will be analyzed. In view of the great

number of editorials and articles involved (over four hundred), only the conclusions of the analysis can be presented in this thesis. A brief comment on the method of analysis is therefore essential.

The process began with a careful perusal of each year in each newspaper for a few weeks before Labor Day and a few days after. Detailed notes were taken and each editorial was then transposed onto an "analysis sheet" (Figure 1) which broke out the contents by subject so that all the editorials became readily comparable. Summaries of these sheets were then placed on pages divided into boxes with one vertical column for each newspaper, and one horizontal column for each year, thereby allowing the essentials of each editorial to be juxtaposed for still readier comparison. This sheet was then studied for trends by theme, by year, and by paper. By working methodically through each of these steps, it was possible to consider all of the material in several contexts, and thereby lessen the arbitrariness of this sensitive, but still impressionistic approach to editorial analysis.

Labor Day provides a touchstone, comparable from year to year, which permits the analysis of press opinion to range over a long period. While there can be no guarantee that Labor Day editorials exhausted the newspapers' views on the subjects treated in this thesis, nonetheless, a random perusal of editorials published on other occasions by the same newspapers indicated a remarkable consistency of views. To indulge in this general analysis while so many specific studies in the field of Canadian social history cry out for

Paper	Page	Date	Title
Social Image of Worker		Rights vs. Duties	
Role of Unions		Class & Class Relations	
Quebec vs. Others	Status Quo vs. Change		
Labor Demands & Approved Goals			
Meaning of Labor Day		Tone, Mood	
		Imagery, Language	
Attitude to Conflict	Religiosity	Rhetoric	
		Rigorousness	
Purposes of Work	Abstract vs. Concrete	Audience	
Other		Contemporary Events	

Figure 1: Sample Analysis Sheet (Reduced Size)

attention may appear premature. But surely the desire to fill in one small chunk of the jigsaw puzzle which constitutes our social past need not preclude a peek at that past from a more general vantage point.

Before turning to the editorial analysis, two chapters provide the context for the editorials: the first deals with Montreal's social and economic evolution between 1886 and 1950, and the second outlines the social history of Labor Day in Montreal during the period.

CHAPTER 1: MONTREAL 1886-1950: CRUCIBLE OF CHANGE

Montreal's prodigious growth between 1886 and 1950 transformed it from the major city of a precarious colony-nation into a metropolis of world stature, prominent in industry, commerce, transportation, finance and culture. Labor unions established themselves in response to Montreal's modernization, as instruments for protecting many of the tens of thousands of workers absorbed by the city's new factories, shops and warehouses. Recording and interpreting the city's progress were the metropolitan daily newspapers which competed for the readership of worker and master alike. In order to appreciate the context in which these newspapers published their Labor Day editorials it is necessary to sketch briefly the development of Montreal's economic and social life, its labor movements, and its press.

A. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE 1886-1950:

The most obvious manifestation of Montreal's growth was the increase of its population. Undeterred by war or depression, people kept crowding into Montreal to swell its population over seven times from about 200,000 in 1886 to nearly 1,400,000 in 1951.¹ These hundreds of thousands of new inhabitants, many of them unfamiliar with life in a large city, spread the community well beyond its original confines. Even municipalities

¹ The Census of Canada, 1951, Vol. I, "Population", pp. 10-1, 12-1. Norbert Lacoste, Les Caractéristiques sociales de la population du grand Montréal, (Montréal, 1958), p. 115. Abbé Lacoste's figures are based on the results of various censuses.

such as Westmount and Outremont, which preserved their independence in the face of waves of annexations, could not escape falling within the orbit of the encroaching metropolis.²

Fueling and sustaining the growth of Montreal's population was the increase of its economic activity in which industry, commerce, transportation and finance acted as mutually-reinforcing stimulants. In the period immediately preceding World War One Quebec industry, concentrated largely in Montreal, reached the "take-off" point of self-generating progress.³ Although industry generally enjoyed an upward trend during the period, the process was not always smooth. (Figure 2). After the pre-World War One "take-off" the two World Wars were the major stimuli to production, with the immediate postwar periods experiencing a falling-off, and the middle thirties enduring a serious decline. Montreal's commercial pre-eminence throughout the period was a function of its status as Canada's greatest trans-shipment centre,

2 John I. Cooper, Montreal, A Brief History, (Montreal, 1969), p. 125.

3 André Raynauld et. al., Croissance et structure économiques de la Province de Québec (Québec, 1961), p. 28. Montreal industry was initially concentrated in such labor-intensive activities as clothing, footwear, food-processing and tobacco. By the Second World War the city's industry had also firmly established itself in more sophisticated and capital-intensive areas such as oil refining, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, electrical appliances and metal construction, particularly of ships, rolling stock and aircraft. Refer to Jean Delage "L'Industrie Manufacturière," in E. Minville, ed. Montréal Economique (Montréal, 1943), pp. 183-241.

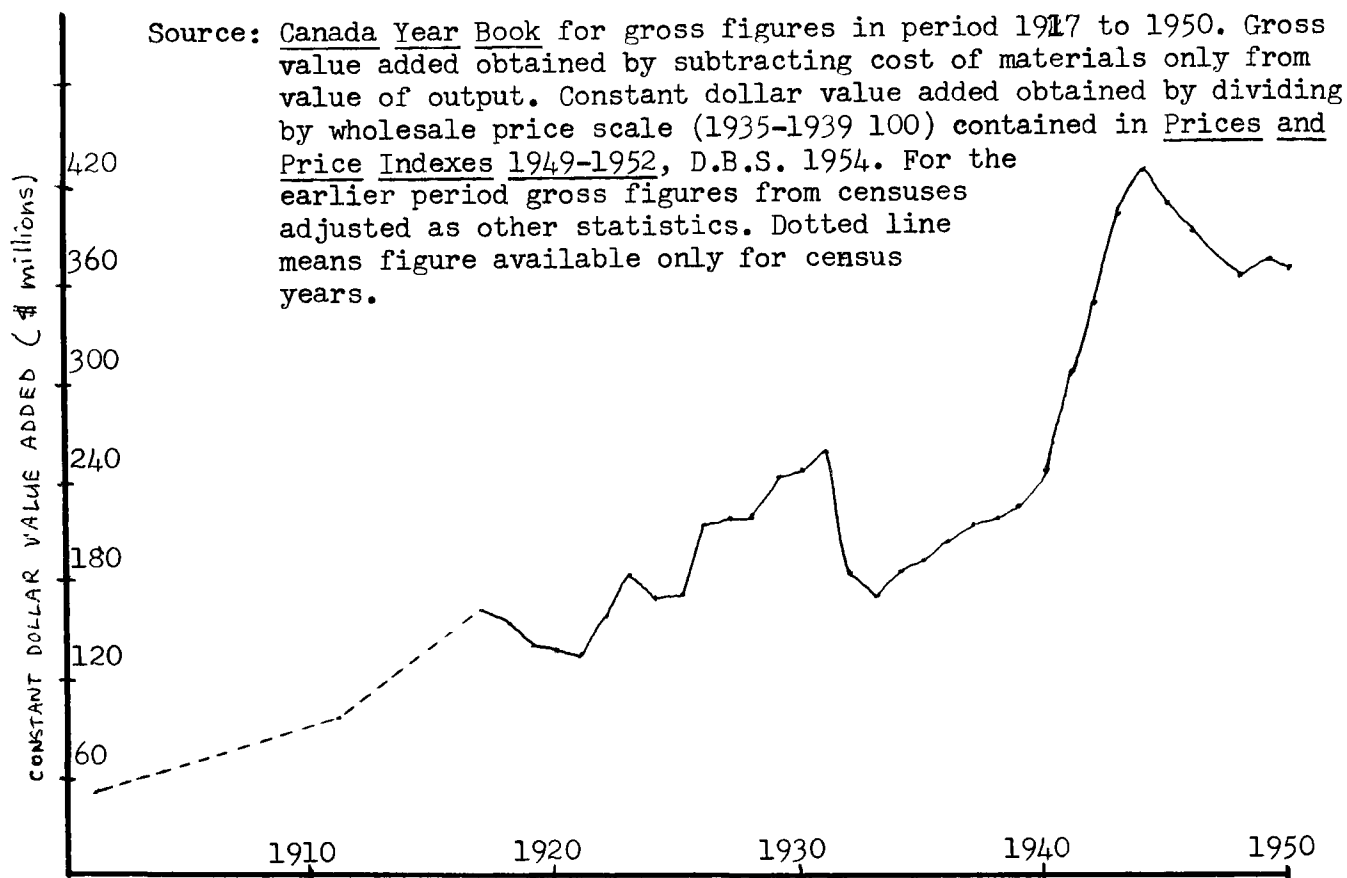


Figure 2: Constant Dollar Value Added by Montreal Manufacturing 1900-1950

possessing both an ocean and a river port, as well as the country's most important railway termini. In the world of finance, St. James St.'s powerful banks, insurance and trust companies, and brokerage houses were dominant in Canada, even if by 1950 Bay St. in Toronto had begun to emerge as a serious rival.⁴

In the midst of such rapid economic development, the city transfigured itself. New technologies, reflected primarily in the automobile and the multitude of new gadgets rendered possible by relatively cheap oil and electricity, made their appearance first as novelties, but soon as commonplaces. The

⁴ Raoul Blanchard, L'Ouest du Canada Français: Montréal et sa Région (Montréal, 1953), p. 318.

automobile in turn created a need for a network of widened and paved roads which began by the turn of the century to replace the traditional mud and macadam. For the masses, the horse-drawn street-railway gave way to an extensive system of streetcar lines and later buses serving most city areas, and even acting as an outrunner to open up new areas for settlement.

But if the economy expanded magnificently, despite periodic set-backs, and if the city changed its face continually, three factors remained constant. The first was the pre-eminence of the Catholic Church; the second was social cleavage based on ethnicity; and the third was social cleavage based on class. The active commitment of most Montrealers to the Catholic Church was evident in the rapid increase in the number of new parishes founded to serve the growing crowds of Catholics in the city. Perhaps the culmination of the progress of the institutional Catholic Church in Montreal was the construction during the twenties and early thirties of the vast St. Joseph's Oratory on the slopes of Mount Royal in fulfillment of the dream of a humble lay brother and financed by the contributions of the ordinary people of the city.

Montreal's ethnic population balance remained largely unaltered between 1886 and 1950, although one important shift did occur. While the city's French population held steady at around 60% of the total, the proportion of English declined sharply from around 38% in 1886 to just over 20% in 1950. The slack was absorbed by a cosmopolitan mix of

immigrants, dominated by European Jews and Italians, who tended to assimilate into the English-speaking minority, thereby ensuring a stable linguistic balance.⁵ The French-English ethnic balance might not have been a subject of much interest were it not for the fact that economic power lay in the hands of the English-speaking minority. In Montreal's economic progress the managers, the financiers and the stockholders were English; nearly everywhere the French were the hired hands, although many of their fellow workers were English too. Some French-Canadian spokesmen, alienated by the economic weakness of their people, and repulsed by what they saw as the moral depravity of modern industry and the transformed city it spawned, bitterly denounced the new order. These nationalists vacillated between advocating that French-Canadians assert themselves as leaders of economic growth, and longing for a return to some simpler time and a more aesthetic city where the virtues attributed to rural life such as sobriety, earnestness, piety and family solidarity could flourish.

While so many French-Canadian intellectuals, both lay and clerical, attacked Montreal's modern industrialized character, the ordinary French-Canadians continued to be forced by the mundane consideration of ensuring economic survival for themselves and their families to enter the new factories and workshops in ever increasing numbers. Together with their English-speaking co-workers they

⁵ Blanchard, op. cit., p. 282.

inhabited the dingy east-end or the ramshackle tenements which clustered around the factories throughout the city or near the river, while their more comfortable fellow Montrealers, English and French, looked down on them from the slopes of Mount Royal.

B. THE WORKERS AND UNIONISM IN MONTREAL 1886-1950:

The term "worker" is a vague one. In both social analysis and propaganda, however, it is usually used to describe anyone who is employed by another person for wages to perform manual or industrial labor, whether skilled or unskilled. The phrase "the working class" generally means the group of people who share this role. For the purposes of this thesis, mining and primary industry, manufacturing, utility, construction, transportation and communications employees will be considered to form most of the working class, and others will be excluded unless they engage in manual labor.⁶

The characteristics of workers, particularly in manufacturing, changed drastically during the period. In Montreal as in all other industrial centres, technical innovations, mechanization and alterations in the organization of capital itself encouraged a progressive increase in the scale of the most profitable enterprises, and a

⁶ These distinctions are debatable, but they are not entirely arbitrary since it was not until well after 1950 that the excluded groups began in large numbers to see themselves as having a social role and interests similar to those of what is here called the working class. Formerly a great gulf of snobbery divided white and blue collar workers.

decrease in the degree of skill required of the typical worker. In industry after industry the small establishment employing skilled artisans was superseded by giant factories whose machines were tended by a proletariat of unskilled and hence readily interchangeable workers. This process was well under way by 1886 and it had not let up in 1950 as the farsighted began to discuss automation.⁷

Because of poor living and working conditions it was not very pleasant to be a worker in Montreal between 1886 and 1950. Cooped up for long hours in dangerous and poorly ventilated factories from an early age, driven by exacting foremen and housed in substandard, unsanitary, rental accomodation, the typical Montreal worker of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was condemned to a life that was "nasty, brutish and short". Perhaps even worse than his low standard of living was the haunting precariousness of his life. Disease, an accident, a downturn in business, some new machine, or a foreman's caprice could suddenly reduce his meagre income to zero. And a "day without work was a day without bread."⁸ The life of Montreal's working

⁷ In the 1880's the process was pronounced in the cigar-making industry, for example. For this as for other industries, the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital of 1889 is a mine of evidence indicating the declining importance of skilled workmanship. The concentration of Canadian industry has long been a subject of note. Refer, for example, to Gideon Rosenbluth, "Concentration and Monopoly in the Canadian Economy" in Michael Oliver, ed., Social Purpose for Canada (Toronto, 1961).

⁸ Jacques Bernier, "La condition des ouvriers à Montréal à la fin du XIX^e siècle," unpublished M.A. thesis, Laval University, 1971, p. 73.

class in the first two decades of this century described by the historian, Terry Copp, was no more congenial. Indeed, Copp argues convincingly that the real income of the average wage earner in Montreal actually declined during the economic boom which the city enjoyed during the war and the immediate post-war years.⁹ Whatever gains may have been won during the twenties were wiped out by the Depression when a quarter of the city's population was dependent on public relief.¹⁰ By the forties, however, there appears to have been some increase in the purchasing power of the average wage earner (Figure 3). Although the factories were still miserable, and

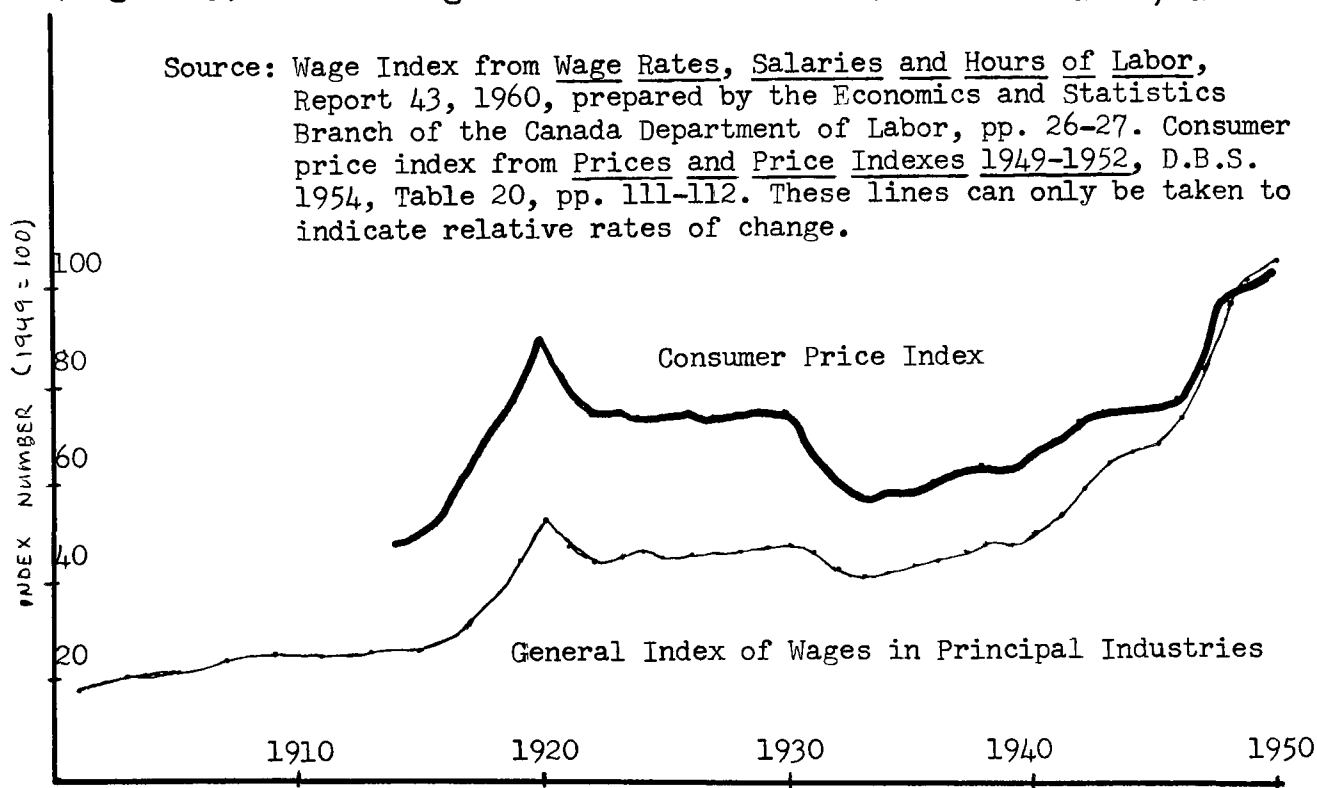


Figure 3: Comparison of Evolution of General Index of Wages and the Consumer Price Index 1900-1950

9 Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929 (Toronto, 1974).

10 Cooper, op. cit., pp. 164-168.

there was a dire housing shortage, and the cost of everything was escalating at an unprecedented rate, conditions appear to have begun to improve in the early postwar period as a result of economic expansion and union pressure.¹¹

That union pressure was a long time in building. After the depression of the 1870's, an American organization, the Knights of Labor, spearheaded the first major wave of unionization in Montreal. Despite official Catholic efforts to suppress the movement, the Knights had successfully united 2,500 workers in the city by 1887. At the same time, craft unions, usually affiliated to the fledgling American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Canadian Trades and Labor Congress (CTLC), both founded in 1886, were spreading as well. In the interests of effective cooperation the Knights and the trades unions jointly founded the Montreal Central Trades and Labor Council (MCTLC) in 1886.

The harmony was shortlived. By 1900, all the international craft unions had seceded to form the Federated Trades and Labor Council of Montreal (FTLCM), presaging a parallel national split in 1902. From that year onwards, organized labor in Montreal was dominated by the internationals' labor

11 Great care must be taken in interpreting Figure 3. Local conditions may well have differed from the national picture. Moreover, the fact that the two curves cross in 1949 does not mean that the dollar amounts represented by the wage index and the price index in that year are equal. Both lines are only a way of comparing one point on one line with another point on the same line. The two lines are placed in the same figure only to allow comparison of their relative rates of change. Two works describing the difficulties of working class life in Montreal in the 1940's are: Pierre Vallières, Nègres blancs d'Amérique (Montréal, 1969), and Gabrielle Roy, Bonheur d'occasion (Montréal, 1945).

central, the FTLCM, soon to become simply the Montreal Trades and Labor Council (MTLC). The few remaining national unions, primarily remnants of the Knights of Labor, preserved a fitful unity as members of a succession of national and local labor centrals.¹²

By the early 1920's, the Catholic union movement was also establishing itself in the city, reflected in the formation of the Montreal Central Council of National Catholic Unions by 1930.¹³ In 1940, most of the non-confessional national unions were assimilated into the Montreal Labor Council (MLC), affiliated with the Canadian Congress of Labor (CCL) and the American Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Both the Catholic unions and the CCL distinguished themselves by seeking to organize the unskilled employees of large factories who had been generally ignored by the TLC affiliates because of their preoccupation with skilled labor.¹⁴

12 At the national level these organizations were: the Canadian National Trades and Labour Congress (1902-1908), the Canadian Labour Federation (1908-1927), and the All-Canadian Congress of Labour (1927-1940). In Montreal, national unions were grouped in a series of organizations such as the Montreal National Trades and Labour Council, the Central Council of Canadian Unions of Montreal, and the Montreal National Labour Council. This information on the Labor Centrals in Montreal is gleaned from Labour Organization in Canada, published annually by the Canada Department of Labor from 1911.

13 This organization changed its name in 1940 to the Montreal Central Council (Confederation of Catholic Workers of Canada).

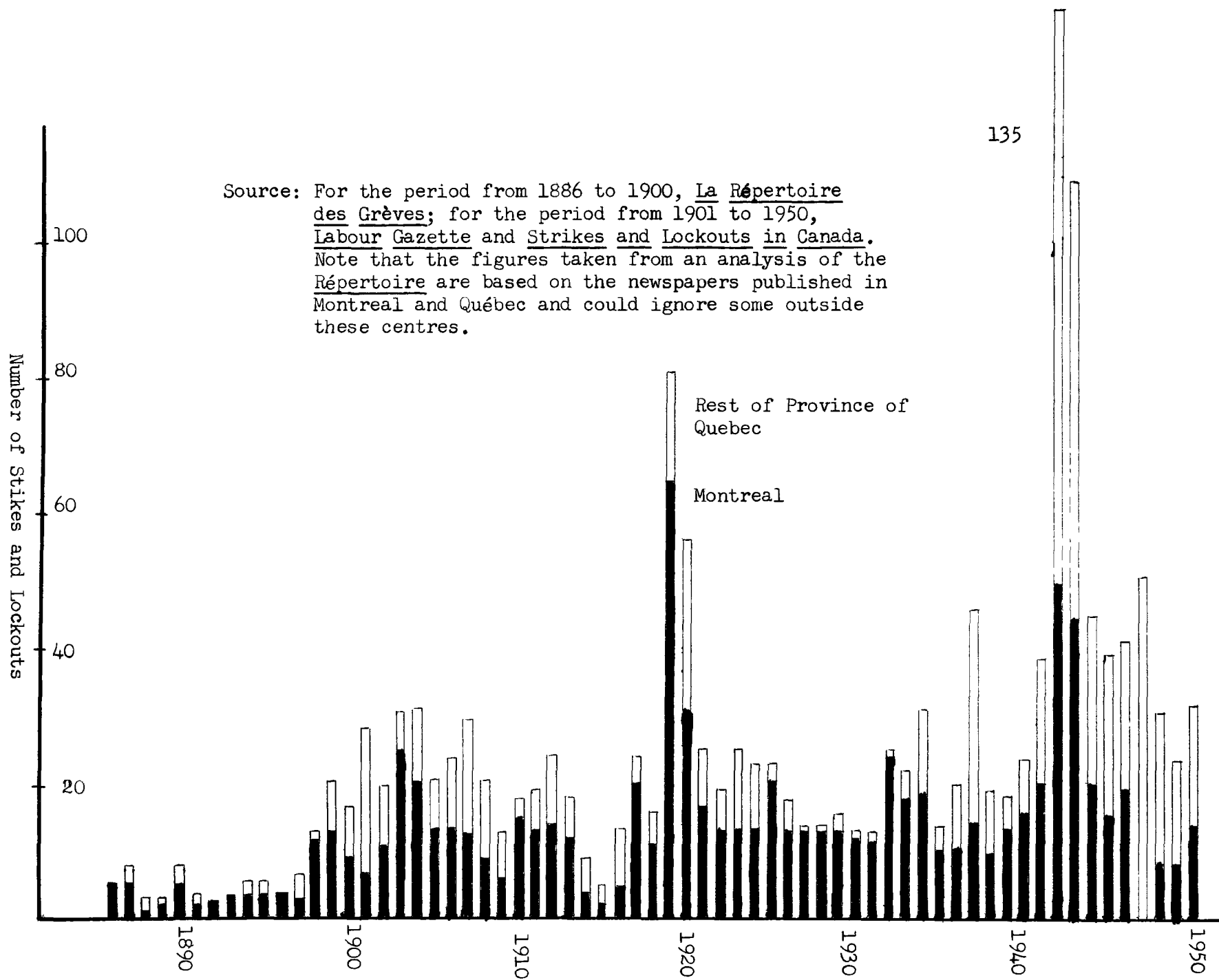
14 The evolution of national and provincial level organizations is illustrated in a chart which appears in Fernand Harvey, ed., Aspects historiques du mouvement ouvrier au Québec (Montréal, 1973), pp. 227-8. Other smaller labor groups such as the Communists and the One Big Union also had a varying, but relatively minor, number of adherents over the years.

It is impossible to know exactly how many union members there were in Montreal at any given time, since before 1911 there was no systematic reporting system, and after that date it was largely left to the vagaries of a voluntary report. An analysis of the figures on unionized workers in Montreal reported annually in Labor Organization in Canada suggests two conclusions (Appendix 2). First, as everywhere in Canada, the two World Wars spurred union membership, and in the early thirties at least, the Depression took a heavy toll. Second, the growth which began in the late thirties and continued through the Second World War and beyond was spectacular.

Consistent with the city's large number of unions and its relatively high union membership,¹⁵ Montreal was frequently the scene of important strike activity. Indeed, whether one considers the number of strikes per year (Figure 4), the number of workers involved in strikes (Figure 5), or the number of man-days lost to strikes (Figure 6) between 1886 and 1950, it is evident that most Quebec strike activity occurred in Montreal. The figures show that after being very peaceful in the late nineteenth century, Montreal labor was readier to use the strike weapon after the turn of the century. The early years of World War One were a lull before the storm which

15 See Union Growth in Canada, 1921-1967, published in 1970 by the Economics and Research Branch of the Canada Department of Labor for a graph of Canada-wide unionization levels. The figure was below 10% from 1920 until 1940, when it began to rise steadily, almost touching 20% by 1950. In Montreal, however, 70,216 out of a work force of 362,653 were unionized in 1941 (19%), and 125,600 out of 537,729 were members of unions in 1951 (24%).

Figure 4: Number of Strikes in Montreal and the Province of Quebec
1886-1950



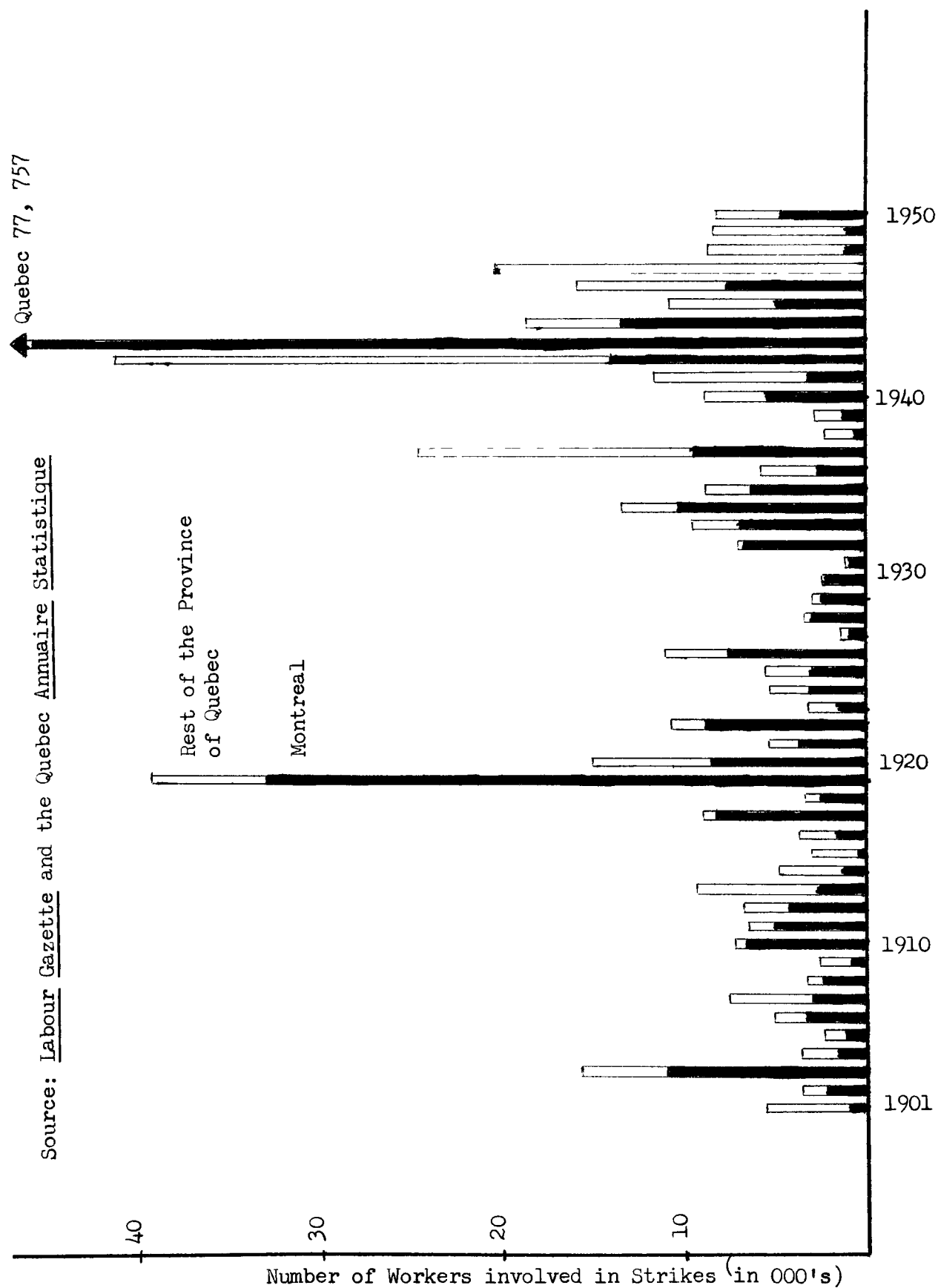


Figure 5: Number of Workers Involved in Montreal and the Province of Quebec 1901-1950

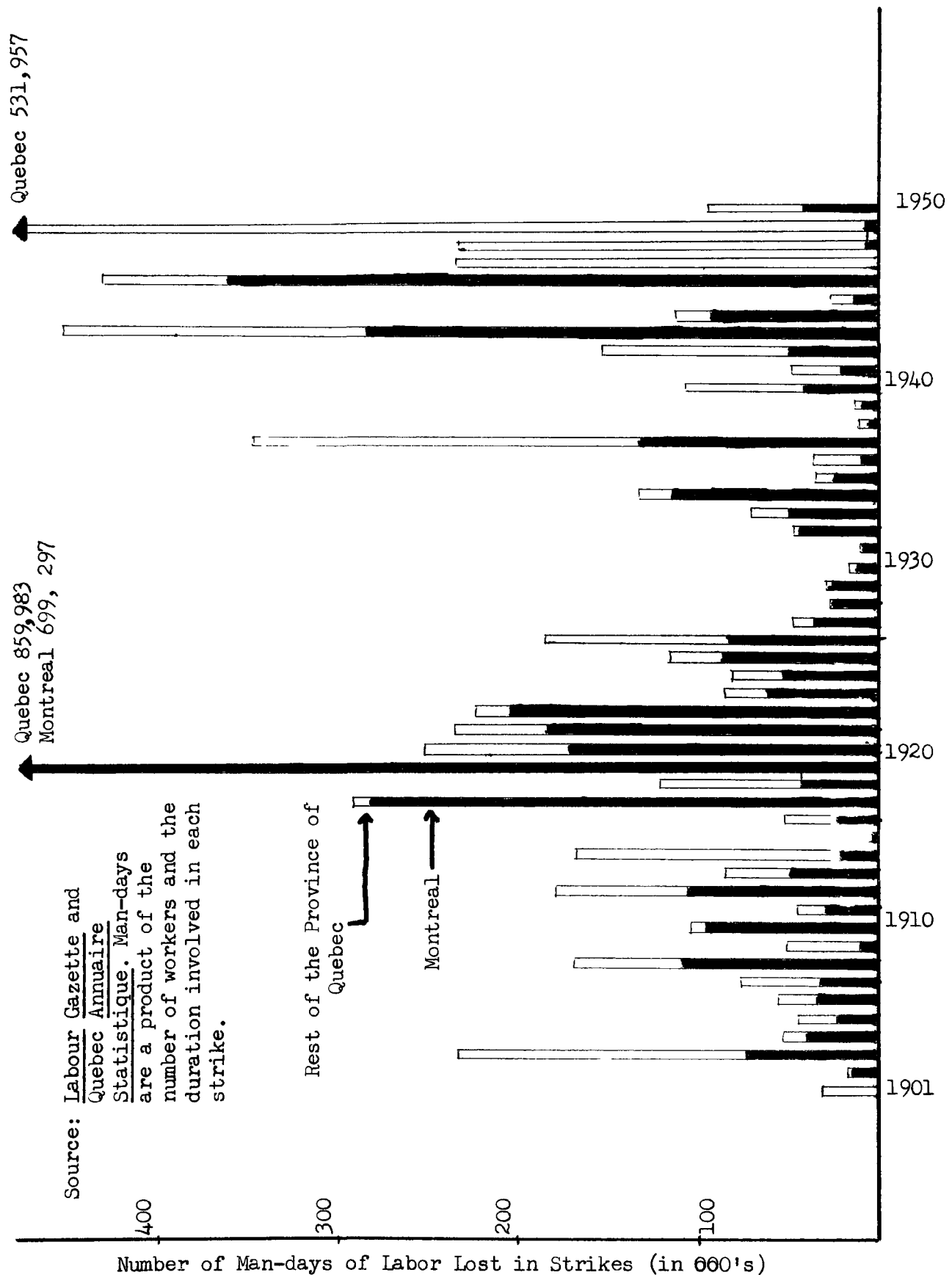


Figure 6: Number of Man-days Lost in Strikes in Montreal and the Province of Quebec 1901-1950

Montreal shared in the immediate postwar years with the rest of the world. As the twenties faded into the thirties, strike activity tapered off to a negligible level. The late thirties, however, and the middle years of World War Two, were times of renewed strike initiatives. After a brief outburst in 1946, the period up to 1950 was characterized in Montreal by relative calm.¹⁶ The basic pattern of the frequency and intensity of strikes in Montreal parallels that of Canada as a whole, as well as the United States and Great Britain, with only a few glaring exceptions such as the British General Strike of 1926 (Appendix 3).

C. THE PRESS IN MONTREAL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FIVE LEADING DAILIES 1886-1950.

Just as technological change remade the city and transformed the conditions of capitalist enterprise, so also it transfigured the press. Before the late nineteenth century newspapers were precarious undertakings, their few pages of political and literary commentary laboriously printed and circulated to a limited clientele of the educated and the well-to-do. Because at this time regular government printing contracts represented virtually the sole means of averting insolvency, only publications friendly to the authorities could hope to survive. News from the United States was

16 The information on strikes in Montreal is taken from The Labour Gazette, published from 1901 to 1950, Strikes and Lockouts in Canada, published from 1927 to 1950, both published by the Canada Department of Labor, and from Jean Hamelin et. al., Répertoire des grèves dans la province du Québec au XIX^e siècle, (Montréal, 1970). The Répertoire does not have sufficient data on the number of workers involved in strike activity to complete Figures 5 and 6.

often a month old, and dispatches from Europe were consistently three months out of date when they reached the Montreal press. By the end of the century, cylindrical presses (1867) and linotype (1887) permitted newspapers to expand both the number of pages and the number of copies printed daily. At the same time, the invention of the telegraph (1837), Morse code (1845), the telephone (1876), trans-Atlantic cables (1886), and the wireless (1899) combined to give newspapers access to news only days or even hours old.¹⁷

These changes in both the immediacy of the newspaper's access to news and the speed and completeness with which it could reproduce its copy permitted publishers to reach a much wider audience than formerly. Because these developments coincided with a marked increase in the general level of literacy, the way was open to enterprising publishers to expand their circulation phenomenally among the whole population. The conquest of many thousands of new subscribers made the newspaper particularly attractive as an advertising medium. The revenue generated by opening their pages to advertisers permitted the most successful newspapers to achieve a financial independence unknown in the past. Motivated partly by a desire not to offend their new benefactors, and partly by a desire to attract the widest possible readership, the most modern newspapers supplemented the traditional political and literary opinion with a

¹⁷ Jean Hamelin and André Beaulieu, "Aperçu du journalisme québécois d'expression française," Recherches Sociographiques, VII, 3 (septembre-décembre, 1966), p. 321.

potpourri consisting of scandal, crime, sports, entertainment, marriages, gimmicks and piety. Some have suggested that this mutation constituted a debasement of the press, although this is by no means self-evident.¹⁸ The triumph of a few papers, however, made it harder for the others to survive since the greater a newspaper's success, the more it attracted advertising revenue and the solicitude of politicians.

These overall trends in the evolution of newspaper publishing were nowhere more evident than in Montreal. The great stalwarts which had fought the political battles of the nineteenth century in Montreal died with the century's turning: Le Canadien in 1893, La Minerve in 1899 and Le Courrier du Canada in 1901. The new century belonged to such brash publications as La Presse, La Patrie and the Star, founded respectively in 1884, 1897 and 1869. Also important, although less successful in terms of circulation, were the

18 Pierre Godin, L'Information Opium, (Montréal, 1973), pp. 11-23. He says for example, on page 11: "L'étude scientifique des media a permis de mettre en lumière une série de dysfonctions (narcotisation, transmission des valeurs établies, publicisme, conditionnement, manipulation, propagande, etc.) qui, avec le progrès spectaculaire des techniques de communication et l'évolution du statut des entreprises de presse vers le monopole ou la concentration, rejettant dans l'ombre leur fonction plus spécifique, d'information authentique." However, Beaulieu and Hamelin on pages 312-3 of the article cited above point out that even the old journals of ideas such as Le Canadien and La Minerve in 1836 used as much as one and a half out of four pages on advertising. They also argue that "c'est moins, semble-t-il, les autorités politiques que les commerçants qui menaçaient la liberté de la presse." Whether it was the merchants or the government which did the menacing, it would appear that the kept press has a long past. Was scurrilous political writing really more noble than the details of the latest murder? Each class is prey to its own version of sensationalism. Some truth must nevertheless be granted to Godin's charge, for example, even in comparing La Presse of the early 1920's and the same paper thirty years earlier.

long-lived Gazette, founded in 1778, the Herald, initiated in 1818, and two latecomers, Le Canada, begun in 1903, and Le Devoir launched in 1910. Supplemented by a Hebrew daily, the Jewish Eagle, and the McGill Daily, the Montreal daily press continued to number around nine or ten from 1900 to 1950 (Figure 7).

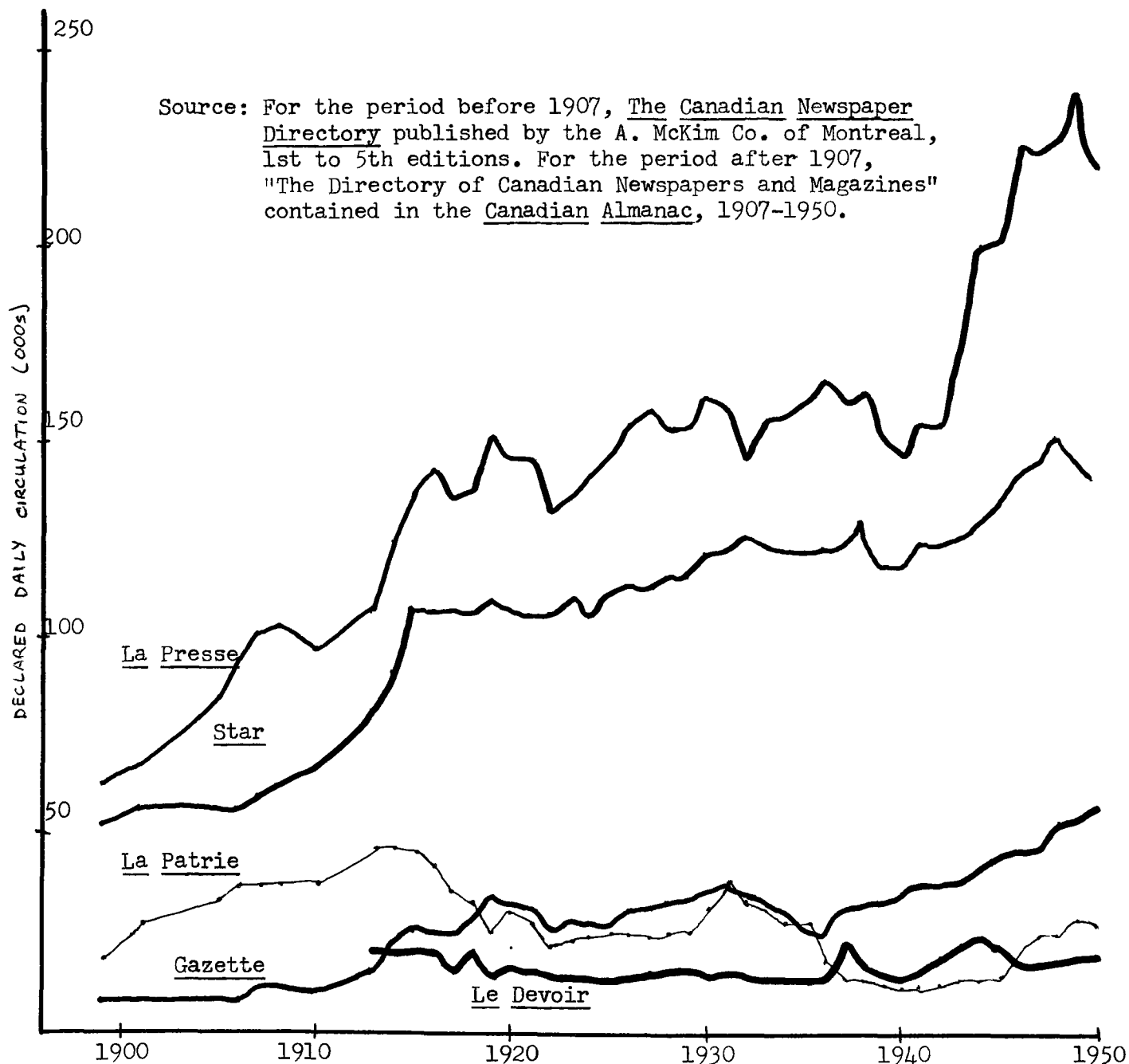


Figure 7: Declared Daily Circulation of Five Major Montreal Daily Newspapers 1899-1950

La Presse's success was the most remarkable. It was born on October 20, 1884, of a struggle between factions within the Quebec Conservative party to be a champion of the liberal wing of the party, led by Adolphe Chapleau.¹⁹ In 1889, after a string of unsuccessful publishers, the paper was conceded to Trefflé Berthiaume, an ambitious printer. Under his leadership La Presse advocated such social reforms as the establishment of night schools, children's aid societies and employment exchanges, as well as the recognition of trade unionism. An eager exploitation of technical advances and a taste for gaudy sensationalism helped to win for La Presse the largest circulation of any newspaper in Canada. Although between 1904 and 1906 the paper fell into the hands of the Tory speculators, Mackenzie and Mann, La Presse's political stance was in general overtly pro-Laurier from the middle-1890's.²⁰ In the 1920's, La Presse introduced a new decorum and sobriety into its pages which contrasted with its earlier unrestrained exuberance. Still, the paper maintained the multitude of features, from agricultural news to the famous advice column by "Colette", by which it sought to please almost everyone. Senator Pamphile du Tremblay, Berthiaume's son-in-law, who emerged victorious in 1932

19 Information on La Presse and the four other papers is taken from Godin, op. cit., Cooper, op. cit., André Beaulieu and Jean Hamelin, Les journaux du Québec de 1764 à 1964 (Québec, 1965), and W. H. Kesterton, A History of Journalism in Canada (Toronto, 1967), and from the author's own impressions derived from ploughing through hundreds of issues of each paper.

20 It does not seem unduly cynical to assume that the return of La Presse to Berthiaume's control was related to Laurier's concessions to the Canadian Northern Railway, directed by Mackenzie and Mann.

from the long series of family intrigues which had followed Berthiaume's death in 1915, continued as publisher until well after 1950. The paper maintained its pragmatic tradition during the Duplessis years, preserving an officially neutral stance which leaned indulgently towards the Union Nationale government. At once secular and pietistically Catholic, and always patriotically French-Canadian, La Presse succeeded in satisfying the popular taste. Despite the harsh criticisms of generations of nationalists and intellectuals, La Presse evidently enjoyed the status of an indispensable institution in French-Canadian society.²¹

La Presse's major rival in the race for circulation and advertising revenue was the English language Montreal Star. Founded on January 16, 1869, the Star remained in the hands of its original owner, Hugh Graham, later Lord Atholstan, until his death in 1938. His successor as publisher was John Wilson McConnell, who was still in control in 1950. Although the Star consistently lagged behind La Presse in circulation after 1896, it nevertheless was without rival in the amount of space devoted to advertising. In his efforts to boost circulation and advertising rates, Graham combined the sensational, the bizarre, the sentimental, and the patriotic. Like La Presse, the Star was quick to exploit every new kind of publishing technology. Graham was also active in Conservative politics as a prime organizer for the federal

21 Godin, op. cit., p. 18. Witness, for example, the uproar caused when it was revealed by Olivar Asselin in Le Nationaliste in 1904, that La Presse had fallen into the hands of English-Canadian Tories from Toronto like Mackenzie and Mann.

party in Quebec, allegedly a source of annoyance to La Presse's Berthiaume before he switched his allegiance to the Liberals.²²

Comparing the two rivals in 1935, Le Devoir remarked:

Sauf les nouvelles de Ste.-Emilie de l'Epouvante et autres lieux insignifiants, on trouve tout dans le Star, mieux présenté, plus détaillé que dans la Presse, et la photogravure y est incomparablement supérieure.²³

Within the French-Canadian community, La Presse faced another rival in La Patrie. Started on February 24, 1879, as an organ of the progressive wing of the Liberal party, La Patrie was purchased in 1897, at Laurier's urging, by J. Israel Tarte to ensure the paper's moderation. After the split between Laurier and Tarte in 1903, the paper became nominally independent. Tarte abandoned the paper's anti-clericalism, its unorthodox views and its staid format, and embraced the new formula for success: faits divers, illustrations and extensive advertising. As a result, La Patrie enjoyed, if less spectacularly, the same kind of circulation growth as La Presse and the Star. The tide turned, however, during the First World War, and it was mainly downhill from there until the paper was acquired by a group of Conservatives in 1925, and finally absorbed by its rival, La Presse, in 1933. Under La Presse's control La Patrie was turned into a tabloid. As a result, it became less credible as a daily, although its weekend edition flourished. The truth was, that despite La Patrie's attempt to compete with La Presse and the Star, it was consistently less flamboyant and less up-to-date in its

22 Godin, op. cit., p. 90.

23 "La Patrie et La Presse," Le Devoir, 22 janvier, 1935, p. 1.

use of new techniques. Apparently the amorphous centre, in which a newspaper strove to be all things to all men, could accomodate only two occupants in Montreal, one in French and one in English.

More frankly conservative and elitist was the Gazette, founded on June 3, 1778. The paper passed through the hands of seven publishers until it came into the possession of the White family in 1870. Richard White was succeeded as publisher in 1936 by John Bassett Sr., who remained in office after 1950. The Gazette made no attempt to pander to the masses by offering the latest in photography, layout or murders. Very slow to change its format or its ideas, the Gazette concentrated on the international, commercial and financial news of most interest to its educated and wealthy readers. Despite its relatively modest circulation, the Gazette enjoyed a disproportionate prestige as the acknowledged voice of Tory St. James St. As with the other papers, politics was central to the Gazette, since a number of its publishers and editors were active as Senators or Cabinet Ministers. In keeping with its sober and business-like outlook, the Gazette's circulation grew slowly but steadily, while others like La Patrie and the Herald floundered.

Le Devoir was launched on January 10, 1910, as an independent platform for a group of ardent nationalists led by Henri Bourassa. He was forced to resign as Director in 1932 in favour of Georges Pelletier, who was in turn succeeded by Gérard Filion in 1946. Le Devoir's very small circulation was primarily among the clergy, the intellectuals and the

rising French-Canadian middle class. In all fields Le Devoir was very much a journal of ideas, devoting a large proportion of its space to editorials. In political matters the paper was independent of party, opposing imperialistic influences in Canada, whether British or American, and championing the cause of provincial rights within a federal Canada. Strongly Catholic, the paper espoused the Church's social teachings, showing particular deference to the clergy and to rural values. In the forties, Le Devoir began to modify its traditional social views to include a greater acceptance of industrialization and labor militancy. Because of its persistent honesty and the incisiveness of its arguments, it possessed a powerful influence both in Quebec and in the country at large.

What was the press' influence? Did it reflect or mould public opinion? Certainly politicians considered it important to have the support of particular newspapers, and moralists were convinced that the Americanized "yellow press" could corrupt the faithful and deprive them of their national and religious sentiment.²⁴ In the case of politicians, what other explanation is possible for the pre-election intrigues designed to secure the support of certain newspapers or to found new ones for the occasion? Yet the precise impact of press opinion on particular events is uncertain. Obviously the outcome of events such as elections cannot be attributed

²⁴ Omer Héroux, "Le journalisme et la Cité," Semaine Sociale de Chicoutimi, 1929. This piece expresses well the moral disquiet. See also Georges-Henri Dagneau, "Remarques sur l'influence des quotidiens de langue française au Canada," Culture, VIII, 3 (Septembre, 1947), pp. 243-253.

to any single cause such as the support of a given paper or even the entire press. And to the extent that the press has an influence on immediate events, its impact must be weighed along with several other factors such as the degree of press unanimity, the extent of literacy, the degree of polarization within the public, the degree to which a position advocated is consistent with deeply held popular convictions, the attraction of competing media, and perhaps even the season of the year. And yet, it seems probable that papers like La Presse, La Patrie and the Star, which tried to alienate as few of their readers as possible by expressing jarring views, must have endeavored to keep in line with what they perceived to be the popular view.

The influence of the press on the formation of broad social attitudes may, however, be considerable. For people whose lives were often spent in the same area within the city, the newspapers, at least until the wide diffusion of the radio, must have been the major vehicle for the literate to gain information about the outside world. Moreover, most of the major dailies tended to agree on certain basic ideas like the virtues of private enterprise or the need to give a total effort in time of war. Despite discordant voices such as Le Devoir, the daily repetition of fundamental attitudes about men and society must have had an important formative influence on regular readers. The general problem of the influence of the media is still disputed; it is nevertheless evident from the attitudes of politicians and moralists that the press could

be ignored only by the foolhardy at their peril.²⁵

The importance of the editorials published by the Montreal press between 1886 and 1950 to mark Labor Day is similarly uncertain. But whether it formed public opinion or merely reflected some segment of it, each of the newspapers analyzed in this thesis was a substantial and respected voice in the community. In the midst of the rapid modernization outlined in this chapter, the attitudes expressed by such media on Labor's annual festival take on particular interest for the social historian. Before turning to the analysis of the Labor Day editorials, however, the reader should become acquainted with the festival itself.

25 Wilfred Eggleston, writing in a paper, "The Press in Canada" for the Massey Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, published in Royal Commission Studies (Ottawa, 1951), p. 42, takes the following view: "One is driven to the conclusion that most of what Canadians know about Canada - and much of what they feel - must have come from the press."

CHAPTER 2: THE SOLIDARITY OF THE MEEK:
LABOR DAY IN MONTREAL 1886-1950

The Canadian labor movement seems to have been responsible for originating Labor Day. In 1872, workers marched in Toronto and Ottawa to convince Sir John A. Macdonald to abolish the conspiracy laws which threatened the very existence of unions. Parades continued in Toronto annually through to 1882 when Peter J. McGuire of New York, a prominent American unionist and general secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, was invited to participate. Although he did not take part in the Toronto festivities, McGuire did propose to the New York City Central Labor Union later in the same year that a day be set aside for a demonstration and a picnic. From this second beginning the festival spread throughout North America wherever the American Federation of Labor was powerful.¹ In Montreal it was the cigarmakers' union which began to hold an annual picnic in 1885. By 1889, when the Central Trades and Labor Council took over the organization of the festival, between 5,000 and 10,000 marchers joined in the parade. Labor Day's popular success created tremendous pressure for its official recognition. Following the lead of the American Congress, and belatedly accepting a recommendation of Report I of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, the Canadian Parliament

1 C. A. Scotton, "The Origin of Labour Day", Canadian Labour (September, 1961), pp. 39-41. Until the 1940's, P. J. McGuire was known as "The Father of Labor Day", and presumably he still is in the United States. It should be noted that Labor Day predated May Day by several years.

passed a Bill giving the festival legal sanction on June 22, 1894. Although it is alleged that there was strong opposition within the Conservative Party to this concession, the only recorded objection is that of Senator Alphonse Desjardins who reminded his colleagues that the holiday was unnecessary since Sunday was already provided to laborers as a day of rest.²

The typical Montreal Labor Day was resolutely peaceful and innocent. After religious services and a suitable sermon proclaiming the virtues of hard work and respect for authority, the various international unions would gather for the parade around 8:00 a.m. at some large open place like the Champs de Mars or Fletcher Farm. Stragglers would keep the marshalls busy forming the ranks until about 10:00 a.m. when balloons would be released and a cannon would sound to announce the commencement of the parade. In a casual march to the tune of fife and drum bands, union would follow union along major streets such as St. Catherine, St. Laurent and Craig to the applause of the dense crowds which packed the sidewalks. After a three or four mile walk, the procession would reach its destination: some large city park where the families of the marchers would gather for a picnic and an afternoon of races and lacrosse or baseball. In the evening there would

² Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1894, Fourth Session, Seventh Parliament, p. 620. According to Fred Williams, writing in the Gazette on Monday, September 7, 1942, John Thompson was persuaded by Alexander W. Wright to agree to recognize Labor Day despite strong disagreement within his party. Wright was a journalist, a founder and secretary of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and a member of the Knights of Labor. It was as a Conservative organizer, however, that he persuaded Thompson that such a policy was good politics.

be dancing and concerts, and a banquet for the leaders with rousing speeches and a toast to the Crown. By midnight the crowds would be on their way home and the police constables hired to keep order would be remarking how little work there had been. After the Catholic unions were established, they initiated the custom of holding services at St. Joseph's Oratory the Sunday before Labor Day to pray for the intercession in their behalf of St. Joseph, patron of workers.

From its inception until the mid-1920's, and again in the late 1930's and early 1940's, Labor Day in Montreal seems to have been second only to St. Jean Baptiste Day as a popular festival. From the fragmentary figures available in the newspapers consulted for this thesis, there was a large participation both as marchers and as spectators in five major periods: 1902-1904, 1907-1914, 1918-1925, 1929-1933 and 1937-1942 (Appendix 4). These years correspond roughly with the periods of unusual labor unrest and strike activity illustrated in Figures 4, 5 and 6.³ In some years, the extent of this participation was astounding if the estimates have any validity. For example, in 1919, 30,000 marchers, 22 bands and 40 floats took two hours to pass any given point as 200,000 spectators cheered them on.⁴ Fully a quarter of the city's population allegedly participated!

³ This point must be qualified by the recognition that figures for many years are missing altogether, and therefore cannot enter into the comparison. This could, of course, reinforce my point if it were conceded that newspapers are more likely to record remarkably high attendances than mediocre or low ones.

⁴ La Presse, 2 septembre, 1919, p. 1.

Labor Day in Montreal, therefore, was never the trauma for the bourgeoisie that May Day was in France and other European communities. The European festival, which began as a commemoration of the execution of five American labor leaders who had been blamed for a bombing in 1886 in Chicago's Haymarket Square during a monster demonstration for the eight-hour day, has traditionally been a militant left-wing event featuring great parades, radical speeches and occasionally, violent clashes with the forces of order, all in the name of solidarity and the Revolution. In France after the turn of the century, under the influence of revolutionary syndicalism, May Day took on the dimensions of a regular national catharsis of class hatred. It gave the left a chance to proclaim the advent of a spontaneous revolution which would carry the workers to power; and it gave the bourgeoisie the vicarious satisfaction of seeing a few proletarian heads bashed in defence of law, order and property.⁵

5 For basic information on May Day, especially in France, see Maurice Dommanget, Le Premier Mai (Paris, 1953). A chronology of important dates in the history of the Quebec labor movement prepared by Richard Desrosiers for his work, Le travailleur québécois et le syndicalisme, and reprinted in Québec-Presse, 29 avril, 1973, p. 18 ff. claims at least three May Day celebrations in Montreal: 1891 with 15,000 workers, 1894 and 1906 when there was allegedly violence as a result of bitter repression. With reference to the 1906 incident, La Presse reported on May 2, p. 5 that some Jews, Russians and other foreigners numbering about 1000 marched singing the Internationale and shouting insults at the priests at Laval. Despite the fact that La Presse would have been eager to denounce any violence, the report claimed there were no disorders. I suspect that the claim of 15,000 attendance in 1891 is based on a misreading of Charles Lipton, The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959, (Montreal, 1967), p. 91, where he reports that 15,000 marched in Montreal on Labor Day, 1891. The September Labor Day appears to have been confused with May Day by Desrosiers.

But the absence of violence or overt class confrontation in the events of a typical Labor Day celebration in Montreal does not mean that the festival was devoid of class content. The French sociologist, Alain Touraine, argues that "worker consciousness", that is, the way workers think about themselves and their role in society, is composed of some combination of three elements: a sense of group identity, an opposition to those who are perceived as preventing the workers from controlling the fruits of their labor, and a concept of the framework of this tension, whether a factory, a city or society itself. At one end of the spectrum of possible "worker consciousnesses" is "working class consciousness" which Touraine defines as "le type d'analyse sociale par lequel, en se définissant lui-même comme exploité par le capitaliste, [l'ouvrier] affirme que la société est dominée par ce rapport et cet antagonisme fondamental." At the other end lies the purely economic agitation associated with the AFL's "business unionism" by which unions are seen as fighting for more money rather than for any program of social reconstruction: "c'est le degré zéro de la conscience ouvrière." Using this analytical framework, it is obvious that Labor Day in Montreal was not a manifestation of a developed working class consciousness. For example, except with regard to specific strikes there were few of the denunciations of enemies which are essential to working class consciousness. But in its early decades the festival was a celebration of trade union consciousness, the starting point

of all working class consciousness.⁶

The regular sponsoring of a parade and mass picnic by organized labor in Montreal reflected a fraternal solidarity within a large segment of the working class. To join with fellow workers of various trades in marching, friendly competition and merry-making indicates an acceptance of others as peers because they also share the social role of worker. This

⁶ This exposition of the concepts of "worker consciousness", "working class consciousness" and "business unionism" is derived from two sources: Alain Touraine's work, La Conscience Ouvrière (Paris, 1966), and the article by Morris Ginsberg on "class consciousness" which appeared in the First Edition of the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (New York, 1930). The most recent edition of the latter's successor, the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (New York, 1968), was relatively useless since it ignored class consciousness as such, and contented itself with a noncommittal precis of recent American work on social stratification. No treatment was given of any Marxist ideas on the subject, even for the purposes of refutation. In Touraine, see especially pp. 17, 328, 323.

V. I. Lenin in his What Is To Be Done?, trans. S. V. and Patricia Utechin (Oxford, 1963), pp. 63 and 85 has a pertinent comment on the distinction between trade union consciousness and working class consciousness (Socialism):

The history of all countries shows that the working class, solely by its own forces, is able to work out merely trade-union consciousness, i.e. the conviction of the need for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers, and for trying to prevail upon the government to pass laws necessary for the workers etc. The teaching of Socialism, however, has grown out of the philosophical, historical and economic theories that were worked out by the educated representatives of the propertied classes - the intelligentsia.... Social Democracy leads to the struggle of the working class not merely to achieve profitable terms for the sale of labor, but also to achieve the annihilation of the social order which forces the have-nots to sell themselves to the rich.

With respect to Labor Day's peaceful nature, it is interesting to note that in 1917, for example, when the demonstration might have been expected to degenerate into a riot against conscription, the Labor Day committee issued a special appeal for calm and forbade the carrying of provocative banners. La Presse, 1 septembre, 1917, p. 25. No incident was recorded on this occasion.

recognition of common condition is most evident in the habit of donning uniforms which would distinguish particular unions. The plasterers, for example, wore immaculate white. This practice reached its peak in 1932 when the entire parade wore blue overalls, prompting the Gazette's reporter to remark on the grim spectacle of long lines of workers marching like the "dauntless ranks of the robots."⁷ The practice of grouping the young sons of the workers to march before their fathers, often bearing placards, was testimony not only to the solidarity of the workers, but also of a realization that this embraced their families as well. And it must be assumed that the ranks of spectators were swelled with parents, wives, daughters and other relatives who participated by their cheering.

The specifically working class quality of this solidarity was evident in several ways. As was noted earlier, there was a tendency for the parade to attract the largest participation during periods of greatest strike activity. Moreover, the prominence and aggressive assertiveness of striking unions as well as the warm applause that greeted their appeals for support show that workers considered Labor Day an appropriate forum for winning sympathizers to their cause. In 1908, for example, CPR strikers bearing placards reading "pas de scabs" were acclaimed.⁸ Banners and

⁷ September 6, 1932, p. 3. The fact that a middle class reporter would react in this way to the apparent submergence of individuality underlines the affirmation of solidarity which the organizers and the participants obviously intended to convey.

⁸ La Presse, 8 septembre, 1908, p. 5. Nor was this an isolated incident.

placards of various kinds were reported in the press regularly. They generally favored trade union goals: "Labor omnia vincit", "L'éducation est le pain de l'intelligence", "Liberté, égalité, fraternité", "L'union fait la force", "A bas le monopole", "We are organized to promote friendship and discourage selfishness", "Every person in this procession is a bona-fide wage-earner", "Saluons l'ouvrier puisqu'il est la base de notre société."⁹

In La Conscience Ouvrière, Alain Touraine has remarked: "le travailleur cherche à se reconnaître et à être reconnu à travers ses oeuvres."¹⁰ The Labor Day parade provided workers with a perfect and sometimes amusing showcase for their skills and the products of their labor. Thus in 1890, the bricklayers' float featured two men engaged in building a wall; in 1907, the cigarmakers could be recognized by the dense cloud of smoke which followed them as they each puffed contentedly on a giant cigar; in 1912, the sheet metal workers took to wearing tin hats; in 1914, 6 linemen were busy installing wires on telephone poles erected on floats; in 1921, the firemen demonstrated the contrast between old and new fire-fighting equipment; in 1943; women munitions workers marched with a float displaying the bombs they had manufactured; and in 1947, 40 members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union modelled old

⁹ La Presse, 3 septembre, 1895, p. 1; Star, September 5, 1892, p. 4; September 5, 1898, p. 6; La Patrie, 5 septembre, 1893, p. 2.

¹⁰ Touraine, op. cit., p. 306.

clothing styles.¹¹ The desire to use floats to depict their work, to have spotless uniforms and to rent bands implied a wish to present both one's trade and the whole union movement in the best possible light. It was a matter of pride.

Some indications are also available of the intensity of participation in the Labor Day celebrations. In the first place, the simple act of marching down several of the city's major streets before tens of thousands of onlookers must have been something of an act of courage for men whose normal life was passed in humble obscurity. A remarkable determination accompanied that courage, at least during the festival's early years. In 1902, for example, despite a torrential rainfall during the parade, and the mud which must have ensued, no one faltered.¹² In several other years before the twenties, a devoted core of marchers also completed the parade despite the inconvenience of rain. Finally, although from 1904 the Church organized a religious Labor Day celebration at Notre-Dame and St. Patrick's on what was called "Labor Sunday", and in the twenties expanded this into a pilgrimage to St.-Joseph's Oratory, no attempt was ever made to compete with the parade itself. Given the Church's antipathy to the international unions who were responsible

11 Gazette, September 2, 1890, p. 5; La Presse, 3 septembre, 1907, p. 15; Gazette, September 3, 1912, p. 6; September 8, 1914, p. 3; La Presse, 3 septembre, 1921, p. 38; Gazette, September 6, 1943, p. 15; Star, September 2, 1947, p. 15.

12 Both La Presse and the Gazette remarked on this. See La Presse, 2 septembre, 1902, p. 1; and the Gazette, September 2, 1902, p. 5.

for the parade, it seems reasonable that the Church would have attempted to organize a Catholic counter-demonstration if it had thought it could win such a confrontation. The fact that the Church respected the Labor Day parade is another testimony to its vitality as a working class institution.

Besides being a suitable expression of trade union fraternity and solidarity, Labor Day was also a potent means of building and encouraging those very qualities. One of the major goals of the Labor Day celebration was to demonstrate to the unorganized the power and spirit of the union movement and thereby to convince the timid to join the ranks. The importance of the festival in the long-run development of the rudiments of working class consciousness is hinted at in the comment of a labor leader quoted in the Star in 1892: "We must have a few more annual processions to the parks before the workers march together to the polls. We must entertain them before teaching them political economy."¹³

The strategy of using festive entertainment as a means of attracting interest and adherents was a shrewd one. Mircea Eliade and other religious thinkers have shown that festivity was an essential component in the community life of every traditional society in the world.¹⁴ Ritual provided an opportunity to relive a primordial act, to recreate

¹³ September 5, 1892, p. 4.

¹⁴ Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, trans., Willard R. Trask (New York, 1965); Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), and Joseph Pieper, In Tune with the World: A Theory of Festivity, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1965), provide the sources of the theoretical ideas about festivals used in this thesis.

a mythical example. By so doing life was filled with meaning and history was transcended, since time became a series of re-enactments of archetypal situations, rather than a continuous flow of unique and hence threatening new experiences. Official Christianity specifically rejected this approach to the world, celebrating the individuality of the human personality and proclaiming the linearity of time until the Parousia. And the modern society which has emerged from the Industrial Revolution was proud of its rejection of myth and ritual, and of man's newly discovered ability to fashion history according to his own will, on the long march of human progress. Eliade, however, demonstrates that the older forms of human thought based on myth and ritual have persisted in rural Europe. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that rural French Canada also preserved some elements of this tradition. If this is true, then an annually recurring festival was a perfect instrument with which to persuade the newly urbanized French-Canadian factory worker of the virtues of unionism.

Certainly the events included in the Labor Day festival were entirely within the established pattern of French-Canadian fêtes: "La fête de la grosse gerbe se termine par une soirée de jeux et de danse comme toutes les autres réjouissances populaires."¹⁵ Oswald Hall has

15 Le May, Fêtes et Corvées (Lévis, 1898), p. 33. The joyous and celebrative qualities of the Labor Day festival are evident in this quotation taken from La Presse, 3 septembre, 1888, p. 4:

De bonne heure ce matin, la ville, principalement les quartiers ouvriers, se ressentait d'une animation extraordinaire. A voir les jeunes garçons se promener en habits de fête, les jeunes filles lancer par la fenêtre

remarked that for the newcomer to the city the industrial world must have presented a "dramatic spectacle" which he would find disorienting.¹⁶ The form of the festival, however, would be something that was familiar to him and it may well have had deeper cultural attractions such as those postulated in Eliade's theory of the fundamental role of myth and ritual in traditional societies. Moreover, the very unprofessionalness of the parade as indicated by its perennially late starting time, and the sloppiness of the marching is another manifestation of the popular character of the festival with which the newly urbanized worker might be expected to identify.

15 (cont.) quelquesoeillades discrètes, en mettant elle-mêmes la dernière main à leur toilette, un ruban dans leurs cheveux, un bouton de rose à leur corsage, il était facile de deviner qu'il se préparait un grand jour de fête pour la classe ouvrière. Bientôt on vit circuler au milieu de la foule qui encombrait les rues, des ouvriers d'un âge plus avancé, en redingote noire, avec chapeau de soie, portant des insignes de diverses sociétés ouvrières, la plupart officiers de ces mêmes sociétés. La musique des fanfares se fit entendre successivement dans tous les quartiers habités par la classe ouvrière, appelant les hommes sous la bannière des sociétés. L'heure fixée pour le départ de la procession étant proche, le Champs de Mars et les rues voisines furent envahis par une foule nombreuse. De tous côtés drapeaux et bannières flottaient au vent, ondulant sous les caresses d'une brise légère, attiédie par les rayons d'un soleil bienfaisant. La nature a voulu rendre la Fête des ouvriers plus éclatante en lui envoyant une journée ensoleillée et une température très agréable.

16 Oswald Hall, "Comments," in Jean-Charles Farlardeau, ed., Essais sur le Québec Contemporain (Québec, 1953), p. 99. The Labor Day festival may also have been of some assistance in overcoming the individualist mentality preserved by the workers of rural origin alluded to by Jacques Rouillard and Judith Burt in their article "Le mouvement ouvrier", which appeared as Chapter II of Les Travailleurs Québécois 1851-1896 (Montréal, 1973).

As every institution must, the Labor Day festival evolved. Aside from the obvious fact that participation varied from year to year according to the weather, the degree of current labor militancy, and the appeal of competing attractions such as excursions to the country, Labor Day suffered one serious setback early in its development. By 1893 there were already two separate celebrations, the official one run by the Central Trades and Labor Council which was described above, and another organized by the Construction Council. From that date onwards, the vagaries of union affiliation dictated that two, three or even four separate festivals be conducted. Sometimes there was a common parade and independent picnics; in other years, rival organizations mounted entirely autonomous festivities. The Catholic unions, once they were established in the twenties, dispensed altogether with the parade, and concentrated instead on religious ceremonies and a picnic. This fragmentation of the Montreal Labor Day celebrations reflected the factiousness inherent in trade union consciousness, in which loyalty is centred on the union rather than the entire working class. In this way Labor Day was a barometer of the tensions which existed at any given time between competing labor organizations.

Always, however, it was the International unions' parade and picnic which attracted the greatest attention. By fits and starts participation in this celebration mounted to its greatest triumphs in the few years immediately after the First World War as was noted above. By the middle twenties, however, Labor Day was in decline as an institution. Despite

some revival in the late thirties and early forties, it never reached the levels of participation which had been obtained in the much smaller Montreal of two or three decades earlier. In 1944, for the first time in fifty-nine years, no parade was even planned, much to the chagrin of oldtimers.¹⁷

Two reasons can be adduced to account for Labor Day's lessening importance after the middle twenties. First, changes in Montreal unionism lessened the attraction of Labor Day within its natural constituency. The late twenties and early thirties, which were years of stagnation and decline for Canadian unions generally, were hardly conducive to enthusiasm over the celebration of Labor Day. In the more mature industrial society which emerged in Montreal as a result of the Second World War, the skilled worker was more and more replaced by unskilled production line employees. Because such a role in the production process discouraged the worker from identifying personally with the final product, in which it would probably be impossible for him to recognize his own contribution, there would naturally be less reason for him to wish to display it proudly before his peers in the Labor Day parade. Moreover, as Touraine argues, the rationalization of production militates against the human contact between workers which was a hallmark of the earlier organization of industry as a series of trades.¹⁸ And this change in the conditions

17 Gustav Francq, "Célébration de la Fête du Travail", Le Monde Ouvrier, 2 septembre, 1944, p. 1.

18 Touraine, op. cit., pp. 316-7.

of industry would tend to lessen the basis for a fraternal celebration. In any case, with the growing recognition of collective bargaining, many unions became more preoccupied with their plans for seeking higher wages and better working conditions in their own plant or industry. Consequently, there was less reason to feel part of a general struggle for acceptance of common objectives which cut across union boundaries. Being as yet unwilling to press on to demand a further substantial redistribution of social and economic power which a developed working class consciousness would claim, individual unions had less need of each other than in the days when industrialists still treated the closed shop as anathema. And having less need of each other, they had less need of Labor Day as an occasion for common affirmation.

A second reason for the lessening importance of Labor Day was the diffusion of mass media such as cars, radio and pulp magazines which brought modern culture to all but the most isolated communities and undermined the traditional culture described by Eliade. Consequently, the festival of Labor Day may not have had as profound an effect on the newly urbanized worker as we have suggested it had earlier. Besides, the novelty must have begun to wear off. As movies became accessible to the working class and their children, could an earnest, but clumsy parade really be as exciting as it once was? The idea was passé. And nothing emerged to replace it, while all around there were new distractions. For the worker cooped up in poorly ventilated factories, the chance afforded by the automobile to go to the

country must have been enticing, especially since his holidays were few. Indeed, Le Monde Ouvrier stressed this point in 1927, when it began admonishing workers that while it was certainly pleasant to visit the country, attendance at the parade was more important.¹⁹ At the same time, then, that reasons for cherishing Labor Day were declining, alternatives were becoming more alluring. As a result, Labor Day celebrations attracted fewer faithful from year to year as 1950 approached.

Labor Day was a successful working class institution in the first few decades of its existence because it provided a valued opportunity for the expression of Montreal workers' trade union consciousness, and because it was an appropriate way of persuading the unorganized of the virtues of unionism. The sense of common identity which the placards and cheers for striking workers indicated went beyond simple "business unionism" which stressed gains for particular trades, at the expense of other workers if necessary. There was in the festival's solidarity the raw material of a working class consciousness which appropriate circumstances and leadership might inspire in the future. Nevertheless, between 1886 and 1950, the solidarity celebrated on Labor Day remained a solidarity of the meek. At no time did it move beyond the recognition of a common status primarily for skilled workers to the identification of a mutual enemy. Not even in the depths of the Depression was there any recorded incident of

¹⁹ 10 septembre, 1927, p. 2.

labor-oriented violence or confrontation associated with Labor Day.

If this festival was radically different from the European May Day, the reason undoubtedly lies in differences between the economy and culture of these two societies. For example, it may be wondered whether France could have sustained a revolutionary labor movement if its bourgeoisie had not been so bull-headedly reactionary, and if its governments had not so resolutely avoided adopting social reforms. Nevertheless, within the confines of the conservatism of the Canadian political culture²⁰ and the prevailing philosophy of "business unionism", Labor Day in Montreal was an important instrument for affirming and expanding a trade union consciousness in the working class of that city. If it never became a manifestation of working class consciousness, it remained very much "une fête des travailleurs." Especially in the first few decades of the festival's existence, the mere public affirmation of the virtues of trade unionism was a courageous undertaking.

Against this background the Montreal press expressed its views on the relations of capital and labor in its Labor Day editorials. The main thrust of these editorials was to persuade the workers of the benefits to be gained through an acceptance of the existing social structure. In order to make this point the editorialists stressed three themes in

20 For a brilliant discussion of the Canadian political culture, see Gad Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada: An Interpretation", which is Chapter One of his work Canadian Labor in Politics (Toronto, 1968).

varying degrees throughout the years between 1886 and 1950: the nobility of work, the destructiveness of strikes, and the necessity of friendly class collaboration. The following chapters of editorial analysis are therefore organized around these three themes.

CHAPTER 3: LA LUTTE PACIFIQUE - 1886-1913

L'ouvrier que nous coudoyons sur la rue,
est un symbole de l'honnêteté dans l'humilité
que nous devons respecter; comme groupe,
comme phalange, il est puissance, il nous
domine, il nous écraserait, s'il voulait -
mais le peuple est bon.

La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1902

In the thirty years between the crushing of the Second Riel Rebellion in 1885 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Canada must have seemed a haven of social and industrial peace. The contrast between the docile behaviour of most Canadian unions and the periodic violent trials of strength between labor and capital in Europe and the United States was a source of both satisfaction and apprehension for the Montreal press. Obviously Canada had cause to rejoice in the law-abiding calm and devotion of its workers; but how long could they remain uninfected by the poison of class hatred so rampant elsewhere? In the first years of the twentieth century some editorialists thought that their fears had been realized: the wave of strikes which broke out then was surely symptomatic of the disease. However, in the few years between the fall of the Laurier government and the outbreak of the First World War, a renewed complacency about the labor movement dominated the Labor Day editorials. Despite these shifts, the main thrust of the editorials and articles published for the occasion between 1886 and 1913 in the Montreal newspapers was that labor should not disrupt the status quo. In arguing this view the papers largely took

for granted the first of the themes around which our analysis is organized: the nobility of work. Because strikes were too infrequent to merit many philippics in these years, the second theme, the destructiveness of strikes, received short shrift as well. Instead, the papers concentrated on our third theme, the necessity of friendly class collaboration.

In this period, the Montreal press treated the nobility of work more as a matter to be celebrated than to be proven. The most vivid evidence of this view was the full page drawings used by La Presse and La Patrie as the front cover of the issue for the Saturday before Labor Day. These drawings regularly featured muscular workers in heroic poses, with a goddess figure bestowing laurel wreaths upon them, under some gala banner such as "Gloire au Travail". (See Figure 8 for an example.) Although more explicit declarations of the value of work were relatively infrequent, they were very positive. For example, in its nineteenth century remarks, La Presse found work ennobling because it permitted individuals to rise in life, and succeeding generations to create the marvels of modern society. Opinion after 1900 was more forceful. Both La Presse and La Patrie pitied those who did not work hard and enjoy it since work was a consolation in life and the seasoning of pleasure. Even more important, the Labor Day editorialists viewed contempt for work as the underlying cause of all wars, crimes and violence which threatened society. Indeed so confident were they of the value of work that they indulged the

La Patrie

100 ANNIÉE - N. 1 - 100 SECTION DE LA

ADDITIONAL SAMEDI

SEPTEMBRE 1900

LE NUMÉRO COUTE CINQ



Le 100^{ème} anniversaire de la fondation de la République française est célébré aujourd'hui par une manifestation nationale. Les citoyens de toutes les communes ont participé à cette grande fête. Les drapeaux tricolores ont été hissés sur les toits et les clochers. Les écoles ont organisé des fêtes et des concours. Les sociétés de gymnastique ont donné des représentations. Les municipalités ont fait tirer des coups de canon. Les habitants ont défilé dans les rues, portant des bannières et des fleurs. C'est une journée de joie et de fierté pour tous les Français.



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optimistic spirit of the age by sketching futuristic visions of work's perfection. La Presse foresaw that work might well progressively cease to be the function of a single class in order to become the chosen vocation of all. La Patrie went further by arguing that effort in the present could create instruments to transform the character of work in the future from the employment of brute force to the utilization of creative intelligence.¹

In contrast to later periods, however, praise of work in this period did not often verge into panegyrics. In 1899, La Patrie did exuberantly proclaim that Labor Day constituted what it called the "apothéose du travail libre." To the extent that the workers were the embodiment of work's virtues they basked in reflected glory by being hailed on Labor Day with titles such as "roi du Monde", "heroes of peace" and "one of the principal human forces in the world". But in this period praise could also rub off in the other direction, with workers lending work some of their prestige, as in the following citation:

En célébrant la Fête du Travail, les ouvriers...
ont cédé à un sentiment noble et juste. Ils
ont voulu témoigner par là qu'ils aiment leur
condition de travailleurs, qu'ils honoraient
le travail, et qu'ils entendaient l'élever à
la hauteur d'un grand principe.

Before the First World War neither the workers' effort nor the glories of work attracted great attention from the Labor

¹ La Presse, 1 septembre, 1894, p. 1; 5 septembre, 1908, p. 22; La Patrie, 6 septembre, 1904, p. 4; La Presse, 2 septembre, 1905, p. 1; 5 septembre, 1903, p. 10; La Patrie, 30 août, 1895, p. 2.

Day editorialists, although both were welcome subjects for graphic idealizations. Apparently no one doubted the nobility of work during the period, nor that of the workers who fulfilled their duty.²

Strikes were not a sufficiently serious problem between 1886 and 1913 to attract much editorial wrath on Labor Day. Only the two English-language papers showed serious alarm. For the Gazette strikes were unjust because they were a form of violence perpetrated by a minority against the innocent majority. In 1905, its editorialists went so far as to portray the American National Association of Manufacturers as a kind of David locked in a death struggle with a greedy, menacing union Goliath. The Star's few comments on strikes were in basic agreement with the Gazette, although they were much less dramatically presented. Because strikes interfered with the achievement of Canada's great economic and commercial potential, the Star considered them irrational. This viewpoint led the paper to fall back on a patently absurd explanation for strikes: unions, the Star's editorialists suggested, "seem carried away by a widespread hypnosis." Despite the English-language editorialists' vehemence, the infrequency of Labor Day editorials in either the Gazette or the Star during the period (Appendix 1) implies that neither paper was overly worried.³

² La Patrie, 5 septembre, 1899, p. 4; 1 septembre, 1906, p. 1; Star, September 3, 1906, p. 4; La Presse, 3 septembre, 1892, p. 4.

³ Gazette, September 5, 1904, p. 4; August 28, 1905, p. 6. The Biblical allusion is the author's, although it is strongly hinted by the tone of the latter editorial. Star, September 2, 1907, p. 4.

La Patrie, and to a much lesser extent La Presse, rejected the Gazette's histrionics with a qualified defence of the workers involved in strikes. In keeping with a scrupulous concern for the overall priority of social peace, La Patrie argued that the best road to industrial change was patience, since strikes must always engender a desire for revenge among those on the losing side. But strikes were nevertheless necessary tools for the defence of working class interests. In 1901, the paper blamed the frequent strikes in the United States on the intransigence of large American trusts. The next year the paper reiterated its stand by affirming that although not all strikes were excellent, many might be, and that if an owner's answers to union grievances were unsatisfactory, then "c'est la grève". In the same year that the Star was reduced to blaming strikes on hypnotism, La Patrie considered it axiomatic that if there were strikes, then there must have been a residue of unresolved issues left over from an inadequate negotiation process. Moreover, the paper's Labor Day editorialists punctured the favorite argument against the closed shop, namely that it interfered with the freedom of work, by arguing that the unorganized workers hired to replace strikers were not neutrals, but paid belligerents without whose assistance the owners would be hardpressed to win any confrontation. La Presse consistently opposed strike action; like La Patrie, however, it stressed that blame lay at least equally with the employers in any industrial conflict. Although there was clearly a gulf separating

La Patrie and La Presse from the Gazette and the Star on the subject of strikes, there was no disagreement on the view that strikes were destructive and therefore to be avoided; the editorial conflict centred instead on whom to blame for those which did occur.⁴

All of the papers agreed on the necessity of friendly collaboration between the classes as a prerequisite to national progress and improvements in the workers' living and working conditions. Different papers, however, followed this premise to different conclusions. The opinions of the Gazette and La Patrie, for example, constituted the argument and rebuttal in a single debate about the impact of unions on class relations. Before 1900, the Gazette was content to observe disdainfully that men gathered together in force always consider themselves invincible. In the early twentieth century, however, the Gazette took editorial notice of Labor Day to condemn unions in effect as a threat to the security of civil society itself. The paper's editorialists denounced the campaign for the closed shop as "a tyrannical attack on the rights of a people" led by a scheming coterie of "would-be despots". Somewhat inconsistently, the paper also dismissed unions as "things of straw" whose flaw was a non-universal interpretation of the term "solidarity". From the Gazette's viewpoint, although the desire of workers to improve their lot was a valuable stimulus to economic growth,

⁴ La Patrie, 8 septembre, 1908, p. 4; 28 août, 1905, p. 4; 3 septembre, 1901, p. 4; 1 septembre, 1902, p. 1; 31 août, 1907, p. 10; La Presse, 31 août, 1907, p. 18.

any activity which disturbed normal industrial routines was an assault on the public, an innocent bystander.⁵

La Patrie, on the contrary, analyzed unionism in terms of an implicit theory of social peace through the equality of countervailing social forces. The evident power of capitalist trusts was a threat to the body politic which could only be balanced by a strong and united union movement. Although La Patrie was an enthusiastic partisan of friendly collaboration between classes, the paper recognized that recent improvements in the workers' lot could only be treated as a short step along a long road. Sympathy for the workers' cause was prominent in the paper's Labor Day editorials. In 1904, for example, La Patrie insisted that it was futile for capital to try to destroy the workers' organizations, and that instead, capitalists and the public should weigh the workers' demands seriously. La Patrie's defence of workers against bull-headed employers was a logical conclusion of its resolutely liberal orientation, since its idea of balanced class cooperation demanded equal partners.⁶ For the Gazette, then, unions made class collaboration virtually impossible; for La Patrie unionization was a prerequisite to social peace.

La Presse appeared to suffer from schizophrenia in its views on class relations, being unable to reconcile its

5 Gazette, September 2, 1890, p. 4; August 27, 1903, p. 4; August 28, 1905, p. 6; September 1, 1909, p. 6; September 1, 1894, p. 4; September 2, 1911, p. 12.

6 La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1906, as well as editorials in 1888, 1894, 1901, 1904, 1907 and 1909. Such was the paper's enthusiasm for labor unions that in a 1906 editorial the paper credited unions with reducing the abuse of alcohol among workers. La Patrie, 3 septembre, 1904, p. 8.

editorial page with its front page. On its editorial page, La Presse sought by a mixture of pious and secular arguments to narrow the gap between the wealthy and the working class. In an editorial published in 1890 and reprinted in 1892, for example, the paper urged its readers not to envy the haggard entrepreneur who must continually scramble to meet the challenges of management or face ruin. The worker, on the other hand, could rest content in the knowledge that his capital grew in the safety of heaven, while here below he enjoyed the voluptuousness of working with his hands, and the incomparable joy of "gagnant sa vie". Class equality was an utopian vision; yet through peaceful cooperation between capital and labor better conditions for the worker might gradually evolve. Typically, therefore, the paper reminded the workers in 1888 of their duties as well as their rights:

La fête du travail, c'est la gloire du travailleur qui s'honore de son état et qui est fier de contribuer par son énergie et son habileté au progrès social, intellectuel et morale du pays; c'est comprendre que le travailleur a des devoirs et des obligations qui égalent ses droits devant la société; c'est reconnaître l'accord qui doit régner entre le capital et la main-d'oeuvre.... la classe qui aime le travail aime aussi l'ordre, la paix, la concorde, et la justice.

On its front page, however, where the labor reporter was apparently given a free rein, a very different social vision was frequently articulated. For example, an article published in 1903 maintained that workers' sufferings were not inevitable consequences of natural causes:

Le travailleur a conscience à cette heure que le fruit de son labeur n'est pas partagé suivant les règles de l'équité, et qu'il est manipulé

par beaucoup trop de gens n'ayant d'autre intérêt
à se mêler à sa distribution que de s'emparer
illégitimement de sa plus grosse part.

By the end of the decade, however, the critical spark was extinguished even on the front page, having been replaced by such safe ideas as the disastrous consequences of laziness and the frank cooperation of employer and worker. La Presse had solved the conflict between its front page and its editorial page by stressing everywhere the view which had always dominated the paper's editorials: unions were laudable organizations so long as their "struggle" to "conquer" enhanced rights and improved conditions for the workers was peaceful.⁷

The Star sought to avoid the debate by conducting a determined campaign to convince its readers that there was no such thing as "class" in Canada. In 1888, the Star denied that labor should be considered as a separate class since virtually everyone of age worked for his living; only the occupations differed. For good measure the paper added in 1904 and 1909 that capital was only stored labor. Moreover, since Canada enjoyed an open system of advance based on individual merit, then by implication a man's position, whether high or low, reflected his worth, and not the injustices of some caste system. By denigrating the notion of class, the Star clearly attempted to undercut in advance any logical basis for class conflict; the alternative was cooperation

⁷ La Presse, 30 août, 1890, p. 2; 3 septembre, 1892, p. 4;
7 septembre, 1909, p. 4; 3 septembre, 1912, p. 4; 27 août,
1910, p. 5; 1 septembre, 1888, p. 2; 5 septembre, 1903, p. 1;
4 septembre, 1909, p. 1.

between all members of society.⁸

Just as the Labor Day editorialists had glorified the workers as an embodiment of work's virtues, so too did they praise the workers for wisdom, intelligence and patriotism because of their adherence to the press' prescription of friendly class collaboration. The Star expressed a bizarre twist on this lauding of workers for being law-abiding when it commended "peaceful" Cleveland workers for attacking and beating "disruptive" anarchists who dared to unfurl a red flag during a parade in that city. A chauvinistic note crept into the kudos as well when La Patrie explained Canada's lower level of labor strife compared to that of the United States by the greater intelligence and patriotism of Canadian workers. A grateful Gazette attributed the difference to the paternal influence of the Catholic Church, while La Presse ascribed the workers' peacefulness to the wisdom of the workers themselves.⁹

Because the workers were peaceful, their lives rarely attracted anything more than an occasional sentimental glance. Seldom did any newspaper mention the sufferings of the worker, whom sickness, old age and death struck most cruelly. The following quotation from La Patrie, for example, was unusual:

Parcourez nos grands laminoirs une nuit de travail

⁸ September 4, 1888, p. 2; September 5, 1904, p. 4; September 6, 1909, p. 4; September 7, 1908, p. 8.

⁹ Star, September 4, 1888, p. 2; La Patrie, 5 septembre, 1893, p. 1; Gazette, September 5, 1893, p. 4; La Presse, 1 septembre, 1900, p. 8.

Voyez ces faces terreuses et maigres aux yeux brillants de fièvre....ce sont ceux qui mangent sans appétit, à deux pas des brasiers, assis sur un tas de métaux, le pain que leurs mains noircissent, que la poussière poivre, que l'horrible fumée empeste; ce sont ceux qui se lèvent à cinq heures du matin...tous les jours, depuis leur tendre enfance, pour venir s'enfermer dans ces immenses hangars où tout est noir et rouge.

In general, the press exaggerated the workers' well-being, blandly asserting their contentedness, power and prosperity:

Par son indomptable énergie, et favorisée par la conception moderne des droits individuels, la classe laborieuse a vaincu les anciens préjugés de caste, qui la tenaient on pourrait dire, dans un humiliant servage.... Le capital a cessé d'être un maître pour devenir un associé avec lequel l'ouvrier traite d'égal à égal.

By ignoring the concrete conditions of the workers' lives and the everyday tensions of class relations, the Labor Day editorialists were able to focus instead on platitudes designed to extend the feeling of brotherhood inherent in the holiday to embrace everyone. Since work was the lot of everyone, then Labor Day was for everyone; indeed it was "un hommage national de l'union consciencieuse du capital et de la main-d'oeuvre."¹⁰

Between 1886 and 1913, then, the Montreal Labor Day editorialists focused on the need for patient class cooperation as a means of gradually improving the workers' lot. The glory of work was treated as a truism during the period, and strikes were too infrequent to warrant many condemnations. At once to flatter the workers and to admonish them to stay in their place, the press relied heavily on curious phrases

¹⁰ La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1906, p. 1; 2 septembre, 1911, p. 8; La Presse, 2 septembre, 1905, p. 1.

which combined an evocation of battle with the advocacy of peace. Thus the editorialists referred to the workers' "invincible force" which was wisely held in check, or the "conquest" of rights by collaboration, or the "phalanx of workers" who extended their hands in greeting to their employers.¹¹ This was the essence of the concept of "la lutte pacifique" which dominated the thinking of the two papers, La Presse and La Patrie, which published most of the Labor Day editorials and articles between 1886 and 1913. Progress for the workers was acceptable so long as it was not at the expense of social peace. By the last years of the period the "lutte" aspect became completely overshadowed by a complacency about the achievements of organized labor and the state of class relations in Canada. The Labor Day press suggested that Canadian workers were better off than their fellows in other countries. Pervading the editorials after 1911 was a sense of completed evolution, with workers having overcome through organization the prejudices against them, and their peaceful efforts having been rewarded by the establishment of a genuine class harmony.¹² Into this atmosphere of confidence and self-satisfaction the guns of August burst.

11 La Patrie, 3 septembre, 1904, p. 8; La Presse, 30 août, 1904, p. 4; La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1902, p. 1; La Presse, 31 août, 1895, p. 10.

12 Virtually all the editorials published for Labor Day in the five newspapers in the years 1912 and 1913 reflect this point of view. This outlook had been present in earlier editorials, but it had never been so general.

CHAPTER 4: A PLAGUE OF STRIKES - 1914-1929

Strident voices here and there demand all the interest and all the profit, leaving capital naked and helpless; but these are not the voices of men trained and nurtured in the gospel of "meum" and "tuum", but rather the voices of frothy creatures who would destroy a planet for a half-baked phrase.

Gazette, September 5, 1921

The years between 1914 and 1929 form the least homogeneous of the periods analyzed in this thesis. Throughout the war years the Labor Day editorialists were preoccupied with fostering a total working class war effort, arguing that the workers would have most to lose in case of defeat. In the immediate postwar years (1919 to 1923) the press was shaken by the unusual level of social and labor unrest. It seemed that after contributing selflessly to the war effort, the workers in several countries were willing to follow subversives determined to turn the new-found peace into a world civil war based on class hatred. By the end of the twenties, however, prosperity and relative social stability gave rise to complacency, a sentiment comparable to that which had prevailed just before the outbreak of World War One. In general, despite the desirability of writing positively in editorials marking a major national holiday, support for labor became weaker and more perfunctory during the years 1914 to 1929, while criticism became more outspoken.

Each of the three themes around which our editorial

analysis is organized is traced in turn through the entire sixteen years. During the war years, the press emphasized the theme of the nobility of work in order to spur the workers on; but during the twenties, the press showed little interest in work itself. The theme of the destructiveness of strikes naturally tended to overshadow other ideas during the labor strife of the immediate postwar years. Both during the War and in the late twenties, however, this theme was relatively unimportant. Although the theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was evident throughout the years between 1914 and 1929, the Labor Day editorialists were most enthusiastic in asserting it in the last years of the period because the combination of prosperity and labor peace at that time seemed to demonstrate the doctrine's efficacy. Underlying all three themes throughout the period was the press' desire to preserve the existing distribution of social power.

Just as it had done before the First World War, the Montreal press continued to treat the nobility of work as too self-evident to require much emphasis. During the War the press stressed the indispensability of labor's contribution to the war effort, but always more in a tone of calm affirmation than of persuasion. La Presse remarked in 1915, for example: "On ne saurait donc trop honorer le travail, base sur laquelle reposent la puissance et la prospérité des nations." The Star promoted the idea of labor's fundamental contribution to the war effort by pointing out that a slacker in the workshop could be as fatal to the

Allied cause as a coward on the firing line. La Patrie asserted in 1917 that not only did labor's brawn provide society with subsistence, but its skill created "ces milles raffinements qui rendent la vie plus séduisante."¹

Impressed by labor's formidable contribution to the Allied victory, the Labor Day editorialists treated the festival itself in the immediate postwar years as a demonstration of labor's excellence and power. La Presse remarked about the 1919 parade that:

Ce sera un spectacle des plus impressionnants, bien propre à faire réfléchir ceux qu'attardent encore à ne voir dans le travailleur et l'artisan que des créatures d'ordre inférieur, des machines à accumuler des richesses pour les autres.

Characteristically, La Patrie expressed a similar idea more positively, observing that that year's great procession would show the workers the effort, energy and initiative which they represented. To some extent the press also envisaged Labor Day as a celebration of the ideal of good craftsmanship. The Gazette, for example, was intrigued by the custom of portraying various unionized crafts through floats and demonstrations. This was no mere show for the Star, but "a vague, groping effort" to teach the lesson that the true craftsman is proud of his skill.²

Aside from pointing to Labor Day as a symbol of labor's nobility, the press had only limited praise to bestow on work during the twenties. In 1920, La Presse asserted that it

1 La Presse, 4 septembre, 1915, p. 10; Star, September 6, 1915, p. 8; La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1917, p. 4.

2 La Presse, 30 août, 1919, p. 12; La Patrie, 23 août, 1919, p. 3; Gazette, September 5, 1921, p. 10; Star, September 4, 1922, p. 10.

was work which would give human life its value and dignity, thereby healing all social wounds. Only a traitor could refuse the national duty to work hard. And later in the decade the Star confided that good craftsmanship was the secret of contentment and success in life. By the last years of the decade the Labor Day editorialists had nothing to say about work; evidently they felt as they had before the War that no one disputed its value.³

Because of the small number of strikes during the First World War, the Montreal Labor Day editorialists could easily avoid discussing the theme of the destructiveness of strikes. Under the circumstances, the unions won the press' respect. The Star, for example, was impressed with the unions' role in the war experience because they proved to be a valuable tool for dealing with the workers whenever it became necessary to manage industry centrally. Even the Gazette was content to remind workers in 1917 to avoid the calamity of work interruptions which could only entail privations for them. This outlook changed dramatically, however, when military peace in Europe signalled a mushrooming of labor strife around the world.⁴

The Gazette spearheaded the attack on strikes and unions, printing with unaccustomed frequency Labor Day editorials which denounced them both with a fervor bordering on hysteria. The paper asserted that not only did strikes victimize the

³ La Presse, 7 septembre, 1920, p. 4; Star, September 7, 1925, p. 10.

⁴ Star, September 2, 1918, p. 8; Gazette, September 3, 1917, p. 8.

public, but they caused great sufferings for the workers themselves, primarily as a result of the unemployment which was an alleged consequence of strikes in a time of economic turmoil. Looking back on the period later in the decade, the Gazette characterized postwar strike action as an attempted hold-up of an innocent public by greedy and spoiled workers who had been duped by their power-hungry leaders into refusing to accept wage cuts when declines in retail and commodity prices were allegedly depressing business profits to the minimum and below. Most of the paper's violence fell upon the unions which were responsible for the strikes. The unions were accused of being composed of "swelled heads" seeking to "extort ridiculous terms from already tortured and over-taxed employers", and of forcing 96% of the population to reward the unionized 4% despite the fact that workers were unwilling to give "a fair day's work for a fair day's wages." The very concept behind unions, insisted the Gazette, was obsolete since strikes were futile in an age of ruthless competition against cheap German labor. The paper therefore urged the rank and file to desert their rapacious leaders.⁵

Nor was the Gazette calmed by the labor peace which was largely restored in Canada by the middle-twenties. The campaign of innuendo persisted unabated:

The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada...stands for the principle of internationalism. So do the Reds

⁵ Gazette, September 2, 1921, p. 12; September 5, 1927, p. 10; August 30, 1921, p. 10; September 2, 1920, p. 10; September 6, 1921, p. 10; September 2, 1921, p. 12.

of Russia. The American Federation of Labor has so far refused to share its authority on this continent with the gentlemen of Moscow, but the Canadian Labor Party, meeting in Ottawa in advance of the Trades and Labor Congress, adopted a resolution advocating the formation of a world union, with a central control, to be empowered to call a world strike, etc. and the Canadian Labor Party is the creation of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, which, in turn, is the creature of the American Federation of Labor. Are there two answers to the question whether such a movement is a good thing for Canada?

Indeed so concerned was the Gazette over the fate of business in general that events in the United States or Great Britain were enough to provoke the paper's editorial wrath. And so in 1926, the paper shuddered at the thought of an insolent British union movement attempting to bring that country's government to its knees by means of a General Strike.⁶

Indeed, as will be shown, only in the last year or two of the decade did the Gazette tame its attacks on unions for indulging in the folly of striking.

Although the rest of the Montreal press' Labor Day editorialists agreed with the Gazette on the need to avoid strikes, they were not as provoked as that paper by the labor strife of the immediate postwar years (1919-1923). In contrast too, with the Gazette, they did not perpetuate a negative attitude towards unions in an effort to discredit strikes. Le Devoir came closest to the Gazette's view, condemning the egoistic battle for material advantage being

⁶ Gazette, September 3, 1925, p. 10; September 6, 1926, p. 10.

waged between capital and labor at the expense of the multitudes of the unorganized, "cette catégorie nombreuse de petits employés de bureaux, d'humbles bourgeois qui ont le tort apparent de ne pas appartenir à des unions ouvrières, à des corps de métiers protecteurs." Moreover, Le Devoir denounced the international unions for their disruptive and naive attempt to flout the forces of race and religion which would always divide any group of people. By respecting human nature in uniting only workers of the same race and religion, Catholic unionism could expect to avoid disruption and surpass the internationals even in the sphere of material progress. For these unions the strike could only be a weapon of last resort. Perhaps yielding to clerical pressure, La Patrie also criticized the international unions in 1921 for being too ready to use strikes, as well as for being too much under the sway of foreign leadership. At the same time, La Patrie carefully stressed the internationals' earlier role in improving the workers' lives; indeed, the paper may well have published the critique reluctantly. La Patrie's liberalism asserted itself in its habit of blaming both sides for any strike: "La violence, le soviétisme ne peuvent être tolérés, mais le travail a droit au respect et à la considération du capital." In the immediate postwar years, the Star was content to urge labor to transcend its preoccupation with its own special interests by avoiding strikes. And La Presse avoided any explicit discussion of strikes at all. By the middle twenties, the Labor Day editorialists, except for those of the Gazette, had

largely lost interest in the issue of strikes. The Star articulated a common view in 1927 when it suggested that the very concept of the strike was "a thing of the past", and even the great strikes of the immediate postwar years were to be blamed exclusively on sabotage by foreign agents. The other papers shared the Gazette's abhorrence of the destructiveness of strikes, yet they felt no compulsion to mimic either that paper's vehemence or its persistence. Unlike the Gazette they concentrated their sights on the Quebec labor scene which despite some turmoil was, by contrast with other places, a model of industrial calm by the middle twenties.⁷

The theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was a major preoccupation of the Montreal Labor Day press throughout the period between 1914 and 1929. Indeed, the rapid expansion of union membership and the increased militancy which were precipitated in Canada and elsewhere by the war and its immediate aftermath provoked in the press a revision of its perception of class relations. During the War, the papers attempted to persuade the workers that their interests and aspirations would be the first to be jeopardized by an Allied defeat. Whatever the accuracy of this assertion, it clearly served as part of the propaganda for a total war effort. In this spirit, La Presse could justify continuing with the Labor Day celebration during the war on the grounds

⁷ Le Devoir, 31 août, 1918, p. 1; 25 août, 1917, p. 7; 23 août 1919, p. 1; 4 septembre, 1920, p. 3; 3 septembre, 1921, p. 1; La Patrie, 2 septembre, 1921, p. 4; 2 septembre, 1922, p. 8; Star, September 5, 1921, p. 8; September 5, 1927, p. 8.

that the holiday was not simply dedicated to vain rejoicing, but to increasing the understanding between worker and owner which was indispensable to Canada's war contribution. The editorialists promised that labor's crucial participation in the war effort would earn it a respected voice in designing a renovated post-war Canadian democracy. The Star, for example, in congratulating the workers on their wholehearted commitment to victory, assured them that they would also share fully in the spoils to follow. The union movement even won the modest approbation of the Gazette in 1917 when the paper approved the wisdom of the labor leaders for recognizing labor's complementary role with capital in the defence of modern democracy.⁸

Unfortunately the postwar economy faltered; instead of receiving rewards, the workers were called upon to bear new sacrifices. The editorialists accordingly sought to draw on the unselfishness and patriotism which had animated workers during the war years. In the hour of victory, La Presse warned the workers that their effort was not over:

Si l'on doit exalter les efforts [des travailleurs] tendant à assurer le triomphe des armées alliées, on doit faire autant de cas des efforts que devront déployer nos travailleurs, lorsque l'heure de la reconstruction industrielle et commerciale aura sonné.

By 1920, however, La Presse had entirely subordinated any mention of the workers' exaltation in favor of a reminder that each citizen was responsible for developing his portion of the

⁸ La Presse, 4 septembre, 1915, p. 10; Star, September 2, 1918, p. 8; Gazette, September 3, 1917, p. 8.

national heritage. Continuing the spirit of the trenches, the Star also stressed the concept of postwar duties to the state, asserting that the war's formidable challenges had been overcome by the readiness of all social classes to put aside their privileges in favor of the common enterprise. The paper acknowledged the legitimacy of the hopes emerging from the war; but it warned that their realization would be agonizingly slow.⁹

Many workers apparently remained unconvinced, since 1919 and the few years immediately after was a time of unprecedented labor strife in Montreal and in the rest of the country. All of the papers agreed in deploring not only the strikes themselves as was shown above in the analysis of our second major theme, but also the more general attitude of class antagonism which seemed to plague the Western world. The Gazette attempted to intimidate the workers by suggesting that their militancy and lack of cooperation was isolating them from the sympathy of the general public whose tacit support was essential to the achievement of any substantial improvements in working class conditions. The Star employed similar language, reminding its readers that the foolishness of the Russian Communist experiment was already manifest. For La Presse class strife was intolerable, since God had provided the example by combining within Himself both the capital and the labor necessary for His primordial act of Creation. Le Devoir diagnosed the cause of the upsurge in class antagonism

⁹ La Presse, 3 septembre, 1918, p. 4; 7 septembre, 1920, p. 4; Star, September 6, 1920, p. 10; September 1, 1919, p. 10.

as an inordinate lust for money, and rejected such a base motive as unworthy of Christians. La Patrie, characteristically, less critical of labor, while affirming that close collaboration between capital and labor was crucial, still insisted in 1919 that organized labor had never abused its power, and that in fact, without some labor pressure, capital would never cooperate.¹⁰

In confronting this crisis in class relations in Canada, each newspaper had its own ideas for a panacea. For La Presse the solution was an acceptance of the Church's social teachings which called for justice and charity to govern all group relations: "L'Eglise a les remèdes les plus capables de ramener à la santé morale, à la paix et au bonheur la grande famille ouvrière." Le Devoir pursued this viewpoint even further to find in Catholic unionism the secret of social harmony. The Star offered a Protestant variant of this religious vision of social tranquillity: the ideal of human beatitude lay in the universal brotherhood which the coming of that holy, happy society, the Kingdom of God, would confirm. But no indication was given of when or how such a society might be expected to arrive. For La Patrie the road to a lessening of social tensions was the more secular one of breaking down class barriers through education. The Gazette was confident that if each worker only had a decent carpet and a piano in the parlor, then labor would become a conservative social force ready to fight for "property rights

¹⁰ Gazette, September 6, 1920, p. 10; Star, September 1, 1921, p. 10; La Presse, 3 septembre, 1921, p. 12; Le Devoir, 31 août, 1918, p. 1; La Patrie, 30 août, 1919, p. 2.

and order and decency in life."¹¹

By the second half of the twenties, however, most of the press was no longer particularly concerned with strife or panaceas. For most of the papers, the coincidence of relative labor peace and prosperity in the late twenties was proof of the effectiveness of harmonious class relations in improving the workers' lot. La Presse and the Star annually rejoiced in Canada's remarkably subdued labor scene. For La Presse the workers prospered since "là où il y a de la bonne volonté et de la générosité, il arrive très rarement que l'on ne puisse pas s'entendre." Indeed so confident was the paper of the workers' docility that it was content to proffer studied blandness instead of analysis, as in the following typical example:

Grâce à Dieu, notre population ouvrière n'est pas seulement fière de la considération dont on l'entoure, elle cherche sans cesse à se rendre digne de la confiance placée en elle.... Nos travailleurs savent que leur sort est intimement lié au sort de la patrie canadienne et ils s'emploient de toutes leurs énergies à rendre cette patrie belle, riche, influente, car ils sont les premiers à en bénéficier.

By comparing contemporary working class conditions with those of fifty or a hundred years earlier, the Star and La Patrie had no difficulty in demonstrating that labor had made tremendous advances in Canada without resorting to the violent extremities of their counterparts elsewhere. This rhetorical trick was employed by the press to encourage the working class to be content with the status quo. So gratified were the

11 La Presse, 5 septembre, 1922, p. 4; Le Devoir, 4 septembre, 1920, p. 3; Star, September 2, 1922, p. 10; La Patrie, 4 septembre, 1920, p. 4; Gazette, September 5, 1921, p. 10.

editorialists with the glories of the present, however, that they could not even envisage the necessity of further improvements. Thus in 1929 La Patrie rejoiced in l'épanouissement of labor which the workers had won by conquering one by one the rights and favored position which were by then universally recognized.¹²

The Gazette, as has been noted, was not so readily convinced that labor conflict was over. In 1924, for example, the paper expressed annoyance at the manual workers' tendency to appropriate to themselves the exclusive right to be called "workers". The paper countered this view by arguing that without the brainwork of the inventive capitalist the manual operative could not hope to be as productive, and therefore create so great a surplus value. No attempt was made to assert that the man who simply clipped coupons was a worker; the issue was skirted by implying that the capitalist himself provided the ingenuity and expertise necessary to direct his enterprise. But such semantic quibbles were only a small part of the Gazette's concern. As late as 1926, the paper maintained that "a leaf [should be] taken out of Mussolini's primer" by establishing joint councils of labor and capital to govern industrial relations. Apparently not only right-wing Catholics were guilty of flirting with corporatism! This willingness to countenance a suspension of the unfettered operations of the free market was a measure of the Gazette's disquiet over industrial conflict. By the last year or two

¹² La Presse, 1 septembre, 1928, p. 30; 3 septembre, 1927, p. 20; La Patrie, 31 août, 1929, p. 16.

of the decade, however, the Gazette had swung around to the prevailing complacency. In 1929 the paper joined with its colleagues in pointing approvingly to the successful outcome of a century of labor's struggle for just recognition. In fact, the paper suggested, the working class was on the threshold of achieving social hegemony.¹³

During the years 1914 to 1929, the Montreal press used its Labor Day editorials to remind workers of their social duties and to minimize any discontent by showing how fortunate they were in comparison with their forebears. Although the promotion of a total war effort provoked some articulate praise of work's nobility, the Labor Day editorialists still tended to treat that theme as self-evident. In the immediate postwar years, however, the convulsions of industrial unrest aroused the press' anger. The Gazette especially emerged then as a regular and vocal critic of strikes and unions. The peaceful prosperity of the late twenties led the press to change its focus by celebrating more than usual the benefits of friendly class collaboration. Changing circumstances, therefore, led the press to emphasize one or the other of our three basic themes. But whether the words evoked the glory of labor's wartime effort, the terrors of industrial conflict, or the pleasures of cooperative prosperity, the message was always the same: the workers must accept the existing social relationships.

Canada had survived the upheaval caused by the wave of

¹³ Gazette, September 2, 1924, p. 10; September 6, 1926, p. 10; September 2, 1929, p. 10.

strikes which had marked the early postwar years, a wave which the Gazette had denounced as the unions' "attempted hold-up". Just as in 1913, the Montreal press by 1929 was convinced that the labor movement had attained a stable summit. Just as in 1913, the Labor Day editorialists proved to be singularly poor prophets.

CHAPTER 5: NOS SOLIDES TRAVAILLEURS - 1930-1938

Man's physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social, moral and spiritual being is striving to express itself and develop itself by constant, painstaking, deliberate effort, while he looks to God for inspiration to perceive the higher possibilities for life and for strength to attain them.

Gazette, September 3, 1938

The Depression precipitated a dramatic change in the Montreal press' Labor Day editorials. During the early twenties at least, strikes and acute class tensions had given the press a target for self-assured criticism of the workers and their unions; during the thirties it was the working class' ominous inactivity which dominated the discussion. This inactivity, in the form of unemployment and union peacefulness, aroused both relief and fear. The absence of industrial strife during the early thirties made the press confident that an overthrow of the economic and social system was impossible; instead the press feared that the system might well preside over its own disintegration. The press' jitters were not so much openly articulated as implied in frequent affirmations of the theme of the efficacy and nobility of hard work. In the midst of economic stagnation and unemployment the press had little need to reiterate the theme of the destructiveness of strikes. However, the crisis did underline the continuing need for all classes to cooperate fully in the interest of general prosperity.

As the Depression left tens of thousands of Montreal

workers without work, the Gazette responded with an exuberant celebration of that elusive commodity. In the early thirties the paper focused on the creative power of work. Labor's role was seen as consummating what genius invented. No man was exempt from the duty to labor; indeed work would hold barbarism in check and make available the means of wealth for the comfort and convenience of the community at large. But this "gospel of work" was not only a cure for most of humanity's ills, it was also a basic ingredient in each man's moral education and maturation. The very act of handling and shaping the material world would determine the worker's character. By overcoming the challenge of hard work the worker would perfect himself as a human being. Almost with nostalgia for past activity the paper recited in 1935 a litany of labor's accomplishments: "It clears forests, raises farms and crops, builds cities, bridges rivers, delves into mines, constructs ships, tunnels hills." Even the timing of Labor Day bore a deeper, more mystical meaning, for September was the month when all the energies of the cosmos were welling up to full fruition; it was clearly a propitious occasion to praise the efforts of thousands of workers who, like nature, quietly but efficiently prepared bounteously for the needs of society. By 1938, the glorification of work had assumed a religious character. Work was man's method of sanctifying himself by cooperating with God in fulfilling His Divine purpose. Indeed, "our God is a working God!", toiling continually to better mankind's

welfare. Could man do less in his own behalf?¹

The other papers concurred, but with differing emphasis. Le Devoir worried about the moral and social consequences of prolonged idleness. All make-work schemes, therefore, had the paper's endorsement. Even if no remuneration were involved, such projects were opportunities to toughen the sagging physical and moral fibre of the working class. To counter what it considered a growing contempt for work, Le Devoir defended it both as a necessary suffering resulting from the Fall of Man, and as an activity worthy of free men because of the Redemption. La Presse welcomed Labor Day as "une occasion pour les ouvriers de rendre un hommage collectif et solennel à la vertu de travail." The Star agreed on the importance of the festival as a glorification of work: it gave the workers a chance to renew their pledges to those high ideals without which work would become a numbing drudgery. In contrast to the abstraction with which the other papers surrounded the pleasures and value of work, La Patrie stated quite bluntly that job security was the prerequisite for any kind of "joy of work." In a similar practical vein, the paper maintained that in the interests of averting socialism, the average worker deserved greater everyday recognition of the value of manual work and more sympathetic respect for union demands.²

1 Gazette, September 7, 1931, p. 12; September 5, 1932, p. 10; September 2, 1935, p. 10; September 7, 1936, p. 10; September 5, 1932, p. 10; September 3, 1934, p. 10; September 3, 1938, p. 8.

2 Le Devoir, 30 août, 1932, p. 1; 27 août, 1935, p. 1; 5 septembre, 1936, p. 1; La Presse, 2 septembre, 1933, p. 22; Star, September 1, 1930, p. 10; La Patrie, 29 août, 1931, p. 12.

The newspaper's exaltation of work in the midst of massive unemployment was ironic. It was also an insult to the unemployed, since it implied that the millions denied work by the economic crisis could not be fully human because they had lost touch with material productivity, the major road to human fulfillment. Although the mass of the unemployed would probably have agreed with this analysis of the destructive effects of idleness, the last thing they needed was a sermon on what they were missing through no fault of their own. But the press was worried about the long-term effects of idleness on social discipline; the more the workers' traditional social role was undermined by the Depression, the more strident was the press in its reaffirmation of that role.

As usual, strikes were roundly condemned for their destructiveness even though they were infrequent in the period. Thus the Gazette in 1934 considered strikes "a colossal blunder"; the Star claimed in 1930 that they were as "serious as international warfare." In 1931, the Star hedged on its opinion, declaring that some clashes were inevitable in the course of humanity's struggle toward the light. But by 1937, the sit-down tactics employed by the Congress of Industrial Organizations once again prompted the paper to denounce strikes as unfortunate "thunderbolts". The C.I.O. also attracted the ire of the Gazette, which suggested that an overly aggressive union movement could quickly run itself into the ground just as the Knights of Labor had done several decades earlier. Although Le Devoir agreed with its

competitors in opposing strikes, the paper's editorialists heaped scorn on the Gazette for its suggestion that industries would leave the province if strikes like that in the textile industry in 1937 were repeated. Because attention had shifted in the thirties to the problem of unemployment, therefore, the theme of the destructiveness of strikes assumed the same status as a truism that the nobility of work had held before 1930.³

The Labor Day editorialists were insistent that the Depression demonstrated once again the necessity of friendly class collaboration. And even though the workers at the time seemed quite willing to act according to this precept, the press did not feel it could take the idea for granted. The papers therefore went to great lengths to praise the working class for bearing its sufferings so nobly. For example, this was La Presse's favorite theme in the period:

C'est la bonne fortune de la province du Québec de posséder une population ouvrière paisible, amie de l'ordre et respectueuse des lois, disposée à coopérer généreusement aux entreprises et aux mouvements propres à favoriser le progrès de notre société et à assurer le bonheur de la masse.

The workers' docility in the face of adversity, remarked La Presse, confirmed their healthy qualities of patience, dignity and acceptance of established authorities and institutions. Because of their heroic attributes, the workers could be counted upon to set a good example of public-spirited behaviour

³ Gazette, September 3, 1934, p. 10; Star, September 1, 1930, p. 10; September 7, 1931, p. 10; September 6, 1937, p. 10; Gazette, September 5, 1938, p. 8; Le Devoir, 28 août, 1937, p. 1.

in a trying time. Year after year, as if in disbelief, La Presse proudly reminded the workers of their calm restraint. According to La Patrie, the years of crisis had enhanced the workers in the eyes of their fellow citizens because of the moral force which their acceptance of deprivation had revealed. The papers may have been aware of the extent of that deprivation, but they rarely mentioned it in the midst of their congratulations to the workers for their patience. In 1937, La Presse briefly acknowledged the pain experienced by the worker in seeing his family suffer and in what it called "the discouraging humiliation" of living off the state. And La Patrie evinced sympathy for the workers' torment in its denunciation of the "angoissante étreinte de la pauvreté" which many were forced to endure despite public assistance.⁴ But such remarks were an afterthought; primarily the workers merited attention because they had refrained from using the crisis as a pretext for challenging the status quo in class relations.

Because of the generally peaceful labor scene during the thirties, the unions also won the press' Labor Day approbation. Indeed, La Patrie argued that the workers were able to remain strong and serene during the difficult hours of the Depression precisely because they were grouped into powerful unions. Only through such organizations could the workers even hope to maintain just salaries and decent working

⁴ La Presse, 2 septembre, 1933, p. 22; 1 septembre, 1934, p. 26; 31 août, 1935, p. 22; La Patrie, 2 septembre, 1933, p. 16; La Presse, 4 septembre, 1937, p. 22; La Patrie, 1 septembre, 1934, p. 32.

conditions. Moreover, La Patrie viewed unions as essential because most good suggestions on how to deal with the crisis had originated within the ranks of organized labor. A qualified version of similar ideas was expressed by the Star when it argued the need for effective organization of workers and employers in order to emulate Great Britain's enlightened system of collective bargaining.⁵ The one consolation discernible in all the suffering was the lesson that social classes were interdependent, the workers and their unions needing their employers' prosperity in order to keep their jobs, and the employers needing their workers' prosperity in order to sell their products.

Beneath the surface of the papers' repeated congratulations of the workers and their unions for their cooperative attitude lurked the fear that friendly class collaboration and social peace might well not endure in conditions of such suffering. For example, La Presse, as a self-proclaimed sincere friend of the workers, felt the need to promise to help preserve peace and contentment by continuing "de cultiver au sein du monde ouvrier les idées saines et les sentiments généreux." In so doing, La Presse exploited an important rhetorical technique, which may be called "prescriptive description". This method of reinforcing social discipline and smooth class relations involved enmeshing admonitions to the workers within what was ostensibly a description of existing reality. Thus in discussing the aftermath of Labor Day, La Presse remarked:

5 La Patrie, 30 août, 1930, p. 16; 5 septembre, 1931, p. 12; 2 septembre, 1933, p. 16; Star, September 7, 1931, p. 10.

"l'artisan de chez nous reprend sa besogne avec un sentiment plus profond de sa dignité, avec un désir plus vif de se montrer ouvrier modèle, parfait citoyen et excellent patriote."

Or again in 1932:

La crise économique ...aura servi à mettre en relief les solides qualités qui distinguent nos travailleurs.... Chacun a admiré leur patience en face des rudes épreuves auxquelles un grand nombre d'entre eux ont été soumis, leur respect de l'ordre, de l'autorité, des institutions, leur esprit de solidarité professionnelle, leur souci sincère de coopérer avec les pouvoirs publics et leurs patrons afin de hâter la fin du chômage.

Certainly there was some truth in such a description, but the annual repetition of such idealized portraits of the perfectly submissive worker must also have served as a way of reminding the workers of what was expected of them in order to preserve amicable class cooperation. Such cultivating of "healthy ideas" among the working class, however, did not preclude frank warnings to the middle class.

As La Presse pointed out in the same editorial:

le meilleur moyen de conserver bon le moral de l'artisan est de lui procurer la chance de gagner sa subsistance et celle de sa famille. S'il est nécessaire de nous imposer des sacrifices pour occuper utilement l'ouvrier, n'hésitons pas à les consentir. Nous aurons par là contribué à fortifier l'ordre social et par conséquence à sauvegarder nos propres intérêts, à défendre notre propriété.⁶

Despite the worsening conditions during the Depression, the press still clung to its argument of the late 1920's that friendly class collaboration had proven its worth by improving

⁶ La Presse, 5 septembre, 1931, p.32; 3 septembre, 1932, p. 30.

the workers' lot over the past several decades. The Star argued, for example, that however bad conditions might be, they were still better than those faced by earlier generations of workers. Following this idea further, the paper called upon employers to continue proving the value of class cooperation by viewing themselves as trustees invested with responsibility for the welfare of their workers. Thus the Gazette could reiterate the view it had expressed in the late 1920's that the working class was achieving a dominant social role:

The 19th century wrought a miracle in behalf of labor. Steam power revolutionized the industrial world. The physical sciences changed the face of continents. The introduction of labor-saving machinery multiplied the productive capacity of the community a hundredfold. The vast army of workers increased under the stimulus of new inventions and new markets opening up on every side. Nations grew richer than at any period previously known.... The working man's lot has been made conformable to higher standards. One modern writer puts the matter broadly by saying that labor is today in the position of the aristocracy during the centuries when feudalism was being established.

Such a perspective would certainly give the impression that the workers had much to be grateful for, even if their position had declined in the immediate past. The very celebration of Labor Day, the Gazette maintained, embodied a mighty change in what it called "the spirit of the modern age" in that labor unions had been a major force in the democratic impulse which had effectively transferred power from the privileged few to the masses over the last few decades. In the hands of La Presse, however, even encouragement such as this had strings attached. In 1938, the workers were reminded how their social influence allegedly

grew from year to year leaving them with new responsibilities to balance their new prerogatives: "Ce serait certes injustice de ne pas vouloir donner après avoir tant reçu."⁷

To some extent, the Depression invited press criticisms of the free enterprise system itself by highlighting the fact that prosperity depended on close cooperation among all social groups. Both La Patrie and the Star espoused the Keynesian idea that working class purchasing power should be protected in order to ensure a market for industrial production. This idea contrasted with the conventional wisdom of the early 1920's which held that if prices fell, then the workers must pay their share by accepting wage cuts. For La Patrie at least, this policy was part of a belief in a more even distribution of wealth. In the Gazette, competition and selfishness were questioned and then severely criticized as two pillars of sand whose continued acceptance might well spell ruin for civilization. Despite this criticism, however, the paper could not help wondering whether the labor-socialist society which it saw emerging would be a free society which could assure the best development of each individual. This obvious groping indicated a genuine fear that existing class relations might be permanently altered as a consequence of the Depression.⁸

During the Depression, then, the press lost much of the

⁷ Star, September 3, 1934, p. 10; September 6, 1937, p. 10; Gazette, September 7, 1936, p. 10; September 1, 1930, p. 10; La Presse, 3 septembre, 1938, p. 22.

⁸ La Patrie, 30 août, 1930, p. 16; Star, September 5, 1932, p. 10; September 4, 1933, p. 10; La Patrie, 3 septembre, 1932, p. 16; Gazette, September 1, 1930, p. 10; September 6, 1937, p. 8; September 3, 1934, p. 10.

confidence which it had displayed during the twenties, By its exuberant praise of the nobility of work the Montreal Labor Day editorialists⁹ sought to counteract the corrosive effect of idleness and poverty on social discipline.

Although the theme of the destructiveness of strikes was not prominent in the period, genuine fears were evident that the workers' stoic acceptance of adversity might not be sustained indefinitely. As a result, the theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was stressed both in relieved description of the situation, and in persuasion designed to maintain the existing social structure. If workers and even unions were lauded with unwonted fervor for their patience, so was much sacrifice demanded of them. For the first time the press questioned some of the fundamentals of the free enterprise system by criticizing competition and institutionalized greed. But such questioning merely served to indicate the depth of the press' disquiet. The editorialists' clinging to work as the means of salvation in time of trial demonstrated that they remained committed to traditional social insights and to the existing distribution of social power. The World War which broke out in 1939 only intensified the press' desire to reinforce the workers' faith in the necessity of hard work and class collaboration; happily for the press it also afforded them a potent argument for the indispensability of both.

9 From 1935, La Patrie took on the format of a sensationalist tabloid under its new publisher, La Presse, and its editorial page declined drastically in quality. Because of its loss of independence and lowered standards, the new La Patrie was deleted from the group of papers analyzed after 1934.

CHAPTER 6: THE GOSPEL OF LABOR - 1939-1950

No ethic is sound that does not end in
sound workmanship; no religion can be
true that does not end in true work.

Star, August 30, 1941

For all the anguish it caused, the Second World War did create jobs. However grim its challenge, the War did infuse everyday life with a new sense of purpose and determination. To meet the Allied forces' insatiable demand for materiel, Canadian industrial production soared to record levels during the War. Despite strict government controls on wages and prices, however, rising worker expectations fueled a discontent which flared into bitter strikes in the last years of the War. In the immediate postwar years, union drives to organize unskilled workers in mass production industries, and to catch up with sky-rocketing prices, provoked continued labor turmoil. The aftermath of this War, however, contrasted with that of the First World War. Instead of sliding into a new depression as everyone had anticipated, industry faltered only briefly before surging on to new growth. This time prosperity ensured that there were at least some rewards for the workers to share.

In this period, as in the others before it, the Montreal press stressed our three themes in their Labor Day editorials in order to persuade the workers to continue to accept their role as patient and loyal producers respectful of the status quo. In encouraging the workers not to flag in their war

effort the press continued to extol the nobility of work with unusual enthusiasm. In the postwar years, however, interest in praising work waned considerably. The theme of the destructiveness of strikes was emphasized both during and after the War in response to union militance. Similarly, the press' analysis of the nation's priorities both during the War and in the postwar years led the Labor Day editorialists to refer frequently to the idea of the necessity of friendly class collaboration.

As we have seen, the papers insisted on the value of work during the thirties, no doubt as a way to boost morale in a disillusioning time. But with the arrival of the Second World War and the end of unemployment, the English-language press in particular went beyond simple boosterism to indulge in a fervent reaffirmation of the Protestant work ethic. At the very least, the Gazette argued, work allowed men to overcome the inanity and monotony of a life of idleness, empty of color, purpose or joy. But ultimately, work was capable of "transforming our civilization so that none shall be needy, hungry or unemployed." The paper maintained moreover that labor was the "divinely appointed way of life that gives each man an opportunity to fulfill the purpose of God." This perspective cast a new and sublime light on the most ordinary tasks. No longer could they be a curse; instead they became a means of grace. Laboring in cooperation with "the Divine Worker", men shaped their own character and accomplished the highest ministry of participating in what the Star called "the reciprocity of burden-bearing" which

constituted true brotherhood. The following verse which appeared in the Gazette underlined the solemnity of this task:

My work is mine, and heresy or not,
If my hand slacked I should rob God;
Not God Himself can make man's best,
Without best men to help Him.

The Star was equally forceful in embracing these ideas:

"When the desire to create real value becomes the dominant value of industrial civilization, the whole work of the world will then contribute to upbuilding a higher humanity." Indeed, modern democracy justified itself in the battle with Germany because democracy had developed and sustained the world's highest standards of workmanship.¹

Aside from reminding workers of the catechism lesson that Christ had redeemed manual labor and made it worthy of free men, the French-language papers were not much attracted to the transcendent interpretations of work which so excited the Gazette and the Star. La Presse welcomed the abundance of paying jobs as a source of joy for those who had endured the Depression. Work, declared the paper, ennobled men "en les arrachant aux loisirs déprimants pour donner à leur vie un sens, une direction, et une fécondité dont bénéficient tous ceux qui les entourent." And the effort which the workers devoted to the War in their new-found jobs was a legitimate cause for pride. Le Devoir characterized work as the creation of beauty and utility for men. The paper therefore

¹ Gazette, September 2, 1939, p. 8; September 2, 1939, p. 8; Star, September 4, 1948, p. 8; Gazette, August 30, 1941, p. 8; Star, August 30, 1941, p. 6.

rejected both the materialist view of work as the pursuit of money, and the Jansenist view of it as "une malédiction [qu'il faut] porter tête basse pour l'expiation de nos péchés." The entire Montreal press, then, celebrated work with fervor during the War years, although the English-language papers went much further than their French counterparts in proclaiming work's saving power.²

With the coming of peace in 1945, the Labor Day editorialists generally turned away from the theme of work's nobility. The Star did insist in 1948 that the idle man was a parasite and a sorrow to his neighbors, while the man busy and efficient in the affairs of the world inspired by love for some great ideal was truly alive. And La Presse did maintain that the potential wealth of Canada's resources in the postwar era would only be realized by conscientious and skillful labor. But in general, as the memory of the Depression's unemployment and the War's imperatives began to fade, so also did the Montreal press' enthusiasm for praising work.³

Throughout the period, however, the papers agreed that Labor Day was a potent symbol of work's glory. La Presse expressed this interpretation most clearly in 1940 on "la journée consacrée spécialement à l'exaltation du travail":

Le Travail! vertu civique dont la large et profonde diffusion au sein de la masse populaire rend l'Etat stable, prospère et heureux. L'amusement légitime

2 La Presse, 30 août, 1941, p. 24; 2 septembre, 1939, p. 22; Le Devoir, 31 août, 1940, p. 1.

3 Star, September 4, 1948, p. 8; La Presse, 4 septembre, 1948, p. 23.

et sain, oui, mais accompagné, précédé de la satisfaction volontaire généreuse au précepte du travail. Toute société qui renverse cet ordre, rompt cet équilibre voulu par le divin Créateur, compromet sa tranquillité, risque son bonheur. La fidélité avec laquelle ils honorent le Travail témoignent que nos ouvriers... veulent respecter le plan providentiel, qu'ils sont résolus à y établir leur vie.

Similarly, the Star called upon the workers to revive the spirit of Labor Day's founders and return to the glorification of toil. In 1942, that paper saw Labor Day as an opportunity to urge every man and woman to renew his commitment to the greatest job yet imposed upon humanity. The Gazette suggested that the holiday had religious implications for all thinking persons in its recognition of work's fulfilling quality. The paper welcomed the chance afforded by the festival for Montreal's citizens to pay fair tribute to the worth and dignity of labor.⁴

The workers themselves seemed lost amid this glorification of work. Interest in them was primarily limited to commenting on the heavy responsibility which the workers bore during the War, a responsibility which they could be counted upon to fulfill. In general, the papers preferred to discuss the vague concept "labor" rather than the workers in their Labor Day editorials. In 1944, for example, the Star described labor as "carrying on its broad shoulders the most important burden ever assigned." Only fleetingly in 1939 did the paper express the view that there should be no delusions about what life was like for the millions who toiled for a

⁴ La Presse, 31 août, 1940, p. 22; Star, August 30, 1947, p. 8; September 7, 1942, p. 8; Gazette, September 2, 1939, p. 8; September 4, 1950, p. 6.

living. More common, however, was the paper's excitement over the "enormous amount of sheer, stark muscle and sweat" available across the country. Such references, as well as similar comments which could be cited from La Presse and the Gazette, reflected the press' preoccupation with the workers' productive capacity and its relative disinterest in the workers as people.⁵ In this period, then, there was little tendency for the workers themselves to be included in the nobility which the Labor Day editorialists praised in their work.

The occurrence of many important strikes in the last years of the War and the first years of peace provoked the usual strong denunciations of the destructiveness of strikes. The wave of industrial turmoil during 1943 and 1944 led the Star to accuse labor of still being in knee pants because it had allowed work interruptions to jeopardize the war effort. Such union action resembled those same totalitarian methods that Canada was combatting abroad. Indeed, as the Star remarked earlier in the War, any production stoppage constituted a betrayal of those who were dying for their country. At the same time, La Presse worried that the growth of unions during the War would be one of the principal economic and social problems of the future because unionists would use every weapon in their power, including strikes, to gain the security which had been denied them for a decade and a half and

⁵ Star, September 4, 1944, p. 10; September 4, 1939, p. 8; September 2, 1940, p. 8.

the abundance which they had never known. The postwar outbreak of strikes in 1946, however, aroused an even stronger critique than that which was articulated during the War. The Gazette, for example, angrily condemned the unions' defiance of the law through their strikes, and called for a "conclusive showdown" to demolish labor's "virtual insurrection". So aroused was the paper that despite its own general admonition to avoid inflammatory comments, one editorial warned that any violence would be the strikers' responsibility. The Star was equally upset, suggesting that the strikes must have been of Communist inspiration; the workers could not possibly have struck of their own volition simultaneously in such numbers. And at the end of the decade, bestirred by the Asbestos strike of 1949 and the first national railway strike of 1950, Le Devoir denounced strikes as the outward manifestation of a general secularized greed which might well lead to the very social polarization which Karl Marx had predicted would destroy capitalist society.⁶

Despite these criticisms, however, there was some evidence in the period of a greater acceptance of strikes, and consequently of unions, than had ever existed previously. For example, the Gazette, which had always been most outspoken in its critique of industrial conflict, argued early in the War that strikes should only be a labor weapon of last resort. But even this admonition represented a shift in

⁶ Star, September 4, 1944, p. 10; September 7, 1942, p. 8; La Presse, 2 septembre, 1944, p. 1; Gazette, August 30, 1946, p. 8; Star, August 31, 1946, p. 8; Le Devoir, 30 aout, 1950, p. 4.

attitude from the paper's traditionally unqualified rejection of strikes. In its post-victory assessment of the workers' contribution to the war effort the paper's editorialists argued that the few union abuses which had taken place during the War should not be permitted to detract from labor's generally splendid War record. Although the strikes of 1946 provoked the paper to revert to its more familiar attacks on strikes and unions, the restoration of labor peace in 1947 and the subsequent union initiatives to purge themselves of Communists led the Gazette by 1950 to endorse the majority of the nation's labor leaders as "sound, respectable Canadians" whose unions were effective tools in the preservation of democracy. And Le Devoir, which certainly was no enthusiast for strikes, nevertheless did support the workers in the Asbestos strike of 1949, and rejected the charge that such a position represented "un gauchissement inquiétant."⁷ Therefore, despite the persistence in the forties of the traditional theme of the destructiveness of strikes, the Labor Day editorialists of at least two Montreal dailies evidenced a partial acceptance of the legitimacy of strike activity.

In an effort to foster harmonious class collaboration both during the Second World War and in the postwar years,

⁷ Gazette, September 1, 1941, p. 8; September 3, 1945, p. 8; September 4, 1950, p. 6; Le Devoir, 3 septembre, 1949, p. 4. In its 1949 Labor Day editorial Le Devoir does not specifically mention its support for the workers in the Asbestos strike of that year. However, it seems clear that that support was an important part of the general charge of "un gauchissement inquiétant", levelled by some conservative Catholics, against which the paper sought to defend itself in its Labor Day editorial of that year.

the Montreal press sought to identify working class interests with those of the nation. Any friction between classes, therefore, was to be subordinated to national priorities. During the War, for example, the papers sought to show the workers how their well-being depended upon an Allied victory. Once again the press reminded the workers of the tremendous progress which they had achieved over the past several decades through the exercise of the rights and freedoms guaranteed to them by the existing regime. The Gazette, for example, pointed to the fact that in modern Canada workers could dress like their employers, smoke the same cigarettes, and even eat the same food! To lose the War would mean forfeiting every advantage which labor had gained over the past century through the beneficent operation of Canadian democracy. La Presse stressed how defeat would be disastrous for the workers by underlining the fact that wherever totalitarianism established itself the very freedom of association on which the unions depended for their existence was typically one of the first casualties.⁸

So eager were the English-language Labor Day editorialists to assure the workers' full collaboration with the other social classes in support of the war effort, that they sought to portray a future worth fighting for as well as a past worth preserving. The Star argued, for example, that if collective bargaining and conciliation could work to ensure labor peace as a matter of government policy during the War,

⁸ Gazette, September 1, 1941, p. 8; September 7, 1942, p. 8; September 2, 1940, p. 8; La Presse, 29 août, 1942, p. 30.

then these same techniques should become the accepted methods of labor-management relations in a victorious Canada. The Gazette adopted a similar approach, advocating the establishment of worker-employer councils as outgrowths of the labor-management committees active in several war plants as a vehicle which would permit labor to make its contribution as a partner with industry and government in designing postwar Canada. The Star even attempted to draw on the idealism underlying the war effort by suggesting that a perfect society could someday be created through Christian leadership. Echoing a long-standing Catholic precept, the paper claimed that it was the task of the Christian Church to guide in the construction of a new society by striving to interpret one class to another: "The Church's work is never done until the Prince of Peace is crowned Lord of Lords in the kingdom of industry." But the Star was quick to caution its readers that although the splendid vision of winning "life through death and gain through tragic loss" could sustain effort during the War, it would take a very long time to work out a just and abiding Christian society. Besides, the Star's feeble millennialism was suspect because in the midst of a war supposedly being fought to defend democracy, the paper criticized the possibility that the "incompetent" majority would dominate at the expense of the capable and industrious few as the "great peril of democracy". In view of these qualifications, it seems evident that the future visions were not promoted for their own sake, but as a further means of winning the workers'

friendly collaboration in the War. Even the relatively mundane idea of a sophisticated collective bargaining system for the postwar period dropped from sight once it was no longer needed to inspire the workers' commitment to the military defence of the existing social structure.⁹

In their postwar Labor Day editorials the Montreal papers argued the necessity of friendly class collaboration first, as a prerequisite for exploiting Canada's boundless economic potential, and second, as essential to combating Communist infiltration into Canadian society. The Star began by recognizing the workers' decisive wartime contribution but warning that without further willingness to compromise, reconversion to a peacetime economy could be very painful to the workers, and the rewards their efforts had earned might be postponed indefinitely. La Presse made the same point in a positive way by stressing that intimate class cooperation was necessary in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities opened up by Canada's resources and the demands of war-torn Europe and Asia:

On se plaît à répéter que les chances de succès n'ont jamais été aussi grandes pour le Canada qu'elles le sont à l'heure actuelle.... D'où le besoin, l'urgence d'une entente sincère et ferme entre les classes de la société.... Le magnifique rôle joué par l'ouvrier au cours des années de guerre est un gage qu'il est résolu à ne pas rester en arrière dans les entreprises de reconstruction.

The paper argued as well that the cooperation of organized labor was required to decide any important national question

⁹ Star, September 6, 1943, p. 8; Gazette, September 4, 1944, p. 8; Star, September 5, 1942, p. 8; September 6, 1943, p. 8.

of economic or social policy. The Gazette pointed to the great union progress achieved after the strikes had subsided as proof that the workers could gain more by negotiation than by strikes. In support of this view the paper quoted Samuel Gompers with approval:

The marchers of Labor Day signalize no martial glory, brutal domination, conquests or warlike pomp. They manifest in essence the growing intelligence of workers who recognize peace to be as essential to success in industry and to real prosperity as air is to lung-breathing animals.

By such cooperation the workers could expect to reap the benefits of prosperity accruing from increased economic activity in Canada.¹⁰

Both the Gazette and the Star feared, however, that the fruits of cooperation were threatened by the infiltration of Communists into union ranks to foment discord. For these papers the problem of Communism was a test issue which would indicate whether the working class intended to wield its new power wisely in the interests of national progress, or whether it would attempt to use dictation and paralysis in pursuit of its own narrow class goals. When it became clear in the late forties that most unions would sweep out the Communists, the Star suggested that the Cold War had proven a spur to cooperation, since capital and labor once more had closed ranks as in the War, against a power which threatened to destroy not only capitalism but the labor movement as well.¹¹

¹⁰ Star, August 25, 1945, p. 10; La Presse, 31 août, 1946, p. 30; 3 septembre, 1949, p. 30; Gazette, September 1, 1947, p. 6; September 5, 1949, p. 8.

¹¹ Gazette, September 6, 1948, p. 6; Star, September 8, 1948, p. 14; August 30, 1947, p. 8.

In the postwar period there was also some tendency in the press to spurn the glib answers of the past much as in the late thirties some of the fundamentals of the capitalist system were briefly questioned. One typical editorial published in Le Devoir in 1949 denied, for example, that Communism could be fought by denouncing Moscow without ensuring social justice at home:

Comme toujours, si les gardiens de l'ordre, détenteurs légitimes de l'autorité, négligent d'exercer la primordiale fonction de justice, Dieu donnera libre cours aux instruments de sa vengeance.... On n'empêchera la croissance du Communisme en Canada qu'en déracinant les germes canadiens du communisme. Ces germes il faut les voir où ils sont dans le régime monstrueux que nous avons laissé grandir, que nos lois tolèrent ou favorisent, dont nos gouvernants, nos magistrats, voire un certain nombre de nos ecclésiastiques, sont, inconsciemment, je veux le croire, les gardiens, les complices et parfois les profiteurs.

In an earlier editorial in a similar vein, the paper mocked those who condemned in the workers the very cooperative impulse that they praised in the farmers. Even the Gazette showed an uncharacteristic openness and reserve in inviting labor's answer to a basic but vexing dilemma: how to balance the public interest against the valid private interests of both labor and employers. In earlier times the paper had tended to identify the public interest with the employers' by insisting on the absolute priority of uninterrupted production.¹² For the first time, then, at least two major Montreal newspapers were willing to concede in their Labor Day editorials that they had no ready answers to the

¹² Le Devoir, 3 septembre, 1949, p. 4; 23 août, 1947, p. 1; Gazette, September 4, 1950, p. 6.

continuing problem of how to ensure friendly class collaboration.

Despite the notable, but still isolated examples of hesitation cited above, the general thrust of the Montreal press' Labor Day editorials between 1939 and 1950 was what it had always been: the workers had most to gain by working hard, avoiding work stoppages and accepting a cooperative role in the existing social order. During the War the theme of the nobility of work dominated the press' attention, partly in order to reinforce a total working class commitment to the war effort, and partly in celebration of the renewed abundance of employment. But the return of prosperity in the years after the Armistice in 1945 meant that there was little need to continue reminding the workers of the value of work. Both during and after the War labor unrest prompted the press to decry the destructiveness of strikes, although there were hints of some acceptance of strikes as a part of the process of industrial relations. At the same time, the Labor Day editorialists tried to enlist both fear and hope in arguing the necessity of friendly class collaboration. During the War, fear of the consequences of an Allied defeat and hope for the spoils of victory underpinned the press' approach. After 1945, the press relied on fear of Communism and hope for the benefits of rapid economic growth to move its readers. But the national railway strike of 1950 proved that the unions could still be troublesome in their readiness to disrupt the Canadian economy for selfish motives. It remained to complete the workers' education

in what the English-language papers called the "gospel of labor" which demanded a "reciprocity of burden-bearing". In their Labor Day editorials, however, the Montreal press discussed the burdens of only one class, the workers. It was a curious way to honor them.

CONCLUSION: THE CULTIVATION OF HEALTHY
IDEAS - 1886-1950

Change was the most outstanding characteristic of the economic and social development of Montreal between 1886 and 1950. The sevenfold increase in the city's population to nearly 1,400,000 by 1950, coupled with the wide diffusion of the fruits of modern technical genius, transformed the city. Underlying this rapid urbanization and modernization was the successful establishment of a diverse and sophisticated manufacturing base. This in turn spurred expansion in the city's traditional economic specialties: transportation, commerce and finance. At the same time, working men and women banded together into unions in ever greater numbers to gain for themselves a larger share of the wealth created by the city's economic advance. And the press participated in this general remaking by transfiguring itself from the literate, rabidly partisan preserve of the educated élite into the eager purveyor of disaster and scandal for the new urban masses.

The Labor Day festival which was born in 1886 was an element of continuity in the midst of this transformation, serving as an expression of the Montreal working class' trade union consciousness. As a rallying point for unionists and as advertising aimed at the unorganized, the holiday provided workers with a chance to assert their dignity as skilled producers and to demonstrate the strength made possible by their solidarity. Through a peaceful parade and recreation

the workers were able to recognize their common condition and renew their determination to use union action to obtain improvements in their living and working conditions. But in the swirl of change which characterized Montreal during those years, not even this institution could persist unaffected. After reaching a peak of participation and success in the years immediately after World War One, Labor Day began to lose its drawing power. New generations of workers found the celebration less attractive than an excursion to the countryside. By the forties, despite a rapid growth in union membership, the holiday was honored by only a few thousand faithful in Montreal. Labor Day was in eclipse, a victim of social changes and the failure of its organizers to adopt it.

In the context of these changes in Montreal's economic and social life, La Presse, the Star, La Patrie, the Gazette, and Le Devoir used Labor Day as an opportunity to make an editorial statement about what the French-language press liked to call "la question ouvrière". But given the festival's peaceful character, it was hardly surprising that the papers used the day for a rhetorical celebration of basic verities, rather than for critical analysis. Regularly, the press stressed the three themes of the nobility of work, the destructiveness of strikes and the necessity of friendly class collaboration. Superficially, there would seem to be no reason why last year's effort could not be hauled out and refurbished from one year to the next. No paper would be likely to condemn work, or praise strikes or denigrate class

collaboration on Labor Day. In fact, however, there was more to the Labor Day editorial than mere rhetoric, for the emphasis placed on each theme evolved from one period to another in response to such phenomena as wars, depressions, or a major wave of strikes. We shall review these developments briefly by recapitulating each theme in turn.

Although the Labor Day editorialists routinely lavished grandiloquent praise upon work between 1886 and 1950, it was only in the 1930's and early 1940's that the theme became dominant. Before those years, the Montreal press honored work as the method of producing the necessities of life, of overcoming boredom through the pleasures of activity and creation, and of providing the nation with the effort required to achieve its goals, whether economic growth, or winning the First World War. But these noble qualities of work were treated as truisms, if not afterthoughts, in the Labor Day editorials. During the Depression, however, the Montreal press celebrated the value of work as a prerequisite to human maturation and even spiritual salvation. Indeed, work became in the press' eyes a duty to God without whose fulfillment no one could claim to be completely human. Apparently fearing that prolonged unemployment might sap the workers' social discipline, the press made the nobility of work its major point in the 1930's. The outbreak of the Second World War led the Labor Day editorialists to redouble their praise of work to spur the workers on to renewed effort against the barbarian enemy. This propaganda in support of a total war effort differed from that employed during the

previous war in the prominence accorded the transcendent importance of work. With the return of peace in 1945, however, the Labor Day editorialists reverted to their former habit of treating the nobility of work as an obvious fact. Work, therefore, could only gain editorial priority during a war, or a period when social discipline seemed threatened.

The theme of the destructiveness of strikes was also one which the Labor Day editorialists preferred, unless provoked, to leave implicit. Only when a wave of strikes emerged did the press feel moved to comment; once moved, however, the press knew only the language of thunderous denunciation. On such occasions, the press condemned strikes as the disruptive, even subversive, weapon of greedy malcontents which would ruin employers, jeopardize national progress and injure the innocent public. Except briefly in La Presse and La Patrie, the press never dealt with the question of how to conduct peaceful negotiations with intransigent employers. Even when editorialists did analyze specific strikes, the treatment almost always emphasized a return to order, rather than evaluation of the issues. Outside of a few years after the turn of the century, strikes were generally too infrequent in the period before the First World War to merit much attention. However, the upsurge of labor and social turmoil which challenged the stability of the capitalist economies in the first years after the war provoked in the press strident criticism of strikes and unions. By the late twenties, the return of relative industrial peace

led all but the Gazette away from the discussion of strikes in Labor Day editorials. Although several specific examples of strike action were denounced during the Depression, it was not until the middle forties that another major wave of strikes made the theme of the destructiveness of strikes important again. But this development was shortlived, and there was even some evidence in those years in Le Devoir and the Gazette of a willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of strikes in certain circumstances. Although the Labor Day editorialists' view of the destructiveness of strikes changed little between 1886 and 1950, it was only in particular situations that the theme became prominent.

The theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was always important, however. No matter what conditions they surveyed in their Labor Day editorials, the Montreal press found in them corroboration of their view that class cooperation was essential to social progress. In time of war, the survival of the national way of life and the protection of the workers' hard-won rights dictated collaboration between the classes to assure a total war effort. These ideas were expounded with equal conviction during both the First and Second World Wars. In time of peace, the nation's economic potential cried out for common action to achieve the greatest possible wealth for everyone. Before the First World War, for example, several newspapers embraced the new unions with approval, arguing that effective combination of the workers was a condition for the maintenance of industrial harmony.

Gathered into peaceful cohorts, the workers would be better able to negotiate with their employers who also felt a need to group themselves into trusts. The prosperity and calm which characterized the years before both World Wars appeared to prove the efficacy of the press' views. Building on these precedents in the years after 1945, the press invited the workers to cooperate in exploiting Canada's economic advantages to achieve an even greater prosperity. In time of depression, hardship taught the stern lesson that no one could prosper without the aid of all. By discussing the workers' conditions from the perspective of several decades, or even centuries, the press was able to give the impression that the workers had gained too much through cooperation to abandon that approach in favor of militancy, even if their position had declined in the immediate past. Always, the Labor Day editorialists tended to ignore the socio-economic reality of the workers' lives, to underplay the idea of social class, and to exaggerate the workers' status and well-being. In general, the press was prepared to live with the advances won by unions in the past; but the papers very seldom even mentioned the possibility of future advances. Instead, the Labor Day editorialists concentrated throughout the years between 1886 and 1950 on arguing for friendly cooperation between the classes in order to preserve social peace. Although the terms of the argument varied from one period to another, the theme itself was basic to nearly every editorial.

In promoting these themes each of the papers also possessed

a distinct personality which further enhanced the variety of the Labor Day editorials. La Presse, the most faithful publisher of editorials, articles and special messages on Labor Day, favored a paternalistic approach. Although a critical sensitivity in front page Labor Day articles counterpointed this editorial approach before the First World War, by the twenties and thirties, the paper adopted an enduring blandness throughout. Consistent with this perspective, the paper gloried in the theme of the nobility of work. But even in the worst waves of labor turmoil, La Presse avoided dealing with the strikes explicitly. The paper preferred to describe what it saw as the workers' docility and prosperity, no doubt relying on the efficacy of the power of suggestion. In dealing with the theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration, year after year La Presse recycled its warnings against subversives, its reminders of Quebec labor's good reputation, and its pious advice to cooperate in maximizing the nation's wealth. The paper claimed to be a sincere friend of the workers, always ready to "cultiver au sein du monde ouvrier les idées saines et les sentiments généreux."¹ If there was "une vaste famille ouvrière", as La Presse claimed repeatedly, then that paper considered itself the father figure.

The Star was very consistent during the years covered by this thesis in its enthusiastic optimism and its simplistic rhetoric. Because of the paper's intense loyalty to Britain, it was especially active in the war years, praising and

1 5 septembre, 1931, p. 32.

cajoling the workers to a total commitment to the Allied cause. In the Second World War, as well as the last few years of the Depression, the paper spearheaded the press' general praise of the transcendent value of work. The Star also joined the Gazette in denouncing strikes in the years following both World Wars, but it lacked the latter's shrillness. Although the paper certainly believed that business and industry should operate in harmony, its standard answer to class problems was to deny the relevance and even the existence of classes in Canada, maintaining that amid the expanding opportunities of a young country, merit was the only arbiter of success. Indeed, there was no problem that the Star could not explain away with a trite phrase.

La Patrie provided an interesting contrast to both La Presse and the Star until it was absorbed by La Presse in 1933. Although the paper certainly acknowledged the virtues of work, the other themes always outweighed this one for La Patrie's editorialists. Persistently, the paper adopted a liberal approach to industrial issues, blaming capital and labor equally for whatever conflicts degenerated into strikes. Although the paper was considerably more sympathetic than any of its rivals to the workers' sufferings, it still considered strikes to be undesirable tools for achieving improvements. But if La Patrie defended workers and unions against their detractors, the very liberal viewpoint which motivated the defence made it an ardent advocate of the necessity of friendly class collaboration. In general, La Patrie tended to employ a more forthright, articulate and

analytical style of writing than either La Presse or the Star. And unlike La Presse, which addressed itself to the workers, but in condescension, La Patrie regularly spoke to the general public more in the workers' defence than in criticism.

The Gazette considered itself the tribune of reason. Lacking any special affection for the workers, the paper lashed out at the slightest evidence of industrial disruption. Throughout the years between 1886 and 1950, but especially in the 1930's and 1940's, the Gazette was outspoken in its recognition of work's nobility. But strikes aroused the paper's passions most. Thus in the 1920's the paper led its colleagues in denouncing the destructiveness of strikes. Because the Gazette included in its awareness the British, American and European scenes, the paper could find sufficient cause to fill its editorials with foreboding, even when Canadian industry was free of strife. For the Gazette, class collaboration was an obvious imperative. Only by maximizing production could the workers hope to improve their lot; only by leaving capital a free hand to exploit the country's potential without being harassed by labor's whining could production be maximized. In arguing its views, the paper used everything from careful reason to innuendo; always, however, the Gazette's editorials were sophisticated.

Although Le Devoir was an infrequent contributor of Labor Day editorials, its efforts were the most earnest and analytical. For example, although Le Devoir worried with the rest of the press about what effect the enforced idleness of the Depression would have on social discipline, in dealing

with the nobility of work, the paper still felt compelled to scrutinize what work meant. And although Le Devoir disapproved of strikes in general, by 1949 the paper did lend its support to the Asbestos strike. Even so, the paper questioned the secularism evident in the greed for private gain which motivated both sides in the strikes of the late 1940's. The theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was very dear to Le Devoir, since that was one of the basic tenets of the Catholic unionism which the paper spent its initial decades championing. In general, however, the paper's critical perspective gave it the independence necessary to cut through platitudes. Between 1910 and 1950, the paper's reasoned style combined with the conviction of its views differentiated it from the rest of the Montreal press.

At the centre of the entire Montreal press' approach to Labor Day was a fascinating ambiguity. The words "travail" in French and "labor" in English are both imprecise; they refer equally to work and to the collectivity of workers. This confusion was encouraged by the nature of capitalist enterprise which stripped workers of their individuality by establishing a free market in labor, and by technical advances which replaced skilled artisans with mechanized assembly lines. By playing on the ambiguity of the words "travail" and "labor", the Montreal Labor Day editorialists could simultaneously praise the workers (labor), and admonish them to make still greater efforts by praising work (labor). In this way, the press could tell their readers what they wanted to hear, and

at the same time tell them what the press felt they ought to hear, thus fulfilling precisely the formula for an ideal Labor Day editorial presented in the Introduction. The meaning of Labor Day could thus be finely controlled; according to emphasis, it could be the festival of the workers, or the festival of work.

Despite the variations of thematic emphasis over time, and the papers' differing personalities, however, one purpose underlay all the Labor Day editorials and articles throughout the sixty-five years: to keep the workers in their place by discouraging them from seeking any fundamental alteration in the distribution of social power. Indeed, the press' desire to remain true to this fundamental idea explains the shifts of thematic emphasis from one period to another. By praising work, denouncing strikes, and advocating friendly class collaboration in various combinations, the Montreal Labor Day editorialists could tailor their message to the exigencies of the moment in the same way they could manipulate the meaning of "travail" and "labor". Although one paper's personality may have led it to disagree with its colleagues about the perception of a particular problem, at no time did any of the papers diverge from the central purpose. Always the goal was to discourage any tendencies which might disturb existing social relationships. Neither religion, nor language, nor time made any significant difference.

APPENDIX 1: LABOR DAY EDITORIALS IN FIVE MONTREAL
DAILY NEWSPAPERS: 1886-1950

<u>Year</u>	<u>La Presse</u>	<u>Gazette</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>La Patrie</u>	<u>Le Devoir</u>	<u>Total</u>
1886						
1887						
1888	1		2	1		4
1889	1					1
1890	1	1				2
1891						
1892	1					1
1893	2	1		1		4
1894	2	1		1		4
1895	1			1		2
1896						
1897	1					1
1898	1			1		2
1899	1		1	1		3
1900	2					2
1901	2			1		3
1902		1		2		3
1903	1	1		1		3
1904	2	1	1	2		6
1905	1	2		2		5
1906	1	1	1	4		7
1907	1		1	1		3
1908	1		1	2		4
1909	1	2	1	1		5
1910	1			3		4
1911	1	1	1	1		4
1912	1		1	1	2	5
1913	2				1	3
1914	1		1			2
1915	2		1	1		4
1916	1		1		1	3
1917	2	1	1	1	1	6
1918	1		1	1	1	4
1919	2	2	1	3	1	9
1920	2	3	2	2	1	10
1921	1	5	2	1	1	10
1922	3	1	4	2		10
1923	2	1	1	1		5
1924	2	1	1			4
1925	2	1	1	1	1	6

<u>Year</u>	<u>La Presse</u>	<u>Gazette</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>La Patrie</u>	<u>Le Devoir</u>	<u>Total</u>
1926	1	2	1	2		6
1927	1	1	1	1		4
1928	1	1	2	1		5
1929	2	1	1	1		5
1930	1	1	1	1		4
1931	2	1	1	2		6
1932	1	1	1	1	1	5
1933	1	1	1	1		4
1934	1	1	1	1		4
1935	1	1	1			3
1936	1	1	1		1	4
1937	1	1	1		1	4
1938	1	2	1			4
1939	1	2	1			4
1940	1	1	1		1	4
1941	1	2	2			5
1942	1	1	2			4
1943	1	1	1			3
1944	1	1	1			3
1945	1	1	3			5
1946	1	2	2			5
1947	2	1	2		1	6
1948	1	1	2		1	5
1949	1	1			1	3
1950	1	1			1	3
Total	78	57	58	51	18	262

Note: In addition there were several hundred articles published during the period in these newspapers which dealt with Labor Day and its celebration.

APPENDIX 2: EVOLUTION OF REPORTED UNION MEMBER-
SHIP IN MONTREAL 1911-1950

Source: Labor Organization in Canada, 1911-1950

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Unions</u>	<u>Number of Unions Reporting</u>	<u>Number of Members Reported</u>
1911	95	54	8,515
1912	107	59	15,562
1913	121	68	15,694
1914	126	43	8,439
1915	136	37	10,767
1916	127	74	13,337
1917	123	75	15,914
1918	149	106	32,422
1919	195	130	45,289
1920	192	119	44,803
1921	168	94	32,292
1922	157	88	31,829
1923	152	97	37,771
1924	146	98	35,892
1925	161	107	36,073
1926	163	106	31,482
1927	202	153	37,608
1928	200	148	39,218
1929	200	147	41,389
1930	193	159	47,034
1931	197	125	27,741
1932	199	158	41,110
1933	198	124	26,297
1934	196	156	34,349
1935	201	149	34,220
1936	200	171	46,320
1937	248	194	65,068
1938	247	215	68,196
1939	242	210	64,879
1940	235	208	67,708
1941	234	180	70,216
1942	238	184	92,276
1943	249	219	114,884
1944	256	189	92,980
1945	280	230	94,291
1946	297	244	117,095
1947	323	255	105,937
1948	344	268	110,945
1949	342	297	131,300
1950	367	305	125,600

Note: These figures are based on voluntary returns from union officials. They can therefore only be treated as broadly indicative of the evolution of union membership.

APPENDIX 3: STRIKE ACTIVITY IN CANADA, THE UNITED
STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN - 1901-1950

<u>CANADA</u>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Strikes and Lockouts</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Time Loss in Man days</u>
1901	99	24,089	737,808
1902	125	12,709	203,301
1903	175	38,408	858,959
1904	103	11,420	192,890
1905	96	12,513	246,138
1906	150	23,382	378,276
1907	188	34,060	520,142
1908	70	26,071	703,571
1909	96	18,114	880,663
1910	101	22,203	731,324
1911	100	29,285	1,812,084
1912	181	42,860	1,135,786
1913	152	40,519	1,036,254
1914	63	9,717	490,850
1915	63	11,395	95,042
1916	120	26,538	236,814
1917	160	50,255	1,123,515
1918	230	79,743	647,942
1919	336	148,915	3,400,942
1920	322	60,327	799,524
1921	168	28,257	1,048,914
1922	104	43,775	1,528,661
1923	86	34,261	671,750
1924	70	34,310	1,295,054
1925	87	28,949	1,193,281
1926	77	23,834	266,601
1927	74	22,299	152,570
1928	98	17,581	224,212
1929	90	12,946	152,080
1930	67	13,768	91,797
1931	88	10,738	204,238
1932	116	23,390	255,000
1933	125	26,558	317,547
1934	191	45,800	574,519
1935	120	33,269	288,703
1936	156	34,812	276,997
1937	278	71,905	886,393
1938	147	20,395	148,678
1939	122	41,038	224,588
1940	168	60,619	266,318

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Strikes and Lockouts</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Time Loss in Man days</u>
1941	231	87,091	433,914
1942	354	113,916	450,202
1943	402	218,404	1,041,198
1944	199	75,290	490,139
1945	197	96,068	1,457,420
1946	228	139,474	4,516,393
1947	236	104,120	2,397,340
1948	154	42,820	885,793
1949	137	51,437	1,063,667
1950	161	192,153	1,389,039

Source: Strikes and Lockouts in Canada 1927-1950

UNITED STATES

1919	3,639	4,160,348	
1920	3,411	1,163,054	
1921	2,385	1,099,247	
1922	1,112	1,612,562	
1923	1,553	756,584	
1924	1,249	654,641	
1925	1,301	428,416	
1926	1,035	329,592	
1927	707	329,939	26,218,628
1928	604	314,210	12,631,863
1929	921	288,572	5,351,540
1930	637	182,975	3,316,908
1931	810	341,817	6,893,244
1932	841	324,210	10,502,033
1933	1,695	1,168,272	16,872,128
1934	1,895	1,466,695	19,591,949
1935	2,014	1,117,213	15,456,337
1936	2,102	788,648	13,901,956
1937	4,740	1,860,621	28,424,857
1938	2,772	688,376	9,148,273
1939	2,613	1,170,962	17,812,219
1940	2,508	576,988	6,700,872
1941	4,288	2,362,620	23,047,556
1942	2,968	839,961	4,182,557
1943	3,752	1,981,279	13,500,529
1944	4,956	2,115,637	8,880,078
1945	4,750	3,470,000	38,000,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Strikes and Lockouts</u>	<u>Workers Involved</u>	<u>Time Loss in Man days</u>
1946	4,985	4,600,000	116,000,000
1947	3,693	2,170,000	34,000,000
1948	3,419	1,960,000	34,000,000
1949	3,606	3,030,000	50,500,000
1950	4,700	2,300,000	38,500,000

Source: Strikes and Lockouts in Canada 1927-1950

GREAT BRITAIN

1919	1,352	2,401,000	34,970,000
1920	1,607	1,779,000	25,570,000
1921	763	1,770,000	85,870,000
1922	576	556,000	19,850,000
1923	628	399,000	10,670,000
1924	710	613,000	8,420,000
1925	603	441,000	7,950,000
1926	323	2,734,000	162,250,000
1927	308	108,000	1,710,000
1928	302	124,000	1,390,000
1929	431	533,000	8,290,000
1930	422	307,000	4,400,000
1931	420	490,000	6,980,000
1932	389	379,000	6,490,000
1933	357	136,000	1,070,000
1934	471	134,000	959,000
1935	553	279,000	1,955,000
1936	818	322,000	1,829,000
1937	1,129	610,000	3,413,000
1938	875	275,000	1,334,000
1939	940	337,000	1,356,000
1940	922	299,000	940,000
1941	1,251	361,000	1,079,000
1942	1,303	457,000	1,527,000
1943	1,785	559,000	1,808,000
1944	2,194	826,000	3,714,000
1945	2,293	532,000	2,835,000
1946	2,205	529,000	2,158,000
1947	1,721	623,000	2,433,000
1948	1,759	426,000	1,944,000
1949	1,426	434,000	1,807,000
1950	1,338	302,000	1,388,000

Source: Strikes and Lockouts in Canada 1927-1950

APPENDIX 4: LABOR DAY PARADE PARTICIPATION AS
ESTIMATED BY THE MONTREAL PRESS

Source: Contemporary Accounts published as noted near Labor Day

<u>Year</u>	<u>Presse</u>	<u>Gazette</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>Patrie</u>	<u>Devoir</u>	<u>Monde Ouvrier</u>
1886		1,500	1,500	1,500		
1887						
1888	4,000	8,000	10,000			
1889	10,000	5,000		10,000		
1890						
1891			8,000			
1892	8,000	7,000				
1893		2,000				
1894			5,000			
1895						
1896						
1897						
1898	10,000					
1899	12,000			10,000		
1900	5,000	5,000	10,000			
1901		4,000				
1902	20,000	8,000	20,000	15,000		
1903	20,000	20,000	20,000	30,000		
1904	20,000	4,000				
1905	8,000			30,000		
1906	5,000	5,000				
1907	18,000	15,000	20,000	15,000		
1908	20,000	15,000	20,000	10,000		
1909	20,000					
1910	10,000	10,000	6,000		10,000	
1911	12,000	12,000		25,000		
1912	15,000	10,000		30,000	10,000	
1913	12,000	5,000	30,000	5,000	5,000	
1914	15,000	15,000	20,000	15,000	20,000	
1915	4,000					
1916						
1917						
1918		15,000			30,000	
1919	30,000	30,000		30,000	20,000	
1920	25,000	20,000	30,000	25,000	10,000	
1921			30,000			
1922			30,000			
1923						
1924			30,000			20,000
1925	15,000	10,000	10,000			15,000

<u>Year</u>	<u>Presse</u>	<u>Gazette</u>	<u>Star</u>	<u>Patrie</u>	<u>Devoir</u>	<u>Monde Ouvrier</u>
1926		10,000				5,000
1927						10,000
1928	5,000	10,000	5,000			5,000
1929		18,000	18,000	15,000		15,000
1930		20,000		25,000		
1931				15,000		
1932						25,000
1933			30,000			20,000
1934						
1935					5,000	5,000
1936	5,000	3,000	3,500			
1937	15,000	5,000	5,000			5,000
1938	15,000	10,000	15,000			15,000
1939	15,000	20,000	20,000			20,000
1940						
1941	25,000	10,000	7,000			
1942		15,000	10,000			
1943			10,000			
1944						15,000
1945						
1946						
1947	5,000	5,000	5,000			
1948		3,000	3,000			
1949						
1950			5,000			

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis is a study of the opinions about labor and class relations expressed in the Labor Day editorials and articles published between 1886 and 1950 by five major Montreal daily newspapers: La Presse, the Star, La Patrie, the Gazette and Le Devoir.

Chapter One outlines the context of the press' ideas by summarizing 1) the rapid social and economic changes which transformed Montreal during these sixty-five years from the major city of a precarious colony-nation into a metropolis of world stature, 2) the precarious condition of the workers in Montreal and the development of organized labor in the city, and 3) the transfiguration of the press from the preserve of the educated elite into an eager purveyor of disaster and scandal for the new urban masses.

Chapter Two traces the social history of Labor Day in Montreal during the period. It argues that although Labor Day was a consistently peaceful celebration, nevertheless, particularly during the first few decades after its inception in 1886, the holiday was a potent expression of the Montreal working class' trade union consciousness. As a rallying point for unionists and as advertising for the unorganized, the festival provided workers with a chance to assert their dignity as skilled producers and to demonstrate the strength made

possible by their solidarity.

In Chapters Three to Six the conclusions of the editorial analysis are presented broken into four time periods: 1886-1913 (Chapter Three), 1914-1929 (Chapter Four), 1930-1938 (Chapter Five), and 1939-1950 (Chapter Six). Within each chapter, the material is organized around three themes which were evident throughout the sixty-five years: the nobility of work, the destructiveness of strikes, and the necessity of friendly class collaboration. The emphasis placed on each of these themes by the Labor Day editorialists varied, however, from one period to another. For example, while the theme of the necessity of friendly class collaboration was always important, that of the nobility of work was only prominent during wars or when social discipline seemed threatened, and that of the destructiveness of strikes was only stressed in times of unusual labor unrest.

The Conclusion reiterates the basic insight of the thesis which was mentioned frequently in the four chapters of editorial analysis. Despite the shifts in emphasis among the three themes over time, and despite the differences in the personalities of the five newspapers themselves, one purpose underlay all of the editorials and articles treated in the thesis: to keep the workers in their place in the existing social structure by discouraging them from seeking any fundamental alteration in the distribution of social power.