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STANLEY B. RYERSON: MARXIST INTELLECTUAL
AND
THE FRENCH-CANADIAN NATIONAL QUESTION

Vivian McCaffrey

Thesis submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies of the University
of Ottawa in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
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UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
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With respect to gathering source material I would like to thank Robert Comeau for sending me the unpublished manuscript he wrote in collaboration with Bernard Dionne and also Gui Caron for giving me his time for an interview. Most important, of course, were my meetings with Stanley Ryerson who spent several hours away from his countless other projects and preoccupations to read and discuss my work. He also dug deep into his vast library to retrieve material not to be found elsewhere which proved to be invaluable in filling out the context of the thesis. His hospitality on these occasions made this part of my research one of the most pleasurable.

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Vivian McCaffrey
June, 1981.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of reconciling the aims of a dynamic national group with those of a movement committed to class revolution has been the focus of important debate since the middle of the last century. The validity of a national movement's claim to sovereignty and the ramifications of this claim for the cause of international struggle for proletarian rule were crucial issues confronted by the members of the First and Second International founded by followers of Marx and Engels in 1863 and 1889 respectively. What came to be known as the "national question" also figured among the principal concerns of the Russian disciples of Marxism, V.I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin.

The controversy surrounding the national question continues to occupy the attention of political theorists and persists as a primary subject of debate among Marxist groups. Canada too has had her national question. The strong sentiment for national identification among some of the French-speaking population of the province of Quebec has been a tenacious thread of Canadian political history, reaching its most recent peak during the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s.

Given the historical experience of Marxists in dealing with the political consequences of national movements, it is

not surprising that it was the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) which first approached Quebec politics in terms of its understanding of Marxist theory on the national question. A key figure in formulating the CPC policy regarding French Canada was Stanley Bréhaut Ryerson. It is through the writings of Ryerson that we shall examine the CPC's response to nationalist sentiment in Quebec and determine how this one leading Canadian Marxist intellectual dealt over the course of his career with French-Canadian nationalism in the context of his commitment to the international class struggle.

Marx did not develop as scientific a theory on nationality as did Lenin or Stalin, for example. He used the term "nation" loosely and employed it to refer to "country", "state" and even to the ruling class of a given country.¹ His principal concern was, of course, the promotion of the international proletarian movement. While adhering to the notion of internationalism and believing that national rivalries would disappear with the advent of socialism, Marx nevertheless tended to be sympathetic to certain national struggles against oppression. This was particularly true if he believed that achievement of nationhood would lead to the development of modern economies, a precondition for the advancement of the proletariat. He was therefore more tolerant of the cause of large nations as opposed to small ones.²

Among contemporary national causes, Marx viewed the German unification movement as a progressive one. He assumed its success would not only promote modern economic development, but, by weakening the opposing aristocracy and monarchy, a modern Germany would challenge the strength of reactionary European powers, most notably Czarist Russia.³ He likewise supported the cause of an independent Poland which would serve as a buffer to Russian imperialism.⁴

Lenin was faithful to Marx's opposition to national oppression. He also shared his mentor's optimism regarding the eventual disappearance of national competition once socialism was universally established by the proletariat. He accepted the principles of "national equality" and "right to self-determination", but he clarified that

To accuse those who support freedom of self-determination i.e., freedom to secede, of encouraging separation, is as foolish and hypocritical as accusing those who advocate freedom of divorce of encouraging the destruction of family ties.⁵

In his attempts to build a united revolutionary political party, Lenin found nationalism to be essentially a bourgeois concern and thus a divisive political force. In his last years, he distinguished between proletarian and bourgeois nationalism:

Insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case...in favour, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression. But insofar as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation

stands for its own bourgeois
nationalism, we stand against.⁶

His support for national causes was most often lent to colonial liberation movements; a nationalist movement led by the proletariat could be a positive force in the liberation of oppressed colonies.⁷ On the whole, however, he unquestionably placed more emphasis on the international than on the national struggle.

Stalin continued Lenin's commitment to the principles of "national equality" and "self-determination", but in practice displayed even less tolerance of national particularism than his predecessor. In his early writings he emphasized the bourgeois character of national movements:

...the national struggle under the conditions of rising capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves. Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle externally assumes a "nation-wide" character. But this is so only externally. In its essence it is always a bourgeois struggle, one that is to the advantage and profit mainly of the bourgeoisie.⁸

His emphasis determined the official Communist attitude to the national question during the 1930s. After the Soviet Union was attacked by Germany during the Second World War, however, Stalin showed himself to be much more sympathetic to those nationalist groups which resisted Nazi aggression. This change in attitude was in turn reflected in pronouncements issued during this period by Comintern which indicated approval of nationalism in the context of the existing struggle against

German oppression.

From the 1930s through to the late 1950s, Ryerson and the CPC faithfully reflected the modifications of the Stalinist line on the national question. But, as we shall see, during the latter 1960s, Ryerson became so sympathetic to the cause of the French-Canadian national movement that he went beyond the view of orthodox Marxism-Leninism.

The Communist Party of Canada has only relatively recently attracted the interest of Canadian scholars. Canadian historiography and political science have long been dominated by our so-called liberal and conservative schools which have ignored the CPC. William Rodney,⁹ Ivan Avakumovic¹⁰ and Norman Penner¹¹ have provided useful overviews of the development of the party in Canada; two master's theses have dealt with the political structure and functioning of the CPC;¹² and a recent Ph.D. thesis has examined the application of Marxist theory to the Canadian situation.¹³ Among French Canadians in the field, Marcel Fournier,¹⁴ Andrée Lévesque-Olssen,¹⁵ Robert Comeau and Bernard Dionne¹⁶ and Bernard Gauvin¹⁷ have done specific studies of the Communist movement in Quebec. No one, however, has yet focussed upon any of the leading personalities active in the CPC.

Historians of the Canadian Communist movement recognize Stanley Ryerson as being among the first group of intellectuals to join the CPC in the early 1930s and they also point to

his rôle in developing the party position regarding French Canada. As well as being an active proponent of Marxism in Canada, Ryerson is well known as a pioneer Marxist historian. In both these facets of his professional life he has demonstrated a particular interest in French Canada. He was first brought to Quebec by a teaching position in Montreal. His facility in the French language and his involvement with the Communist movement drew him increasingly close to French Canada and the national question eventually became one of his primary interests.

Ryerson's family background and early educational training were not the usual makings for an adherent of Marxism. In contrast to the great majority of the early CPC members who were either European or British immigrants, he is a fifth-generation Canadian from a long-established Toronto family. He was once described by a fellow party member as a "symbol of unity of the French and English-speaking peoples of Canada."¹⁸ Not only was he completely fluent in both official languages by the time he joined the CPC, but he boasts both an English and French-Canadian heritage. On his father's side, the family history in Canada goes back to the immigration of the United Empire Loyalists during the American Revolution. The most notable family ancestor was his great-grandfather, Egerton Ryerson, the prominent newspaper editor and educator in Upper Canada. He was also the grand-nephew of William McDougall, one of

the Fathers of Confederation. On his mother's side, the family lineage dates back to 1636 when the first Bréhaut arrived in New France.¹⁹ While living and writing in Quebec, Ryerson often includes the "Bréhaut" in his name to underline his claim to a French-Canadian heritage.

Born in March 1911, Ryerson was educated in Toronto, first attending Upper Canada College and then the University of Toronto where he studied modern languages. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1933. During his university programme he spent the year 1931-1932 studying Italian language and literature at the Sorbonne. While attending the Sorbonne, he wrote a thesis on G.B. Vico and Giovanni Verga, two Italian men of letters, and was awarded a "diplôme d'études supérieures". He returned to Paris in 1933-1934. It was during these prolonged visits to the intellectual capital of Europe, in the early years of the Depression decade, that he was first introduced and drawn to the Left and the international Communist movement. His interest in the theatre and art led him to join the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes révolutionnaires shortly after his arrival in Paris in 1931.²⁰ Later, in 1937, he explained the connection between his concern for culture and his politicization and support for Communism:

The realization that the cultural values of art and literature were being turned by capitalism into what I can only describe as spiritual onanism, and the discovery that Communism, by solving the material

problems of society, was the one path to a future creative renaissance, was the first impulse.²¹

His interest in art and culture remained a constant, although not a predominant, concern in his work. Like others of the Left in Europe during the thirties, he looked to the Soviet Union as a model society in the realm of culture and the arts.

Ryerson officially enlisted in the ranks of the Communist movement when he returned to Canada after his first stay in Paris; he joined the Young Communist League (YCL) in 1932 and also became involved with the Progressive Arts Club and the Workers' Theatre in Toronto before actually taking up membership in the CPC the following year. In 1933 he was elected to the national executive of the YCL and worked as editor of the organization's newspaper, The Young Worker. At this time he was also active with the Canadian Labour Defense League. Ryerson claims that a key figure in this initial stage of his political apprenticeship was Bill Sparks, also known as Bill Rudas, an organizer from the Communist Party of America who was sent to Toronto to assist the Canadian movement. When he returned to Paris later in 1933, Ryerson joined the French counterpart to the YCL, the Fédération des Jeunesses communistes and also worked for l'Avant Garde editing workers' correspondence to the journal.²²

Ryerson's role as a principal figure in the Quebec wing

of the CPC began when he returned to Canada, late in the summer of 1934, to take a teaching position in French Studies at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. In 1935, at the age of twenty-four, he became director of education for the CPC in Quebec and in the same year was co-opted to the Central Committee of the party. Then, in the spring of 1936, he was elected secretary, or head, of the Quebec section of the CPC. Shortly after the founding of the party weekly French newspaper, Clarté, he was appointed assistant editor and contributed regularly to its columns. Because of the way the Communist movement was viewed in Canada at the time and in order to protect his position at Sir George Williams, he wrote under the pseudonym "E. Roger". In the spring of 1937, however, his political activities were discovered by the university and his contract was not renewed for the following academic year. From this moment on he became a full-time activist with the CPC. During his early years in Montreal, Ryerson worked closely with such prominent party organizers as Fred Rose, Paul Delisle and Berthe Caron.²³

During Ryerson's initial years in the Communist movement, few French-speaking members of the CPC held key positions within the national executive, a fact which underlines the importance of his role as a link between the francophones and the leadership. In the 1930s, when francophones were just beginning to join the CPC, there were virtually none who shared either the formal or political

education of some of their English-speaking comrades.

Ryerson, as provincial secretary, was the spokesman for the French-speaking activists and articulated their concerns to the leadership. He made monthly reports to the Central Committee to keep it abreast of the activities and concerns of the Quebec membership.²⁴ He thus acted as an important vehicle of communication between Quebec and the Toronto-based leadership.

Ryerson also played a key role in educating English-speaking Canadians about French Canada. In Montreal during the late 'thirties, he gave lectures on Quebec to study groups like the St. James Literary Society. In Toronto he spoke to church groups and to different centres of the Young Men's Christian Association.²⁵ Within the Communist movement, he carried his message to the various CPC clubs and his writings on Quebec were at times the subject of discussion for these clubs' study sessions. Among fellow party members, he was highly respected for his academic credentials and was widely accepted as the expert on Quebec within the CPC. His dual ancestry and complete command of both the English and French language made him unique within the Communist movement in Canada during this early period.²⁶

When Ryerson returned from France to join the ranks of the Canadian Communist movement, he was young and idealistic and newly infused with ideas from a political doctrine which appeared to provide the answers to the economic and social

crisis afflicting the world during the first cataclysmic years of the 1930s. A study of those early writings provides us with an example of the commitment with which Canadian Communists sought to reveal to their fellow countrymen their conception of the path to social salvation.

As a full-time party worker, Ryerson wrote extensively. His contributions to party newspapers and journals constitute the bulk of the primary source material for this study. To the extent that it was possible, the material was read in chronological sequence to follow Ryerson and his party systematically as they responded to the development of Canadian society from the height of the Depression to the twilight of the Quiet Revolution. While Ryerson is more popularly known as an historian, this study focusses on his political writing. Beyond the recognition that he stands as a pioneer in developing a Marxist interpretation of Canadian history, no attempt is made to evaluate his historical work.

The first chapter deals with the Depression and the conflict between the opposing ideologies of the 1930s. Ryerson's articles in Clarté and, to a lesser extent, its English-language counterpart, the Daily Clarion, provided the basic sources for this period. The following chapter focusses on the Second World War during which time he wrote for La Victoire, the successor to Clarté, and the Toronto-based Canadian Tribune. This chapter also covers the post-war period roughly to the end of the 1950s when the

American "ally" became the "imperialist aggressor" in the view of the world Communist movement. From 1944 to 1949, Ryerson was managing editor of the monthly periodical of the CPC, National Affairs Monthly, and his contributions to this publication form the core of the material for the latter part of the chapter. The final section deals with the decade of the 1960s and in particular the events in Quebec. The central CPC journal, The Marxist Quarterly, provided the essential forum for Ryerson's writing. In each of these periods, he also produced at least one significant historical work which adds another dimension to his political analysis of Quebec and the larger political scene. In addition, where necessary to establish the political context for Ryerson's work, I have used party documents, especially the speeches and pamphlets of Tim Buck, the general secretary of the CPC.²⁷

Further and important aspects of the research for this study were the background information and different responses to the thesis derived from interviews with Ryerson and other individuals who were active in the Communist movement during the same period. In addition to meeting with Ryerson while writing the paper and once the final draft was near completion, I also discussed the work with Communist activists R.S. Kenny and his wife Phyllis of Toronto and former party member, Gui Caron of Montreal. These sessions were useful for filling in the background and for some of the biographical details

regarding Ryerson. The interviews also provided the opportunity of testing my interpretation of the response of Ryerson and the CPC to the national question in French Canada. The reactions and information I received from these encounters raise some interesting questions with respect to the role of written source material in the writing of history and is a subject which will be discussed more fully in the conclusion.

It should be noted that although Ryerson's work provides the core source material upon which this study is based, during his years as a member of the CPC he was acting as a key party spokesman and his writing should be regarded as interpretation and promotion of the official party line and not as separate from it. At the same time, however, this paper will demonstrate the important and original role played by Ryerson in shaping CPC policy regarding French Canada. It is clear that during the 1930s and early 1940s his view of the national question at times anticipated official adoption of policy by the party. Furthermore, during the last couple of years before he left the party fold, there is evidence of some ambiguity and contradiction between his view and the official line. The differences between the man and his party ultimately became irreconcilable and marked an important stage in his political development.

Ryerson's writing offers an obvious focus for a study of the evolution of the Canadian Communists' response to

nationalism and the national question in Quebec by virtue of the period his work covers and also the extensiveness of his published material, both political and historical. While the CPC has been only a marginal force in Canadian political life, a study of its development with regards to policy on French Canada is nevertheless a worthwhile undertaking. In his overview of the Left in Canada, Norman Penner describes CPC policy on French Canada as being determined simply on the basis of tactical necessity.²⁸ This thesis is a challenge to this conclusion by Penner. By plotting out the modifications in Communist policy on French Canada and by placing these changes in their historical context, this study demonstrates how CPC policy was fashioned by more than tactical considerations; it illustrates the increasing awareness and understanding of Quebec society in general and of French-Canadian nationalism in particular on the part of Ryerson and his party.²⁹

Finally, in addition to providing the opportunity to examine the development of one party's response to the French-Canadian national question, the thesis also explores the experience of a prominent Canadian Marxist intellectual whose understanding of Canadian society ultimately went beyond the limits of orthodox Marxism-Leninism. This individual experience adds a further dimension to the historiography of French-Canadian nationalism.

INTRODUCTION NOTES

1. Solomon F. Bloom, World of Nations: A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx, (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1967), p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 35. See also Horace B. Davis, Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 18.
3. Bloom, World of Nations, p. 143.
4. Ibid., p. 44.
5. V.I. Lenin, On the National Question and Proletarian Internationalism, (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1969), p. 41.
6. Ibid., p. 28.
7. Davis, Nationalism and Socialism, p. 208.
8. Joseph Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question" (1913) in Bruce Franklin, ed., The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings, 1905-1952, (Garden City: Anchor Books Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1972), p. 69.
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13. Phyllis E. Clarke, "An Application of Marxist Thought to Canada", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 197

14. Marcel Fournier, "'Clarté' ou le rêve d'un Front populaire:", in Fernand Dumont, et. al., éds., Idéologies au Canada Français 1930-1939, (Québec: Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1978), pp. 273-294; Communisme et anti-communisme au Québec (1920-1950), (Laval: Éditions coopératives Albert St.-Martin, 1979).
15. Andrée Lévesque-Olssen, "The Canadian Left in Quebec during the Great Depression: the Communist Party of Canada and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Quebec, 1929-39", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1972.
16. Robert Comeau, "La Canadian Seamen's Union (1936-1949): un chapitre de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier canadien", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, vol. 29, no.4 (mars, 1976), pp. 503-538. Comeau has also recently published a book in collaboration with Bernard Dionne and he kindly allowed me to read copies of the manuscript for the purposes of this thesis.
17. Bernard Gauvin, "Le parti communiste du Canada et la question canadienne-française", unpublished M.A. thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1978. Gauvin provides a critical analysis of the CPC's application of Marxist theory to French Canada during the 1920s and 1930s.
18. Sydney Jordan, "Stanley Ryerson, Author of New Book Brilliant Personality", Daily Clarion, November 2, 1937.
19. Ibid.
20. Interview with Stanley Ryerson in Montreal, February 6, 1981.
21. Jordan, "Stanley Ryerson, Author..."
22. Information for the above paragraph came from the interview with Ryerson, February 6, 1981.
23. Stanley Ryerson, "Comrade Beth" in Wendel McLeod et. al., Bethune: The Montreal Years, (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1978), p. 148.
24. Interview with Ryerson in Montreal, February 6, 1981.
25. Ibid.
26. Interview with R.S. Kenny and his wife Phyllis in Toronto, February 22, 1981.

27. This applies particularly for the period covered by the second chapter of this thesis. From 1942 until he left the CPC in 1969, Ryerson lived in Toronto and worked as the national organizational secretary for the party. During the war and early post-war period, his work was directed primarily towards organizational and recruitment work. In the 1960s, he returned once again to focus his attention upon the French Canadian national question. The major portion of this party source material is contained in the R.S. Kenny Manuscript Collection held by the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto.
28. Penner, The Canadian Left, p. 116.
29. In his review of Penner's book, Leo Panitch is also critical of Penner's failure to place his analysis of the CPC in an historical context. See Panitch, "Canada's Socialist Legacy" in Canadian Dimension, Vol. 13, no. 2 (August-September, 1978), p. 42.

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT DEPRESSION: STANLEY RYERSON RESPONDS TO THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

For modern industrial societies, the Great Depression of the 1930s was an experience of social and economic upheaval and general uncertainty. Not all onlookers to the widespread turmoil of this period, however, were convinced that it was but an aberration or simply the nadir in a cycle of economic development. To the followers of Karl Marx, the events unfolding in the thirties were clearly the fulfilment of prophecies dating back almost a century. Communists interpreted this turmoil as a great crisis of capitalism; this economic system was being undone by its own inherent contradictions.

In December 1933, in line with policy which dated back to the founding of the Communist International (Comintern),¹ the executive committee of that organization announced that "The great task of the international proletariat is to turn the crisis of the capitalist world into the victory of the proletarian revolution."² The Communist analyst believed that the Depression demonstrated that capitalism was in its final stages and that the goal of socialist revolution was one step closer. Despite the disintegration of world capitalism, however, the political collapse of bourgeois regimes was not inevitable. In response to the threat of

revolution, the desperate capitalist class was turning to fascism to bar the way to working-class victory. In 1935 the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International declared:

Fascism is not a philosophy, not a theory, not a social system, but the means used by finance capital, in order to maintain its rule...

Fascism is the attempt of the bourgeoisie to shift the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the toilers. It is an attempt of the bourgeoisie to solve the problem of markets by enslaving the weak nations, intensifying colonial oppression and the repartitioning of the world by means of war... 3

During the 1930s, the disease of fascism spread quickly to different parts of the world. Following the earlier March on Rome and seizure of power in Italy in 1922 by Mussolini and his "blackshirts", Hitler swept to power in Germany in 1933, Franco led the rebellion against the legitimate Republican government in Spain in 1936 and, a year later, Japan invaded China. According to Tim Buck, general secretary of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), such examples were "all integral parts of the drive of reactionary finance capital to overwhelm democracy throughout the world."⁴

While fascism was a menace to the working-class movement in all capitalist countries, its most serious threat lay in the possibility that Germany and Japan might attack the Soviet Union, the "bulwark of socialism".

For Communists throughout the world, the Soviet Union was the embodiment of the ideal or model society. It was the one country in which the proletariat had successfully triumphed in revolution against the oppressor class. Since October 1917, the Soviet Union had evolved from being one of the most backward societies in Europe to being the most advanced. Great improvements in agricultural techniques and industry enabled its population to enjoy a rising standard of living. This contrasted starkly with the deepening misery of workers in capitalist societies, especially those in the grip of a fascist regime.⁵ While the capitalists' imperialist ambitions naturally led to international war, the Soviet people "need peace to enable them to complete and enjoy the building of socialism and to show the people of the world the dazzling light of Soviet achievements that, under socialism, peace can be permanently assured."⁶ By defending the interests of the Soviet Union, then, one was also promoting the cause of world peace.

To defeat the fascists, the Seventh Congress of Comintern decided on the tactic of a "united front", of which the most important element was the working class led by the Communists. It would also include all democratic forces opposed to fascism. Democratic fronts were to be mobilized within each country to combat indigenous elements of reaction and to support anti-fascist forces abroad.⁷

The movement in defense of Republican Spain against Franco is an example of the concept put into action. From 1935 on into the war years, the "united front" remained the watchword of the Communist movement.

Within their own national borders, Canadian Communists applied the analysis of a crisis of capitalism to the economic scene of the 1930s. As a young Marxist Ryerson surveyed the conditions prevailing in Canada during the Depression and perceived a society ripening for revolution. Most conspicuous was the widening gap between the capitalist and working class and the increasing burden borne by the latter during economic hard times. Explaining the workings of the capitalist system to his Clarté readers, he wrote:

Il en est toujours ainsi sous le régime capitaliste, fondé sur la course acharnée aux profits et sur l'accaparement individuel des grandes entreprises industrielles, tandis que la masse des ouvriers sont privés de toute propriété et ressent à la merci de l'insécurité et de la misère. Ce paradoxe de la pauvreté générale au milieu de l'abondance est le résultat logique du capitalisme;...⁸

Party leader Buck added to this condemnation of the existing system by assailing the barons of high finance: "With four of the ten banks controlling 70% of the banking business, and industry trustified behind tariff barriers, which assure monopoly prices and profits, a tiny group of fifty or sixty men dominates Canada's economic life."⁹ Of these men, Buck singled out Sir Edward Beatty, Sir Herbert

Holt and Arthur Meighen as being among the worst offenders of economic exploitation.¹⁰

In Ryerson's view, the most crystallized and blatant example of economic disparity was to be found in the province of Quebec.¹¹ The glaring contrast between rich and poor was particularly evident in Montreal. St. James Street, the symbol of high finance and class oppression, bordered the district in which lived scores of unemployed workers and industrial labourers living in impoverished conditions. The standard of living in Montreal was the lowest among the major industrial centres in the country, a claim Ryerson substantiated with figures published by the federal government.¹² Among industries based in Montreal and throughout the province in general, he singled out the textile manufacturers as being the worst exploiters of their workers, of being guilty of "asservissement".¹³ The general condition of destitution among the labouring poor existed in spite of the high levels of production in the manufacturing sector and the great reserves of hydro-electric power.¹⁴ To explain to his working-class readers the basis of their plight, he chose examples of economic and social injustice which were part of their daily life experience.

Ryerson singled out the municipal tax system in Montreal as a conspicuous example of economic oppression. He maintained that the increase in the city's water tax was

designed to pass the surtax imposed on public utilities onto the consumer and that consequently the least privileged bore the greatest financial burden of the tax. He found a similar fault with the business tax; within the world of affairs the large corporation was not seriously affected, rather the small businessmen subsequently faced financial ruin.¹⁵ Finally, he placed the 2% sales tax in the same context of economic oppression:

Cette taxe, qui a été imposée uniquement pour que les détenteurs d'obligations, de débentures et d'hypothèques, les grandes banques et corporations qui sont créanciers de la ville, ne perdent pas une cent de leurs dividendes: pour que le "crédit" municipal soit sauvegardé --cette imposition fait partie de toute la politique de l'administration de la ville: sacrifier les pauvres aux intérêts financiers de la rue Saint-Jacques. La taxe de vente n'est qu'un chaînon dans toute une série de mesures ayant ce même but. ¹⁶

Exposure of injustices in the tax system and the need for tax reform were themes to which Ryerson returned periodically throughout the decade. In summing up his evaluation of the tax structure in Quebec, he referred to the province as "un véritable paradis pour les trustards."¹⁷ The tax system was just one source of the class tensions swelling within the province.

Another example of social inequity was the failure of the system of education to respond to the needs of the poor. Elitism was not peculiar to the province of Quebec,

but Ryerson maintained that in Canada its rate of illiteracy was the most startling and that the level of schooling among its population was the lowest:

Le nombre des illettrés complets dans le Québec dépasse de 50% le chiffre de l'Ontario, qui a une population supérieure d'un demi-million à celle du Québec... On avoue officiellement qu'il y a 118,000 enfants d'âge scolaire qui ne vont pas à l'école. A Montréal, la seule Commission des Ecoles catholiques a constaté qu'en 1935, 3,000 enfants ont été privés d'instruction, faute de vêtements et de chaussures pour aller à l'école. ¹⁸

He was first prompted to write on the subject of education in response to a provincial report on the subject prepared in early 1935 by Jean-Charles Harvey, then director of the Quebec bureau of statistics. In the report, Harvey concluded that the primary goal was not to raise the mass of the population to levels of functional literacy, but to produce a cultivated and superior social elite.¹⁹ The interests of the elite were consciously promoted by the Church-run system of classical colleges which prepared its students for their place among the top-ranking professions.²⁰ It was against these anti-egalitarian values in education which Ryerson launched his assault.

Ryerson characterized institutionalized education in Quebec as being not only elitist, but also as backward and scholastic in nature; the system taught reactionary ideas which led its students to mysticism rather than preparing

them for the problems of the modern world. Essentially, "la possibilité pour la jeunesse de faire connaissance avec oeuvres d'économie d'un caractère progressif est limitée."²¹ The potential danger of reactionary education was particularly acute during the Depression. Because of their lack of understanding of the workings of modern society, throngs of dissatisfied youth vented their frustration against organized labour rather than the capitalist system itself. In Ryerson's view, disenchanted youths were the most susceptible to the demagogues of reaction.²² To redress the élitist and regressive nature of education, the Communist Party advocated a state-run system coupled with more French-speaking schools and libraries as well as institutions of higher learning which would facilitate "progressive" development in Quebec society.²³ Definite measures had to be taken to combat the reactionary ideology fostered by backward education.

The flagrant economic and social disparity was glaring evidence of the advanced stage of crisis in the capitalist system. Quebec society had reached the crossroads in its political evolution and faced the choice of shedding the bonds of capitalism and striving towards socialism or falling into the abyss of fascism. For Communists the threat of the latter was especially menacing in Quebec and they warned that it was essential to nip incipient fascism in the bud before it spread throughout Canada: "Il est de la plus

haute importance pour tout le Canada que Québec ne devienne pas la base d'une offensive pour établir le fascisme dans tout le reste du pays."²⁴ Ryerson and his party viewed the interests of high finance and monopoly capitalism as being the primary force of reaction in the province and singled out the right-wing elements of the Church and petit-bourgeois nationalism as the two principal sources of support.²⁵ The political lackey of the St. James Street barons was the Duplessis government.²⁶

The social leadership provided by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church posed a serious threat to democracy in Quebec. Unlike Italy or Germany, where fascism developed outside of the bounds of religion, in Quebec, "nous faisons face au danger d'un enchevêtrement des forces cléricales et fascistes, d'une espèce de clérico-fascisme sur le modèle autrichien..."²⁷ Referring to the danger but not the reality of clerico-fascism was the closest Ryerson came, however, to outright criticism of religion in Quebec when he wrote for his French-speaking readers during this period. There was no criticism of the Church on the pages of the weekly Clarté. The party could ill afford to alienate its French-speaking Catholic readership by attacking the institution of faith so central to their own identity. In the English party paper, the Daily Clarion, he accused the Church of moving increasingly to the Right in its political sympathies and of being "the main instrument of the French

and English Canadian capitalist class in holding the Quebec masses in check."²⁸ Yet he explained to his English-speaking readers that the force of reaction was not the Catholic faith, but elements of the Church hierarchy. He was quick to dispel any notion that Catholicism in itself was a source of fascism, a supposition that would have contributed to division between the English and French-speaking working class.

Tensions between the CPC and the Church in Quebec were exacerbated by the latter's involvement in trade unions as an alternative to the militant international unions. Ryerson contended that the aim of the Catholic unions was to undermine the effort of the internationals to organize the mass of unorganized Quebec workers and to instill the notion of class collaboration rather than class warfare.³⁰ This of course was diametrically opposed to the goals inherent in Communist theory.

Although the aims of the Catholic and international unions appeared to be contradictory, the CPC could not afford to spurn cooperation with its trade union rivals. Given the directive of the Communist International to build a "united" or "democratic" front, the party was obliged to regard the Catholic unions as potential allies. In 1935, at the beginning of the united front period, Ryerson admitted that the main barrier to cooperation was that the Communists did not understand the Catholic unions: "We do not know

enough about the Catholic Syndicates so far as trade union unity is concerned."³¹ As the decade wore on and the party learned more, it declared its opposition to the ideology of corporatism advocated by Catholic union leaders and insisted that the advantages of the international movement was its defense of democracy and the ties developed with workers of other nations.³² Party representatives in Quebec, like Fred Rose, Evariste Dubé, Lucien Dufour and Jean Bourget, however, lauded the Catholic unions' struggle within the textile and steel industries and praised this obvious militancy on the part of French-Canadian workers. More importantly, they acknowledged that in the small industrial towns, Catholic trade unions would "predominate for a long time to come" and consequently conceded the necessity for joint action against economic oppression.³³ In 1938, in a report to the Political Buro of the party, Ryerson gave marked approval of the joint action taken by Catholic and international union leaders against the anti-union legislation provided in the provincial Bills 19 and 20.³⁴ In response to the Church in Quebec, therefore, the CPC was divided between its guarded approval of the Catholic unions and its condemnation of the reactionary sympathies of the Catholic hierarchy.

One reactionary doctrine promoted by the Church and unequivocally^a opposed by the Communists was that of corporatism. It was defined as follows by one of its most

ardent supporters:

La Corporation, c'est la réunion de tous les membres d'une même profession d'une même industrie, patrons techniciens, et ouvriers, pour la protection de leurs intérêts, respectifs et pour le bien commun...

Avec la Corporation, l'ouvrier devra chercher à devenir de plus en plus une compétence pour bénéficier de la considération de ses compagnons, dans le syndicat, de l'estime de ses patrons, dans la Corporation... 35

Advocates of corporatism wished to restore an organic unity to society through ensuring class collaboration rather than competitive individualism or class warfare; its Communist opponents viewed it as a means to arrest the working-class movement. Ryerson wrote:

La propagande mensongère et hypocrite en faveur de Corporatisme masque le désir des trustards d'en finir avec les libertés démocratiques afin d'empêcher les opprimés d'avancer vers la conquête d'une nouvelle Démocratie économique. 36

In addition to assailing the Church and barons of St. James Street for their promotion of corporatism, Ryerson condemned the group of intellectuals and professionals led by Philippe Hamel and Paul Gouin. He viewed their adoption of corporatism as tantamount to relinquishing their campaign to combat the trusts;³⁷ corporatism posed no real threat to the reign of monopoly capitalism.

As a response of the petty-bourgeoisie to the crisis of capitalism, corporatism was complemented by colonization,

a programme designed to check the trend towards industrialization and urbanization. The campaign launched by the Quebec government to send hundreds of unemployed urban dwellers back to the land to form rural settlements in the interior was, in Ryerson's view, both desperate and ludicrous.³⁸ Together, corporatism and colonization represented a yearning for a return to a golden past which he termed "idiotic utopianism". Addressing two of the leading proponents, he wrote: "MM Gouin et Groulx se plaignent du fait qu'on a crée de grands centres industriels, et un proletariat industriel. Ils préconisent une volte face totale, un retour à la production villageoise et artisanale."³⁹ The clock could not be turned back, contended Ryerson; the development of advanced capitalism was inevitable:

Le capitalisme nous ayant améné [sic] sur la base de la propriété industrielle privée, un appareil productif merveilleux, il ne s'agit aujourd'hui que d'aller de l'avant et de remplacer le régime du capital en décadence et en pleine crise par un régime basé sur la possession et administration sociale et co-opérative de notre grand appareil productif; en d'autres termes, par le Socialisme.⁴⁰

French-Canadian intellectuals who promoted corporatism were also committed nationalists. Nationalism, or what Comintern often referred to as "chauvinism" was singled out by the Seventh World Congress of the International as being "the most dangerous form of fascist ideology." The task of Communists was therefore to make clear to the masses

"that the fascist bourgeoisie uses the pretext of defending the national interests to carry out its sordid class policy of oppressing and exploiting its own peoples as well as robbing and enslaving other peoples."⁴¹ Following the Comintern line, Ryerson pointed to Quebec as being the province "where perhaps more than anywhere else in the country it has been possible for the bourgeoisie to utilize the national sentiments and traditions of the French-Canadian people."⁴² It was this petty-bourgeois nationalism which constituted one of the greatest foes of Ryerson and the Communist movement in the struggle to gain the allegiance of the French-Canadian working class. The leading protagonists of the nationalist camp singled out by Ryerson, were Abbé Groulx, the group led by Paul Gouin and the intellectuals behind the journal La Nation under the direction of Paul Bouchard.⁴³

One issue which Ryerson had to confront was the safeguarding of French-Canadian culture which the nationalists claimed could only be achieved through isolation from the rest of Canada. Ryerson retorted that what was really crucial for French-Canadian cultural survival was economic security:

Nous voulons une culture nationale,
une culture canadienne-française.
Nous savons qu'elle ne sera possible
que par l'émancipation économique de
tout le peuple canadien. Une fois
qu'on aura assuré à tous une vie
confortable et humaine, on n'aura
plus besoin de craindre les piétinements
de la standardisation et de la vulgarité

--chose qui nous fait subir l'intérêt
de PROFIT maître suprême! 44

Returning to the same theme at a later date, he summed up his position by proclaiming: "Le progrès matériel et l'épanouissement culturel marchent la main dans la main." 45

It is important to note here that as early as December 1936 when Ryerson wrote the passage cited above, he refers to the "national culture" of French Canadians. This would indicate that he is beginning to view French-speaking Canadians in Quebec as a national group, but it is still unclear as to whether or not he, or the party he represented, regarded French Canadians as anything more than one of Canada's many national minorities at this point. When promoting Canadian unity, for instance, Ryerson called for "l'unité des travailleurs Canadiens-français avec les travailleurs d'autres nationalités du Canada, dans une cause commune contre l'ennemi commun..." 46 He has yet to distinguish French Canada as one of two nations in a bi-national state.

The nationalism promoted by Abbé Groulx was a diversion from the real issue of capitalist oppression and promised no amelioration in the general material welfare of the population. 47 The fulfilment of his program would deepen the economic misery of French Canadians by isolating the province from the forces of material progress. Ryerson especially condemned the educational policies of Groulx which included reinforcing the Church's hold over education and drastically

reducing the teaching of English in the name of cultural survival. Groulx' school of nationalism promised to render French Canadians incapable of coping with the crisis of capitalism and to abandon them to a perpetual state of class oppression.⁴⁸

In his debate with the nationalists over the means of protecting French-Canadian culture and what in fact constituted true culture, Ryerson looked to the Soviet Union as a model. In this socialist republic, economic security had been attained and the national culture had become the popular culture of the masses. In his review of a Soviet art exhibition shown in Montreal in the spring of 1935, he wrote:

le sujet qui attire la plupart des artistes représentés ici, c'est la vie normale, de tous les jours --le travail, le sport, le repos. C'est un réalisme sain et vivant, qui crée de nouveau la sérénité qui a été libérée des entraves de l'oppression de classe...⁴⁹

Moreover, since economic and social oppression had been eliminated in the Soviet Union, its artists were no longer forced to live on the margins of society as frustrated and seemingly impotent social critics. Art was for the people by the people; national culture was popular culture. It was towards the achievement of this type of culture that Ryerson urged his readers to fight.

A further disagreement between Ryerson and the

nationalists was their claim that their economic oppressors were all to be found among the English-speaking élite.

In interpreting the nationalist position to his English-speaking readers, he declared:

The fact that the dominant positions in finance and industry are not held by French-Canadian capital is used to create the illusion of an oppressed nation whose salvation can come only by the revival of the national consciousness and the establishment of a French, Catholic state on the shores of the St. Lawrence. 50

To break this "illusion", he sought to prove that ultimately the main source of oppression was not ethnic, but class.

To correct the notion that all members of the class of finance-capital were English-speaking, he pointed to the continuing presence of French Canadians among the dominating élite. Drawing from an American bibliographic publication listing the most wealthy men, he identified several French Canadians: Beaudry Leman, président, Banque Canadienne Nationale; G.H. Rainville, prés. Quebec Golding Corp., Narcisse Ducharme, prés., La Sauvegarde assurances; S. Godin, vice-prés., Montreal Light, Heat & Power Corp..."⁵¹

Ethnicity was not an obstacle to these men securing positions within the ranks of finance capital.

Central to Ryerson's dispute with the nationalists on the question of culture was the definition of the term itself. In the final analysis, Ryerson and a nationalist like Groulx were not discussing the same concept when they

referred to culture. It is clear from the writings cited by Ryerson in Clarté that Groulx was primarily concerned with protecting and promoting the French language in Quebec. For his part, Ryerson addressed the question of fostering a popular culture which implied expression of working-class interests and values through the different traditional art forms. Class rather than ethnicity played the most important role in his conception of culture. Moreover, he contended that the mass of English-speaking Canadians were as much deprived of cultural expression and identity as their counterparts in French Canada. Groulx' policy on the French language only served to divide the Canadian working class and isolate French-Canadian workers from the international movement.⁵²

Having outlined the social and economic conditions which made Quebec society susceptible to fascism and having singled out the main reactionary forces in the province, Ryerson levelled some of his sharpest criticism at the political instrument of fascist policies --the Duplessis government.⁵³ Like the emergence of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the Social Credit Party in the West, third-force politics also took root in Quebec during the 1930s. In 1935 a provincial election followed quickly in the wake of the federal contest and witnessed the birth of the Action Libérale Nationale (ALN) led by Paul Gouin, and the rejuvenation of the Conservatives of

opposition leader Maurice Duplessis. The two groups joined in a coalition called the Union Nationale and made healthy gains against the longstanding Liberal regime of Alexandre Taschereau, winning a total of forty-two seats against forty-six for the incumbents.⁵⁴ For Duplessis the sweet taste of ultimate victory was not long in coming; less than a year later the Union Nationale toppled the minority government securing seventy-six seats against fourteen for the Liberals. Except for the interval of 1939-1944, Duplessis held a firm grip over provincial politics until his death in 1959.

The response of Canadian Communists to the advent of the Union Nationale on the Quebec political scene was similar to their reaction to other third parties of the period.⁵⁵ The overthrow of the traditional bastions of power was a necessary step towards the disintegration of the capitalist order, but the elements within the new forces did not promise improved status for the working man, let alone a proletarian revolution. Responding to the November 1935 election, Ryerson interpreted the gains made by the opposition parties as largely a protest against the Taschereau regime, not as a vote of outright support for the Gouin-Duplessis coalition.⁵⁶ Mass support had been gained, however, by spouting rhetoric against the trusts and instilling hope for relief from the economic crisis. The voters "croyaient que l'Action Libérale Nationale leur

donnerait plus de liberté et une amélioration économique. Mais depuis les élections, le véritable caractère des éléments de droite dans l'A.L.N. se dévoile de plus en plus."⁵⁷

The personalities associated with the ALN remained rivals of the Communists, but their movement rapidly disintegrated as a political force. The principal source of reaction and threat of the CPC was the Duplessis government. In 1936 the King administration repealed Section 98 of the Criminal Code which had been employed previously to outlaw the Communist Party. Backed by the Archbishop of Quebec, Cardinal Villeneuve, Duplessis urged the federal government to take action against the Communists. When his appeal proved unsuccessful his government took its own initiatives to undermine the CPC: the new Padlock Law made all publication and distribution of Communist literature in the province illegal and gave the Province authority to "padlock" all establishments deemed to be devoted to Communist propaganda.⁵⁸ Ryerson, along with Clarté, waged an all-out attack against the law, claiming that "c'était un premier pas qu'on faisait sur le chemin qui conduit à la destruction, sur l'échelle provinciale, des libertés essentielles que la Constitution est supposée de garantir."⁵⁹ The government's "red-scare" tactics were a smokescreen designed to conceal the ulterior motive of blocking the development of the working-

class movement in Quebec.⁶⁰

The Padlock law made it extremely difficult for the Communist Party to operate in the province. The office of Clarté was padlocked and party members were harrassed with many of the principal figures finally being forced underground. The weakening of the CPC in Quebec prevented the party from leading the struggle against the anti-labour policy of the Duplessis administration⁶¹ and it thus lost potential gains in union organization and party recruitment. For Communists, the Padlock law was an overt expression of the fascism which was increasingly tightening its stranglehold over the province as the decade wore on. In 1930 Justice Greenshields of the Supreme Court handed down his judgment recognizing the constitutionality of the Padlock law. It was his judicial decision which opened "la porte toute grande à la destruction morceau par morceau, des libertés démocratiques dans le pays entier. Il appuie et encourage toute la campagne des Tories réactionnaires épris de fascisme."⁶² Thus by the close of the decade, given the political bent of Duplessis and his lot, the prospects for material progress for the French-Canadian working class and the survival of democratic rights in the province were, from Ryerson's perspective, indeed grim.

The initiative against the Communists in Quebec was just one plank in the platform of Duplessis for increased

provincial autonomy. Ryerson condemned the refusal of the Quebec premier to participate in the federal programme for unemployment insurance as well:

La lutte contre la suppression
des libertés populaires et syndicales
dans notre province ne peut être
séparée de la lutte pour le bien-
être et la sécurité; et le régime
duplessiste s'est dévoilé comme
saboteur du bien-être social aussi
que de la liberté. ⁶³

In the mounting contest for power between Ottawa and Quebec it was the French-Canadian working people who suffered most.

Duplessis was joined in his opposition to federal interference in provincial jurisdictions by Ontario Premier Mitchell Hepburn. Both men held a strong hostility towards King and his federal government and accused Ottawa of attempting to thwart their schemes for developing their provincial economies. They were also adverse to the growth of militant trade unions and were critical of the federal power for failure to take repressive measures against the "alien" agitators. They were outspoken anti-Communists.

In December 1937, after several months of waging independent assaults on the King government, Duplessis and Hepburn declared their formal alliance against federal undermining of provincial autonomy.⁶⁴ Ryerson refuted the contention that there had been an erosion of provincial powers.

Defending the need for a strong central government, he argued rather that the provinces had already taken too many

prerogatives away from the jurisdiction of the federal government.⁶⁵ Canadian Communists viewed the issue of provincial autonomy as a smokescreen for reaction and the triumphs of Hepburn and Duplessis as indications of incipient fascism in Canada.

The response of the international Communist movement to the advance of fascism throughout the latter half of the 1930s was the building of a "united" or "democratic" front at both the national and international levels. The working class, led by the Communists, was to form the nucleus of the front, but it would also endeavour to recruit "farmers and urban middle-class people who suffer from the crisis, to fight the effects of the crisis against reaction and fascism and against imperialist war."⁶⁶ Within Canada a democratic front was particularly urgent in the province of Quebec. As Ryerson explained: "Il est de la haute importance pour tout le Canada que Québec ne devienne pas la base d'une offensive pour établir le fascisme dans tout le reste du pays."⁶⁷

In Quebec, as elsewhere, building a democratic front entailed sharpening the political consciousness of the workers and instilling within them a sense of mission in leading the battle against reaction. The crisis of the Depression, he believed, had profoundly stirred the political consciousness of the French-Canadian masses. During the election campaign which preceded Duplessis' sweep to power,

Ryerson wrote to his English-speaking readers:

Those who have hitherto imagined Quebec as a province apart immune to the new social and political currents of the crisis years, are due for a rude awakening. The impact of the crisis on the lower middle class, on the youth and on masses of the working people has once and for all undermined the spirit of unquestioning passivity which once was supposed to characterize the inhabitants of French Canada. 68

In Communist literature, the working class was portrayed as the one ray of light piercing through the gloom of the Quebec of Duplessis and the trusts.

To justify the building of a democratic front among French Canadians and to promote the notion that the working class must take the lead in that task, Ryerson turned to history. In general, the Communist International proposed to use history to raise the political awareness of the working class:

The communists must in every way combat the fascist falsification of the history of the people, and do everything to enlighten the toiling masses on the past of their own people in an historically correct fashion, in the true spirit of Lenin and Stalin, so as to link up their present struggle with the revolutionary traditions of the past. 69

The message was passed on to the Canadian membership by the CPC⁷⁰ and later echoed by Ryerson who emphasized the role that history could play in providing direction: "...if we are to understand the present issues, we must be able to look into the future in the light of what has happened in

the past, and understand the way in which our yesterdays and our tomorrows are originally interwoven."⁷¹

A strong identification with popular history did not exist among the working class because this history was suppressed by the contemporary élite. Ryerson explained why:

Parce que la clique qui est au
pouvoir aujourd'hui craint même
l'histoire de notre pays! Le
souvenir du soulèvement populaire
qui nous donna la liberté
démocratique inquiète les profitards
multimillionnaires qui règnent
sur nous. Ils n'aiment mieux ne
pas y penser, et ils n'aiment pas
que le peuple y pense non plus! ⁷²

It was to fill this void left by "respectable" historians that he devoted much of his journalism to Canadian history and that he wrote his first substantial historical work, 1837: The Birth of Canadian Democracy, published in 1937. The book was designed to commemorate the centenary of the colonial rebellions and to provide the starting point for the long overdue writing of Canadian history from a Marxist perspective.⁷³

What were the given factors in the Canadian situation which supported a Marxist analysis? According to Ryerson, Canadian history followed a pattern of class struggle between the masses, on the one hand, and their oppressors, on the other. The great symbols of this struggle were the rebellions of 1837-1838 in Upper and Lower Canada. Writing to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the

event, he proclaimed: "Ici, après les batailles du Richelieu, à Saint-Denis et à Saint-Charles, fut livré le combat mortel le plus héroïque, entre forces populaires et démocratiques, et forces réactionnaires, féodales et oligarchiques."⁷⁴ The rebellions were the "inevitable" result of tensions that had developed between the "forces of social production" and the "forces of social privilege and decay."⁷⁵ The defeat of the 1837-38 uprisings meant that the "bourgeois democratic" revolution remained incomplete. The ultimate goal of a fully democratic constitution was not realized through a victory on the part of the popular masses, but rather from concessions conceded from above by a threatened colonial power and the indigenous élite. Both responsible government granted in 1848 and Confederation achieved in 1867 were accomplishments of the ruling class and sought in the interests of that class.⁷⁶

In view of their opposition to popular struggles for economic equality the capitalist class could no longer claim to lead the masses; only the working class had the right to lay claim to the heritage of the heroic democratic struggle of 1837: "Ceux qui luttent par des grèves, par des mouvements organisés de la class laborieuse, pour libérer le pays de l'emprise étouffante des trusts ont seuls le droit de se réclamer de Papineau, de Mackenzie des héros de '37."⁷⁷

Ryerson and nationalist historians of the period like Groulx and Robert Rumilly all used the popular historical figure of Louis-Joseph Papineau to support their respective views of Quebec society. For Groulx, Papineau, although not a model Catholic, was the symbol of nationalist sentiment: "Les Canadiens français maîtres chez eux, maîtres de leur parlement, maîtres de leur politique! telle est l'idée que le président de la Chambre québécoise incarna et que nul n'eut pu incarner aussi puissamment..."⁷⁸ For Ryerson, Papineau was the symbol of the democratic struggle waged by both French and English-speaking Canadians. In his portrayal of the rebellions as a joint struggle between the two language groups he placed particular emphasis on Papineau's cooperation with the English-speaking faction of the Reformers. He attacked the nationalists for what he perceived to be the abuse of the rebel leader:

Ces individus qui, de nos jours,
tentent de souiller la mémoire et
la tradition de Papineau, afin de
maintenir notre peuple dans un
isolement réactionnaire et sans issue,
étranger aux luttes des travailleurs
du reste du pays, "oublent" d'une
façon très commode que les lieutenants
de Papineau étaient des révolutionnaires
anglais, irlandais, et suisses aussi
bien que canadien-français! ⁷⁹

He underlined not only Papineau's role as a democrat, but in pointing to the non-French-speaking members of the Patriote movement, he also struck a blow at the anglo-phobia of Groulx' brand of nationalism.

While both Groulx and Rumilly recognized the democratic side of Papineau, they also emphasized with approval that he was an ardent defender of seigneurial and property rights. For Rumilly, the ultimate significance of this fact was that "Fort attaché à ses droits et ses devoirs de seigneur, ce démocrate patriote eut combattu le socialisme..."⁸⁰ This conclusion, which depicted Papineau as a social conservative, was completely antithetical to the image that Ryerson wanted to project. Papineau as seigneur was an aspect of the man which this Marxist historian was unable, or at least unwilling, to deal with at this time. For Ryerson, both the chauvinist and conservative elements of nationalist history represented the reactionary tendencies within the French-Canadian nationalist movement in general.

French Canadians' commitment to the democratic ideal was not extinguished with the defeat of the rebels of 1837-1838. The struggle for national survival was intertwined with a fight for democratic liberty which persisted throughout the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth: In May 1939, Ryerson chose International Labour Day as an occasion to outline this French-Canadian tradition:

Turning for the moment to the past, one can trace a clear line of continuity from the democratic struggle of 1837-38, for independence, responsible government, and French-Canadian national survival through the battles of the Parti Rouge

for freedom of thought and education, and against the reactionary elements in the Macdonald-Cartier confederation proposals...; the struggle for Canadian autonomy, and against involvement in imperialist war policy at the beginning of this century; up to the widespread opposition in Québec to the imperialist war of 1914...⁸¹

Ryerson's effort to portray French Canadians as a fundamentally democratic people was important to his party's attempt to establish a basis for joint cooperation between English and French-Canadians in a united front against fascism. To ensure the willing participation of the latter, the CPC adopted the position that they must be guaranteed equality of certain rights. In 1938, in its submission to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, the party maintained that there were no genuine guarantees of minority rights in the British North America Act and that consequently French Canadians had been traditionally denied equal democratic liberties:

Genuine minority rights require that the central government ensure to the people of the minority the same social services as are enjoyed by the other citizens of the state; the French Canadians have been denied this. Genuine minority rights ensure freedom of culture and language to the people of the minority by granting equal rights in education to the minority; this too has been denied to the French-Canadian people...⁸²

The CPC submission emphasized that minority rights of French Canadians were "not identified with Quebec provincial rights." Rather the party advocated amendment of the

BNA Act "to permit the completion of national unification which opens up the way for the establishment of equality of the rights of the French-Canadian people, without which there can be no economic progress and social security for the Canadian people as a whole."⁸³ A front against fascism could not be built apart from the struggle to secure for French Canadians the same social, cultural and economic rights enjoyed by English Canadians.

Organizing workers into unions was the key weapon which the workers had against the trusts and economic tyranny: "L'unionisation des travailleurs d'usine de la Province de Québec: voilà le coup le plus dur qu'on puisse porter aux magnats trustards du capital. Et les cris hystériques que pousse leur pantin Duplessis en sont la meilleure preuve..."⁸⁴ The objectives of organized labour, aside from the expansion of their movement, included significant salary increases and major gains in the domain of social security. According to Ryerson, these were also the essential tasks undertaken by Clarté in its crusade for the welfare of French Canadians.

Economic agitation did not suffice. In order to confront the political oppression that went hand in hand with economic exploitation, the working class had to unite as a political force as well. During the latter half of the 'thirties, Ryerson noted periodically a growing radicalization among the working class. He pointed specifically

to strikes in the textile and clothing manufactures and to the manifestations of organized labour against the anti-union legislation, Bills 19 and 20 introduced by the Duplessis government.⁸⁵ During the Depression years, the CPC was fairly successful in recruiting the unemployed into its ranks. In the summer of 1935, for example, 60 per cent of the party's 8,200 members were unemployed.⁸⁶ Communists also secured leadership positions in a few key sector unions. By the end of the decade, Ryerson could point to a significant transformation in the level of Canadians' political consciousness:

...ten years of unparalleled crisis
 --conditions have stirred vast numbers
 of people to social and political
 consciousness; and inevitably, people's
 approach to the threat of war is coloured by
 this new awareness of social forces
 and social responsibilities... 88

Contributing to the need for a workers' party was the fact that the Liberals had forsaken their traditional role as defenders of democratic rights; they had failed to take up the challenge, in cooperation with the labour movement, of fighting in the popular interests against the forces of reaction.⁸⁹ Sunk deep into the folds of high finance and capital, they were too far removed from the masses. The fate of Quebec workers lay in their own hands. Only a workers' party would be close to the immediate and daily concerns of the majority of French Canadians. Such a party would provide the only effective challenge to reaction in the province.⁹⁰

Obviously, for Ryerson, the party with the natural

claim to lead the popular elements in Quebec was the Communist Party.⁹¹ He depicted the Communists as the embodiment of the revolutionary ideal symbolized by the 1837-1838 rebellions:

les communistes canadiens-français
qui comptent dans leurs rangs des
petit-fils des Réformateurs de '37,
et qui travaillent pour la solidarité
des opprimés du Canada anglais aussi
bien que du Canada français, comme
le faisaient Papineau et Mackenzie
--ce sont eux qui sont les porte-
paroles et les héritiers de notre
passé et encore de notre Avenir! ⁹²

Elsewhere he pointed to the international significance of Communism and tied the rebellions and the Canadian Communist movement to the radicalism of British Chartism, the 1848 European revolutions, the Paris Commune, and, most importantly, the October 1917 Russian Revolution.⁹³ Class consciousness at both the national and international levels was an important ingredient for the radicalization of French-Canadian workers. The task of instilling feelings of common bonds between Canadian workers and other oppressed groups internationally as well as historically was one which Ryerson pursued throughout the period.

There were several obstacles standing in the way of the CPC fulfilling its role as the vanguard of the working class. The Communists were regarded as being a "foreign" element on the Canadian political scene. The party was anxious to recruit Anglo-Saxons and French Canadians to

correct the make-up of its membership. As a party statement in 1934 explained: "as long as the alliance* preserves its present national composition, i.e. 75% foreign workers, so long will it remain not the truly representative party of the Canadian working class."⁹⁴

In Quebec the problem was further compounded by the lack of a high level of unionization with which to provide a solid base for recruitment.⁹⁵ Also, as Ryerson pointed out in his 1935 report on the state of party affairs in Quebec, the fact that the Communist Party recruited primarily the unemployed into its ranks tended to mean that there was a high turnover rate and instability within the provincial wing.⁹⁶ At the same time, he indicated that the party did not have a "strong foothold" in the union movement, particularly among Catholic unions. The CPC could boast few French-speaking members holding leadership positions. Ryerson attributed this shortage to the general low level of education in the province, to the influence of the Church and the strength of rural traditions in shaping attitudes of the worker.⁹⁷ Consequently, the leading positions within the party were held for the most part by English-speaking members.

Traditionally, the world Communist movement had regarded social democratic parties as their greatest enemies; in drawing the workers away from the Communists, they were dividing the working class and prolonging

*The code word for the Communist Party.

capitalism. In December 1933, in response to the encroachment of fascism on the international scene, the executive committee of the Communist International outlined a new approach to social democracy -- "A united front from below".⁹⁸

The attitudes towards social democratic parties continued to soften and, although still professing the need to criticize reformism, the Seventh World Congress of Comintern issued statements in August 1935 calling for an extremely broadly-based united front.

Without for a moment giving up their independent work in the sphere of communist education, organization and mobilization of the masses, the communists in order to render the road to unity easier for the workers, must strive to secure joint action with the social democratic parties, reformist trade unions and other organizations of the toilers against the class enemies of the proletariat...⁹⁹

An authority on the Comintern documents summed up the new policy by concluding: "The choice now was not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism."¹⁰⁰

In spite of efforts made by the CPC to force a united front the results of their campaign were minimal. The first test of the new policy came during the federal election of 1935, but as Ryerson then lamented, overtures from the Communists for united action were rebuffed by both the CCF and the Parti Ouvrier in Quebec.¹⁰¹ The

CPC was both bitter and exasperated concerning the incessant refusal on the part of the CCF to cooperate.

The CPC continued faithfully to propose cooperation with other parties during election battles. It made perhaps its most dramatic overture during the 1938 federal by-election in the Montreal riding of Cartier where the prominent CPC candidate Fred Rose was withdrawn from the race in order to provide a common front behind one candidate of the Left.¹⁰² The failure of the CCF and other "progressive" groups to reciprocate such actions was unquestionably frustrating as Ryerson surveyed the political scene and noted a growing opposition to Duplessis and the trusts. Without a common and united programme on the part of the so-called democratic forces it would be impossible to capitalize upon the general disenchantment with Duplessis and thus impossible to mount an effective front against fascism.

Another possible member of the anti-fascist front were Catholic organizations. Ryerson asserted that "we have to start approaching religious organizations, we have to overcome the hesitancy of drawing such organizations in the united front, we have to penetrate the middle class, intellectuals, students and spread out."¹⁰³ He emphasized at the same time the need to explore the potential alliance with French-Canadian farmers and Catholic unions in order to strengthen the Quebec labour movement. Recognizing the

extent of the support for nationalism in the province, the Communists even appealed to what they termed "progressive" elements among the nationalists, such as the ALN.¹⁰⁴ The diverse groups of the Left were not individually strong enough to harness the numbers of disillusioned voters, but a popular front, argued Ryerson, would have the strength required to defeat Duplessis and the forces of reaction in Quebec.¹⁰⁵

One of the issues around which the appeal for a popular front was focussed was the campaign against "an imperialist war." Throughout 1936 and 1937 Ryerson urged an all-out opposition to the impending world conflict. The war-mongering nations such as Germany, Italy and Japan were all experiencing a crisis in their capitalist system and were aggressively seeking war to alleviate the problem of a collapsing economic structure. In contrast to these imperialist states was the Soviet Union "qui par le caractère de son économie socialiste n'a point besoin d'expansion coloniale pour trouver des marchés."¹⁰⁶ The Soviet example demonstrated how the necessity of war could be avoided and the ideal of world peace achieved.

Initially, the CPC policy regarding foreign affairs was one of passive resistance --a refusal to take part or to contribute in any way to the mobilization of military forces. The Communist attitude was intensified by the Munich conference of September 1938 attended by Hitler,

Chamberlain, Mussolini and Daladier. World Communists condemned the conference because it permitted the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Hitler, but also because it isolated the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ Communists in Canada appealed to the nation's "democratic" forces to join the masses throughout the world in a campaign to force their governments to align themselves with the Soviet Union and to build a world-wide defensive wall against fascist aggression. In May 1939, Ryerson, arguing for a more concrete national defense programme, pointed to the danger of an isolationist position on the part of Canada: "Les partisans de l'isolement canadien, de la soi-disante 'neutralité absolue', préconisent la défense adéquate du sol canadien; mais en niant le danger de toute agression, ils ont tendance à faire le jeu des agents hitlériens."¹⁰⁸ The menace of an imperialist war now demanded more than passive resistance.

Canada's defense policy was potentially a divisive issue along ethnic lines. French Canada persisted in her demand for isolation. Once again Ryerson felt compelled to come to the defense of the French Canadians: he argued against the notion that an isolationist stance illustrated their anti-democratic nature. What it really demonstrated was the power and influence held by forces of reaction in Quebec:

Combined however with this isolation in which Quebec has been kept by finance-capital and its agencies, this anti-imperialism has tended to become a static, unrealistic demand for isolation and complete neutrality for Canada. In this, reaction and the agents of fascism have played a part, so that here as elsewhere, abstract pacifism has become a serious obstacle to the building of a united peace front against aggression. ¹⁰⁹

From the point of view of Canadian Communists striving to defend the interests of the Soviet Union, the anti-imperialist strain among French Canadians presented a serious stumbling block to building a nation-wide united front. It was thus up to the CPC and other "progressive" forces to win French Canadians to support collective security as a means to defend democratic rights on a world scale.

Defense alliance was still an issue in Canada as the 1930s drew to a close and the hopes for peace dissipated with the outbreak of another world-wide conflict. During the closing hours of the decade, the Communists modified their policy towards the war effort; with the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty in August 1939, Communists in Canada and elsewhere followed the Comintern line and condemned any participation in the war that they now labelled as "imperialist". ¹¹⁰ It was a policy which shaped party statements for the first two years of the war. During this period, the drastic changes which took place

on the international political scene affected the CPC's approach to French Canada:

Ryerson's writing of the 1930s clearly attests to the impact of the Soviet Union's leadership upon the Canadian party's approach to both domestic and international political development. Throughout the decade, the young Ryerson viewed Canadian society and the world at large as divided into two classes which clashed both on the domestic and international stage. In this context, he saw French-Canadian nationalism as a smokescreen employed by the capitalist oppressors to divert the French-Canadian masses from the reality of their exploitation. This pattern of thinking prevented him from perceiving nationalism in Quebec as an aspiration for cultural identity. While he recognized the importance of language and culture to the French-speaking population of Quebec and did make occasional reference to a national culture in the province, he did not discuss the national organizations in terms of their concerns for cultural survival. Abbé Groulx' notion of creating a French state in North America was, from the Communist point of view, synonymous with promoting corporatism and, ultimately, fascism. The right-wing character of French-Canadian nationalism during the Depression merely confirmed Ryerson's faith in the Comintern line that all nationalism was reactionary and markedly influenced the attitude with which he approached nationalism

in Quebec during the thirties.

CHAPTER I NOTES

1. The CPC, like all Communist parties, was a member of the Communist International, more often referred to as Comintern, which was founded in Moscow in 1919 and which provided direction for its member parties until its dissolution in 1943.
 2. Cited by Jane Degra, ed., The Communist International, 1919-1943, (London: F. Cass, 1971, Vol. III, p. 299.
 3. Communist Party of Canada, Canada and the VII World Congress of the Communist International, (Toronto: 1935), p. 4.
 4. Tim Buck, The People vs. Monopoly, (Toronto: New Era Publishers Ltd., 1937), p. 53.
 5. Ibid., p. 50.
 6. Ibid., p. 51.
 7. Communist Party of Canada, Canada and the VII World Congress, p. 4.
 8. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Cent Ans de capitalisme dans Québec", Clarté, 22 mai 1937.
 9. Buck, The People vs. Monopoly, p. 9.
 10. Ibid., p. 14.
 11. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), Le Réveil du Canada français, (Montréal: Les Editions du Peuple, 1937), passim.
 12.

	<u>Hourly Wages</u>			
	Winnipeg	Vancouver	Toronto	Montréal
Menuisiers	\$.75	\$.62-.87	\$.60-.80	\$.30-.60
Peintures	.70	.62-.80	.50-.75	.30-.60
Platriers	1.00	1.00	.75-1.00	.67
Journaliers	.37-.42	.35-.50	.40-.60	.15-.40
- Cited from "Salaires et Heures de Travail au Canada", Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 10.
13. Ibid.
 14. Ibid., p. 8.

15. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Où va-t-il? La trajectoire de l'honorable R.B. Bennett", Clarté, 14 janvier 1935.
16. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Indignation grandit parmi les marchands montréalais!", Clarté, 4 mai 1935.
17. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Les taxes provinciales du Québec", Clarté, 30 juillet 1938.
18. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 11.
19. From passages of the Report cited in E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Une honte dont on est fier", Clarté, 7 février 1935.
20. Léon Lortie, "Le système scolaire" in J.C. Falardeau, éd., Essais sur le Québec contemporain, (Québec: Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1953), p. 177.
21. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "L'empoisonnement de la jeunesse canadienne-française", Clarté, 2 novembre 1935.
22. Ibid.
23. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 41.
24. Ibid., p. 35.
25. Ibid., p. 24.
26. Ibid., p. 32.
27. Ibid., p. 41.
28. With respect to the CPC's approach to religion in Quebec, sociologist Marcel Fournier makes a distinction between the public and private lives of the party. While publicly little mention was made of religion, privately the party adhered to the Marxist view of religion as an instrument employed by the ruling class to passify the workers. See Marcel Fournier, "Histoire et idéologie du groupe candien français de parti-communiste (1925-45)", Socialisme Québécois, no. 16, 1969, p. 75.
29. Stanley Ryerson, "Reaction CAN be Defeated", Daily Clarion, November 27, 1937.
30. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, pp. 22-23.
31. (Ryerson), "Building the Movement in Quebec" in Communist Party of Canada, Toward a Canadian People's Front, (n.p., 1935), p. 161.

32. University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, Discussion, Issue no. 5, Canadian Communist Party of Canada, Eighth Dominion Convention, October 8-11, 1935, p. 6.
33. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, Fred Rose, "The Catholic Syndicates in Quebec", Discussion, Issue no. 4, Eighth Dominion Convention, October 8-11, 1935, p. 6. See also in same collection and box, Evarist Dubé (and S. Ryerson), "French Canada Awakens", (English Text) co-report presented to the convention. In an interview on February 6, 1981, Ryerson pointed out that it was he who drafted the report presented by Dubé.
34. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, Stanley Ryerson, "The Present Situation in Quebec", Summary of report by Ryerson to Political Bureau, March 2, 1938, p.2.
35. Philippe Hamel, "La Bourse et ses Ruines: Le super-capitalisme et ses fraudes, le corporatisme et ses bienfaits", conférence prononcée à la salle paroissiale de S. Alphonse d'Youvillé, Montréal, le 1 décembre 1938, pp. 10-11.
36. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Cent Ans de capitalisme dans Québec", Clarté, 22 mai 1937.
37. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Les Libéraux n'ont-ils rien appris?", Clarté, 31 juillet 1937.
38. (Ryerson), "Building the Movement in Quebec" in Communist Party of Canada, Toward a Canadian People's Front, p. 155.
39. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 18.
40. Ibid., p. 19.
41. Declaration of Seventh World Congress of Comintern, August 1935, in Jane Degras, ed., The Communist International, (1919-1943), p. 366.
42. (Ryerson), "Building the Movement in Quebec" in Communist Party of Canada, Toward a Canadian People's Front, p. 155.
43. La Nation was the most anti-Communist of the nationalist journals of this period and specifically waged a campaign against Clarté. See Robert Comeau, "L'Idéologie Petit-Bourgeoise des Indépendantistes de 'La Nation' 1936-1938" in Idéologies au Canada français 1930-1939, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), p. 204.

44. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Pour une culture Canadienne-française, Clarté, 26 décembre 1936.
45. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le Nationalisme au Service du Progrès", Clarté, 29 octobre 1938.
46. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 15.
47. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "L'Education Anti-Nationale de M. Lionel Groulx", Clarté, 12 décembre 1936.
48. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Bilingualisme et Culture", Clarté, 19 décembre 1936.
49. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "La Peinture émancipée", Clarté, 1 juin 1935.
50. Stanley Ryerson, "The Choice Before Quebec", Daily Clarion, July 25, 1936.
51. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 14.
52. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Congrès de langue française", Clarté, 3 juillet 1937.
53. See, for example, Stanley Ryerson, "Reaction CAN be Defeated", Daily Clarion, November 27, 1937.
54. Robert Rumilly, Maurice Duplessis et son temps, I, (Montréal: Editions Fies, 1978), p. 206.
55. Ibid., p. 259.
56. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le Peuple a exprimé lundi sa haine pour Taschereau", Clarté, 30 novembre 1935.
57. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Concentration fasciste dans l'Union Nationale", Clarté, 7 décembre 1935.
58. Rumilly, Maurice Duplessis, pp. 324-325.
59. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le Jugement de Greenshields --Un Signal d'Alarme!", Clarté, 10 juin 1939.
60. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 34.
61. Andrée Lévesque-Olssen, "The Canadian Left in Quebec during the Great Depression: The CPC and the CCF in Quebec, 1929-39", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1972, p. 235.

62. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le Jugement de Greenshields --Un Signal d'Alarme!", Clarté, 10 juin 1939.
63. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Cent Ans de Capitalisme", Clarté, 22 mai 1937.
64. H. Blair Neatby, William Lyon Mackenzie King, Vol. III, 1932-1939: The Prism of Unity, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 242-243.
65. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le pacte confédératif et le peuple québécois", Clarté, 12 février 1938.
66. Communist Party of Canada, Canada and the VII World Congress, p. 15.
67. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 35.
68. Ryerson, "The Choice Before Quebec", Daily Clarion, July 25, 1936.
69. Cited in Degras, ed., The Communist International, III, p. 366.
70. Communist Party of Canada, Canada and the VII World Congress, p. 52.
71. Stanley Ryerson, "God Be Thanked for the Rebels", New Frontier, Vol. 1, no. 2, (May 1936), p. 6.
72. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le feu de la Rivière-du-Chêne 1837", Clarté, 24 juillet 1937.
73. Stanley Ryerson, 1837: The Birth of Canadian Democracy, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1937), p. 10.
74. Roger, "Le feu de la Rivière-du-Chêne 1837", Clarté, 24 juillet 1937.
75. Ryerson, 1837: The Birth, p. 81.
76. Ibid., p. 127.
77. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Vers l'unité démocratique du Québec", Clarté, 10 septembre 1938.
78. Abbé Lionel Groulx, Notre Maître, Le Passe, 2ième série, (Montréal: Librairie Granger Frères Limitée, 1936), p. 161.
79. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 5..

80. Robert Rumilly, Papineau, (Montréal: Ernest Flammarion, 1934), p.277.
81. Stanley Ryerson "French Canada's Place in the Fight for a True Canadian Peace", Daily Clarion, May 1, 1939.
82. Communist Party of Canada, Toward Democratic Unity for Canada, Submission to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, 2nd edition, 1939, p. 12.
83. Ibid., p. 101.
84. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Vers un parti des ouvriers et des cultivateurs dans Québec: La formation du Parti National-Corporatiste --défi au mouvement du Travail organisé", Clarté, 17 juillet 1937.
85. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le Parti Libéral et l'Opposition populaire", Clarté, 30 avril 1938.
86. Rundschau (Basel), September 24, 1935, p. 2136. Cited in I. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 77. See also Lévesque-Olssen, "The Canadian Left in Québec...", pp. 141-142.
87. See, for example, Robert Comeau, "Le Canadian Seaman's Union (1936-1949): un chapitre de l'histoire du mouvement ouvrier canadien", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, vol. 29, no. 4, (mars, 1976), pp. 503-538.
88. Ryerson, "French Canada's Place in the Fight...", Daily Clarion, May 1, 1939.
89. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Les Libéraux honnêtes peuvent encore faire quelque chose", Clarté, 4 juin 1938.
90. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Une réforme s'impose dans le système des taxes à Québec et à Montréal", Clarté, 16 juillet 1938.
91. "See, for example, Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 41.
92. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "La vie d'un des nôtres menacée", Clarté, 11 juillet 1936.
93. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Nous trainera-t-on à la remorque des impérialistes", Clarté, 10 avril 1937. The emphasis placed by Ryerson on Canadian Communists as the vanguards of the struggle for democratic rights is representative of the primary concerns dealt with in Clarté and party pamphlets. While Ryerson and other

contributors to the paper did not neglect to preach the lessons of Marxism, this played a minor role in the party's political writing. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Marcel Fournier, "'Clarté' ou le rêve d'un Front populaire" in Fernand Dumont, et. al., eds., Idéologies au Canada français 1930-1939, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval), pp. 273-294.

94. Cited in Monthly Review, no. 5, (September, 1934), p. 15.
95. Lévesque-Olssen, "The Canadian Left in Quebec...", p. 16. Lévesque-Olssen points out that the CCF was also confronted with this problem.
96. (Ryerson), "Building the Movement...", p. 157.
97. Ibid.; p. 159.
98. See Degras, ed., The Communist International, III, p. 303.
99. Ibid., p. 363.
100. Ibid., p. 358.
101. Roger, Le Réveil du Canada français, p. 36.
102. Stanley Ryerson and William Kashtan, "Pour raffirmer l'Unité contre Duplessis Fred Rose se retire", Clarté, 22 octobre 1938.
103. (Ryerson), "Building the Movement...", p. 161.
104. Buck, The People vs. Monopoly, p. 31.
105. Ryerson, "Reaction CAN...".
106. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Isolement ou défense de la paix", Clarté, 28 novembre 1936.
107. Berthe Caron, Clarté, 10 octobre 1938.
108. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "La défense nationale du Canada, Clarté, 13 mai 1939.
109. Ryerson, "French Canada's Place in the Fight...".

110. See the Comintern article cited in Degras, ed., The Communist International, Vol. II, p. 48. See also Melvyn Pelt, "The Communist Party of Canada", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1964, p. 160.

WORLD WAR II AND THE COLD WAR AFTERMATH:
COMMUNISTS RECOGNIZE FRENCH CANADA
AS A NATION

The Second World War and the period known as the "cold war" which quickly followed in its wake were times when the policies, actions and political success of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) were perhaps most blatantly governed by the precarious changing of events of the battlefield of international diplomacy. The star of the Soviet Union rose and then fell dramatically in the eyes of the western allies. The fortunes of the CPC in Canadian political life followed closely the fate of its spiritual leaders. As the CPC developed its line against and then in support of the war effort and later its anti-American stance once the "cold war" set in, French-Canadian national sentiment was continually a factor the party had to deal with.

With the signing of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty in August 1939 and then the official entry of Canada in the war, the authorities began to perceive the pro-Soviet Communists as potentially dangerous opponents to the war effort. Emotional propaganda for war stoked the flames of anti-Communist sentiment. In Quebec, the party journal Clarté, like the Toronto Clarion, was forced to cease publication in late autumn of 1939 and shortly thereafter Ryerson, along with fellow high-ranking party members, was driven underground in Montreal. Ryerson remained in

hiding until the summer of 1942.¹ The precarious position of the Communists was further compounded when the King government passed an order-in-council on June 4, 1940 which declared the CPC to be illegal.² Despite these difficulties, the party endeavoured to continue to play a political role and carried out limited clandestine activities to defend the Soviet Union's stance against the "imperialist" war.

In their campaign against the war, the CPC counted on the anti-imperialist tradition of French Canadians. No longer was this sentiment perceived as an impediment to Communist political goals, but rather as a vital and positive factor to thwarting mobilization for the war effort in Canada. Writing in early 1940, Ryerson alerted his readers that in the struggle against world imperialism their first task was to defeat the Canadian bourgeoisie whose members were partners of British imperialism.³ Conceding that until then French Canada had been "a brake on historical progress", he claimed that in the context of the war it "may become its violent accelerator."⁴ For among French Canadians

exists the broadest base for mass, popular struggle in resistance to the imposition of conscription, in opposing the continuance of the war, and in raising most sharply the question of breaking the "British connection" as an integral part of the struggle for peace.⁵

In his cultivating of French-Canadian support, Ryerson.

maintained that his party had, since the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, called for the economic, social and political equality for Quebec and that its report to the Rowell-Sirois Commission represented a further development of that position.⁶ With the war, the French-Canadian national question had to be examined more fully; nationalism in Quebec had to be reappraised:

It becomes clear that the nationalism of the French-Canadian masses, which has been too often simply identified with the element of narrow regionalism that is a part of it, is not in essence anti-Canadian, but pro-Canadian and anti-imperialist. Its edge is turned against British imperialism and that minority within Canada who for profits' sake would turn Canada's manpower into cannon-fodder and her future into ruin.⁷

While Ryerson does specify that he is referring to nationalism of the masses, this attitude to French-Canadian nationalism was clearly a departure from the CPC line of the 1930s. This softening towards nationalism and its stance against the war enabled the party to make some political inroads among French Canadians.⁸

The political climate that was conducive to the CPC wooing support from the anti-imperialist French Canadians abruptly disintegrated when international developments once again changed the Soviet attitude to the war. The declared neutrality of the Soviet Union came to an end on June 22, 1941 when Nazi Germany invaded the Communist state thereby violating the non-aggression treaty of 1939. After a series

of negotiations among Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, the latter was eventually accepted as an ally of the anti-Hitler forces and subsequently was included as one of the "Big Three" of the allied powers.⁹

(In August 1941, Tim Buck, in announcing the new party line on the war, stated that the reason for the reversal was the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Describing the initial stages of the war as a struggle "for imperialist redivision of the capitalist world", Buck defended the original official Communist stance. He contended that as long as the USSR had been able to maintain its neutrality, it had served as an effective buffer against the spread of fascism and imperialist exploitation.¹¹ The CPC henceforth maintained that the future of world democracy was dependent upon the strength and success of the Soviet Union in the battle against Nazi Germany.

The main concern of the CPC once the party became involved in the war effort was to forge a strong democratic front through strengthening national unity in Canada, a front which would mirror that of the Big Three on the international scene. While the policy was also a concern of the party in the 1930s, the reality of the war intensified the sense of urgency surrounding it and meant that more than ever before the building of a broad national front took precedence as the most pressing task facing Canadians.¹²

In the campaign to promote a national front for the

Canadian war effort, the Communists emphasized the need to achieve an equal balance between classes by elevating the voice of labour in the national decision-making process as well as the necessity of promoting unity between French and English Canadians. The party realized that French Canadians could not be expected to make as great a contribution to the war effort if they did not enjoy equal rights and share in the benefits of Canadian citizenship. Buck outlined the rights that had to be guaranteed to French Canadians before their full participation in the war effort could be expected: "the winning of wage equality for French-Canadian workers, of full recognition of the French language in the Canadian armed forces, of adequate representation in the administration of the war and in the government services generally."¹³ In his 1941 report, he reaffirmed the CPC's belief that French Canadians as a people were fundamentally democratic and unquestionably dedicated to the defeat of fascist tyranny. He called upon all progressive elements in Quebec to join the battle cry of the "national front".¹⁴ Furthermore, he pledged that the party would defend the French Canadians' "special political, cultural and economic interests."¹⁵

For his part, Ryerson also stressed that French Canadians' vital interests were irrevocably linked to the war overseas:

La réforme politique et économique
qui s'impose au Québec ne peut se

réaliser dans un vacuum. Elle ne sera atteinte qu' à travers la défense outrancièrre de la patrie canadienne contre l'ennemi naziste et japonais, à travers la participation intégrale de tout notre peuple à la lutte mondiale contre la tyrannie! 16

He made it clear that French Canadians' national concerns could not be realized before the larger task of defeating international fascism and imperialism was achieved.

Like other parties in Quebec, the CPC had to confront the issue of conscription. Fully cognizant of the divisiveness of the conscription debate and believing that the war in Europe would be short-lived, Prime Minister King had promised in the autumn of 1939 that a government led by him would never impose mandatory enlistment. In early 1942, King announced that a national plebiscite would be held to determine whether the electorate would release his administration from his previous commitment. In Quebec, one French-Canadian response was the formation of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada to promote a "no" vote in the plebiscite.¹⁷ For its part, the CPC endorsed a "yes" vote and attempted to rally support for this stance in Quebec.¹⁸ The approach taken by the party was to try to convince French Canadians that the Second World War differed from the previous world conflict. A resolution presented to the 1942 National Conference of the CPC declared:

We Communists fully understand why the French-Canadians fought so hard against conscription in 1917, but

we appeal to our compatriots in Quebec to realize that this war is different. It is a war for national defence, liberty, and independence against the most monstrous oppression the world has ever known --Hitler fascism. 19

In the appeal for French Canadian backing, the resolution further stated that the Communists "stand for the recognition of the cultural and racial aspirations of the French Canadians. We are ready to accord every right of citizenship."20

When the results of the 1942 plebiscite vote demonstrated that Quebec had overwhelmingly opposed the national trend by voting "non", Ryerson questioned:

Peut-on dire que tout ce qui est possible a été fait pour "renseigner", pour faire croire aux Canadiens du Québec qu'on recherche pour eux la pleine égalité de droits aussi bien que de sacrifices qu'exige cette mesure populaire, libératrice? 20

The results of the plebiscite translated into a clear message for Ryerson: there was yet a long way to go to ensuring French Canadians equality with their English-speaking compatriots and thus a long road to travel before French Canadians could be expected to make an equal commitment to the war. The goal of equality between the two linguistic groups had to become a main concern for all those committed to building a strong and effective campaign against Hitler.

"Equality" came to mean different things when referred to by Ryerson and his party. In 1942, the rights of French Canadians were no longer described by the Communists as

"minority rights" as had been the case in the CPC submission in 1938 to the Rowell-Sirois Commission; nor were they yet explicitly defined as "national rights", although the 1942 CPC resolution proclaimed that the party stood for "the fullest satisfaction of the national aspirations of the French Canadians."²² In the autumn of 1942, it would appear that the party was primarily concerned with promoting French Canada's equal role in the war effort. Specifically, Ryerson called upon the King government to recruit progressive, patriotic French Canadians into his cabinet.²³ He warned that if forceful leadership for wartime participation and cooperation was not found, then the masses of French Canadians would be vulnerable to the defeatist propaganda of the Bloc populaire.²⁴ The Bloc populaire, led by such disenchanted Liberals as Maxime Raymond, René Chalout and Paul Gouin and supported by members of the defunct Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, was aimed towards combatting French-Canadian participation in the war. The achievement of equal involvement in national wartime politics was therefore essential to undermine the platform of the Bloc populaire and moreover to avoiding an all-embracing reactionary backlash in the province of Quebec.

In the process of forging a policy on the status of French Canadians, the Communists began to refer to them as a "nation". In an article in a March issue of La Victoire, written to defend the CPC against attacks from l'Action

catholique, Ryerson declared that his party was a champion of French Canadian "national rights" which he enumerated to be "l'emploi de la langue française sur un pied d'égalité dans les forces armées, l'élimination des conditions d'inégalité au Québec, dans les domaines des salaires, de la santé publique, des facilités éducationnelles."²⁵ This brief statement indicated for the first time the Communists' willingness to recognize French Canada as a nation. It also formed the basis for the position on French Canada enunciated in the draft programme presented to the founding convention of the new legal party of the Communists called the Labor Progressive Party (LPP) in August 1943. With respect to French Canada, the draft programme of the party declared that it

stands unreservedly for the establishment of full national equality for the French Canadians. The Party presses the governments, provincial and federal, to take immediate measures to redress the burning grievances of the French-Canadian people. It fights for the establishment of explicit constitutional guarantees of the cherished language rights of the French Canadians. It works to win the united support of English Canada for the achievement of full national equality for the French-Canadian people, as a common responsibility of all Canadians and the key to real and enduring national unity. ²⁶

The promotion of the cause of the war among French Canadians and the development of mutual understanding between this group and the rest of Canada were two principal motives for the writing of a major work by Ryerson while he was

underground: French Canada: A Study in Canadian Democracy was published in 1943, shortly after the founding of the LPP. Two years later, he produced a French version of the work.²⁷ Referring to the English and French editions respectively, he explained the differences and why he did not simply translate the English one into French: "celle-ci étant une discussion en français de problèmes canadiens-français-- et celle-là, une tentative d'éclaircissement auprès de nos compatriotes de langue anglaise."²⁸ Each book in its own way was directed specifically to the group in whose language it was written.

In French Canada Ryerson continued to develop the theme of French Canada's democratic traditions that was central to his first historical work, but took his discussion beyond the 1837-1838 rebellions and into the period of Confederation and the early 20th century. As in his previous book, he employed history as a means to defend contemporary Communist policies. Asserting that the relations between French and English Canadians had been a major problem persisting throughout their shared history and which presently threatened the Canadian war effort, he insisted that these relations could be

understood and resolved only by probing deep beneath the surface of our past and present history; by abandoning two-dimensional, surface conceptions, and laying bare, in depth, the actual unfolding of social and economic forces on which rests the life of every

national community.²⁹

In the 1930s, during the Communist crusade against fascism, Ryerson had used history to demonstrate the basic democratic nature of the mass of French Canadians and the struggle they had shared with their English-speaking counterparts in the mid-19th century to gain democratic liberties. A decade later, history revealed to Ryerson that the French-Canadian struggle had also been "a struggle for the right of national self-determination, for their right as a nation to choose their own form of state."³⁰ He placed the French-Canadian cause in the same tradition as the national unification movements which characterized mid-nineteenth century Europe.³¹

This national struggle won a partial victory, according to Ryerson, with the political compromise of Confederation in 1867:

The French-Canadian popular demand for an autonomous state was conceded by the B.N.A. Act, insofar as a federal system was established instead of a legislative union; and in the granting of powers to the provincial governments in the spheres of direct taxation, administration of public lands...education, municipal institutions...³²

Thus the principle of two nations was established with the founding of the Canadian state. Ryerson's book and the LPP programme established officially the Communists' acceptance that French Canada was indeed a nation.³³

Once the LPP had formally adopted the position that French Canada constituted a nation, the next task was to win its acceptance among English Canadians. Ryerson argued that the failure to recognize fully the democratic right of French Canadians to choose freely their own state violated the principle of national equality.³⁴ It also undermined the cause of Canadian unity so crucial, in the minds of the Communist leaders, to the welfare of all Canadians both in the war effort and the future. Ryerson contended that "Canadian unity can be real and complete only if the minority nation, that of French Canada, is able to feel full confidence that its right freely to determine its own destiny, to arrange its life as it sees fit, is assured democratic guarantees."³⁵ Canadian unity also was dependent upon English Canadians taking up the defense of French-Canadian rights as a cause of their own.

In his call for recognition of French-Canadians' right to self-determination, Ryerson was several years ahead of his party. It was not until the second National Convention of the LPP in June 1946 that an official commitment in favour of French Canada's right to national self-determination was made by the party. A "Statement of Aims and Principles" presented to the convention declared:

A Socialist Canada will extend to the people of French Canada the full right of national self-determination and on that foundation realize in practice the fraternity of the peoples of the two nations, French and English, which together constitute Canada.³⁶

This declaration did not become part of the official party policy until it appeared in the 1952 edition of the LPP programme.³⁷

While the principle of political equality between French and English Canada was entrenched in the Canadian federal system and "an historical fact", Ryerson argued that there were serious obstacles which prevented that principle from becoming a full reality. The main impediments were the economic and social inferiority suffered by French Canada in comparison with the rest of Canada. Comparing statistics for Quebec and Ontario,³⁸ he claimed that while the average annual per capita income in Ontario in 1940 was \$530, in Quebec it was only \$358.³⁹ He endeavoured to impress upon his English-speaking readers that the inferior wage levels in Quebec served to depress incomes generally throughout the country and thus affected their own material interests. Furthermore, in addition to individual material welfare, economic equality was a crucial factor in the war effort: "The issue of wages and working conditions in Quebec are war issues: the raising of shamefully substandard wages is required in the interests of efficient production as well as of morale..."⁴⁰

Ryerson's bid for improving the income levels of Quebec workers was undermined by the imposition of wage and price controls along with other restrictive measures of the King government. This implementation of wartime emergency powers

was a response to severe inflationary pressures placed upon the Canadian economy from a combination of full employment, labour shortages in essential industries and massive government expenditure.⁴¹ These measures would obviously serve as major impediments to any attempt to equalize wage levels between English and French-Canadian workers.

The industrial expansion stimulated by wartime production had, nevertheless, generated several beneficial by-products. Referring specifically to French Canada, Ryerson asserted:

L'industrialisation du Québec poussée si loin pendant le premier quart du siècle actuel, vient d'être relancée à nouveau. Le centre de gravité du Canada français se déplace encore plus, des campagnes vers les villes. Le poids de la classe ouvrière dans la vie nationale s'accroît.⁴²

He pointed to important gains made in labour organization in the province during the war and claimed that while there had been a general flourishing of trade union movement in the country, the progress made in Quebec was outstanding:

In aircraft, munitions, shipyards, textile, international trade unions have acted as a mighty lever in raising wage standards and securing betterment of conditions. Through trade union action, tens of thousands of Quebec workers have come to understand what national unity can mean to them in terms of joint action with fellow Canadians for the securing of the common good.⁴³

Ryerson interpreted these developments as being a positive sign for the growth of democracy in French Canada. Explaining

the situation in Quebec to his English-speaking readers, he concluded optimistically: "With the organizational growth of the French-Canadian labor movement there must go a heightening of political consciousness and clarity of that movement."⁴⁴ For Ryerson, the economic and political progress made by the labour movement, particularly in Quebec, augured well for the working class and its political vanguard, the Communist Party.

In spite of the advances made in the union movement in Quebec, the province's workers were still faced with comparatively low wage levels and consequently with sub-standard health and housing. As during the 1930s, in French Canada, Ryerson reminded his readers of the generally lower standard of social conditions suffered by French Canadians. Choosing infant mortality as one indicator of public health, he pointed to statistics published in the Canada Yearbook which revealed that for every thousand live births in 1941 there were 45.6 infant deaths in Ontario compared to 75.9 in Quebec.⁴⁵ During the tuberculosis epidemic which persisted in Canada during the period, Quebec once again had a significantly greater rate of reported cases than Ontario. There was a similar pattern for other infectious diseases at the time.⁴⁶ Related to both low wages and substandard health were housing conditions. Ryerson painted a grim picture of overcrowding and unwholesome living conditions in the province's industrial centres. Documented reports of housing in Montreal

revealed that the situation was not improving over the years but rather was drastically deteriorating. Overcoming the disparity between the standard of living of English and French Canadians was a necessary task for all concerned with advancing the war effort.⁴⁷

In addition to promoting mutual understanding between the two linguistic groups and to cultivating acceptance of French-speaking Canadians as a nation, a third theme developed by Ryerson in his work French Canada was the negative role played by the reactionary politics of the opposition forces led by Maurice Duplessis and the Bloc populaire. The defeatism regarding the war and the racial chauvinism of these Quebec "reactionaries" threatened both national unity and English Canada's understanding of French-Canadian national sentiment. Ryerson railed against the Bloc populaire for its "misrepresentation" of the war as being "British" and "imperialist" and thus alien to the interests of French Canada. He referred to its anti-war campaign as a "prostitution" of French-Canadian nationalism in the interests of fascist reaction.⁴⁸ He also challenged that party's tactics and motivations:

every special grievance of the French Canadians is seized upon --language inequality in the armed forces, sub-standard wages, and so forth-- not with a view to correcting the grievances in the interests of the war effort, but with the undisguised purpose of disrupting the struggle for victory. ⁴⁹

He further accused the Bloc populaire of shielding its fundamental ambition of establishing corporatism behind its ranting against the trusts. This appeal to the masses was merely demagogic manipulation; national interests of French Canadians could only be safeguarded by the real democratic force-- the working class. The Communists met the Bloc populaire head on in a federal by-election in the Montreal riding of Cartier in August 1943. In a break-through victory for the LPP, its candidate Fred Rose narrowly defeated his Bloc opponent.

The nationalist issue which resurfaced during the war with the advent of the Bloc populaire and the continuing presence of Duplessis was that of provincial autonomy. It was an issue which Ryerson perceived as most threatening to national unity. The problem was not peculiar to Quebec; he pointed to both George Drew in Ontario and Duplessis as the self-appointed defenders of "provincial rights".⁵⁰ Prior to the 1944 Quebec election campaign, he accused both men of opposing housing projects, the building of improved educational facilities and, most significantly, the federal health insurance programme.⁵¹ Rather than working towards progressive change in their respective provinces as promised in their election platforms, Ryerson argued that Duplessis and Drew worked deliberately to obstruct the social and economic reforms necessary for national equality. In this they were simply the lackeys of Big Business Toryism, the

interests with most to gain from preventing the implementation of social and economic reforms. The battle-cry of "provincial autonomy" was clearly a tactic to facilitate the perpetuation of the status quo. Ryerson explained:

A chaque fois le peuple canadien a voulu s'unir pour relever sa condition sociale, les réactionnaires ont poussé des hurlements: 'La constitution est en danger! la constitution ne le permet pas!' Ce qui, pour eux, veut dire tout simplement: Diviser pour regner.⁵²

Thus the issue of provincial autonomy served not only to impede social progress in both English and French Canada, but to cause a diversion from the war effort and weaken the campaign to defeat international fascism.

In the spring of 1944 with the provincial elections in Quebec drawing nearer, Ryerson, writing in Toronto as the editor of the newly-established party journal National Affairs Monthly (NAM), called upon the "liberal bourgeoisie" and the labour movement to join together to defeat the forces of reaction led by Duplessis and to prevent the Union Nationale from returning to power. Recognizing the strength of nationalist sentiment in the province, Ryerson emphasized that the combined unity of "democratic" and labour forces would be successful against reaction "only if it wins the support of the masses of nationalist followers both in town and countryside."⁵³ When the election was eventually held and Quebec witnessed Duplessis reconquer the seat of government, Ryerson attributed this victory to

the failure of "labour-democracy" to form a united electoral front.⁵⁴ He placed the burden of the responsibility on the shoulders of the CCF: "Organized labor, close to 200,000 strong was in a position to ensure the defeat of Duplessis. But the whole weight of growing CCF influence was thrown in the scales against the policy of democratic unity."⁵⁵ Governed solely by the ambition to bring down the Godbout Liberals, the CCF, in refusing to combine forces with other "democratic" groups, was effectively working in the interests of Duplessis and the Bloc populaire.

In the aftermath of the election Ryerson stressed that the only means to defend democratic rights and Canadian unity was to form a "democratic coalition" in Quebec, or, in other words, to promote the policy that had failed to be successfully adopted during the election.⁵⁶ It was also important to consider the role played by the "national factor" in the fight for Canadian unity given the chauvinism of both Drew in Ontario and Duplessis in Quebec.⁵⁷ He concluded that

Under no circumstances can the labor movement afford to underestimate the scope and import of the factor of national division and prejudice. The pro-fascist circles of English-Canadian big business who poured money like water into Duplessis' campaign fund evidently understood its usefulness to them. Their aims will be blocked by the camp of national unity only if and when the labor and democratic forces give bold and energetic leadership to the solving of national grievances in French Canada. ⁵⁸

Once again the crux of the issue was the struggle for "full national equality" between English and French Canada. During the course of the war, Ryerson continued to develop and promote the theme of the importance of recognizing French Canada's national rights.

While Ryerson worked principally out of Toronto during the later years of the war, he did not cease writing to French Canadians. In addition to his periodic articles in La Victoire, the French-language party newspaper, he brought out a French version of his book French Canada in 1945. As mentioned above, Le Canada français, sa tradition, son avenir, was not a translation of the 1943 publication; rather Ryerson reworked the book and designed it specifically for his Quebec readers. Much of the text of the two works is the same, but whereas the English version stresses the democratic nature and tradition of French Canadians, the French edition emphasizes to its francophone readers the justness of the war and deals more specifically with the Roman Catholic Church's position on the war and the feasibility of united action on the part of Catholic and Protestant Canadians.

A major theme developed in the French version of the book is a reiteration of the party line that the current conflict was not an imperialist one. Ryerson refuted any historical comparison between the present war and the imperialist aggression of the early twentieth century. He argued instead that World War II was analagous to the noble,

popular struggles of Upper and Lower Canada: "En 1837-38 une oligarchie féodale et coloniale tenta de nous asservir. Un siècle plus tard, une oligarchie internationale, la coalition des puissances fascistes, tenta d'asservir le monde entier."⁵⁹ Having assailed the obstacle of anti-imperialism with respect to French Canadians' perception of the war, Ryerson went on to undermine any feeling that the war was opposed monolithically by the Church in Quebec. In his introduction to Le Canada français he cited Cardinal Villeneuve declaring that his visit to the front had proven to him the justness of the war.⁶⁰ In his writing, Ryerson endeavoured to convince French Canadians that participation in the war, rather than threaten their interests, was vital to their future survival.

The subject of national inequality between French and English Canada which played such a central role in French Canada was equally as important in the French version. In the realm of social conditions, Ryerson took a much stronger position against the disparity in the quality of the education between Quebec and the rest of Canada in the second work. Educational reform in Quebec, he contended, was deliberately suppressed by the ruling class: "Ce qui se sont opposée à la modernisation de notre système scolaire sont les gens qui craignent la diffusion des livres parmi la masse du peuple, de peur des idées progressives."⁶¹ While in early 1943 he had saluted the adoption of legislation which made

school attendance obligatory,⁶² in Le Canada français he declared that obligatory attendance was insufficient to remedy the upgrading of both teaching facilities and teachers' salaries which trailed far behind those in Ontario. Finally, he affirmed the necessity of establishing a provincial ministry of education in order to place education in the public domain and render the system more democratic.⁶³

In Le Canada français, Ryerson once again singled out Big Business as being the main culprit contributing to the economic ills of Quebec. He pointed to the overwhelming predominance of English-speaking financial interests in control of the economy, but reminded his readers that behind the English names of corporations in Quebec stood numerous members of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie. What differed from his critique of the Depression era was his inclusion of the Church among the leading economic powers in the province, a presense that he claimed was even more obscured and camouflaged than that of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie.⁶⁴ Maintaining that a recent evaluation of the Church's wealth was estimated at \$600 million with an annual income of \$50 million, he stated: "Ce revenu est à peu près égal à celui du Gouvernement de la province de Québec dans les années d'avant guerre. Un cinquième de ce revenu ecclésiastique servirait à diverses oeuvres sociales et charitables."⁶⁵

Again, as in the previous decade, Ryerson's criticism of the Church was directed against the institution and in no

measure against the prevailing faith in the province. Singling out the Catholic hierarchy in Quebec as being a major impediment to a united war effort, he made it clear that the principal sin committed by leading members of the clergy was their campaign denouncing communism and their endeavour to sabotage the war alliance with the Soviet Union.⁶⁶ It was thus also a personal battle between the CPC and the clerics.

Ryerson was faced with a difficult task in his assault upon the Catholic clergy. As during the previous decade, he could not afford to alienate the masses of Catholic French Canadians at a time when his party was proclaiming that national unity had to come before all other concerns. Also during the war the Church advocated social and economic reform, leaving Ryerson with less ammunition for his critique than he had had during the Depression. Consequently he attacked the Catholic hierarchy's anti-Communist pronouncements and argued that such reactionary politics could be attributed to only a small, albeit powerful minority within the Church:

Face aux aspirations légitimes du peuple, catholique comme protestant ou autre, une certaine minorité des membres du clergé se livre à une action politique qui est condamnable. Sympathisants de Franco, de Salazar et de Mussolini, ces hommes accordent leur appui aux ennemis jurés du Canada français et de la liberté humaine...⁶⁷

Citing examples in Europe where Communists and Catholics sat together in government and fought together on the front,⁶⁸

he called upon the same level of cooperation --unity in the war effort and in the period of reconstruction that would follow.

When Ryerson stood back to evaluate what the war had meant for Canada, he came to some positive conclusions. He pointed to the fraternity that had developed on the battlefield between French and English Canadians. It was a bond, he argued, that would enhance unity on the domestic scene.⁶⁹ He also maintained that the experience of the war had silenced much of the anti-Soviet sentiment in Canada and had improved understanding of the Soviet Union among Canadians.⁷⁰ During the war the Communists enjoyed unprecedented acceptance, or at least tolerance, due to the prestige of the Soviet power and military prowess of the Red Army. Ryerson and his fellow party members thus looked forward to the post-war period with great expectation.

Ryerson's optimism concerning the course that the post-war world would take as well as the stature that his party would hold was short-lived. Indeed, disillusionment set in generally among world Communists before the final act of World War II. By the spring of 1945, deep cracks were appearing in the mortar binding the major Western powers to their Soviet ally. In April of that year, President F.D. Roosevelt died and his successor, Harry Truman, took a less conciliatory approach to dealing with Joseph Stalin and Soviet policy.⁷¹ During the final months of the war, sentiment in West grew increasingly hostile towards the "socialist

republic". Ryerson found the anti-Soviet sentiment to be particularly flagrant at the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in May of that year. He warned that the call for "world government" was an attempt by the so-called "middle powers" to dismantle the Big Three unity and, more specifically, to weaken the position of the Soviet Union.⁷²

The chilling of relations between the Soviet Union and her wartime allies during the final hours of the war was the preamble to the "cold war" period. International politics grew more and more polarized between the two protagonists, the Soviet Union and the United States. In turn, the official line of the LPP became increasingly anti-American. From the immediate post-war period on into the 1950s, Communist party literature singled out American economic and cultural "imperialism" as the foremost threat to Canada's independence and general welfare.

Within this new anti-American policy, French Canada would again be assigned a special role. Depicting the southern neighbour as the military aggressor, the Communists returned to viewing the anti-imperialist tradition among French Canadians as presenting the greatest potential Canadian source of resistance to American imperialism. Furthermore, the working class had acquired a heightened political consciousness because of warring against fascism and the expansion of the trade union movement. During the

war, the CPC had looked upon anti-imperialism as a cause led by the petty-bourgeoisie in Quebec; now it claimed that the working class was taking part in anti-imperialist activities and giving it its democratic character.

Referring to French Canada as the bulwark against imperialism was a common refrain of LPP rhetoric of the period and one which was reminiscent of Ryerson's remarks regarding French Canada during the early days of the war.⁷³ Ryerson now praised prominent nationalists, who had been arch opponents during the war, for their stand. In response to journalist André Laurendeau's stance against war, for example, he wrote:

In these words of a leading spokesman of the Quebec nationalists there is expressed the profound hostility to imperialist war which is one of the most deep-seated and progressive features of the national tradition of the French-Canadian masses.⁷⁴

In the same vein, an LPP resolution drafted in 1951 referred to French-Canadian members of Parliament as being the only ones to raise their voices against Canadian involvement in the Korean war. The resolution stated that "Their stand was an expression of the historic tradition of French Canadian people, of struggle against participation in foreign wars, against imperialism and conscription..."⁷⁵

French Canadians were not portrayed by the LPP nor Ryerson as waging an anti-imperialist crusade single-handedly, but the party paid special tribute to Quebec's

long-standing position against involvement in war. While this salute represented a restatement of the party's faith in French Canada as a democratic force, it also signified the LPP's attempt to mobilize an important sector of the public to support its own political ends --the defeat of imperialist monopoly capitalism.

In the LPP campaign against American influence, Canadian Communists once again laid strong emphasis on the need for national unity. As during the war years, the party argued that fundamental to achieving unity was the winning of national equality. For Ryerson, the key to realizing equality between English and French Canadians was an unequivocal acceptance of French Canada as a nation with distinct and peculiar characteristics. Addressing the problem of French-English relations in Canada, he warned:

Those who dismiss this problem by saying the "the issues are the same in French as in English Canada", are saying this in English. National nihilism, in the sense of just easily assuming that "there is no problem there", can be a serious obstacle to the solution of this problem. It can also constitute a veiled expression of English-Canadian "great nation" chauvinism. 76

Over the course of the post-war period, Ryerson and official party literature developed a comprehensive defense of French Canada's status as a nation.

The LPP endeavoured to distinguish itself from the "reactionary" brand of nationalism that in recent years had dominated the province of Quebec. Throughout the 1930s

Ryerson assailed nationalists for talking in terms of racism and for promoting the interests of society's privileged groups and not those of the working class. During the immediate post-war period, this "petty-bourgeois" brand of nationalism continued to be a concern to the party. In his speech to the national party conference in 1945, Ryerson pointed to a renewal of strong nationalist sentiment in Quebec arising from the internal conflict during the war over the question of conscription.⁷⁷ In the face of the upsurge of national feeling in Quebec, he urged his party to "uphold the principles of working-class internationalism and in no way succumb to the powerful pressure of petty-bourgeois nationalism."⁷⁸

The dangerous tenet of petty-bourgeois nationalism was the assumption that French Canada as a whole was an oppressed nation and that it was in the interests of all classes to band together in the fight against the primary evil --English-Canadian domination. This assumption denied the validity of the class struggle and thus was totally unacceptable to Ryerson:

The historic task in French Canada is not that of a bourgeois democratic struggle to open the way to capitalist development, but is one of finding the avenues of approach to the decisive final abolition of capitalism in French as in English Canada.⁷⁹

He impressed upon his readers that the party's position on the national question in Quebec was not to be identified

with the provincial autonomy issue promoted by Duplessis and the "clerico-nationalists". This brand of nationalism only worked in the interests of monopoly capitalism and it did nothing to further the interests of the working class. 80

Petty-bourgeois nationalism was not the only expression of nationalist sentiment. In his work French Canada, Ryerson expressed the view that nationalism was not necessarily by nature reactionary and enumerated the various episodes in history where nationalist sentiment was the driving motivation of progressive movements. Among those he singled out were the eighteenth-century American and French revolutions, the Italian unification movement, the 1837 rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, "the struggle of the young Soviet Republic against the interventionists in 1919-20", the Spanish Civil War and the "patriotic war of national liberation being waged today by the United Nations."⁸¹ In the context of the "cold war" and the shadow of American imperialism in Canada, the LPP began to see that nationalist movements were not always reactionary; indeed they might become important allies of the working class in its struggle for power. Drawing from both Marx and Lenin, Ryerson explained the distinctions between the two brands of nationalism:

This interest of the working class in the destiny of its country arises from a source that is very opposite of that of bourgeois "particularism".

The latter is motivated by money-grubbing greed for markets and sources of investment income. The former springs from awareness of the fact that the highest fulfilment of the aspirations of the masses, of the vast majority of the nation, is emancipation from the yoke of capital through the winning of Socialism. ⁸²

Several years later, when he returned to the subject of petty-bourgeois nationalism in order to confront its seductive potential within his own party, he simplified even further the distinction between the two brands of national sentiment. "The struggle around it is one in which the issue is: For or against the workers? For or against the bosses? There is no 'middle road' in the matter."⁸³ In the national fight to "keep Canada independent", the LPP therefore saw itself advancing the working-class fight against monopoly capitalism.

While the LPP persistently defended French Canada's right to national equality and declared its support for democratic nationalism, the party was not as sympathetic to the "national" demands of French Canadians as some members of the Quebec wing would have liked. During the 1947 Quebec provincial convention of the party, a group led by Henri Gagnon spoke out against the leadership's programme for achieving national equality. In order to ensure economic and social equality between French and English Canada, the LPP executive advocated strengthening the powers of the federal government to facilitate a redistribution of the

country's wealth and to guarantee equal standards. The Gagnon faction condemned this support for more centralization and were subsequently sharply denounced by the leadership.⁸⁴ Convinced that their nationalist views could not be accommodated within the LPP, Gagnon and his followers left the party. Approximately 375 of the 500 delegates joined in the exodus.⁸⁵

Following this departure from the LPP, Gagnon founded a series of political groups in an effort to form a political base for working-class nationalism in Quebec. The first was the Ligue d'action-ouvrière which dissolved shortly after its founding. Then followed the Ligue pour la paix which met with the same fate. Finally, in 1949, Gagnon led the establishment of the Parti Communiste du Canada français; it too disintegrated within a year.⁸⁶ The schism which took place at the 1947 convention was a definite blow to the party and left its mark upon those members who remained.

Subsequent to the crisis of the Quebec wing of the LPP, the official position regarding the nationalists' demands softened and by 1951 Buck declared support for French Canada's right to self-determination. While Ryerson wrote in defense of this right in his 1943 work, French Canada, it was not enshrined in party policy until the fourth national LPP convention when Buck declared:

The people of French Canada must decide for themselves as a nation what their stand shall be upon any

question which involves the issue of peace or war. The workers of Canada as a whole must be helped to recognize the fact that the right to national self-determination for the people of French Canada is indispensable if we are to win the battle of Democracy in Canada as a whole. 87

Moreover, in order to overcome the disenchantment of French-Canadian members, the LPP attempted to ensure the Quebec wing a greater voice within the party. The 1951 convention adopted an amendment to the constitution designed to guarantee "adequate representation" from French Canada on the National Committee "because of the two-nation character of Canada." 88

The party further strengthened its defense of French Canada's national status by calling for the constitutional recognition of this "fact". The LPP brief to the Tremblay Commission, the Royal Commission appointed by the Quebec government in 1954 to investigate constitutional problems in Canada, stated:

Le Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste croit qu'il est nécessaire d'entreprendre l'élaboration d'une nouvelle constitution canadienne. Cette constitution doit reconnaître le caractère bi-national de l'état canadien et consacrer le principe de l'égalité des deux nations qui composent le Canada. 89

The brief maintained that in 1867 Confederation had been a pact between two nations each with its own distinct language and culture. It argued that although the union took the form of a pact, the constitutional framework did not guarantee

sufficient national rights to French Canada. In particular, "L'Acte de l'Amérique britannique du Nord n'accorde pas au peuple du Canada français le droit de décider si, dans une question aussi grave que celle de la guerre ou de la paix, il participera ou il s'abstiendra."⁹⁰ And even more importantly, the BNA Act did not guarantee the French-Canadian nation the right to self-determination.⁹¹ This commitment to national self-determination was also expressed by Buck in a pamphlet published the same year as the brief to the Tremblay Commission. Citing Stalin's definition of a nation as an "historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture", Buck asserted that French Canada was a nation in every respect and therefore the main task of French Canadians was to establish their right to control their national affairs. Drawing once again from Stalin, he concluded that the exercise of control over all aspects of their life was the sole means of survival for French Canada.⁹²

Recognition of the principle of the right of self-determination, not the realization of national independence on the part of French Canada, was the goal towards which the LPP strived. As the LPP stated in its brief to the Tremblay Commission:

Nous ne préconisons pas la
sécession. Nous sommes contre
la sécession parce qu'elle serait,
à nos yeux, contraire aux intérêts

de notre peuple. Mais nous proposons une constitution qui assurerait au peuple canadien-français le droit de décider de sa propre destinée sans contrainte. ⁹³

Addressing the question of the right of national self-determination, the LPP programme, adopted at the fifth national convention in March 1954, enunciated: "Victory for this democratic principle will open the way for the free and voluntary association of French Canada with English-speaking Canada in a federal state based upon the complete national equality of both peoples."⁹⁴ Moreover, it was the leadership's contention that French Canadians were finding that they could best defend their national interests through the struggle for Canadian independence from foreign domination.⁹⁵

If the concessions made to the French-Canadian nationalists within the party during the early 1950s had any positive impact, it was severely undermined by the shock waves which rippled through the international Communist movement when Krushchev revealed the horrors of Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union. The Quebec members felt that they had suffered an especially brutal blow. At the 1957 LPP convention, the Montreal club lamented that their previous faith in the Soviet Union had been based on illusions. They declared:

We in the Province of Quebec who worked under the difficult conditions of the Padlock Law and other repressive measures were particularly sensitive on questions such as democracy in the party, the democratic road to

Socialism in Canada and independence
of our party from the domination of
any other group. 96

The general demoralization resulting from the revelations by Krushev in 1956 and the revolts against the Soviet Union in eastern Europe led to extensive withdrawal⁹⁷ from the party among the Quebec members and throughout the Canadian Communist movement. Ryerson was one of the few intellectuals to remain within the party to weather the storm. The next shock wave to jolt the party and the rest of the country was the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec and Ryerson would throw himself into the debate on the national question with even greater intensity.

Over the course of the "cold war" period, Ryerson and his party promoted policy in line with the Soviet Union's position against American imperialism. The long-standing anti-imperialist stance of French Canadians led the party to regard French-Canadian nationalism as a potentially positive element. Moreover, with the experience of the war years, Ryerson came to appreciate the strength of nationalism as a political force. The war was supported by the Communist movement in the name of national liberation against Nazi aggression. This meant that the Communists no longer viewed nationalism as unquestionably evil; if a vehicle of the democratic working class, the movement would be a progressive force. In the context of Quebec during this period, the key factors in Ryerson's spurning of the

nationalists were the latter's negative reaction to the war and their blatant hatred of the Soviet Union.

In response to the apparent growing strength of Maurice Duplessis and the nationalists led by the Bloc populaire, as well as pressure applied from its Quebec wing, the LPP went beyond its promotion of "national equality" and came to advocate recognition of French Canada's right to national self-determination. In accommodating French-Canadian nationalism to this extent, the LPP endeavoured to make clear the distinctions between its support of working-class nationalism and the brand of chauvinist and reactionary nationalism espoused by petty-bourgeois interests. Although Ryerson played a principal role in having French Canada's right to self-determination ultimately adopted as party policy, he joined the party leadership in insisting that the national concerns of French Canadians remain subordinate to the wider tasks of the working-class struggle. He also affirmed the view that these national concerns could best be served by a united effort on the part of both English and French Canadians to combat the powers of monopoly capitalism.

CHAPTER II NOTES

1. Interview with Stanley Ryerson, Montreal, June 28, 1979.
2. Melvyn Pelt, "The Communist Party of Canada", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1964, p. 164.
3. Stanley Ryerson, "French Canada: Thorn in the Side of Imperialism", The Monthly Review, (March 1940), p. 26.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 27.
7. Ibid., p. 29.
8. Robert Comeau, "Le Parti Communiste Canadien au Québec pendant la seconde guerre mondiale: 1939-1945", unpublished manuscript, p. 1.
9. Robert Beitzell, ed., Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam: the Soviet Protocols, (Hattiesburg, Miss: Academic International, 1970), p. 45.
10. University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, Tim Buck, "A National Front for Victory", report adopted by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Canada, August 28, 1941, p. 1.
11. Ibid., p. 2.
12. Ibid., p. 9. In defining "national front", Buck wrote: "we mean a common front, expressed in identity of aims, of all sections and groups of Canada's people who are for the defeat of Hitler: workers, farmers, business and professional people including sections of the bourgeoisie, of French, English and other origins, and of communist, socialist, social credit, liberal and tory political opinions.
13. Ibid., p. 17.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 18.

16. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Le problème de notre survivance, vu par M. René Chaloult --et par le Général Laflèche", La Victoire, 22 août 1942.
17. Robert Rumilly, Maurice Duplessis et son temps, I, (Montréal: Editions Fides, 1978), p. 609.
18. It is interesting to note that Ryerson wrote a pamphlet prior to June 1941 calling on French Canadians to fight conscription in order to combat the "imperialist" war. See E. Roger, La Conscription, c'est l'esclavage, n.p., n.d.
- 19.. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, "Resolution of the National Party Conference", Communist Party of Canada, February 1942, p. 15.
20. Ibid., p. 6.
21. Roger, "Le problème de notre...", La Victoire, 22 août 1942.
22. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 2, "Resolution of the National Party Conference", p. 15.
23. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Brisons l'influence des Munichois de chez nous!", La Victoire, 19 septembre 1942.
24. Ibid.
25. Stanley Ryerson, "La Guerre, 'L'Action Catholique' et les Communistes", La Victoire, 13 mars 1943.
26. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 3, "Draft Program" presented to the 1st Labor-Progressive Party National Convention, pp. 5-6. See also official 1943 LPP programme, p. 9.
27. Stanley Ryerson, Le Canada français: sa tradition, son avenir, (Montréal: Les Editions La Victoire, Ltée, 1945).
28. Ibid., p. iv.
29. Stanley Ryerson, French Canada: A Study in Canadian Democracy, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1943), p. 21.
30. Ibid., p. 63.
31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 70. It is interesting to note that in the French version of this book Ryerson is much more explicit about the significance of the "political compromise" of Confederation for French Canada. The comparable passage in French reads: "Par l'adoption de la forme (sic) fédérale, à la place de l'union législative, on a reconnu le droit des Canadiens-français à l'état de leur choix, sous la forme d'une province autonome au sein de la Confédération." (p. 74) The contrast can perhaps be explained by the fact that Ryerson was speaking to two different audiences or that the two-year time lag had seen him develop a more sympathetic position regarding the national question.
33. In an interview in Montreal, February 6, 1981, Ryerson stated that he had been actively pressing for recognition of French Canada as a nation since 1939-1940. He claims that at that time he was supported in this position within the party executive by Leslie Morris, but that they met with strong opposition from Tim Buck and Sam Carr.
34. Ryerson, French Canada, pp. 178-179.
35. Ibid. p. 179.
36. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 3, "Preliminary Draft of a Statement of Aims and Principles" presented to the 2nd National Convention of the LPP, June, 1946.
37. This is a point made Robert Comeau and Bernard Dionne, "Le Parti ouvrier-progressiste en crise 1946-56", unpublished manuscript, pp. 10-11. Comeau is quite critical of the party's refusal to recognize French Canada's right to self-determination and argues that recognition would have been the only way to make French Canadians feel willing to make a full commitment to the war effort. See Comeau and Dionne, "Le Parti Communiste Canadien au Québec pendant le seconde guerre mondiale 1939-45", unpublished manuscript, p. 19.
38. Ryerson claimed that this was a logical comparison given the similarities between the provinces' population and economic structure.
39. Ryerson, French Canada, p. 148.
40. Ibid., p. 212. Elsewhere he explained that low wages in Quebec also meant low productivity because they had detrimental affects for the worker physically and discouraged increased use of machinery. See his article "Canadian War Policy and Wages in Quebec", Canadian Tribune, October 16, 1943.

41. Stuart M. Jamieson, Times of Trouble: labour unrest and industrial conflict in Canada 1900-1966, (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971), pp. 277-278.
42. Stanley Ryerson, "Québec en voie de transformation", La Victoire, 20 février 1943.
43. Stanley Ryerson, Two Peoples, one land one future, (Toronto, 1944), p. 6.
44. Stanley Ryerson, "French Canada and the New Party", Canadian Tribune, July 31, 1943.
45. Ryerson, French Canada, p. 160. Drawing from the Canada Yearbook, he also pointed to the startling fact that in 1937 the city of Trois Rivières had counted more infant mortalities than either the Indian cities of Bombay and Madras recorded for 1936, making it the worst in the world.
46. Ibid., pp. 160-161.
47. Ibid., pp. 162-163.
48. Ibid., p. 176.
49. Ibid., pp. 196-197.
50. Stanley Ryerson, "Drew-Dorion-Duplessis contre le Canada français", causeries électorales du Parti Ouvrier-Progressif, Montréal, 1944 (?), p. 5.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 7.
53. Stanley Ryerson, "Days of Decision in French Canada", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. 1, no. 2, (May 1944), p. 36.
54. Stanley Ryerson, "The Lesson of Quebec", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. 1, no. 6, (September, 1944), p. 163.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 164.
58. Ibid., p. 165.
59. Ryerson, Le Canada français, p. 1.

60. Ibid., p. 3.
61. Ibid., p. 30.
62. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "La Réforme scolaire et l'avenir des enfants", La Victoire, 1 mai 1943.
63. Ryerson, Le Canada français, p. 31.
64. Ibid., pp. 15-16. Ryerson does make a comparable statement regarding the Church in the English version, but it is more significant that he ventures to criticize or challenge actions of the religious order in writing to French Canadians.
65. Ibid., p. 17.
66. Stanley Ryerson, "Democracy in Quebec and National Unity", Canadian Tribune, October 30, 1943.
67. Ryerson, Le Canada français, p. 119.
68. Ibid., p. 128.
69. Ibid., p. 3.
70. Ryerson, French Canada, p. 225.
71. Robert Beitzell, The Uneasy Alliance: American, Britain and Russia, 1941-1943, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1972), p. 383.
72. Stanley Ryerson, "Canadian Imperialism and World Politics", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. III, no. 2, (February, 1946), p. 298.
73. See Ryerson, "French Canada: Thorn in the Side...", pp. 25-30.
74. Stanley Ryerson, "The National Question and Canadian Imperialism", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. III, no. 10, (October, 1946), p. 303.
75. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny, Box 4, "Draft Resolution", Labor-Progressive Party National Convention, January 1951, p. 6.
76. Stanley Ryerson, speech printed in the LPP and Post War Canada from the Labor Progressive Party National Conference, August 10-16, 1945, p. 85.
77. Ibid.

78. Stanley Ryerson, "A Great Party for Great Tasks", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. III, no. 7, (July, 1946), p. 201.
79. Ryerson, "The National Question...", p. 300.
80. Ibid.; p. 301.
81. Ryerson, French Canada, p. 174.
82. Stanley Ryerson, "Karl Marx Has Only Just Begun to Live", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. V, no. 3, (March, 1948), p. 88.
83. Stanley Ryerson, "The Proud Title: Member of the Party", National Affairs Monthly, Vol. X, no. 3, (March, 1948), p. 18.
84. Comeau and Dionne, "Le Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste en...", pp. 40-47. Ryerson was active in political work in eastern Europe at the time so we have no reaction on his part to what transpired at the Quebec convention.
85. Interview with Gui Caron in Montreal, May 8, 1981.
86. Comeau and Dionne, "Le Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste en...", pp. 54-56.
87. Tim Buck, Fight for peace --as for life!, report by Buck to the 4th National Convention of the LPP, Toronto, 1951, p. 57.
88. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll, 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 4, Labor-Progressive Party, Fourth National Convention, January, 1951.
89. Labor-Progressive Party, "Mémoire du Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste à la Commission Royale d'Enquête sur les Problèmes Constitutionnels", février, 1954, p. 190.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Tim Buck, Put Canada First (Toronto, 1954), p. 19. For Stalin's definition, see Bruce Franklin, ed., The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings, 1905-1952, (Garden City, N.J: Anchor Books Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1972), p. 60.
93. Labor-Progressive Party, "Mémoire du Parti Ouvrier-Progressiste à la Commission...", pp. 189-190.

94. Labor-Progressive Party, Canadian Independence and a People's Parliament: Canada's Path to Socialism, (Toronto, 1954), p. 13.
95. Buck, Put Canada First, p. 18.
96. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 4, "Statement and Resolution" from the LPP Club, Montreal, Quebec, no. 28 of resolutions presented to the sixth National Convention, 1957, p. 38.
97. Avakumovic, The Communist Party in Canada, p. 232. Avakumovic does not provide the exact number of individuals who left the CPC during this crisis period. Discussion in terms of definite numbers is made difficult by the fact that the party no longer published membership figures at this time.

CHAPTER III

THE QUIET REVOLUTION: RYERSON AND HIS PARTY RESPOND TO THE DEMAND FOR NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION FOR FRENCH CANADA

In 1960 a new decade was ushered in by the Communist Party of Canada (CPC)¹ with a reiteration of the economic concerns it had emphasized during the immediate post-war period.² The extent of American domination of Canadian society remained the central issue for Canadian Communists. The party claimed that sixty percent of the country's primary resources and manufacturing was controlled by American capitalists³ and warned that Canada was being transformed into a foreign-owned reservoir of raw materials.⁴ The CPC further cautioned that one political ramification of growing American influence was the danger of Canada becoming a "launching pad for nuclear war."⁵ It advocated the nationalization of American owned monopolies in such key industries as automobile, rubber oil, electrical goods and mining and repeated its earlier support for trade with "socialist" states as a means to loosen the hold of American investors over the Canadian economy.⁶

The struggle for Canadian independence, however, would not be successful without first a resolution of the crisis of Confederation that resulted from the "Quiet Revolution" in Quebec.⁷ In the province of Quebec, the previous era, characterized by the fifteen-year reign of the Union Nationale, was ended by the death of its leader Maurice

Duplessis in September 1959. His successor, Paul Sauvé, was in power for only a few months before he too passed away and the party was toppled in provincial elections by the Liberals led by Jean Lesage.⁸ It was under this new Liberal administration that Quebec experienced the profound social, political and economic changes which came to be known as the "Quiet Revolution".

The new political climate engendered by events in Quebec thrust the national question to the forefront of Canadian political consciousness and debate. Once again, Stanley Ryerson figured as a leading spokesman for his party on this issue. In his role as the longstanding managing editor of the political journal published by the CPC, he devoted a large proportion of his editorial comment and feature articles to Quebec. During the decade of the sixties, he also published two volumes of general Canadian history which deal to a large degree with the historical roots of the national question. As throughout the earlier periods studied, he turned to history to furnish a basis upon which to build and promote the party line.⁹ And under the impact of the left nationalism which was one of the features of the Quiet Revolution, he underwent a definite shift in his outlook towards the national question. By the end of the decade he had taken an important step beyond the position held by the CPC with regards to the support he felt the Communist movement should lend to the left nationalists in

Quebec. Up until that time he had remained faithful to the official CPC line in its refusal to go beyond the symbolic gesture of recognizing the right of French Canada to national self-determination. By the close of the sixties he had evolved to a position of profound disagreement with the practical limitations of his party's stance on the national question.

The fall from power of the Union National was evidence that many voters no longer found the traditional ideology of French-Canadian nationalists credible.¹⁰ The new ideal was that of a "highly efficient technological society led by French Canadians and animated by a French spirit."¹¹ Many French Canadians were yearning for rattrapage, a desire to catch up with social and economic developments enjoyed by other industrial societies.¹² Nationalist ideology, rather than inhibiting social change, became a motivating force behind it. Instead of looking to the Church, many nationalists looked to the state to bring about the changes they desired. Naturally, they focussed their hopes on the provincial government. During the early sixties, the Lesage government, by demanding more and more power, was opening up a serious crisis in Confederation.

Clearly, the national question, the status of Quebec within Canada, would be an issue of major concern to the Communists during this period. The new nationalist movement in the province was attractive to the CPC to the extent to

which the realization of its goals could undermine political elements viewed as being reactionary by the party. As expressed in a document prepared for the CPC's 1962 national convention:

Having ousted the arch-reactionary Duplessis-Union Nationale regime the people of Quebec have begun to press for far-reaching reforms in education to free the school from clerical control; they are challenging the traditional patterns and institutions that have imposed conditions of social backwardness and handicapped French Canadian development;... ¹⁴

There was therefore obvious potential for the achievement of political and social aims of the Communists long opposed by Duplessis and the Church. The party characterized the upheaval in the province not simply as a "quiet revolution", but more significantly as a "democratic revolution"¹⁵ and viewed this as a positive step in Quebec's political development.

Moreover, the new nationalist movement might provide the impetus for a resolution of the problem of inequality between English and French Canada, a precondition for a united struggle against American imperialism. The CPC endorsed the demand for the negotiation of a new "pact" between English and French Canada and reiterated its defense of the latter's right to self-determination.¹⁶ Significantly, it now shifted the blame for Quebec's inferior living standards from the "reactionary" social institutions and groups in Quebec to the domination of English Canadians.

In giving their wholehearted support to the cause of the Quebec nationalists, however, the Communists ran the risk of undermining their commitment to working-class power. Many nationalists tended to ignore the class lines in French Canada and showed concern for the Quebec "nation" instead of for socialism. The CPC could not afford to oppose the new nationalist movement. But neither could it defend Quebec nationalism to the detriment of the ultimate Marxist objective of proletarian revolution. It differed from the nationalists in that while defending the right of self-determination, it did so with an important reservation. It advocated that the right

be exercised in such a manner as would best serve the interests and unite the efforts of the working people of both nations in their struggle against common enemies --monopoly, imperialism, exploitation, war. 17

As the 1960s progressed, the CPC emphasized the common interests of the working people of both English and French Canada. The party called for national equality because it aspired to build bi-national unity --a unity of the working people of the two nations. While conceding that each "nation" had its "particular psychological make-up", the CPC stated that from their shared historical experience, there had emerged "a common sense of all-Canadian identity."¹⁸ Communists wished for a new constitution that would establish the basis for a voluntary union of the two nations, each on an equal footing.

Ryerson defended the nationalist movement in Quebec to the extent that it served as a vehicle for achieving socialist goals. He turned to Canadian history to provide examples of national sentiment harnessed by popular social movements. He pointed, for example, to the substitution of the "Compagnie des Habitants" for the "Compagnie des 100 associés in New France in 1645. He suggested that the economic organization of the colonial community had produced a national spirit:

La conscience nationale fait son apparition, non pas comme une chose mystique, planant au-dessus de la société mais à la suite d'un développement économique, du marché, de l'exploitation des indigènes au moyen de la traite des pelleteries, etc. 19

That nationalism was a sentiment held essentially by the popular elements of New France was proven, according to Ryerson, by the events of the Conquest of 1759-1760:

Vaudreuil in a desperate appeal, sought to rally what was left of a national effort at resistance... It was chiefly the farmers and town people who responded with an effort to keep up guerilla operations; the bourgeoisie were busy seeing to their property. 20

In his historical writing, then, he attempted to establish national sentiment as an expression of the masses.

To explain the unrest and discontent expressed by Quebec nationalism, Ryerson provided an overview of English-Canadian domination of French Canada in his historical works. He argued that from the Conquest of 1759-1760 onward the

French-Canadian community was essentially a "subject nation".²¹
 In 1943, in French Canada: A Study in Canadian Democracy, he had stressed the positive gains made by French Canada in achieving self-government in 1848 and recognition as an autonomous state at Confederation. Almost two decades later, he professed to have exaggerated the extent of these gains and endeavoured to expose the myth of bonne entente between English and French Canada. The problem of national inequality had been left unresolved.²²

The only significant change in the framework, since Confederation, has been the expansion of the emergence of monopoly capitalism in Canada... But in terms of French Canada's position, the state structure has remained essentially unaltered.²³

In political terms, he concluded that "The bloc of ruling social forces of 1763 is the historic progenitor of the bloc of ruling social forces of 1963."²⁴ In economic terms this translated into historically lower salaries and living standards in Quebec than in Ontario, for instance.²⁵

Ryerson also defended the Quebec nationalist movement from the vigorous attacks of a number of prominent intellectuals. One of the first and most notable participants in the debate concerning the status of Quebec within Canada was Pierre Elliott Trudeau, editor of the political journal, Cité Libre. In April of 1962, he published an article in which he lashed out against the French-Canadian nationalists' demand for recognition of Quebec as a sovereign nation,

claiming that such a demand was retrograde.²⁶ He maintained that a nation was not a natural or "biological" political expression of human society and that cultural nationalism was counter to the modern world trend of political development.²⁷ The nationalists in Quebec were reactionary because they defined the common good in terms of one ethnic community rather than in terms of all citizens. He called for a Canadian society based on cultural pluralism not cultural nation-states.²⁸ Finally, he contended that in Quebec, nationalists of the Right out-numbered those of the Left and that consequently nationalism in the province was doomed to become a reactionary force.²⁹ Rather than national sovereignty as the solution to Quebec's demands, Trudeau advocated a large degree of local autonomy and the practice of self-government.³⁰

In response, Ryerson accused the editor of Cité Libre of failing to grasp the root of the crisis in Quebec. "Denunciation of the striving for national identity and sovereignty is no way to combat nationalism",³¹ he asserted. It was Ryerson's view that nationalism was a movement which emerged in reaction to oppression. The appropriate response was therefore to remove the source of oppression and exploitation and to establish the basis for national equality and fraternal cooperation.³² He conceded that Trudeau's vision of an international community, free from state barriers was a progressive one --indeed, world Communists

shared the same goal-- but maintained that such a community presupposed the absence of imperialism. In the early 1960s, at the height of American domination of the Canadian economy, such a stance against national sovereignty was in fact reactionary, according to Ryerson.

One has only to consider the Canada-United States relationship and to recall the invitations made to us to concede that "national sovereignty is obsolete" to realize that what is involved here is a kind of imperialist cosmopolitanism... 33

He concluded by reiterating the longstanding Marxist premise that not before there existed universal socialism could there be a system of world government.³⁴

Trudeau also argued that the nation-state provided the basis for war:

D'ailleurs, à chaque fois que l'Etat a pris pour son fondement une idée exclusive et intolérante (religion, nation, idéologie) cette idée a été le ressort mêmes des guerres... Les guerres internationales ne prendront fin que dans les conditions analogues, la nation cessant d'être le fondement de l'Etat... 35

Ryerson's response to this position was similar to his critique of Trudeau's earlier point:

The fallacy is rooted in an abstract metaphysic. Not "the principle of nationalities", but the capitalist development and the rise of the bourgeoisie are the reason for the wars and revolutions of the post-feudal era... So long as imperialism engenders national oppression, the "principle of nationality" will have the validity of an assertion of democratic, community rights. 36

Thus what Trudeau failed to comprehend, in Ryerson's view, was the predominant role played by imperialism in contributing to national inequality. His nihilistic response to nationalism was not the solution to the Quebec situation. Ryerson reiterated the CPC's claim that the right to self-determination was necessary to provide the basis for a voluntary arrangement between English and French Canada with both "nations" standing on an equal footing.³⁷

Joining Trudeau in total rejection of the "two-nation" concept was Eugene Forsey, a leading Canadian constitutional expert. Forsey conceded that French Canada could be considered a nation in the "ethnic, cultural, sociological sense", but not in the "political, legal, constitutional sense."³⁸ He concluded that French Canada was not a political nation since Canada --not French or English Canada-- was the member of such international organizations as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and G.A.T.T. He further contended that neither the Fathers of Confederation nor the British North America Act sanctioned in any way the notion of two sovereign nations.³⁹

Ryerson dismissed Forsey's views on the status of French Canada, labelling them "legalistic fetishism": "Nation=independent state; therefore they do not constitute a nation!"⁴⁰ He accused Forsey of "thinly-disguised Anglo-Canadian nationalism" and argued that "Stubborn insistence on the status, refusal to entertain the thought

of a new confederal pact between nations equal in status, does nothing but feed the fires of separatist frustration."⁴¹ Thus, in Ryerson's view, Forsey, like Trudeau, promoted a stance regarding Quebec which served only to kindle the sentiment of independence they both denounced and sought to defeat.

During the sixties, Ryerson and his Communist colleagues attempted to demonstrate some practical evidence of their commitment to the ideal of equality between the two peoples. In 1965 the Communist Party of Quebec was established as a distinct entity within the Canadian Communist party.⁴² During the pre-convention discussion of 1966, the National Executive Committee explained the new body:

It will be seen that the Communist Party of Quebec is not a separate party from the Communist Party of Canada. Members of the Communist Party of Quebec are members of the Communist Party of Canada and take part fully in the activities of the Communist Party of Canada and in the working out of its policies. At the same time within Quebec, the Communist Party of Quebec has full control over its own policies and structures.⁴³

It was not made clear what would constitute the policies within the jurisdiction of the Quebec body, but the gesture of forming a distinct political entity for French Canada was an obvious attempt to provide a model for the resolution of the national question in Canada.

In 1966 the CPC made a further commitment to its policy of national equality by transforming the party journal into

a bilingual publication which was given the name Horizons: The Marxist Quarterly. In the editorial which introduced the first bilingual edition, Ryerson wrote that the party was "not bemused by utopian delusions about bilingualism"; rather the Communists were upholding the principles of national equality and national self-determination. Ryerson pointed not only to the problem of a language barrier, but indicated that unresolved differences within the party regarding the national question and the means to achieving both national self-determination and socialism were barring the way to effective cooperation between the English and French-speaking sections of the CPC.⁴⁴ The bilingual journal was a professed attempt at establishing the basis for greater cooperation and joint theoretical work between the two language groups within the party.⁴⁵ At the same time, the party did not commit itself to official Canadian bilingualism for it did not want to be identified with the concept as promoted by the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In treating the Quebec question as a problem concerning language and culture, the issue of national self-determination was completely evaded. Ryerson claimed:

the structuring of the French-English relationship in Canada involves precisely the political question of state structure: a question of the right of national, political, state self-determination for the French-Canadian nation in the first place. It is this that the "linguistic" and "cultural" limitation of the Commission's terms of reference is designed to frustrate. 46✓

In his debate with Trudeau and Forsey regarding the status of Quebec, Ryerson had resolutely defended some of the aspirations of Quebec nationalists. Yet he was not prepared to endorse their most radical ideas such as their claim that French Canada functioned primarily as an "ethnic class" in Canada. Essentially, the theory of "ethnic class", as popularized by Jacques Dofny and Marcel Rioux, two Quebec sociologists, proposed that "les Canadiens français forment un peuple presque entièrement prolétarisé, dominé économiquement par une grande bourgeoisie colonialiste de langue et culture étrangères."⁴⁷ Dofny and Rioux asserted that French Canadians saw themselves as being "a recognizable ethnic minority which plays the same role within Canada, regarded in its turn as a total society, as a social class plays within a total society."⁴⁸ The notion of an "ethnic class" quickly found favour among some of the Left in Quebec and during the early 1960s provided nationalists with the basis for their arguments for independence.

Ryerson agreed that under the Confederation agreement French Canada was not equal in power to English Canada, nevertheless, he contended that the concept of "ethnic class" and the colonial analogy were imperfect because they concealed the role played by French-Canadian capitalists working for their own class interests in cooperation with their English-Canadian and American counterparts.⁴⁹ The position taken by some so-called "left" nationalists that

there was no French-Canadian bourgeoisie made an independent working-class policy impossible.⁵⁰ Ryerson asserted that the concept of "ethnic class" "would seem to obscure rather than clarify the real relationships existing within society. To equate national community with socio-economic structure is to blur the specific qualities of each."⁵¹ He further contended that if the French-Canadian ethnic minority was regarded as functioning as a social class within Canada, then "class analysis in the Marxist sense, and the relationship between class consciousness and national sentiment alike are meaningless."⁵²

In his response to Dofny and Rioux, it can be argued that he oversimplified to some extent the application of their concept of "ethnic class". The two sociologists made it clear that they viewed Quebec as being a full-fledged class society, but they proposed that the national or ethnic consciousness of the Quebec collectivity had played a more predominant role in shaping its social development than its class consciousness. They suggested that it is for this reason that the political Left and the union movement in Quebec took longer to develop than elsewhere in Canada.⁵³ This emphasis on the cultural factor rather than class is, of course, fundamentally opposite to Ryerson's interpretation of Canadian history.

Without negating the vital role played by the "national" factor in Canada's confederation crisis, Ryerson, following

the party line, sought to stress that the class factor was of primary importance.⁵⁴ He made this point clear in describing his approach to writing history:

Yet important as is the fact of national identity and difference, it is not the prime mover. It cannot provide the explanation for the dynamic of social change either within the community, or on the scale of relations among peoples. Attempts at explanation solely in terms of nation or race end up in a reactionary mysticism whose failing (if tacit) premise is the alleged innate superiority of the exponent's own race or nation.⁵⁵

To prove his point, he took pains to demonstrate that class was an important historical fact of French-Canadian society. He refuted the thesis of decapitation at the Conquest, arguing that only a minority of the ruling class left New France after 1760.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he maintained that Lower Canada had its own "industrial bourgeoisie": "The rising 'middle class' in Lower Canada was not only made up of notaries, doctors, shopkeepers: it included a few manufacturers as well."⁵⁷

Towards the end of the 1960s the CPC hardened its stand against the separatist option and thus found itself at odds with the left-wing Quebec nationalists. A draft resolution, prepared for the 1969 national convention of the party which proposed a new Canadian constitution, specified that Communists would support Quebec separatists in their struggle for "national and democratic rights", but

would oppose the separatist solution "as one which contradicts the real national interests of Quebec and particularly of the French-Canadian working people."⁵⁸ In its proposal for a new Canadian constitution, the resolution advocated extensive powers of sovereignty for Quebec but insisted that any new structural arrangement should constitute a "Confederal pact".⁵⁹

It was at this point that Ryerson began to show visible signs of breaking with his party. He responded to the draft resolution by calling for a more conciliatory approach to the indépendantistes in Quebec. Furthermore, he speculated that Quebec separation was perhaps unavoidable. "It looks less and less as though the existing framework would allow of the working out of a new, voluntary Confederal pact of the two nations on a footing of real equality."⁶⁰ He drew a comparison between potential developments in Quebec and what Marx had once envisioned for Ireland: "separation although after separation there may come federation."⁶¹ He posited that it was possible that

the only basis on which la Nation Québécoise will be able to secure and freely exercise the right of national self-determination will be as an independent, sovereign state. In any event, the Communists of English-speaking Canada cannot but strengthen their stand in support of Quebec's right to independence. ⁶²

In response to the opposition of the Convention resolution to the separatist option on the grounds that it went against

the interests of the working class, Ryerson retorted:

The "unpopularity" of such a stand in English Canada is no justification for advancing the sophistry that we oppose Quebec sovereignty, and that we align ourselves with the Anglo-Canadian bourgeoisie and its French-Canadian bourgeois and cultural collaborators against the anti-imperialist demand for equality and independence of Quebec! ⁶³

The party, he asserted, could not lose by promoting closer cooperation with the left-wing nationalists in Quebec.

Ryerson's critique of the party line on Quebec did not reflect a sudden change of mind during the pre-convention discussion in 1969. An article published in the summer of 1967, ⁶⁴ in which he addressed the nationalist Left in Quebec, indicates that his strong sympathies for the separatist cause had been developing at least since then. He suggested in this earlier piece that while he would like to believe that socialism would eventually take hold in both English and French Canada, the chances were greater for such a victory taking place in the latter. "Nous n'excluons pas d'avance la possibilité que le Québec, loin d'être la Vendée, ne soit, à un moment donné, le Cuba des Canadas." ⁶⁵ It is most likely this guarded optimism that ultimately led Ryerson to lean more towards the independence movement in Quebec and away from the more cautious position of his party.

Ryerson's position on Quebec was openly attacked during

the pre-convention debate by long-time CPC member Sam Walsh who defended the party line expressed in the draft resolution.⁶⁷ Ryerson had also criticized the invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia by the "Warsaw pact powers" in 1968 and warned of a "re-Stalinization" of the world Communist movement.⁶⁸ The occupation was an attempt to quash what he saw to be healthy signs of political participation "from below". He was chastized by Walsh for this anti-Moscow stance as well.⁶⁹ Given his differences on Quebec and the direction being taken by the Communist movement on a number of issues, Ryerson felt obliged to give up his membership in the CPC following the events of the 1969 convention. The party line, which over the years had provided what Ryerson had believed to be the right interpretations and appropriate solutions to Canada's development, no longer met with his own understanding of what was best for the country.

During the greater part of the 1960s, Ryerson followed the party line on the question of Quebec's status within Canada and rejected Trudeau's position of "national nihilism" and Dofny's and Rioux' theory of ethnic class. Both Ryerson and the CPC were caught between these two opposing views: both sought a compromise, but Marxist, position. While the CPC declared its commitment for equality between the two peoples, it persisted in advocating a federal structure for the Canadian state. By the close of the

decade, Ryerson's despair of the likelihood of English Canada either accepting French Canada as an equal nation or winning the struggle against capitalist oppression led him to turn towards the hope promised by left-wing nationalism in Quebec. He had reached the stage where he had to make a choice between left-wing nationalism and the federalist state.

The CPC repudiated the Quebec separatist option for it seemed to undermine what the party declared to be its primary concern --the class struggle. In his dispute with his party, Ryerson did not see himself disavowing Marxism. The working-class movement in Canada would not make significant gains until the two nations were on equal footing. Before this could happen, French Canadians would have to become masters in their own house. Furthermore, in the process of gaining power over their own society, French Canadians would unseat the English-speaking capitalists from their place of dominance and thereby achieve a vital victory in the long-term struggle for socialism across the country. Thus in defending the cause of the left-wing nationalists in Quebec, Ryerson believed that he was promoting the longer-term goal of socialism in Canada.

CHAPTER III NOTES

1. The party reverted to its original title during the 1959 National Convention.
2. See Communist Party of Canada, The Road to Socialism in Canada, (Toronto, 1960).
3. University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 9, National Committee, "A New Policy for Canada --Independence, Neutrality, Disarmament", Draft of a Statement on Policy for October, 1960, p. 2.
4. Communist Party of Canada, The Road to Socialism, p. 14.
5. Ibid.
6. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 9, National Committee of the CPC, "A New Policy for Canada...", p. 4.
7. See, for example, Stanley Ryerson, "1763-1963: In the Beginning was the Conquest", Marxist Quarterly, no. 7, (Autumn, 1963), pp. 19-20.
8. Jean Hamelin, éd., Histoire du Québec, (St. Hyacinthe: Edisem Inc., 1977), p. 454.
9. Stanley Ryerson, The Founding of Canada: Beginnings to 1815, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1960) and Unequal Union: Confederation and the Roots of Confederation in the Canadas, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1968).
10. Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Postgate, Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Limited, 1976), p. 98.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. While Ryerson continued to use the term "French Canada" rather than "Quebec", even when it had fallen generally into disuse in the province, it is clear that he too was only referring to the province of Quebec when he spoke of French Canada. There is no indication that he or his party had any special concern for French-speaking Canadians outside the province.

14. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 9, Communist Party of Canada, "Documents of the 17th National Convention", January 19, 20, 21, 1962, (Toronto, 1962), p. 27.
15. See, for example UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, "Keynote Address to 18th Convention", Communist Party of Canada, p. 14, delivered by Leslie Morris, March 27, 1964.
16. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 9, Communist Party of Canada, "Documents of the 17th National Convention", p. 27.
17. Ibid.
18. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 8, Communist Party of Canada, "Submission to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism", p. 7.
19. Stanley Ryerson, "Interaction entre la conscience sociale et la conscience nationale" in Quel Avenir Attend l'Homme? (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), p. 44.
20. Ryerson, The Founding of Canada, p. 196.
21. Ryerson, Unequal Union, p. 17.
22. Stanley Ryerson, "1763-1963: In the Beginning was the Conquest", Marxist Quarterly, no. 7, (Autumn, 1963), p. 13.
23. Ibid., p. 17.
24. Ibid., p. 14.
25. Ibid., p. 19.
26. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "La nouvelle trahison des clers", Cité Libre, no. 46, (avril, 1962), pp. 3-16.
27. Ibid., pp. 3, 5.
28. Ibid., pp. 11, 15.
29. Ibid., p. 11. Richard Jones suggest that Trudeau was representative of the generation of intellectuals who formed their perception of nationalism before 1960 when nationalism and social conservatism went together. He concludes that it is natural that these intellectuals have retained their views towards nationalism in Quebec. See J. Hamelin, éd., Histoire du Québec, p. 497.

30. Ibid., p. 15.
31. J. Sénécal (Stanley Ryerson), "Eugene Forsey, P.E. Trudeau and the Question: 'What is a Nation'", Marxist Quarterly, no. 7, (Autumn, 1963), p. 25.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Trudeau, "La nouvelle trahison...", Cité Libre, no. 46, (avril, 1962), p. 6.
36. Ryerson, Unequal Union, p. 433.
37. Sénécal, "Eugene Forsey, P.E. Trudeau and...", Marxist Quarterly, no. 7, (Autumn, 1963), p. 25.
38. Eugene Forsey, "Canada: Two Nations or One?", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 28, no. 4, (November, 1962), p. 489.
39. Ibid.
40. Sénécal, "Eugene Forsey, P.E. Trudeau and...", Marxist Quarterly, no. 7, (Autumn, 1963), p. 25.
41. Ibid., p. 24.
42. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, Communist Party of Canada, "Keynote Address", delivered by William Kashtan to the 19th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, p. 17.
43. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, Communist Party of Canada, "Keynote Address", Viewpoint, Vol. 3, no. 3, (April 12, 1966), p. 5.
44. (Stanley Ryerson), "Horizons", editorial in Horizons: The Marxist Quarterly, no. 19, (Autumn, 1966), p. 2.
45. In Norman Penner's discussion of the role of the French-speaking section within the CPC, he suggest that the party hierarchy never really delegated significant power to the francophone members and that the English-speaking officers of the executive were the real determinants of party policy. See Norman Penner, The Canadian Left: a critical analysis, (Scarborough: Prentice Hall of Canada, 1977), pp. 122-123.

46. (Stanley Ryerson), "It's Getting Harder to Dodge the Point", Horizons: The Marxist Quarterly, no. 24, (Winter, 1968), p. 1.
47. Hamelin, éd., Histoire du Québec, p. 498.
48. Jacques Dofny and Marcel Rioux, "Social Class in French Canada" in Marcel Rioux and Yves Martin, eds., French-Canadian Society, Vol. 1, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969), p. 309.
49. Stanley Ryerson, "Questions in Dispute", The Marxist Quarterly, no. 15, (Autumn, 1965), p. 64.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p. 66.
52. Ibid.
53. Dofny and Rioux, "Social Class in..." in Rioux and Martin, eds., French-Canadian Society, Vol. 1, p. 312.
54. Ryerson, "Questions in Dispute", The Marxist Quarterly, no. 15, (Autumn, 1965), p. 68.
55. Ryerson, Unequal Union, p. 19.
56. Ryerson, The Founding of Canada, pp. 204-205.
57. Ryerson, Unequal Union, p. 39.
58. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, Communist Party of Canada, "A New Constitution for Canada", Draft Resolution no. 1, 20th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, 1969, p. 2.
59. Ibid. In endorsing the nationalist demand for sovereignty, the resolution was quite vague in its elaboration of its support. It reiterated its commitment to a constitution which would "assert control by the government of Quebec of all the political, economic, social and cultural powers necessary for the flourishing of the French-Canadian nation".
60. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, Stanley Ryerson, "For Broader Approaches", Convention '69, no. 2, (February 26, 1969), p. 18.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.
64. Stanley Ryerson, "L'avenir économique et national du Québec est lié au socialisme", Socialisme '67, (avril-juin, 1967), pp. 37-40.
65. Ibid., p. 40.
66. In 1964, the CPC did suggest that socialism might advance more quickly in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada, but the party did not follow up that position in any constructive way. See Communist Party of Canada, "Submission to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism", p. 27.
67. UTL, TF. Ms. Coll. 179, R.S. Kenny Papers, Box 5, Sam Walsh, "Three points of difference with Comrade Stanley Ryerson", Convention '69, no. 3, (March, 1969), pp. 2-6.
68. Ryerson mentioned in his article "Broader Approaches" that he had written an article for Horizons in August, 1968 criticizing the invasion, but that in accordance with the demands of the Executive Committee it was not published. See, Ryerson, "For Broader Approaches", p. 20. He was particularly marked by the invasion for, as he stated in a June 1979 interview, he was in Prague when the Soviet tanks entered the Czechoslovakian capital in the spring of 1968.
69. Walsh, "Three points of...", pp. 5-6.

CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

Along with other Communists, Stanley Ryerson brought an added perspective to the French-Canadian national question. His party's strong ties to the international Communist movement rendered him attuned to political developments in the rest of the world and led him to perceive Quebec society in terms of conflicting ideological and class forces. As the principal Communist Party intellectual active in Quebec during the 1930s and early 1940s, his analysis of the province was of particular importance in shaping the development of party policy with respect to the status of Quebec within Canada.

Centered in Montreal during the height of the Depression, Ryerson perceived a text-book case of class oppression and the widening gap between rich and poor. Because of his party's awareness of fascism elsewhere in the world as well as its Marxist approach, he identified Quebec as being especially vulnerable to reactionary ideology. At the same time, the prevailing influence of the Soviet Union over the Canadian Communists dictated that the latter adopt a hard line against nationalism in keeping with Stalin's response to nationalist movements within the Soviet Union's borders. What was diagnosed as "right-wing" nationalism was singled out by the CPC as one of its main enemies in Quebec.

While Marxism was well-suited to an analysis of the crisis of capitalism in the 1930s, it restricted Ryerson somewhat from portraying the full complexities of Quebec society. By focussing solely on the capitalists and the workers, he overlooked the extent to which another group --the petty-bourgeoisie-- was also threatened by monopoly capitalism.¹ Although this class did not question the capitalist system, its fundamental opposition to the trusts in Quebec should have made it appear as a valuable ally in any united front.

In response to this criticism, Ryerson maintains that the CPC did attempt to form a common front with representatives of the petty-bourgeoisie nationalists.² He points to an open letter addressed to Paul Gouin, leader of the Action Libérale Nationale, published in Clarté on June 27, 1936 and signed by Evariste Dubé and himself, in which, on behalf of the CPC, they invited the ALN to join in an assault against the trusts. The letter lauds the ALN for its initial break with the Taschereau Liberals, but chastizes the dissenters for later joining in an alliance with Maurice Duplessis. This letter would appear to be the only direct public overture to such a petty-bourgeois group, but Ryerson also claims that during 1936 and 1937 he had several meetings to discuss Marxism and the concept of nation with nationalist representatives, including André Laurendeau of Action Nationale, Dostaler O'Leary of Jeunesses Patriotes and Abbé Groulx who

he says influenced him in his approach to French Canada and the national question.³ He does not, however, write about these meetings. Nor does he depict these individuals in a favourable light through his journalism or indicate that he perceives the nationalist movement to have any positive potential or political validity. While the open letter to Paul Gouin may stand in dispute of the general statement regarding the Communists' failure to view the petty-bourgeoisie as political allies in the campaign to defeat monopoly capitalism, it is not representative of the portrayal of this class in Communist literature during the 1930s.

There were, of course, serious impediments to the CPC developing any sympathy towards the petty-bourgeoisie in Quebec. Their spokesman, like the editors of l'Action catholique and La Nation, were socially conservative, anti-semitic, totally opposed to international trade unionism and ferociously anti-Soviet. In an attempt to undermine the working-class movement in Quebec, La Nation conducted a full-fledged campaign against the Communist movement and its official newspaper, Clarté, during the late 1930s.⁴ In response to the attack, Ryerson, on one occasion accused La Nation of being an agent of fascism by virtue of its promotion of corporatism, a system which the Communists identified as being synonymous with Mussolini's fascist regime in Italy at the time.⁵ The overt animosity between these groups thus precluded any significant sympathetic

analysis of the economic predicament of the petty-bourgeoisie on the part of Ryerson or the CPC.

The CPC's tie to the Soviet Union was most blatant during the Second World War and the "cold war" period. It was perhaps during the early years before the German attack on the Soviet Union, that the connection most hindered the party in its activities. Between the signing of the German-Soviet non-aggression treaty in 1939 and the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the CPC, like other world Communist parties, was forced into the anti-war camp. Banned as illegal, the movement was obliged to go underground and it was consequently virtually impossible for the party to function in any practical way or to provide any social or economic analysis of Canadian society. Furthermore, support for the Soviet Union's position regarding the war took unquestionable precedence over any other political concern. Accordingly, in Quebec the Communists seized upon the anti-imperialist tradition of French Canadians and attempted to enlist their support in resisting the war effort in Canada. After the Nazi violation of the German-Soviet pact, however, the movement fell quickly in line behind the allied forces against Hitler. Henceforth the CPC proclaimed the Soviet Union as leader of the allied camp and, of course, ceased its cultivation of anti-imperialist sentiment in Quebec.

The Communists' support of the war effort did have one important consequence for their position on Quebec: the

CPC's endeavour to rally French Canadians' full participation led the party to become the first in English Canada to espouse recognition of French Canada as a nation and to call for full national equality. Initially during the war period, the CPC defined national equality in terms of linguistic and economic rights; towards the end of the war it included a demand for political equality as well.

At the same time, although Ryerson and his party made significant gestures towards accommodating certain "national" concerns of the French Canadians, the CPC remained hostile to the leading nationalist groups of the period. In his response to the Bloc populaire, Ryerson was unable to look beyond that party's condemnation of the war effort. This myopia meant that he failed to respond to the reformist policies of the Bloc and specifically its animosity to the trusts and economic monopoly. The all-consuming concern, on the part of the CPC, for the Soviet Union and winning the war prevented Ryerson from taking a closer look at the nationalist movement.

With the end of the war and coming of the new anti-imperialist stage of CPC policy, French Canada once again was assigned a special role. The CPC sought to channel anti-imperialist sentiment in Quebec against American "imperialist" power. In their continuing attempt to enlist French-Canadian support the Communists advocated full recognition of Quebec's "national" status and supported this "nation's" right to self-determination.

During the 1960s, the decade of the Quiet Revolution, the character of nationalist sentiment in Quebec changed profoundly. The voices of French-Canadian nationalism no longer lamented the decline of clerical and rural Quebec society. The driving impulse behind the nationalist movement of the period was the ambition to achieve, for the mass of French Canadians, the social and economic benefits enjoyed by English-speaking North Americans. The extreme factions of the nationalist movement insisted that only through independence would French Canadians be able to secure these material benefits. During this time, after the 1956-1957 crisis within the world Communist movement, the influence of the Soviet Union was not as strongly felt as previously by the CPC and Ryerson ultimately strayed beyond the limits to which his party leadership was willing to go in order to make concessions to the Quebec nationalists of the Left. In contrast to the Depression and war years when he had been overtly hostile to the reactionary character of nationalism, in the 1960s, he increasingly regarded left-wing nationalism as a potential force for achieving positive social and political change. Addressing French-Canadian leftists in 1967, he declared: "C'est la montée du mouvement national qui en est l'accélérateur historique."⁶ By the close of the decade, he conceded that the independence of French Canada was not only a possibility but also a potential impetus to furthering the cause of socialism in Canada. The irreconcilable differences between

Ryerson and the rest of the party leadership on this issue was one factor in his abandoning the CPC in 1969.

Since his departure from the CPC, Ryerson has reaffirmed his sympathy towards the nationalist Left and its goal of political sovereignty. He has restated his view of Canadian history as one of national inequality with Quebec as a "subject nation". He depicts a pattern of conquest and subjugation of French Canada established in 1760 and carried on throughout the first hundred years of Canada's dual history only to be reinforced by the structure of Confederation in 1867.⁷ The fruits of this latter event in history were that "La nation québécoise...se trouve dans un état de dépendance quasi-coloniale vis-à-vis de l'état Canadien et des intérêts financiers anglo-canadiens et américains qui dominant l'économie québécoise."⁸ The under-representation of French Canadians in the top echelons of business in the province and the disproportionately small amount of large-scale investment controlled by French-Canadian financiers was evidence, according to Ryerson, of the persistence of the economic inequality of the Quebec "nation".⁹

Ryerson's primary concern, throughout the latter part of his career as a political analyst, has been the problem of political inequality between French and English Canada. Rejecting the notion of cultural duality and the constitutional interpretation that Quebec was simply a province like the others in Canada, he maintained:

A push to strengthen provincial rights of ten constituent elements of one kind, when the real crisis involved two constituent elements of a radically different kind, is either self-deception or plain hypocrisy. The unequal bi-national union of two distinct peoples ...is precisely that central fact of life and history that the 'dominion-provincial' set-up of 1867 was designed to obscure. Yet all governments, provincial and federal, have been and remain committed to this booby-trap..¹⁰

The federal structure of the Canadian state, with its implicit strong central government, held no provision for the self-determination of Quebec thus ensuring that its national oppression continued.¹¹

If the constitutional proposals advanced during the 1960s seemed inadequate to accommodate the rights and needs of Quebecers, Ryerson also deemed traditional Marxism to be wanting in this respect:

Le marxisme traditionnel sous-estime depuis longtemps la portée de la question nationale. L'enchevêtrement historique des oppressions de classe, sociale et de nation-communauté nous incite au dépassement de cette inhibition paralysante.¹²

While on the one hand Ryerson reaffirmed his opposition to the concept of ethnic class, arguing that it obscured the primary role of class, on the other hand he warned that a flaw in orthodox Marxist theory was its denial that an ethnic community had substance and identity of its own. He argued that "the 'nation-community' embodies an identity, linguistic and cultural, that is not simply an 'effect' of

class, however closely its evolution may be interwoven with the shifting patterns of class relationships and struggles."¹³ He further contended that national differences existed both before and after the advent of capitalist production and suggested that these differences would persist beyond the socialist era.

In addition to recognizing the legitimacy of existing "nation-communities", Ryerson maintained that nationalism could provide an important thrust in the struggle against ruling economic elites of the period: "le néo-nationalisme s'accompagne d'un élément important de critique sociale, allant parfois jusqu'à la remise en question du système capitaliste lui-même."¹⁵ Ryerson bestows the title "would-be Marxist" upon those who choose the class struggle over the nationalist option.¹⁶ In response to the critique of the anti-nationalist Left he declared:

c'est en reconnaissant à quel point l'oppression nationale est organiquement liée avec la domination du grand capital qu'on se rendra compte de l'énorme potentiel libérateur du mouvement national...¹⁷

Ryerson claimed that Quebec was the weak link in the chain of American domination of the Canadian economy¹⁸ and that a victory of the nationalist cause would undermine corporate power and thereby further the workers' campaign against American imperialism.¹⁹ By striking a blow at American monopoly power the nationalists would at the same

time be weakening the hold of the Canadian bourgeoisie since the ruling political elite was simply a satellite of American corporate interests:

La symbiose de Canada satellite avec l'empire des multinationales s'effectue et se maintient par l'instrumentalité d'Etat canadien. Dans la mesure où les mouvements populaires réussiront à remettre en cause la valeur politique ou la légitimité de cet appareil et de ses structures de pouvoir, ils porteront un coup au système de propriété capitaliste dont il est l'expression. C'est dans ce sens que la revendication nationale constitue, du moins en puissance, un moyen d'affaiblir le système impérial des grandes corporations.²⁰

The defense of Quebec's national status was therefore more than a question of democratic rights; promoting national equality was the most effective means by which to challenge the rule of the corporate elite and undermine the Canadian bourgeois state itself. Thus Ryerson viewed the nationalist movement as the most promising vehicle for the advancement of socialism in Canada.

Ryerson does not accept that in championing the nationalist cause he has forsaken the class struggle, but he fails to respond directly to the accusation that the present nationalist movement in Quebec does not seriously call into question the economic status quo. Nor does he examine the leadership or base of support of the nationalists to refute the contention that it is a bourgeois movement, although he has recently pointed to the "interweaving of

resurgent Québécois nationalism with broad currents of social radicalism and labour militance."²¹ While it is possible that he has been unable to refute the allegations that the nationalist movement is largely bourgeois in character, it is clear that for him there is no viable alternative to defeating the ruling economic power in both Quebec and English Canada. In his mind, the recognition of French Canada's national status and the realization of political equality between French and English Canada are necessary first steps towards overturning the status quo in Canada. Convinced that a victory of the nationalist movement in Quebec would work in the longterm interests of the working class, he is perhaps willing to turn a blind eye to the short term problem of its bourgeois leadership.

Ryerson's commitment to Quebec nationalism rests partially on the assumption that the anti-American sentiment shared by both English and French Canadians would overcome any feelings of hostility between these two national groups. He does not appear to consider the potential bitterness and national chauvinism that could develop between them in the event of Quebec achieving full independence. He thus overlooks one implication that Quebec nationalism could bear for the unity of the Canadian working class in spite of the fact that working-class solidarity has been a concern which has persisted throughout his writing on the Quebec national question.

By following Ryerson's work for more than four decades,

it has been possible to chart how one political party formulated its position on the Quebec national question and the contribution made by Ryerson's interpretation of Canadian history in determining that line. Without disputing the role played by political tactics in the shaping of CPC policy, this historical approach facilitates a comprehension of how the Communist response to nationalism in Canada evolved and developed over the years. It is clear that the party slowly but steadily advanced towards accepting the validity of the nationalists' demands to recognize Quebec's status as a nation and its people's right to self-determination. This evolution of the party's position was determined by political events of the times, by the political transformation of the nationalist movement itself, and, most significantly, by the CPC's own growing understanding of Quebec.

The conclusion regarding the increasing support from the CPC for French Canada's right to national self-determination has evoked strong cautioning remarks from at least one former member of the party. Gui Caron, who joined the Communist movement in Montreal in 1939 and who was the Quebec provincial secretary following the Second World War until he left the party in 1956, feels that this appraisal of the Communist position regarding French Canada is somewhat misleading. He contends that the official CPC support for French Canada's right to self-determination and the party's

apparent increasing sympathy for the demands of French-Canadian nationalists did not go beyond the level of theorizing and party policy. He is most critical of the Communist leadership's actual lack of firm commitment to ensuring that French Canadians gained full national rights. In terms of its treatment of the French-Canadian membership, the leadership did not put into practice its policy regarding national equality between the two language groups; manifestations of independence on the part of the French-Canadian section were strongly suppressed.²²

The response of Caron raises some interesting questions regarding the use of written source material and the role of oral history. He does not dispute my analysis of the evolution of Communist Party policy with respect to French Canada; his ultimate point is that the official party documents and pamphlets, including Ryerson's material, do not tell the whole story. Anyone attempting to recreate the past through the study of written documents must recognize the limitations under which he or she is working. This is, of course, especially true in the case of a study of an organization like the CPC where much of its proceedings and policy debate took place behind closed doors and where records of such meetings are not now available or non-existent. Oral history, then, can provide material that allows one to go beyond the level of understanding provided by written sources. In this paper, interviews were useful for acquiring factual

information to fill out the background for the study and also for interpretative responses. As long as one keeps in mind that there are also limitations posed by individuals recreating the past for interpretation in the present in an interview situation, oral source material can play an important role in the writing of history.

For Ryerson, Marxism had a special function to perform in furthering Canadians' understanding of the national question:

There remains the question of nationalism and nationality in its theoretical aspect. It is here that Marxism --historical materialism, the working-class science of political development-- is able to make a special contribution to our understanding of a major Canadian problem, and thereby, to influence profoundly the practical struggle for its solution. 23

At a time when the Quebec nationalist movement was itself primarily concerned with cultural and linguistic rights for French Canadians, he identified political and economic equality as being crucial to the problem of English-French relations in Canada. Because it was Marxist, the CPC was the first party to apply a class analysis to Quebec. The Communists were also among the first to perceive that national unity was dependent upon French Canadians achieving economic parity with English-speaking Canadians. Furthermore, they were at the forefront in accepting French Canada as a distinct society espousing its right to self-determination.

Ryerson claims to have had personal influence over several key members of the Left in English Canada. During the 1960s, he worked with members of the Socialist Studies Centre including Cy Gonick and long-time members of the Communist Party such as Frank Cunningham and Phyllis Clarke. He also attended meetings of the Waffle, the left-wing group formed within the NDP in the late 1960s, and claims to have influenced Mel Watkins in his approach to French Canada and the national question.²⁴

Within Quebec, Ryerson's writing in French-language newspapers and the French editions of his pioneer historical works provided rudimentary lessons in Marxist teachings as well as documentation of the "national" inequality in Canada. Without exaggerating the impact made by the CPC in Quebec, one can safely suggest that Communist polemics, including Ryerson's political and historical work, disseminated into the life and mind of Quebec and influenced such left-wing nationalist groups as Parti Pris. He first came into contact with Parti Pris in 1958 and 1959 while working to set up the Marxist Study Centre in Toronto. It was Parti Pris which took the initiative to publish a French edition of Ryerson's Unequal Union under the title Le Capitalisme et la Confédération in 1972.²⁵ To the extent that the Communists' economic and political analysis of Quebec society helped lay the groundwork for the nationalists of the Quiet Revolution, it illustrates

the small, but not insignificant, contribution made by a marginal political element to the movement's theoretical base.

If Ryerson contributed to the infusion of Marxism into the nationalist movement, the nationalist movement equally shaped the political development of this Marxist intellectual. His career provides a case study of how one leading member of the CPC responded to the growth and transformation of nationalism in Quebec. In the 1930s, the young Ryerson began with the traditional Marxist view of nationalism, a view which was further complicated by the right-wing character of the movement at the time. In the 1940s his continuing strong loyalty to the Soviet Union prevented him from discerning some of the reformist elements of the nationalist platform. During the war years and the latter 1950s, the issue of nationalism became more complex than had been the case in the previous decade. On the one hand the international Communist movement championed the cause of the struggle against Hitler as one of national liberation from Nazi oppression. On the other hand, in Quebec, Canadian Communists were faced with the nationalists vehemently opposing the war effort. If Ryerson continued to see French Canadian nationalists as predominantly reactionary, he nevertheless also began to view nationalism as a potentially positive force. With the "cold war" in the early 1950s, the CPC attempted to rally the great mass

of Canadians to oppose American policy under the nationalist slogan of "put Canada first". This obvious appeal to Canadian nationalist sentiment attests to the party's softening toward nationalism and their effort to harness it for positive political ends. During the late 1960s, Ryerson's increasing support of the nationalist cause in Quebec was facilitated by his diminishing faith in the Soviet Union's ability to lead the world to a new socialist era and by the overwhelming momentum of the Quiet Revolution. He was guided by what he believed to be historical forces pushing forward the nationalist movement, a movement swelling from a burgeoning mass base within Quebec.

Disillusioned with the likelihood of his own party being the vanguard of positive political change in Canada, Ryerson looked to the nationalist movement as being the most promising vehicle for upsetting the political status quo and undoing the stranglehold of corporate capital in Canada. He went beyond the mainstream of his party in the importance he placed on the relationship between class oppression and national oppression. Thus Ryerson was endeavouring to advance Marxism in Canada to cope with the new conditions brought about by the social and political upheaval in Quebec since the 1960s.

CONCLUSION NOTES

1. See Denis Monière, Le Développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours, (Montréal: Editions Québec/Amérique, 1977), pp. 263-290; Robert Comeau, "L'idéologie petite-bourgeoise des Indépendentistes de 'La Nation' 1936-1938" in Fernand Dumont et al., et. al., éds, Idéologies au Canada Français 1930-1939, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978), pp. 201-214.
2. Interview with Stanley Ryerson in Montreal, May 8, 1981.
3. Ibid.
4. Comeau, "L'Idéologie petite bourgeoise...", p. 204.
5. E. Roger (Stanley Ryerson), "Lettre ouverte à la Nation", Clarté, 21 mars 1936.
6. Stanley Ryerson, "L'avenir économique et national du Québec est lié au socialisme", Socialisme '67, (avril-juin, 1967), p. 39.
7. Stanley Ryerson, "Le pari québécois: de la nation/communauté au pouvoir étatique?", Politique Aujourd'hui, nos. 7-8, (juillet-août, 1978), pp. 26-27.
8. Stanley Ryerson, "Le social et le national dans le réveil québécois" in Anouar Abdel-Malek, dir., Sociologie de l'Imperialisme, (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1971), p. 548.
9. Stanley Ryerson, "Mutations potentielles des rapports de force Canada"Québec" in Edmond Orban, dir., La modernisation politique de Québec, (Québec: Les Editions du Boréal Express, 1976), p. 74.
10. Stanley Ryerson, "Quebec: concepts of class and nation" in Gary Teeple, ed., Capitalism and the national question in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 2.
11. This critique of the CPC as an accomplice to national oppression for its failure to challenge the Canadian political structure is central to the thesis of Bernard Gauvin in his study of the CPC during the 1920s and 1930s. See Bernard Gauvin, "Le Parti communiste du Canada et la question canadienne-française", unpublished M.A. thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1978.

12. Ryerson, "Le pari québécois: de la...", p. 28.
 13. Ryerson, "Quebec: concepts of class and nation", p. 224.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Ryerson, "Le social et le national...", p. 558.
 16. S.B. Ryerson, "Why I'll Vote Yes", This Magazine, Vol. 14, no. 3, (May-June, 1980), p. 4.
 17. Stanley Ryerson, "Mémoire présenté par l'auteur à la Commission parlementaire chargée d'étudier la 'Chartre de la Langue française au Québec", postscript to le Capitalisme et la confédération, (Montréal: Parti Pris, 1977), 2ième édition, p. 358.
 18. Ryerson, "Le social et le national...", p. 560.
 19. Ryerson, "Mutations potentielles...", p. 76.
 20. Ibid., p. 70.
 21. Ryerson, "Why I'll Vote...", p. 7.
 22. Interview with Gui Caron in Montreal, May 8, 1981.
 23. Stanley Ryerson, French Canada: A Study in Canadian Democracy, (Toronto: Progress Books, 1943), p. 171.
 24. Interview with Stanley Ryerson in Montreal, February 14, 1981.
 25. Ibid.
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Box 3: 1st-3rd (1943-1949) - Labor-Progressive Party

Box 4: 4th-7th (1951-1959) - Labor-Progressive Party

Box 5: 17th-20th (1962-1969)

Boxes 7-8: Briefs written by the Party to various Royal Commissions and government bodies etc.

Box 7: Briefs to 1956.

Box 8: Briefs from 1960.

Box 9: National Office Material

- National Executive Committee Minutes, 1945-1962.

- National Office material, 1945-1954, 1956-1960, 1962-1963.

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Box 10: Leaflets on various topics issued by the Party.

Box 14: Communist Party of Canada Central Committee.

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