"A Modern Weapon for Modern Man": Marxist Masculinity and the Social Practices of the One Big Union, 1919-1924

Todd McCallum

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APPROVAL

NAME Todd McCallum

DEGREE MA

TITLE "A Modern Weapon for Modern Man": Marxist Masculinity and the Social Practices of the One Big Union, 1919-1924

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair Derryl MacLean,

Mark Leier, Assistant Professor

Joy Parr, Endowed Professor

William French, Assistant Professor
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5

Examiner

Date: 26 July 1995

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Title of Thesis

"A Modern Weapon for Modern Man": Marxist Masculinity and the Social Practices of the One Big Union, 1919-1924

Author:

(signature) Todd McCallum

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(date)

Will there be Unions, Strife and Strikes in the new world? No. The only union we shall have in the new world will be the one big union and the president of this union will be a working man chosen from the ranks of the working class. He, being a working man himself, knows all the grievances of his fellow workmates....God chose him president of the union because he is God's only begotten Son. His name is Jesus. He worked at his trade until He was thirty years of age, then he went out healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, and even the poor had the Gospel preached unto them....Now the Son of God was a carpenter by trade, so he knows how to build mansions for the workers to live in and no tar paper shacks in the new world....He promised that he would never leave us and never hide his face from us any more forever. That He would give us a comforter that would teach us and help us the right way to live. We shall be one happy family, working, loving and helping one another, and we shall have no idols and no strife, and He even promised that He would wipe all tears from our faces.

Thomas Pinnell, New Toronto, October 1919

ABSTRACT

In March 1919, more than 230 union representatives gathered in Calgary for the Western Labor Conference. There, they initiated plans for a revolutionary industrial organizatin, the One Big Union, which embodied the internationalist principles of Marxist unionism. Within its first year, the One Big Union (OBU) issued over 70,000 membership cards, and was a powerful symbol of working-class demands for the end of class exploitation. However, given its patriarchal inheritance, the OBU was always something more than just a class organization. It was an attempt by working men to organize around a specific sense of gender identity, which I have called Marxist masculinity, in order to reconstitute the social bases of male power.

The first chapter outlines the events surrounding the creation of the OBU in 1919 and the wave of general strikes that swept through Canada that summer. In particular, it sketches the relationship between class politics and a masculine structure of feeling, and how this relationship influenced the OBU's ideology.

The second chapter discusses three elements around which Marxist masculinity was constructed. To begin, the experiences of women in the OBU are situated in relation to the organization's policies regarding membership in individual unions and the Women's Auxilliary. As well, it examines the personal lives of OBU leaders and the naturalized assumptions about heterosexuality which governed their politics.

The final chapter discusses the purge of Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose, two dedicated activists fired because of rumours of their sexual involvement. The OBU leadership wanted to prevent a public moral panic around issues of "free love" and was thus determined to have the matter kept quiet. In taking this position, OBU leaders regulated the gender and sexual identities of union members through concepts of proper masculine and feminine socialist behaviour.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

American Federation of Labor	AFL
British Columbia Federation of Labor	BCFL
Central Labour Council, One Big Union	CLC
Communist Party of Canada	CPC
General Executive Board, One Big Union	GEB
Industrial Workers of the World	IWW
Lumber Workers Industrial Union	LWIU
One Big Union	OBU
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	RCMP
Royal North West Mounted Police	RNWMP
Socialist Party of Canada	SPC
Trades and Labor Congress of Canada	TLC
United Mine Workers of America	UMWA
Western Labor Conference	WLC
Workers' Party of Canada	WPC

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Introduction
"A Modern Weapon for Modern Man":
Marxist Masculinity and the One Big Union

When Matt Glenday sat down at his typewriter to draft the second issue of the San Francisco Bay Area One Big Union Bulletin in 1920, his thoughts were focused upon the dialectic of capitalist coercion and socialist revolution. Living in Oakland at the time, he and other leftists lived in continual awareness of the wave of repression then sweeping through the western United States, ensnaring thousands of radicals within the grip of the state's iron fist.[1] Indeed, Glenday's office had already been looted, its contents smashed and scattered, and several of his comrades were imprisoned.[2] Despite this ever-present threat, Glenday soldiered on, trying to disassociate the One Big Union (OBU), primarily a Canadian organization, from the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and other groups whose members were popularly depicted as violence-loving foreigners fanatically devoted to anarchy and destruction. To this end, one Bulletin headline proclaimed that "this organization does not advocate any acts of sabotage violence or terrorism."[3] Unfortunately for Glenday and his union, this episode in the class war was won by the ambitious Assistant District Attorney of Alameda County, California, Earl Warren. Under the Criminal Syndicalism Act of 1919, Warren secured a secret indictment, arguing that the OBU was simply a "substitute group" for the newly-outlawed IWW.[4] As a result, Glenday managed only two issues of the Bulletin before being driven out of the United States and ending up in Vancouver.

Given the tension-filled atmosphere in which Glenday produced the paper, his final appeal to American workers had an urgent and, considering his future, a somewhat bittersweet tone:

> You should join the One Big Union at once as it is a most important thing for you to do, and your future depends upon it more than upon any one thing. Immediate action is necessary as the danger which has threatened us for some time is growing more and more immediate, and if action is not taken, will very soon be deadly...When you touch the employing class at one point, you are at war with the whole of that class, united, organized, disciplined, controlled and armed in their One Big Union...The only way in which the capitalistic One Big Union can be met is by the industrial One Big Union.[5]

More than just an industrial organization, however, the OBU was, in Glenday's imagination, "a modern weapon for modern man." To grasp the gendered import of this phrase, we must tune our ears to Glenday's choice of metaphor and the context within which he made his desperate appeal. His mention of weaponry and war referred to male experiences on the battlefields of World War One, from which women were pointedly excluded. According to socialists, the carnage in Europe was a class war in which working men fought and killed each other to further the aims of bourgeois territorial expansion and capital accumulation. In fervent opposition, Glenday called upon working men to fight another class war, this one to further their emancipation, not their enslavement. The Bulletin also addressed specific groups of male workers, with a direct focus on industrial occupations such as shipyard labourers. In an attempt to bolster the autonomous spirit of rank-and-file unionists, Glenday attacked labour leaders who, by virtue of their position, were "no longer working men." Union officials and politicians, according to Matt, were "a privileged exclusive group" which was "coaxed, petted and fondled by the employing class."[6] What was needed was for union men to take control of their destinies and begin the long road leading to socialism.

In these examples - the references to war and to labour leaders - the OBU presented itself as a revolutionary vehicle for industrial working men who knew how to fight and maintain their independence. This "modern weapon for modern man" spoke to a class-specific sense of self which was deeply gendered. Indeed, this particular use of "man" was anything but universal, although Glenday presented his political claims as those of humanity. Alongside his explicit class agenda was his subtle advocacy of a new politics of masculinity, through which working men would gain control over their lives, and those of others, in the workplace, family, and community. In order to understand the challenge posed by Matt Glenday and thousands of male workers in the One Big Union, it is necessary to grasp the ways in which the revolutionary currents of 1919 were caught up in a combination of class and gender interests and identities. To do this, we need to come to terms with the historical and political signficance of Marxist masculinity.

Marxist masculinity is my own term, used to describe the joint articulation of class and gender relations in the oppositional political practices of working-class men in 1919. Marxist masculinity thus signifies an identity of both class and gender, and should be read as such.[7] More uneven, rough, and provisional than stable and seamless, Marxist masculinity was, for a brief but important period, a viable and vital identity for working men in Canada.[8] With the increase in labour protest from 1917 on, class conflict threatened to erupt into class struggle. Government Orders-in-Council that suppressed radical literature and political parties and prohibited strikes served only to increase class tensions.[9] So too did the establishment of Soviet power in Russia. In March of 1919, more than 230 union representatives and at least two government spies gathered in Calgary for the Western Labor Conference. There, they initiated plans for a new organization embodying the principles of revolutionary industrial unionism, the One Big Union. Events, however, overwhelmed this fledgling group of radicals, as workers across Canada initiated a wave of general, sympathetic, and local strikes beginning in May. Thousands of workers took part in public displays of solidarity and power, participating in a political culture which overtly challenged traditional identities rooted in the capitalist logic of exploitation. State autocracy, wage labour, and the low standard of living were condemned as inhumane, and the ideas that bourgeois managers and politicians were parasites and that the working class could govern itself captivated the imagination of Canadian workers in an unprecedented manner.

For this moment, then, which we will call "1919," it was easier for individuals to live a life of collective opposition to capital. Like many others, however, this historic challenge was, to borrow from Raymond Williams, an "emergent culture" which failed to become the Canadian political and cultural dominant.[10] The paradoxical feature of the labour movement during 1919 lies in the fact that support for the OBU was greatest in the days before its actual formation. The OBU was not properly an organization until the founding conference in June 1919. However, the concept of the One Big Union, a pre-revolutionary idealization of working-class unity, was strongest in the days of the Winnipeg general strike from May to late June. By the end of the summer, employer

intransigience, state repression, and the complicity of international craft union leaders combined to crush the labour revolt and undermine the growth of the OBU. Thus, while the OBU issued over 70,000 membership cards in its first year of existence, the last six months of 1919 saw the marked decline of the power of the OBU dream. The ensuing economic depression combined with what organizer Victor Midgley called the "Unholy Trinity" of capital, the state, and international craft unionism to diffuse and suppress what little energy remained in the organization.[11] While retaining a symbolic importance with its emphasis on all-inclusive unionism, the OBU itself maintained but a meagre presence in the Canadian labour movement until its death in 1956, its fundamental challenge to monopoly capitalist development defeated shortly after its promising beginning.

To focus on the institutional dimensions of the OBU, however, would be to miss the widespread experience of Marxist masculinity.[12] Until the strength of the bourgeois renewal was sufficient to close off the possibilities of future radicalism, the practices of Marxist masculinity provided an increasingly powerful way to oppose the capitalist order. Within this context, socialists sought to shape the diverse experiences of Canadian workers into a unifying concept, the One Big Union, which welcomed all wage labourers "irrespective of nationality, sex, or craft."[13] As an identity, Marxist masculinity was the culmination of the idea that working men should come together and direct their collective energies to the creation of a new society rooted in the end of class exploitation and the reconstitution of male power. This identity spoke to particular groups of working men, resonating with their experiences in a manner which bourgeois discourses about Canadian manhood could not. Similarly, the overarching damage to a stable masculine sense of self caused by the psychological devastation of the Great War, both in Europe and at home, challenged patriotic conceptions of British manliness.

The formation of the One Big Union was the result of a particular historical conjuncture of a crisis of working-class masculinity with the global economic crisis.[14] This crisis of working-class men's gender interests and identities was primarily the result of three historical processes: the reorganization of production dictated by the forces of monopoly capitalism; Canada's involvement

in the Great War; and, finally, the transformation of patriarchal power due to the temporary increase in working-class women's participation in wage labour. OBU organizers attempted to make other working men aware of their class and gender interests, which, they believed, lay in the end of class exploitation and the reconfiguration of male power in the intertwined realms of high politics and the new proletarian family.[15] In so doing, OBU men articulated the identity of Marxist masculinity, combining a socialist interpretation of capitalism with a patriarchal approach to the politics of working-class women. Thus, the OBU was bound up in a particular constellation of meanings and practices of subordination and superordination.[16] This gender identity spoke to the need to abolish capitalism through a socialist revolution that would unleash the potentials of male workers' power. Radical men also countered the rising wave of ruling-class nativism by stressing the commonality of class experience in order to unite working men regardless of race or ethnicity. However, engrained within the radical politics of Marxist masculinity was the control and subordination of working-class women.

OBU men constructed images which distinguished radical manhood from both the class politics and the masculinity of male bosses and scabs. In posters, poems, and articles, gender differences between groups of men were central to the construction of class difference. Working-class women were commonly absent from much of OBU ideology; when they were discussed, it was primarily as loyal supporters of their male comrades and the socialist ideal. As a result, the signficance of female activities to the union movement as a whole was continually obscured. As well, OBU men focused their energies on specific groups of male industrial labourers, further excluding working-class women from a prominent role. Indeed, much of the OBU's appeal lay in the connections advocates made, through Marxist masculinity, between an active, positive sense of male gender identity and their particular brand of socialist politics. The omission of women from positions of power in the OBU was necessary to maintain these links and thus the power of male unionists. Women's activities to organize themselves threatened to break with the traditional male control of the radical sections of the labour movement. Consequently, in offering their

revolutionary vision of the transformation of production, these men also gave their patriarchal fears a political voice. Women were to be active but subordinate. Finally, OBU activists suppressed questions of women's oppression which emanated from the underside of male workers' power as typified by domestic violence and heterosexual conflict.

With this patriarchal inheritance, the OBU was always something more than just an industrial organization. It was also an attempt by groups of working-class men to organize economically and politically around their gender, to stabilize the social bases of working-class masculinity through a revolutionary transformation. Substantial numbers of working men came to see their class and gender interests as jointly articulated through the politics and organization of Marxist masculinity and the One Big Union, which depicted the needs of particular groups of men as the needs of the working class as a whole. As Bryan Palmer observes, however, "the One Big Union, for all the euphoria, was always more a powerful idea than a stable institution."[17] The rise of Marxist masculinity was accompanied and at times challenged by new levels of working-class women's activities in 1919. Nonetheless, the material power of the bourgeoisie posed the greatest threat, spelling the death of the One Big Union and its dream of a male-centred socialist society. Thus, we should look on Marxist masculinity as a provisional identity, to borrow a phrase from Andrew Tolson, "a perpetual future, a vision of inheritance, an emptiness waiting to be filled."[18]

One manner in which Marxist masculinity is "an emptiness waiting to be filled" is historiographical. While a great deal of excellent Marxist and feminist scholarship has been produced about 1919, we still lack a consideration of working-class masculinity, both as a manner of social being and a political force.[19] This, I believe, can be traced to historians' genuine admiration for the men and women who so bravely lived in opposition to capital. As an example, Chad Reimer has examined the Western Labor News (WLN), the Winnipeg strike bulletin, as a "counterhegemonic challenge" to bourgeois values. He suggests that the WLN "constructed and engaged a language of working-class entitlement which was largely structured along the lines of a prevalent war discourse," thus producing "an historically distinct, working-class definition of

citizenship and nationhood."[20] However, upon reading the fine print, we discover that "the rights [the WLN] claimed under the economy of sacrifice applied almost exclusively to men."[21] Suddenly, this "counterhegemonic challenge" appears a little less noble, its heroic shine tarnished when considering the events of 1919 in terms of the reconstitution of male power.

This is not to collapse all class conflict into an all-powerful container labelled "masculinity." Rather, it is to mark the inseparable nature of gender and class relationships as they were experienced at this time. Working-class masculinities were both individual and collective, tied to class location and family needs, labour processes and sexual desire. In this case, public claims about the necessity of ending class exploitation were articulated by socialists through their positions as leaders and organizers of the One Big Union. In so doing these men also put questions of gender power on the agenda, although not usually in an overt manner. While on occasion OBU men explicitly represented themselves as bearers of radical manhood, the politics of working-class masculinity worked more frequently as a hidden signifier lurking about the margins of socialist activity. Still, we are able to reconstruct the links between class and gender politics from clues ranging from one poet's choice of metaphor to a union man's advocacy of particular strike tactics or organizational structure. More specifically, Marxist masculinity breaks down into two distinct but interconnected components that I will call the objective and subjective. The first refers to ways in which the OBU's class program sought to reorganize the material relationships through which life was made possible. It will be seen that OBU men fought for the reorganization of male power through, for example, their positions on domestic labour and women's waged work. These ideas, had they been realized, would have transformed the abolition of class exploitation into gender domination by reinforcing male control over women's work. The other aspect, the subjective or internal element of Marxist masculinity, can be seen in the construction of appeals to workers to join the One Big Union. Inseparable from the objective or material aspects of the OBU, this discourse addressed working men's hopes and fears and their perception of their circumstances under

capitalism. In this light, Marxist masculinity was as concerned with the production of revolutionary desire as much as it was with economic forms of production.[22]

I have at times found myself at a loss for words when asked to explain what kind of history I have produced. The label of Marxist masculinity, in particular, seems to provoke blank looks from those who first hear it. After giving a presentation of an abbreviated account of the Cassidy-Rose affair, I was asked one question which has stuck in my mind, and may help to clarify this dilemma. To paraphrase: Did not my analysis mean that labour historians should not privilege class as a form of identity? My response then remains my answer now. If we see this exclusively as labour history, then yes, class was not the only relationship through which these subjects fashioned their lives. Conversely, if this thesis is viewed as a contribution to the burgeoning literature on gender and sexuality in Canada, then it is an argument for the importance of class, both as an objective relationship and subjective identity. This stance is not always readily apparent, as my argument is usually couched in terms of a critique of the masculine dimensions of Marxism, both in reference to the OBU and contemporary scholarship. Nevertheless, I have written this thesis from the premise that to condemn OBU men for their patriarchal legacy without an appreciation for the revolutionary and utopian dimensions of their class politics is to miss the point about the importance of historical materialism for the history we write and the politics in which we take part.

Theoretically, I have drawn upon the historically-embedded studies of language and discourse by Marxists such as Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams.[23] Michel Foucault's work on the processes of knowledge production, particularly in relation to sexuality, has also been helpful.[24] Both Foucault and these Marxists have been involved in a project to denaturalize, and thus historicize, the categories through which we view the world. They have shown us new ways to unpack the meanings which emerged from the particular contexts within which identities such as Marxist masculinity were constructed. This is not an original strategy, however, as many cultural workers on the left made their mark through such similar "play" with language. T-Bone Slim, the irrepresible Wobbly, was "deconstructing" the reality of working-

class life when he asked, "Doesn't the very word **worker** presuppose that there are those who do no work?"[25] This delightful question strikes at the foundation of capitalist relations of power, where the work of many is necessary to support the parasitic bourgeois class. However, T-Bone's question also poses a problem; while most union men during this period would recognize - usually when pushed to do so by working women - the importance of domestic labour, these activities were rarely considered to be work. Rather, "work" in most contexts meant wage labour, that which directly produced surplus value, and it is unclear where working-class women fit into T-Bone's phrase. As we shall see, quotes such as this were used by the OBU to differentiate working men from bourgeois men, with women generally absent from this discursive battle. In a similar vein, Raymond Williams suggests that "work" came to be associated with "paid employment" as a consequence "of the development of capitalist productive relations." With this explanation, Williams, like T-Bone, fails to explore how this definition, which excluded women's labour within the home, was fostered by working men in a manner which privileged their work because of its direct connection to the cash nexus.[26] Indeed, were T-Bone talking about the home, his statement would be a telling indication of how working men rationalized their meagre contributions to domestic labour by appealing to the demands of their waged work. This is perhaps too much analysis concerning what must have been for T-Bone an amusing turn of phrase. However, I hope that through an examination of diverse sources concerning the One Big Union, the dimensions and impact of Marxist masculinity will become more tangible.

The first chapter focuses on the pivotal events in the formation of the One Big Union from the Western Labor Conference in March 1919, where the idea gained widespread credence, to the wave of general strikes which swept across Canada that summer. Specifically, this chapter uncovers how the practices of OBU organizers, and the idea of One Big Union itself, were determined by the particular compound of class and gender identities and interests within radical sections of the labour movement. The second chapter focuses on the historical transformation of Marxist masculinity in three areas in which working-class masculinity was constructed and politicized: the activities of

OBU women; the interaction between public politics and private life; and finally, sexuality. This chapter is considerably more historiographical than the other two, since it is important, politically and historically, to understand how scholars have naturalized the gendered aspects of the Canadian socialist movement. To conclude, the third chapter will take us on a vacation from the incessant class war which occupies the first two chapters. It reconstructs the events surrounding the firing of two important OBU workers, Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose, in the fall of 1923, because of rumours that the two were sexually involved. According to the union's leadership, this dalliance threatened the organization's existence, since if it were publicized in the bourgeois press, the OBU would be branded as a "free love" group. This internal scandal enabled OBU leaders to regulate the heterosexual identity and behaviour of union members as well as a host of issues surrounding patriarchal power and responsibility.

My interest in Marxist masculinity emanates from my own personal politics, which have shaped my historical vision in particular ways. Without understating my role in organizing this presentation, bringing together events and meanings which hitherto have remained historiographically invisible, it is clear that Marxist masculinity did exist in 1919 and played a crucial role in the foundation of the One Big Union. To explore the questions of how and why this was so, we will weave our way through the most intricate of sectarian conflicts, and visit the tableaus of historical transformation writ large. We will meet many men and a few women. We will also speculate about the personal aspects of this identity, focusing more intensely on the motivations of our historical actors than perhaps they did themselves. We will do so with the belief that "old conceptual systems may crumble and new problematics insist on their presence."[27] Marxist masculinity is one such problematic.

Endnotes

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2. OBU Bulletin, 15 May, 29 May, 12 June 1920.

3. University of British Columbia, Special Collections (UBCSC): Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, First Issue of the OBU Bulletin of Oakland.

4. UBCSC: Dorothy Steeves Papers, Box 5, File 5, Matt Glenday to Dorothy Steeves, n.d.

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6. Ibid.

7. On the history of masculinity, I have been heavily influenced by the following: Ava Baron, "An 'Other' Side of Gender Antagonism at Work: Men, Boys, and the Remasculinization of Printers' Work, 1830-1920", in Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor Ed. Ava Baron (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 47-69; Mary H. Blewett, "Deference and Defiance: Labor Politics and the Meaning of Masculinity in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century New England Textile Industry", Gender & History 5:3 (Autumn 1993), 398-415; Mary Ann Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); David L. Collinson, Managing the Shopfloor: Subjectivity, Masculinity and Workplace Culture (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992); R.W. Connell, "The big picture: Masculinities in recent world history", Theory and Society 22:5 (October 1993), 597-623; and Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Lisa M. Fine, "Our Big Factory Family: Masculinity and Paternalism at the Reo Motor Car Company of Lansing, Michigan", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 274-291; Catherine Hall, "Missionary Stories: gender and ethnicity in England in the 1930s and 1840s" and "Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the case of Governor Eyre", both in White, Male and Middle Class: Exploration in Feminism and History (New York: Routledge, 1992), 205-295; Nancy A. Hewitt, "'The Voice of Virile Labor': Labor Militancy, Community Solidarity, and Gender Identity among Tampa's Latin Workers, 1880-1921", in Work Engendered, 142-167; Ella Johansson, "Beautiful Men, Fine Women and Good Workpeople: Gender and Skill in Northern Sweden, 1850-1950", Gender & History 1:2 (Summer 1989), 200-212; Keith McClelland, "Some Thoughts on Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-1880", Gender & History 1:2 (Summer 1989), 164-177; Colleen O'Neill, "Domesticity Deployed: Gender, Race, and the Construction of Class Struggle in the Bisbee Deportation", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 256-273; Michael Roper and John Tosh, "Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity", in Manful Assertions:

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8. For Canadian studies of working-class masculinity, see Christina Burr, "Defending 'The Art Preservative': Class and Gender Relations in the Printing Trade Unions, 1850-1914", Labour/Le Travail 31 (Spring 1993), 47-73; Blye Frank, "Hegemonic Heterosexual Masculinity", Studies in Political Economy 24 (Autumn 1987), 159-170; Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Steven Penfold, "'Have You No Manhood In You?': Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926", Acadiensis 23:2 (Spring 1994), 21-44; Mark Rosenfeld, "'It Was a Hard Life': Class and Gender in the Work and Family Rhythms of a Railway Town, 1920-1950", in Canadian Family History Ed. Bettina Bradbury (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992), 241-280; and Shirley Tillotson, "'We may all soon be `first-class men`': Gender and skill in Canada's early twentieth century urban telegraphy industry", Labour/Le Travail 27 (Spring 1991), 97-125.

9. Gregory S. Kealey, "State Repression of Labour and the Left in Canada, 1914-1920: The Impact of the First World War", Canadian Historical Review 73:3 (September 1992), 281-314.

10. "Emergent culture" is from Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), esp. 108-127.

11. OBU Bulletin, 8 November 1919.

12. My approach to radical organizations has been influenced by Karen Dubinsky, "'The Modern Chivalry': Women and the Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1891", (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1985); Mark Leier, Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia (Vancouver: New Star, 1990); and Salvatore Salerno, Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

13. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, Constitution and Laws of the One Big Union, n.d. (1919-1920), 1.

14. The term "crisis of masculinity" is that of Michael S. Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity in Historical Perspective", in The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies Ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 121-153. However, his structural framework locates class in the workplace and gender in the home, negating the possibility that male gender identities are created in the workplace and the community in addition to the family.

15. Ava Baron has noted the problems with assuming that men automatically realize their gender interests. See Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future", in Work Engendered, 29.

16. Mark Rosenfeld, "It was a Hard Life".

17. Bryan Palmer, "Listening to History Rather than Historians: Reflections on Working Class History", Studies in Political Economy 20 (Summer 1986), 65. See also his Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991 Second Edition (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 200.

18. Andrew Tolson, The Limits of Masculinity (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), 23.

19. For Marxist and feminist literature on the general strikes in Canada, see James R. Conley, "Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis, and the Western Labour Revolt: The Case of Vancouver, 1900-1919", Labour/Le Travail 23 (Spring 1989), 9-37; Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919", Manitoba History 11 (Spring 1986), 28-37; Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 11-44; Linda Kealey, "'No Special Protection - No Sympathy': Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour Revolt of 1919", in Class, Community and the Labour Movement: Wales and Canada, 1850-1930 Eds. Deian R. Hopkin and Gregory S. Kealey (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1989), 134-159; Tom Mitchell, "'To Reach the Leadership of the Revolutionary Movement': A.J. Andrews, the Canadian State and the Suppression of the Winnipeg General Strike", Prairie Forum 18:2 (Fall 1993), 239-255; Suzanne Morton, "Labourism and Economic Action: The Halifax Shipyards Strike of 1920", Labour/Le Travail 22 (Fall 1988), 67-98; James Naylor, The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario, 1914-1925 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Bryan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience; Larry Peterson, "Revolutionary Socialism and Industrial Unrest in the Era of the Winnipeg General Strike: The Origins of Communist Labour Unionism in Europe and North America", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 115-131; "The One Big Union in International Perspective: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism 1900-1925", Labour/Le Travailleur 7 (Spring 1981), 41-66; Nolan Reilly, "The General Strike in Amherst, Nova Scotia, 1919", Acadiensis 9:2 (Spring 1980), 56-77; Patricia Roome, "Amelia Turner and Calgary Labour Women, 1919-1935", in Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics Eds. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 89-117; Allen Seager, "Workers, Class, and Industrial Conflict in New Westminster, 1900-1930", in Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia: Selected Papers Eds. Rennie Warburton and David Coburn (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 117-140; and Peter Warrian, "The Challenge of the One Big Union Movement in Canada, 1919-1921", (M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1971).

20. Chad Reimer, "War, Nationhood and Working-Class Entitlement: The Counterhegemonic Challenge of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike", Prairie Forum 18:2 (Fall 1993), 220.

21. Ibid., 230.

22. On questions of desire, I have drawn upon Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); Carol J. Clover, Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); R.W. Connell, Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); Marjorie Garber, Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); Laura Kipnis, Ecstasy Unlimited: On Sex, Capital, Gender, and Aesthetics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Kobena Mercer, "Just looking for trouble: Robert Mapplethorpe and fantasies of race" and Lynne Segal, "Sweet Sorrows, Painful Pleasures: Pornography and the perils of heterosexual desire", in Sex Exposed: Sexuality and the Pornography Debate Eds. Lynne Segal and Mary McIntosh (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 92-110 and 65-91.

23. Terry Eagleton, Ideology: An Introduction (London: Verso, 1991); "Nationalism: Irony and Committment", in Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 23-39; Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992); E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London: Penguin Books, 1980); "The Poverty of Theory or An Orrery of Errors", in The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 1-210; Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature and the introduction to Keywords (London: Fontana Press, 1988).

24. Michel Foucault, The Use of Pleasure: Volume Two of the History of Sexuality Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

25. T-Bone Slim, Juice Is Stranger Than Friction: Selected Writings of T-Bone Slim Ed. Franklin Rosemont (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992), 154.

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Chapter One
Definitely "Not a Sex Question":
Marxist Masculinity and the Creation of the One Big Union

The Western Labor Conference opened in Calgary's Paget Hall on Thursday, March 13, 1919. In attendance were over 230 union delegates from 178 locals west of Port Arthur and at least two government spies. Their purpose in assembling was to chart a radical new direction for wage workers through the creation of a revolutionary industrial union centre, the One Big Union. Conventions where working men met and discussed political strategies were a labour tradition in Canada, and while there were three female delegates to the Western Labor Conference, the overtly masculine nature of the gathering was evident both in numbers and the concerns it addressed. This was clear to Helen Armstrong, a representative of the Winnipeg Women's Labor League. Armstrong assailed male delegates for their failure to organize working-class women, recalling that she had "sat in meetings, hundreds of times the only woman - the only woman."[1] She had a vision of how the One Big Union might be different from past movements, how it might enable working women to organize against exploitation and for socialism. Helen Armstrong will return, but first we must see why hers was an important, although unheeded, voice about the formation of the One Big Union.

As a Marxist organization, the One Big Union (OBU) did not exist separately from gender, but was itself a conjucture of numerous gendered historical processes. While the patriarchal needs of working men were not always explicitly claimed as such, gendered precepts were continually involved in the ideological work done by OBU men. These political practices were part of what Blye Frank has described as "a process of transforming various meanings and messages to produce a constellation of behaviour."[2] Class and gender were thus mutually constructed, and OBU advocates attempted to reconstitute working-class masculinity as radical manhood. This chapter begins by outlining the post-war context in which demands for the One Big Union were articulated. It then analyzes how the practices of Marxist masculinity influenced the founding of the OBU and the specific groups of workers who initially supported the organization. It concludes with an

account of the working-class culture in which Marxist masculinity flourished, accompanied by a discussion of the importance of this form of politics to the labour revolt.

The construction of Marxist masculinity had its roots in Canada's participation in World War One. At the beginning of the war, strong links existed for British men between manliness and enlistment for military duty.[3] Patriotic manhood was the spirit of the day, and men who did not serve were expected to make the goods necessary for the successful prosecution of the war effort. Crucial to maintaining high production levels was the no-strike pledge, and employers were quick to castigate union demands as providing aid to the Germans. As the war progressed, large numbers of workers rejected this equation, tracing their suffering to wartime profiteering. C.H. Cahan, a Montreal lawyer commissioned by Prime Minister Borden to examine the extent of popular discontent in the summer of 1918, reported that:

> the unrest now prevalent in Canada is due to the weakening of the moral purpose of the people to prosecute the war to a successful end; [and] to the fact that people are becoming daily more conscious of the bloody sacrifices and irritating burdens entailed by carrying on the war.[4]

The tensions caused by Canada's involvement in the Allied war effort were intensified by the anti-war propaganda of numerous socialist groups. Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) member Bill Pritchard conjured visions of the alienating effects of violence upon men who "have been maimed, gassed, blinded and arrive back from the battle line greatly impaired physically, even in those cases where the mental processes display signs of improvement."[5] With the link between active service and manhood severed at the end of the war, many healthy veterans found it difficult to restablish their manliness through wage labour due to the high level of unemployment, a crisis which had intensely personal dimensions.[6] As well, the skilled craftsman returned to discover that "his skill, the foundations of his organization, his identity as a working man and his economic security were all placed [in] jeopardy" by changes to production stemming from Taylorism and other forms of scientific management.[7]

The effects of anti-war activism, unemployment, and the reorganization of work processes were uneven, affecting different groups of workers in various ways. Nonetheless, these processes stimulated a critique of the post-war reconstruction program in a manner which strengthened the OBU's apppeal leading up to the Western Labor Conference. Socialists pointed to the centralization of bourgeois power under the autocratic regime of "imperialistic finance."[8] In this light, workers had nothing to gain from the government's plans for reconstruction because they were rooted in the continued exploitation of labour. Joe Knight, an SPCer in Edmonton, encapsulated this view by suggesting that workers were forced to sell their labour to build a world divided by class: "Reconstruct a system of wage-slavery! Perpetuate your class bondage! Make the world safe for mansions and shacks, for private parks and slums, for millionaires and paupers, for $10,000 poodles and underfed children."[9]

Alongside the growing awareness of state autocracy was the rejection of Canadian involvement in the invasion of Russia, an issue which united radical and conservative unionists alike.[10] Increasing numbers of union men saw the Bolshevik revolution as the first in a coming series of workers' governments; one OBU writer went as far as to label Russia "the Promised Land of working class emancipation."[11] Radicalism was also gaining an increasingly public face in Canada, as the British Columbia Federation of Labor, District 18 of the United Mine Workers of America and the newly-formed B.C. Loggers Union endorsed the ideas of industrial unionism and production for use, not for profit. Workers were provided with another example of the revolutionary spirit when approximately 100,000 Seattle workers began a six-day general strike on 6 February 1919, proclaiming "we are undertaking the most tremendous move ever made by LABOR in this country, a move which will lead - NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!" For these strikers, the idea of "revolution" had a positive meaning:

> We are growing tired of explaining that we DIDN'T mean this and that...We want to tell, in positive words, the glorious things we DO mean. If by revolution is meant violence, forcible taking over of property, the killing or maiming of men, surely no group of workers dreamed of such action. But if by revolution is meant that a Great

> Change is coming over the face of the world, which will transform our method of carrying on industry, and will go deep into the source of our very lives, to bring joy and freedom in place of heaviness and fear - then we do believe in such a Great Change and that our General Strike was one very definite step towards it.[12]

This passage conveys the intense reworking of ideas about post-war reconstruction which were channelled into demands for One Big Union. Workers wanted, in the words of miner James Cluney, "a bloodless Revolution in as short a time as possible."[13]

This revolutionary spirit was embraced by the growing number of left-leaning unionists within the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC). Winnipegger Alex Shepherd observed that many trade union moderates were radicalized in the post-war period.[14] Tactics such as amalgamation, walkouts over political issues, and the general and sympathetic strike all met with increased favour. The conservatism of international union leaders at the TLC's 1918 convention prompted a group of "self-styled progressives" from Western Canada such as Victor Midgley, a member of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council Executive, and David Rees, a United Mine Workers of America organizer, to begin plans for a Western Labor Conference to be held in the spring of 1919.[15] At this gathering, the idea of the One Big Union was given shape, a radical attempt to capture the emergent structure of feeling of the post-war period.

OBU advocates were captivated by the collective potential of male workers' power once freed from capitalist relations of production. In this spirit, they opted at the Western Labor Conference (WLC) in March to defer the creation of the OBU's organizational structure. In a brief detailing the schedule for the OBU referendum, the WLC Policy Committee reported that "no definite plan of organization can be submitted until after the referendum has been taken."[16] Similarly, after the convention, Joe Knight wrote to Victor Midgley, Secretary of the committee administering the referendum, suggesting that future action "can be determined on when the returns reveal the temper of the rank and file."[17] Less than a month later, the editors of the Western Labor News printed a diagram they received from Bob Russell, who thought it had been used by Lenin "in

planning his Soviet organization."[18] From Vancouver, Midgley wrote to Russell, informing him that "I do not care much about it":

> We have discussed several times here the idea of drawing up some concise plan of organization and also the idea of drawing a diagram of the proposed plan of organization, but we always come back to the idea that this new form of organization is not something that is going to be wrapped around the labor movement like a new suit of clothes. It will be necessarily a matter of growth, and you can no more draw a plan of the growth of it than you could draw a plan of the growth of a tree. Conditions and circumstances will determine what form the organization will ultimately take.[19]

Socialist organizers were fascinated with the idea that workers themselves, as opposed to leaders, would radicalize the form of the labour movement to create the OBU. As the first issue of the OBU Bulletin after the wave of general strikes asserted, "If the mass make not the movement, then indeed our efforts were useless and our organization an abortion."[20] Initial advocates of the OBU encouraged new forms of class organization, in particular industrial unionism, to eradicate the sectionalism inherent within craft unions. The OBU would not be just a "new suit of clothes," to use Midgley's metaphor, because it would transform the "body" of the labour movement. But it is also evident that the "body" of the OBU was a man's body, constructed by working-class men and invested with the tenets of Marxist masculinity. Indeed, writers for the OBU Bulletin frequently represented the organization as having a male persona, such as in the suggestion that "The One Big Union is the Man on the Job - or it is nothing at all."[21] One editorial informed readers that "Fence adorners and opponents want to know our numbers. We are too busy to inform our opponents, and weaklings had better stay on the fence for a while. This is a man's job."[22] Yet another advocate firmly suggested that "the only labor movement with any virility or militancy in it is the OBU."[23] More than just a manly representation, however, Marxist masculinity and its patriarchal politics were woven into the very fabric of the organization.

The radical tone of the Western Labor Conference was established at the outset, as delegates unanimously endorsed motions advocating production for use, not for profit and industrial unionism while criticizing conservative union leaders and the practice of "lobbying parliament for palliatives

which do not palliate." A motion recommending the "severance of their affiliation with their international organizations" in order "to form an industrial organization for all workers" was also approved, as was a resolution unanimously endorsing the concept of "Proletarian Dictatorship."[24] These tenets were intended to situate the OBU within a framework of Marxist class politics as opposed to the reformism of TLC leaders. The intention to make the OBU a radical organization was perhaps clearest in the debate surrounding the weighting of referendum balloting. J. Nixon, a delegate from the Vancouver Shipwrights' Union, proposed that the vote be conducted in line with the policy established by the British Columbia Federation of Labor (BCFL). BCFL official Jack Kavanagh explained that "to make a change in the structure of the [BCFL]...require[s] a majority vote of the organization comprising the vital trades." When asked what constituted a vital trade, Kavangh replied:

> Vital trades are those, which ceasing work compel others to cease by virtue of the fact they cannot carry on without them. In the city of Vancouver, the longshoremen, metal trades, that is the transport workers and metal trades, demoralize the city of Vancouver. Those trades which are the keystones of the industries in any particular centre, that is what is meant by vital trades.[25]

This resolution meant that the vote of a number of craft unions who were non- and even anti-radical in orientation would have little effect on the overall referendum results. As a result, the creation of the OBU was conditional solely on the majority vote of industrial unions with a history of radicalism. These groups would then be able to control the direction of the labour movement in Western Canada. In the ensuing discussion, Kavanagh admitted as much:

> Let me point out if you get the majority of the transport workers, the miners, and the metal trades, you could force the others into line. Sure it is force, nothing but force in existence, and unless you are aggressive no other element counts. The boss doesn't take notice of the man that doesn't scrap; he takes notice of those who get up in the meeting and do the business. That is the fellow he will listen to and will call.[26]

Kavanagh and other socialists thus proposed to forge the OBU around specific groups of industrial workers whom they believed could shut down important centers of production in the event of a

general strike. This choice, however, also grew out of and sought to maintain the dominance of Marxist masculinity within the radical union movement.

In terms of membership, the vital trades, as opposed to organizations such as those of garment workers and white-collar clerical staff, were notable for their almost complete exclusion of women.[27] As a result, power within the OBU was concentrated in the hands of men. That few women would have a voice in the creation of the OBU did not appear to the men at the WLC as a problem that needed to be addressed. Nor was it addressed, because the social power of the men who played important roles in the OBU enabled them, in the context of the WLC, to "impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed."[28] For instance, the Winnipeg Women's Labor League put forth a motion:

> that this conference devise ways and means of appointing a woman organizer for Western Canada, to organize the women workers and thereby educating them along class conscious lines for the future welfare of the workers of Canada as a whole.

The response of the Policy Committee, that "industrial policy is not a sex question but a class question," was applauded and adopted by the convention.[29] The enthusiasm with which male delegates rejected this resolution indicates the depth of their support for a form of Marxism which analytically separated class and gender relations, subordinating the latter to a supposedly gender-free conception of class. They saw the class question as of universal interest, indeed the purpose of the OBU, while the sex question was solely of concern to women. Marxist masculinity was thus naturalized and placed out of the realm of inquiry, enabling the depiction of gender politics as the infamous "woman question."

In another sense, the response of the Policy Committee was a falsehood, as OBU advocates were unable to discuss socialism without simultaneously talking about gender. The focus on industrial workers not only excluded most working-class women from any formal involvement in displays of "force" by the vital trades, but also relied on linkages between aggressive socialist politics and a specific sense of male gender identity. In Kavanagh's description of vital trades, for instance, a masculine dichotomy was mapped onto, and in part created, the divisions of union

politics. The reformist element were cast as timid men, not able to make themselves heard and not willing to scrap for working-class liberation. In contrast was the aggressive masculinity of radical men, who, through collective action, were able to force both bosses and conservative unionists to follow their lead in "doing the business." In this representation, the power of radical men emanated as much from their manly strength as from their socialism. This vision of male physicality obscured the work of women, through Women's Labor Leagues and informal community organizations, that was essential to the labour movement.[30]

The social consequences of Marxist masculinity were a topic of discussion at the WLC, as the unwavering Helen Armstrong rose on the final day:

> to place before the men-folks here how the women have had to suffer because organizers up and down the country for the last thirty years holding mass meetings and public meetings never invited the women workers...Now these women, the capitalist provides the dope factories and the minister hands it out. The YWCA they don't forget the women, they educate them so well that when the men vote why their wives went and voted against their own best interests.

She asked organizers to make an effort to educate women to "take their place in the class struggle" and outlined the activities of the Women's Labor League to that end such as picketing, raising funds and holding economics classes. Armstrong did not raise issues of working-class women's oppression not reducible to class exploitation such as domestic and sexual violence. However, she did emphasize that union men were partially to blame for the absence of women, which hampered the movement as a whole. Whether or not Armstrong's concerns were heard is another matter, as she was greeted with laughter when she suggested that "it is your own fault you have been crucified - I have no sympathy for you." She persisted, attempting to impress upon male activists that they had to organize women "unless you want to keep getting it in the neck the way you do."[31] As Armstrong concluded, she was told by the Chairman that "it would be better to put it in a concise manner and bring it up after we dispose of the remaining resolutions. That will give you some time to think it over and we can continue the regular business at this time."[32] Once again, Helen had raised the "sex question," which had to be suppressed so that union men could get back to "regular

business." This gender conflict hardly served as a propitious beginning for the One Big Union. The plans established at the WLC indicate not only the growing power of socialism in 1919, but also the importance of gender, and specifically Marxist masculinity, for the political vision of the OBU. When examining the groups of workers at the heart of the labour revolt and the culture in which their hopes flourished, the mobilizing power of masculinity is conveyed with striking clarity.

James Conley provides the most comprehensive exploration of the social basis of the 1919 uprising, concluding that frontier labourers and craftsmen in crisis were the most vocal groups articulating a radical agenda.[33] Frontier labourers, such as loggers, miners and longshoremen, were primarily unskilled men, many of them migrants, who worked at dangerous jobs for long hours with generally poor living conditions. Their radicalism was shared by craftsmen in crisis like those in the metal and building trades, for whom "a whole culture was at stake."[34] While Conley effectively indicates the social position of workers active in the revolt, he fails to consider the association of socialism with particular forms of masculinity.[35] In their attempt to solidify the socialist identity of working-class men, OBU advocates constructed an oppositional narrative that enabled men to read their social situation through concepts of manliness. With frontier labourers and crafts in crisis, two overlapping yet distinctive conceptions of masculinity were transformed through collective action into a desire for revolution and the One Big Union.

While the majority of miners and longshoremen were originally strong supporters of the OBU, the largest group of frontier labourers to join were those commonly known as "timberbeasts," the loggers.[36] Initially the work of unionists Helena Gutteridge and Birt Showler, the B.C. Loggers Union, renamed the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU), quickly came to be dominated by socialist Ernest Winch. President of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council (VTLC) in 1918, Winch was an ardent supporter of the OBU, and, according to his biographer, Dorothy Steeves, built the newly re-named Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) into "a **virile** organization in the logging camps."[37] Winch was joined by numerous Wobblies and socialists who found strong support for the OBU among what one poet called "the mighty Loggers' Clan."[38]

Historian Gordon Hak suggests that logging was equated with "manliness"; however, he fails to recognize that the qualities he labels as masculine were context specific, and differed greatly from the respectable gender identity of craftsmen or bourgeois men:

> Loggers were characters, individualistic, even idiosyncratic, physically strong, carefree, expert with an axe, beholden to no man. They worked hard and played hard, consuming alcohol with abandon and frequently coming to blows in the drinking establishments and brothels that they patronized. They were a breed apart, living in their own society with its own rules and customs.[39]

The fascination with a rugged and hardy sense of manhood was evident in the work of liberal social scientists of the day such as Edmund Bradwin, author of Bunkhouse Man. Calling logging "the most romantic of all frontier works in Canada," Bradwin exhibited a critical yet voyeuristic attraction for the followers of "that mystical superman, Paul Bunyan, the forest Zeus."[40] Ostensibly a description of work camps, Bunkhouse Man furnished a masculine ethnography according to a racial hierarchy that descended from the English Canadian, "that virile type of man common to the frontier," to the Native, who was "moody in disposition" and left "much to be desired, too, in matters of personal cleanliness." "With little desire to improve," wrote Bradwin, the Native "has stood still for three centuries."[41] While he suggested that reforms were necessary to prevent the growth of radicalism, Bradwin also depicted the forest worker as a breed apart who, "lauded as semi-heroic in the robustness of his personal qualities, has long been deemed to disdain the need, even, of the common physical comforts."[42]

While it is doubtful that many loggers actually read Bunkhouse Man, it is clear that lumberjacks in the Northwestern United States and Canada during this period took direct aim at the idea that they did not need "common physical comforts." American loggers set their bedding ablaze in 1917 to celebrate a strike for the eight hour day, forcing companies to provide them with new supplies. One later recalled that "before the strike of two years ago...a lumberjack wasn't a man. He was a lousy animal." This sentiment was echoed by other loggers, who connected the gains won in the strike with the restoration of working men's humanity: "Now the lumberjack is a man. He

has burned his lousy blankets and made the company furnish him a decent place to sleep...And he feels like a man, for he has time after an eight-hour day to do some thinking."[43] In comments like these, socialists counterposed an animalistic image of nonunionized workers with the masculine humanity, and the feelings of dignity and autonomy which came with it, of militant union men.

Organizers for the OBU appealed to these gendered feelings about human progress and class justice. Writers for the LWIU newspaper, the Camp Worker, published reports of camp conditions, warning working men to stay away from sites where they were treated not as men but "like dogs." Following in the footsteps of the Wobblies in matters of religion, OBU men also ridiculed the travelling preacher who "runs around like his lord and master in a female night shirt." More important, however, was the work of editor Bill Pritchard in articulating an symbolic economy of masculinity which differentiated union men from "those unspeakable pimps that, feeding upon the working class movement, at all times act and speak on behalf of their masters." The working man who scabbed was a "lap-dog" who cast "literary bouquets into the bosom of his loving master." These differences of masculinity were accompanied by the derogation of the value of women. Pritchard constructed a hierarchy of social problems in which class exploitation was seen as the ultimate symbol of capitalist power relations. Issues associated with women such as prostitution and fashion-oriented consumerism were trivial in comparison:

> We can feel sympathy for the poor femal[e] driven by the effects of the capitalist system to a life of shame upon the streets, and sometimes a pitying and amusing interest might be displayed in her who, bound to fashion's ridiculous whims, would impede the natural movement of her pedo-extremities by binding her nether limbs around with the horrible skirt of hobble design. But there can be nothing but contumely and disgust for the man mighty in his so-called wisdom, who sells himself so completely to capital, as to put hobbles on his brains and prostitute his mentality.[44]

In contrast to this servile manhood was the representation of radical male loggers, the "timberbeasts," as bearers of Marxist masculinity. Loggers were told to join the LWIU in order to "Prove your manhood! Think for yourself. Act for yourself!"[45]

With its emphasis on the physicality of work and features such as a weekly death count in the forests, the propaganda of the Camp Worker appealed to a particular sense of working-class masculinity rooted in life as a frontier labourer. The subjectivity of craftsmen was quite different in many respects, infused with elements of respectability, skill and tradition which clashed with the transient and often brutal aspects of unskilled work. Craftsmen rooted their sense of manhood in notions of respectability which connected their control of the workplace, their position as family breadwinner, and their collective morality of self-discipline, including sexuality. The practices of artisanal independence required not only the economic dependence of women through of their subordinate position in the patriarchal family but also the maintainance of craft exclusivity through the system of apprenticeship. As a result, entry into the craft fraternity marked the transition from youth to manhood.[46] This observation was confirmed by the reminiscences of skilled men involved with the OBU. Alex Shepherd spoke glowingly of his entry into craft work, recalling that "the machinists in this plant were a wonderful bunch. They helped me in everything I had to do, showed me how to set up my work, and watched over me like a father would." These paternal figures also introduced Shepherd to working-class politics, teaching him phrases to sing to the rhythm of machines such as "You're being robbed - you fool."[47] This feeling was echoed by fellow machinist Bob Russell, who connected his becoming a socialist with the successful completion of an apprenticeship and entrance into the union.[48]

This equation of craft work and mature, respectable masculinity was predicated upon the absence of women from these trades. However, as increasing numbers of women became involved in sectors of craft production, especially during wartime, many skilled occupations were the site of conflict over the sexual division of labour.[49] As numerous historians have indicated, the gendered classification of tasks stemmed from the interactions of male workers and bosses as well as working women.[50] Skilled men clung to their power, which lay in the material acumulation of craft knowledge and their ability to represent their needs as the needs of the wider labour movement. Indeed, socialists such as Bob Russell were at the forefront of the gender struggle of craftsmen to

prevent the entry of women into the metal trades during the war. As editor of the Machinists Bulletin, Russell informed his membership, "we can assure you if they try the introduction of women taking the place of men in the shops of Winnipeg, we will fight."[51] While skilled men associated the feminization of craft work with deskilling and lower rates of pay, their resistance was also deeply gendered, using "masculinity as a focal point for individual identity and collective loyalty."[52] Consequently, the transformation of the nature of skilled work caused by monopoly capitalism struck at the heart of the craftsman's sense of self in multiple ways.

The One Big Union drew upon the radical heritage of craftsmen and reworked this history of resistance in light of "the industrial changes that have taken place."[53] OBU advocates believed that the connections made between control of the work process, respectability and skilled unionism could no longer be forged because of the transformation of the work process:

> In the days gone by, when the skilled craftsmen produced an article by himself largely by hand work, the craft union organization correctly reflected his interests on the job, but with the introduction of modern methods of production, the skilled worker has been reduced to a large extent to the position of a machine tender or specialist, who contributes but one or two operations in the production of the finished article.[54]

This contradiction between the practices of skilled manhood and "modern methods of production" was to be resolved, they believed, through the reorganization of production and the reconstitution of a masculinity free from class exploitation. Such a transformation would stabilize the gendered division of labour, enabling working-class men to root their gender identity in an equation between masculinity and work.

This process was viewed in explicitly gendered terms, with the OBU as the institutional expression of male maturity: "Unionism was in the evolution of Society and grew from babyhood to youth and is now approaching manhood. Naturally, in the baby condition it did not realize the fundamental nature of the struggle; it fought blindly and wildly."[55] This shift from craft to industrial unionism was applauded by many early OBU advocates. Journalist Jack Carney enthused that "the day of the revolutionary industrial unionist has arrived," a belief echoed by James Cluney, who

wrote that "the Craft Union has outlived its usefulness and must be replaced by the OBU."[56] 1919 was the time of the new socialist man, and one writer encouraged workers to reject the "moss-covered and age-old institution" of craft unionism by appealing to feelings of modernity and unity:

> Let us cut those strings which lead us apart and strengthen those cords which bind us together. A new day arises. New conditions produce new needs. New needs demand new ideas, new forms of organization are hammered out. In union there is strength.[57]

Thus, while the masculinity of frontier labourers and craftsmen in crisis differed in various aspects, OBU organizers appealed to shared ways of being a working man, bridging these disparities through the provisional identity of Marxist masculinity.[58] The term "provisional" applies because the bourgeois renewal which accompanied the labour revolt effectively destroyed the attempt to "fix" this structure of feeling in the One Big Union. However, focusing solely on the institutional aspects of this process obscures the importance of culture and what Salvatore Salerno calls "appeals to class feeling rather than formal ideology."[59]

Within this working-class culture, the notion of "wage slaves" was a historically specific category that primarily represented male workers' experiences of exploitation.[60] For example, consider Brenton Braily's poem, "The Workers," which was published in several OBU newspapers. While ostensibly about "the workers," men and women, it is clear that working men were the only subject of the poem:

> I have broken my hands on your granite,
>   I have broken my strength on your steel,
> I have sweated through years for your pleasure,
>   I have worked like a slave for your weal.

Braily castigated the "masters and drivers of men" for the pathetic wages which rendered male workers dependent and servile, forced to "beg for more Labor again." However, Braily was concerned with more than just the abolition of the wage system, for he had been alienated from more than his labour:

> I have given my strength and my manhood,
>   I have given you my gladness and youth,

> You have used me and spent me and crushed me
> And throw me aside without raith.

While Braily envisioned the experience of working men in terms of class and production rather than status and money, he also envisioned exploitation, and its end, in terms of male power:

> I have built you the World in its beauty,
> I have brought you the glory and spoil...
> Yet I suffer it all in my patience,
> For somehow I dimly have known
> That somehow the Workers would conquer,
> In a World that was made for His own.[61]

Poems such as Braily's were shining examples of how OBU men were caught up in a gendered critique of capitalism. To work was to alienate one's manhood; socialism meant its restoration.

In seeking to reconstitute working-class masculinity by ending class exploitation, OBU men differentiated themselves from wage-oriented conservative unionists. Indeed, one of the strengths of the OBU was the platform of revolutionary change as opposed to the reformist strategies of international craft unions.[62] As with the rhetoric of the Western Labour Conference, this conflict was mapped out through masculine differentiations which used weakness, passivity and servility to signify reformist organizers. For example, Bob Russell assailed the "bunch that were always willing to hob-nob with the boss" under the Canadian Pacific Railway's system of paternalism. Russell had stern words for conservative union leaders, "the Jimmy willings or the wishy washy guys" who refused to fight class exploitation.[63] United Mine Workers of America organizer David Rees also questioned the strength of TLC leaders, sarcastically commenting to Victor Midgley that:

> I learn that many influential men - Oh pardon me, Labor men, will be here this week in order to terrorize or frighten the Cabinet into the position where they will concede all we ask. Oh it will be fierce. I can see now where Bolshevism will have to take a back seat.[64]

Similarly, a writer in the OBU Bulletin informed readers that the "labor leader obsessed by the virus of status is...a plastic, spineless, spiritless object."[65] Yet another depicted labour bureaucrats as "a weak-kneed, spineless crew."[66] Passivity also affected those working men unable to change their ways. In this regard, Bill Pritchard painted a pathetic picture of "two or three hard shell old timers,

who feel in their bones the rapid advance of the sick benefit and BURIAL fund coming on," and thus refused to support the OBU.[67] Men like this were left behind, eclipsed by a sense of class and gender identity rooted in socialism, progress, and vitality.

At its simplest level, Marxist masculinity expressed the firm belief that the workers built the world through their labours, "produce[d] all wealth," and possessed the knowledge to govern society without the "parasites" - bosses, bourgeois politicians, and union bureaucrats.[68] Even many of those who opposed the OBU such as David Rees remained "convinced that the overwhelming majority of the workers who do a little studying believe in the slogan - Production for use, not for profit."[69] This idea was strengthened by a number of strikes which displayed the power of the rank and file. As Bob Russell later observed:

> if they showed they had the power to stop the wheels of industry [they] also showed they had the power to start the wheels of industry - they couldn't start without them, you understand - then you had shown economic sense.[70]

Workers had no need for the bourgeoisie, the "other fellow," because they could "manage without managers."[71] Nor did they need politicians, even those who were once workers, as their association with parliament severed the essential connection between work and manhood: "These politicians are no longer working men. It is years since they had on overalls, or since they toiled at the bench, in the shop or in the mine."[72] Drawing upon their collective power, working men could supersede the masculine limitations of the international craft union movement, which was "a menace to every organization which has any wish to struggle for manhood and freedom of action in resisting the aggressions of big capital."[73] The key was for working men to act; in the words of Bill Pritchard, "the workers would not be saved by any great man but [by] themselves. 'The great...appear great to us because we are on our knees. Let us rise!'"[74]

From the beginning, Marxist principles were inscribed within the fabric of the One Big Union, as, for instance, in the Preamble to the Constitution:

> Modern industrial society is divided into two classes, those who possess and do not produce, and those who produce and do not possess. Alongside this main division

> all other classifications fade into insignificance. Between these two classes a continual struggle takes place...In the struggle over the purchase and sale of labor power the buyers are always masters - the sellers always workers. From this fact arises the inevitable class struggle.[75]

While the OBU Preamble was rather staid in comparison to that of the Wobblies with its famous opening line, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common," its importance lay in the second sentence.[76] While affirming the primacy of the class struggle, it also recognized that other social divisions did exist. Although the authors were attempting to counter working-class nativism with this phrasing, they also created a potential space in which factors such as gender politics could be discussed.

OBU men came from a Marxist tradition which distinguished between production, men's labour in the public sphere, and reproduction, women's work in the home, resulting in a "divided image of the social realm.[77] In practice, this dichotomy placed those working-class women not directly involved in wage labour in an enigmatic position. While OBU activists believed that "labor produces all wealth," consider the following definition: "By the terms WORKER or LABOR we mean all those who by useful work of hand or brain, feed, clothe or shelter; or contribute towards the health, comfort and education of the human race."[78] The first thing to notice is the arbitrary and value-laden nature of this explanation, which was open to the inclusion of non-waged labourers as a group of exploited workers. However, membership in the One Big Union was restricted to wage labourers, implying that the activities of women in the home were not a primary experience around which the working class should organize.[79] The exclusion of non-wage labourers meant that most women were denied a formal role in one of the primary institutions of working-class democracy. While, for example, the wives of working men were directly affected by their husband's determination to strike, the structure of the OBU did not enable them to participate in the actual decision-making process. As well, given the role of working men in limiting women's participation in wage work, the choice to limit union democracy to the workplace further increased the economic dependence of women. Thus, the OBU definition of "worker" was somewhat ambiguous, excluding

non-wage labourers from formal involvement while at the same time providing the potential rationale for women to organize around economic exploitation within the home.[80]

During the period in which the One Big Union took shape, issues concerning the position of working-class women within the movement generally received little consideration. As with the resolutions at the WLC, the power of male unionists to define the political agenda prevented anything more than superficial attention from being devoted to working women in OBU propaganda. This exclusion emanated in part from their stress on the positive energies of working men, who appeared to have the world within their grasp. One Calgary striker prosaicly expressed this proud fascination with working men's accomplishments:

> Who broke the shackles of the slave,
> Made war, to make wrong pardon crave,
> For union a path to pave?
> A working man...
>
> Who daily faces death's cold fear,
> In subterranean caverns drear,
> To cheer with warmth our homes so dear?
> The working man...
>
> Who is it dresses lady fine,
> To make a woman's beauty shine,
> By bringing products into line?
> The working man.

Indeed, the overwhelming confidence of the Calgary striker led him to proclaim that the "working man" had "blazed a trail of light, / Thro' Afric's darkest junge[l] night, / To let in justice and the right."[81] In this poem, exploitation receded into the background, overcome by the spirit of optimism in the potentials of male workers' power. Propaganda of this sort from the OBU was common, as were continual references to the newly-emerging class and gender identity of working men in "the age of the new democracy."[82] Consider this "silent agitator":[83]

Be a Union Man
An Industrial Union Man
An O.B.U. Man

Courtesy of University of British Columbia, Special Collections

Not surprisingly, the emergent identity of Marxist masculinity was a powerful influence on the conduct of working men during the strike wave of the summer of 1919. Reverend William Ivens, a key figure in the Winnipeg Labor Church, justified labour unrest through an explicit appeal to manhood, holding that "men who were full-blooded always had, and always must, protest."[84] Pursuing the theme of revolution, one optimistic writer suggested that "the great working-class giant is rising to his feet," capturing the largely masculine nature of contemporary socialist symbolism.[85] Similarly, Figure 1.1 depicts how the collective strength of manual labourers would save jailed activists from the "powers that be."[86]

One of the most prevalent issues during the strike wave was the coercive apparatus of the state which, socialists predicted, would be brought to bear against them. In May, policemen in Winnipeg voted in favour of striking, but remained on the job at the request of the Strike Committee, which feared the declaration of martial law were the police to strike.[87] The newly-formed Citizens' Committee of One Thousand asked policemen to sign a "yellow-dog" contract pledging not to join unions or to strike. This prompted a number of outcries, and the Western Labor News ran a column entitled "Britons Never Shall Be Slaves" depicting the pledge as an unfree act for white working men: "Only a slave could sign it. A free man, a white man - Never!"[88] Many

FIGURE 1.1 Courtesy of University of British Columbia, Special Collections

refused to sign and found themselves blacklisted for life. In their place was the new force of "specials," which was seen as an attempt by the Citizens' Committee to provoke violence, a charge not without justification. This conflict was represented through a symbolic economy of masculinity. For example, in Figure 1.2, the "peaceable striker," a well-dressed man of obvious respectability is challenged by two other men of questionable character and maturity: the immense bourgeois man, who appears to have accumulated surplus value as body weight, adorned with dollar signs ($) and jewelry and carrying the club of "militarism"; and the Citizen's Committee, a small male child not old enough to wear long pants.[89] By connecting different forms of masculinity with opposing economic ideologies, this representation depicted the issue of coercion as both a class and gender conflict.

In their efforts to ensure class unity during the general strikes, OBU organizers differentiated radical masculinity from that of male workers who refused to strike. At times of overt class conflict such as this, scabs likely stood as the labour movement's most hated enemy; OBU columnist William O'Donnell suggested that "Hell is not half hot enough for him, / The thing that scabs on his fellowmen."[90] As powerful symbols against which radical masculinity was forged, men who scabbed were represented as possessing a servile manhood, set apart from the "brotherhood" of class-conscious male workers. For example, the Calgary Strike Bulletin advised working men about the "shame of being a scab," asking if there was "a more contemptible creature in the world than the one who deserts his fellows and helps defeat his own side."[91] Their comrades in Vancouver also addressed this theme, inquiring of workers who refused to strike, "don't you think you might try and play the man?"[92] In these instances, OBU men made reference to multiple masculinities, using oppositions of maleness to convey differences in class politics.[93] Consider Figure 1.3, which portrayed the members of a company union as decidedly weak and somewhat unattractive men.[94] We are supposed to read off from this image that joining a company union was not the way to be a real union man.

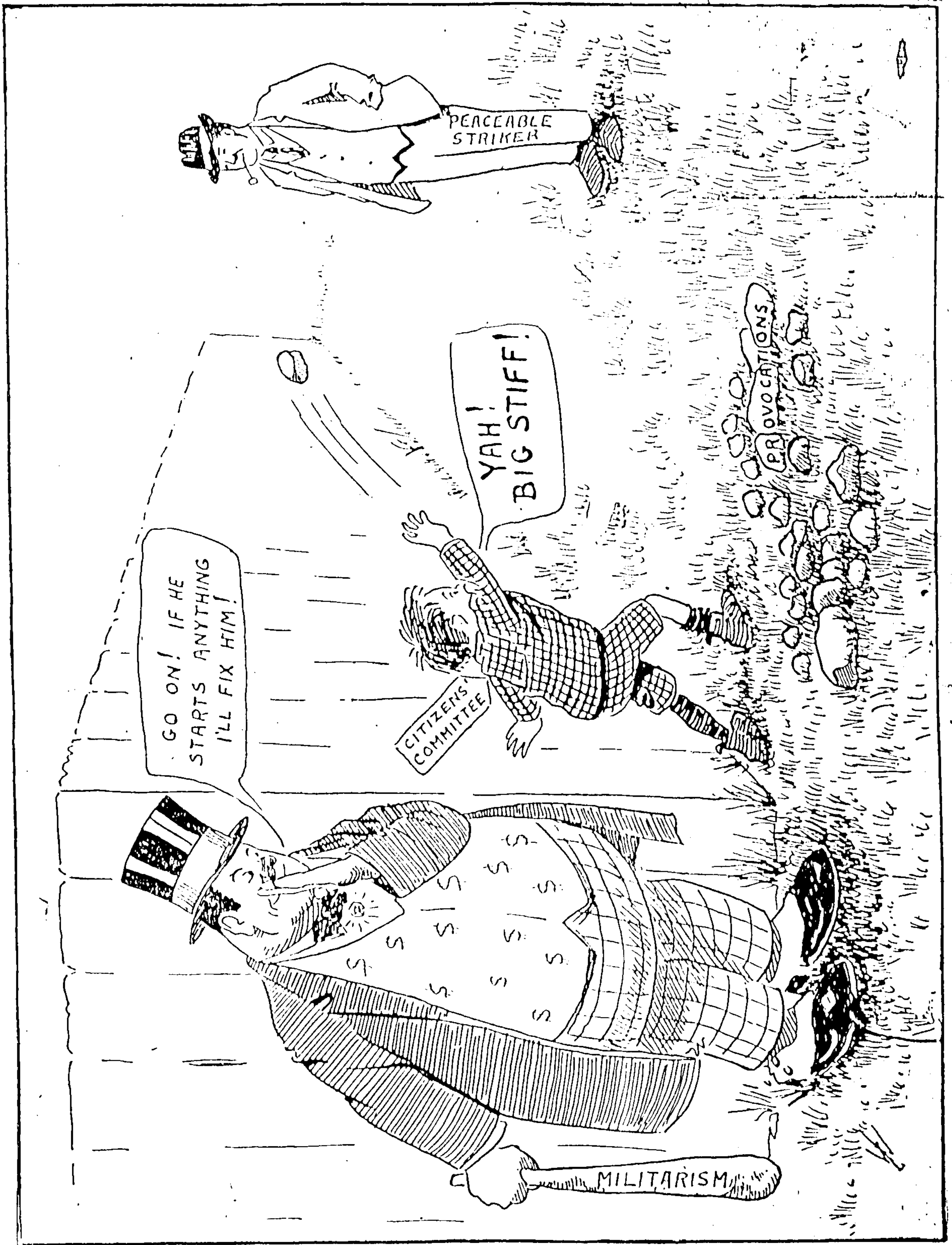

FIGURE 1.2 Courtesy of University of British Columbia, Special Collections

FIGURE 1.3 Courtesy of University of British Columbia, Special Collections

The rising intensity of working-class women's activism during 1919 challenged conventional socialist stereotypes of women's conservatism.[95] Consequently, OBU advocates articulated images of class-conscious militant women which paralleled Marxist masculinity. They discussed the plight of women who tried to make ends meet without the wage of the male breadwinner, writing of "the cheerful endurance by wives and mothers, of privation and suffering in order that victory might be achieved in this fight for liberty."[96] As well, by highlighting the activities of women such as Helen Armstrong as well as groups of female strikers like telephone operators, the "Hello Girls," they differentiated working women from the "volunteers" drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie.[97] The Western Labor News scorned "'Society' ladies stepping from their luxurious limousines" to sell scab newspapers produced by the Winnipeg Citizens' Committee.[98] Their counterparts in Vancouver also emphasized class differences in femininity, attacking the members of the International Order of the Daughters of the Empire for scabbing on female telephone operators.[99] Figure 1.4 contrasted two respectable female strikers with the "snooty Society lady," adorned in a man's suit jacket and tie, who did not "understand that we are out for a principle." The transgression of gendered codes of dress symbolized that this "lady" was scabbing. Differences of class and gender were even constructed through their pets, with the bourgeois cat, complete with bow, strolling blissfully by the black sabotage cat, the "Sabo-tabby," of Wobblie fame. There is also the dark and potentially dangerous figure of the policeman looming ominously in the background.[100] In addition, male leaders appealed to the potential of working-class power to transform gender relations. J.S. Woodsworth declared that:

> In the coming day women would take their place side by side with men, not as dependents or inferiors, but as equals. Thus there would be better relationships based on fundamental love and affinity. This strike was part of the great movement for the emancipation of women.[101]

Public statements such as this, although few in number, encouraged working-class women to organize economically and politically on the basis of their particular experiences.

FIGURE 1.4 Courtesy of University of British Columbia, Special Collections

However, the practices of Marxist masculinity also obscured the importance of the activities of working class women, placing them in a secondary position in relation to those of radical men. Male control of the labour press as well as other institutional resources rendered female activists largely dependent on the prioritization of their efforts according to their patriarchal political vision. OBU men encouraged women to be active without addressing feminist issues relating to their participation in the labour movement. Mass meetings in Vancouver were advertised with two slogans, "Everybody attend" and "women invited," suggesting they in part realized the masculine nature of their appeals.[102] However, assumptions about gender relations also worked their way into union propaganda. One strikers' paper proclaimed, "Only those on strike or ordered to remain at work by the strike committee are loyal to the working class."[103] Strike organizers never thought to order women to continue their domestic labour, which was not considered "work" because it was not directly determined by the public forces of the capitalist market. The above quote did not signify that women were being "disloyal" to the cause. Rather, it indicated that the "loyalty" of working class women was assumed, their support for their male comrades taken for granted.

This said, the events of the strike wave could not be contained within the categories of class and gender as outlined by organizers for the One Big Union. The widespread articulation of an collective working-class program provided energy to the production of radical desire which flowed beyond the institutional limits of the OBU. For men and women caught up in the flow of 1919, their identity was oppositional in nature, temporarily irreconcilable with the demands of bourgeois society. Because of the intensity of polarizing forces, radicalism could be magnified in contexts such as "Bloody Saturday," the 21st of June, when working-class men and women as well as returned solidiers who supported their goals took to the streets of Winnipeg to protest the arrest of eight socialists involved with the Strike Committee. They pelted "specials" and members of the Royal North West Mounted Police with stones with each successive charge down Main Street. Seizing upon a scab-operated streetcar as a symbol of capitalist power, a large crowd overturned it and one woman set it ablaze. (See Figure 1.5) This action spoke of revolutionary dreams, of the

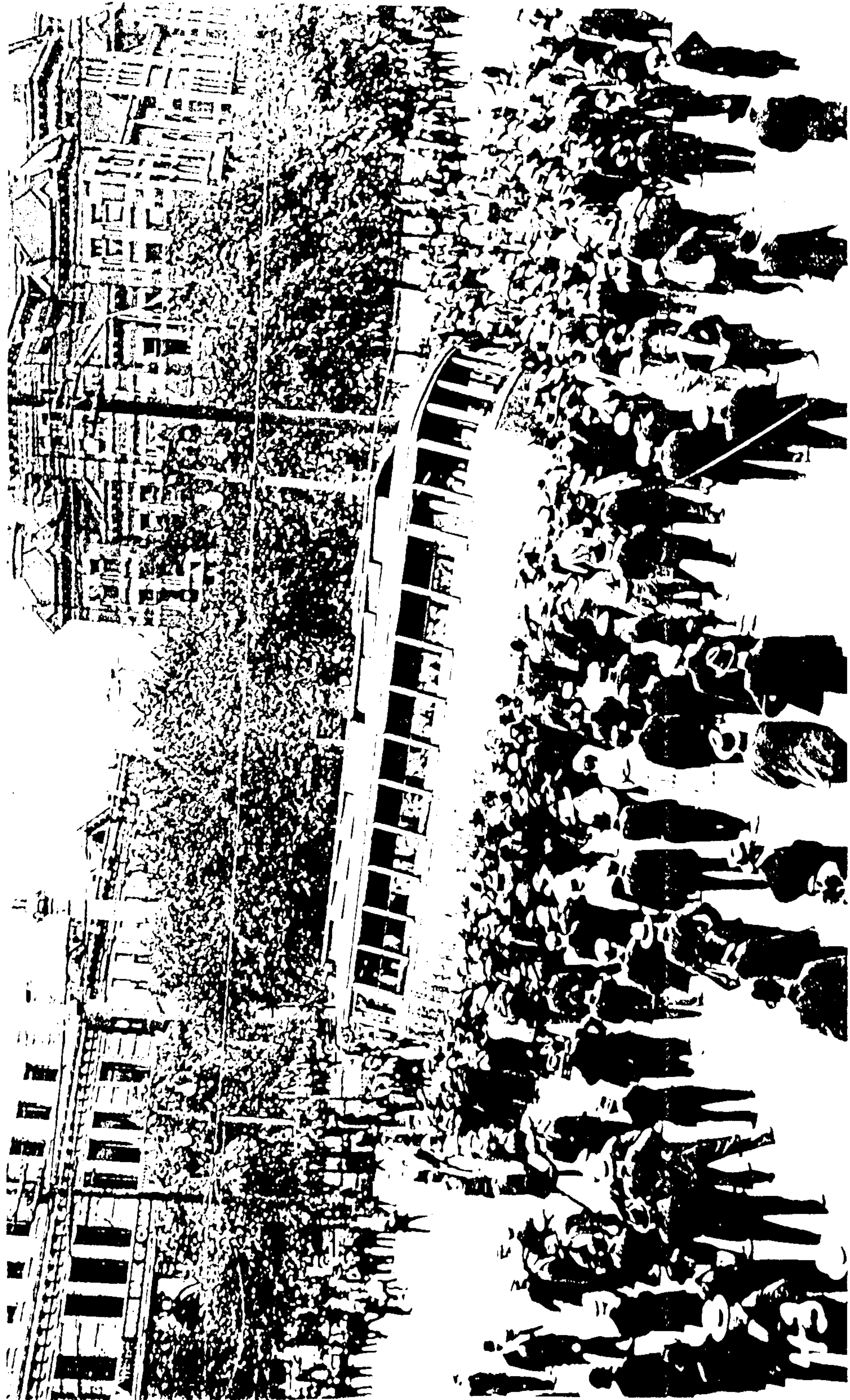

FIGURE 1.5 Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba

urgent need to transform society and restore humanity. It was this feature, however fleeting, which marked the general strike wave as a heroic accomplishment in the collective history of the Canadian working class. Through their actions, working men and women revealed that their labour was the social basis necessary for the continuance of capitalist production. They also learned that their challenge to the sanctity of property and "democratic" law and order in turn solidified the reactionary response of bourgeois renewal.

Despite this defeat, it is still crucial to mark their desire. One striker wrote to the Vancouver Strike Bulletin with a tale of "Life's Combat":

> It's fun to fight when you know you are right,
> And your heart is in it, too.
> Though the fray be long and the foe be strong,
> And the comrades you have are few.
> Though the battle heat bring but defeat,
> And weariness makes you reel,
> There's a joy in life that you can know such strife
> And the glory and thrill you feel.[104]

Another writer conveyed the spirit of collective desire in one of the few passages which spoke directly about/to women:

> These people are fighting for a principle and every working man and woman throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion with a particle of manhood or womanhood in their makeup must feel a thrill of joy running through them at the magnificent courage and endurance of the class to which they belong, which stands out so gloriously and puts to shame all the liars that the master class can coerce or purchase.[105]

Quotes such as this were exceptional for their inclusive nature. The overwhelmingly masculine nature of public working-class desire was perhaps most starkly conveyed in the article, "The Spectre of Industrial Unionism," which OBU organizer Carl Berg took from the International Socialist Review.[106] "Spectre of Industrial Unionism" was the type of article which confirmed the worst fears of the bourgeoisie, for it proclaimed revolution to be imminent. The "message of industrial unionism":

> is [first] heard, first understood by the despised bum, hobo, tramp, stiff, for he is nearest the source from which it comes. But its message of hope for an enslaved working class is wafting upwards and is affecting the entire soul of the great labor army.

This message promised a dark future for those who opposed the socialist movement: "Capitalists, priests, politicians, press hirelings, thugs, sluggers, policemen and all creeping and crawling things that suck the blood of the common working man [will] die of starvation." Class conflict thus was represented as a battle between two opposing armies of men. Women, it seems, were excluded from an active role because victory required the manly quality of strength: "Right never did prevail and never will without the aid of might. Existence is a perpetual struggle; the weak go to the wall. It isn't the **few** who go to the wall but the **weak**." Women were included in this social vision, as the writer suggested that "we ought to be damned if we don't look after our own dear wives and dear little ones." Indeed, the theme of female dependence was crucially important to the production of revolutionary desire, which would allow proletarian men to escape their subordinate position under capitalist relations of production:

> Bowed and humiliated as you are, be you despised ever so much, your mothers, wives and sisters forced to lives of shame, your children stunted and starved, you hold in these two hands of yours the power to save not only yourself, your mothers, wives and sisters, and your children, but the whole human race. The world lies in the hollow of your dirty, blacked and horney right hand - save it![107]

In passages such as these, the revolutionary movement was centered around working men, who alone possessed the "might" to realize a socialist society. That this spirit, in particular the abject portrayal of class "enemies," led some men to threaten women who scabbed with sexual violence indicates the darker undercurrents of the OBU's revolutionary politics.[108]

This masculine yearning for revolution was provisional because the material power of the bourgeoisie coalesced around a reactionary program which undermined the power of the class and gender politics of the OBU.[109] Three of the OBU's most valuable organizers - Dick Johns, William Pritchard and R.B. Russell - were arrested and charged with sedition. All three were later convicted and sentenced to two years in jail, where they faced "the deadly truth [of] iron bars and concrete

floors."[110] This was only one of a number of incidents in which strikers and socialists were confronted with the potential of jail and violence, and these threats had their effect; Winnipeg militant Jacob Penner later called the wave of arrests and police raids "demoralizing."[111] In 1961, the man who stayed with the One Big Union longer than any other, Bob Russell, remembered the immense promise and abrupt decline of his life's dream:

> we were building on the basis that there could be tremendous mass organization, and that was one of the errors we made...[J]ust after the strike, you know, how extensive the One Big Union was, but then the gradual crush, crush, crush, crush come...[112]

This process of "crushing" was debilitating, as blacklists, legal decisions, violence and agreements between employers, the state and conservative union leaders all served to prevent many workers from joining the union of their choice. As well, organizers for the One Big Union became embroiled in numerous sectarian disputes over the direction of the movement, losing their largest locals as a result. Moreover, the ruling class, in cooperation with anti-socialist union bureaucrats, offered a different vision for working-class masculinity rooted in men's ability to provide for their families as opposed to the eradication of class exploitation through the practices of Marxist masculinity. All of these factors combined to drive the OBU out of small towns and large cities. Hundreds of activists left the organization, turning to other groups such as the Workers' Party of Canada or seeking refuge in the mass culture ideal of the male breadwinner. Union politics, and the politicization of working-class masculinity, would never be the same again. Nor would the One Big Union.

Endnotes

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14. PAM: MG14C86, Alex Shepherd Papers, Alex Shepherd to David Bercuson, n.d. (1969).

15. PAM: MG14C93, David Rees Papers, David Rees to David Millar, 30 September 1965.

16. The Origin of the One Big Union, 12.

17. PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, J.R. Knight to V.R. Midgley, 24 March 1919.

18. Ibid., R.B. Russell to V.R. Midgley, 17 April 1919.

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20. OBU Bulletin, 12 August 1919.

21. Ibid., 27 September 1919.

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44. Camp Worker, 2 June 1919.

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48. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 4, 1.

49. For a discussion of working-class masculinity and women in skilled trades, see Shirley Tillotson, "We may all soon be 'first-class men': Gender and skill in Canada's early twentieth century urban telegraphy industry", Labour/Le Travail 27 (Spring 1991), 97-125.

50. This point is perhaps best made in the Canadian context by Karen Dubinsky, "'The Modern Chivalry': Women and the Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1891", (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1985) and Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners. See also the controversy over socialist symbolism in History Workshop: Eric Hobsbawm, "Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography", History Workshop 6 (Autumn 1978), 121-138; Tim Mason, "The Domestication of Female Socialist Icons: a note in reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop 7 (Spring 1979), 170-175; Sally Alexander, Anna Davin and Eve Hostettler, "Labouring Women: a reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop 8 (Autumn 1979), 174-182; and Ruth Richardson, "'In the Posture of a Whore'? a reply to Eric Hobsbawm", History Workshop 14 (Autumn 1982), 133-137. Bryan Palmer suggests that "the most significant factor in the making of...gendered radicalism was the fundamental and varied divide that separated men's work and women's labour." However, Palmer does not devote sufficient attention to the role of working-class men in maintaining this separation. Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991 Second Edition (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 193.

51. Quoted in Mary Jordan, Survival: Labour's Trials and Tribulations in Canada (Toronto: McDonald House, 1975), 26.

52. Mary Ann Clawson, Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 259. For an attempt to apply Clawson's ideas to Canadian craftsmen, see Darryl Newbury, "'No Atheist, Eunuch or Woman': Male Associational Culture and Working-Class Identity in Industrializing Ontario, 1840-1880", (M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1992).

53. OBU Bulletin, 8 November 1919.

54. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, "The One Big Union: A Historical Sketch", 3.

55. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 7, Central Executive Committee of the OBU, Bulletin #4. See also Elizabeth Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 75.

56. PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, Jack Carney to Victor Midgley, 16 May 1919; James D. Cluney to Victor Midgley, 6 May 1919.

57. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 7, OBU Central Executive Committee, Bulletin #1.

58. The notion of a provisional subjectivity is borrowed from Jennifer Terry, "Theorizing Deviant Historiography", differences 3:2 (1991), 55-74.

59. Salvatore Salerno, Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 15, 20-21. While Salerno himself ignores the gendered dimensions of his subject, it is clear that the feelings articulated by these socialists were culturally specific appeals to experiences of class and gender.

60. The history of the term "wage slavery" is explored in David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (London: Verso, 1991).

61. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 2, One Big Union Bulletin (Manitoba), 15 May 1919.

62. For example, see PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 4, 1-2.

63. Ibid., Transcript of Tape 5, 5, 13.

64. PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, David Rees to Victor Midgley, 24 November 1918.

65. OBU Bulletin, 15 November 1919.

66. Ibid., 28 August 1920.

67. PAM: MG10A3, OBU Papers and Correspondence, Bill Pritchard to Dick Johns, 2 April 1919.

68. UBCSC: Vertical File #213, Appendix 3, OBU General Executive Board, Bulletin #1, 1.

69. PAM: MG14C93, David Rees Papers, Newspaper clipping, April 1919.

70. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, C813-816, Interview with R.B. Russell, Transcript of Tape 5, 4.

71. "The other fellow" comes from a clipping of the Fernie District Ledger in PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, while "managing without managers" is from the irrepressible T-Bone Slim, Juice is Stranger than Friction: Selected Writings of T-Bone Slim Ed. Franklin Rosemont (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1992), 35.

72. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, Second Issue of the OBU Bulletin of the San Francisco Bay Cities, 1920.

73. OBU Bulletin, 27 December 1919.

74. Quoted in "'Saving the World From Democracy': The Winnipeg General Sympathetic Strike, May-June 1919", in Norman Penner, Ed. Winnipeg 1919: The strikers' own history of the Winnipeg General Strike Second Edition (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1975), 144.

75. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, Constitution and Laws of the One Big Union, n.d. (1919-1920), 1.

76. Quoted in Joyce Kornbluh, Ed., Rebel Voices, 2.

77. Harold Benenson, "Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class", International Labor and Working Class History 25 (Spring 1984), 10-11. For a discussion of how these dichotomies continue to affect labour history, see Alice Kessler-Harris, "Treating the Male as 'Other': Re-defining the Parameters of Labor History", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 190-204.

78. UBCSC: Verticle File #213, Appendix 3, OBU General Executive Board, Bulletin #1, 1.

79. As Harold Benenson notes, Marx himself "highlighted the adult male worker, who provided the family livelihood, as the archetypical protagonist - as a producer and militant - of his class' essential interest." Benenson, "Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class", 13-16. For an example of the resistance of Marxists to examine the gendered nature of their theoretical baggage, see the most vitriolic rejoinders to Benenson's article: David Montgomery, "Response to Harold Benenson", International Labor and Working Class History 25 (Spring 1984), 24-29; and Kevin Anderson, "Response to Harold Benenson", International Labor and Working Class History 26 (Fall 1984), 37-39. Yes, Mr. Anderson, Marx did write about women. However, considering what he wrote, this hardly helps your case.

80. For a similar conclusion in reference to the Knights of Labor, see Karen Dubinsky, "'The Modern Chivalry'".

81. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 2, Calgary Strike Bulletin, 2 June 1919.

82. New Democracy, 22 May 1919.

83. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6.

84. "Saving the World From Democracy", 12.

85. Red Flag (Vancouver), 14 June 1919.

86. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 24 June 1919.

87. PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, R.B. Russell to Victor Midgley, 19 May 1919.

88. "Saving the World from Democracy", 83.

89. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 19 June 1919.

90. OBU Bulletin, 14 February 1920.

91. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 2, Calgary Strike Bulletin, 2 June 1919.

92. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 23 June 1919.

93. This point is addressed by numerous authors. See Marjorie Garber, Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety (New York: Harper Collins, 1993); Michael Roper and John Tosh, "Introduction: Historians and the politics of masculinity", in Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800 Eds. Roper and Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 1-24.

94. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 19 June 1919.

95. Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919", Manitoba History 11 (Spring 1986), 28-37; Linda Kealey, "'No Special Protection - No Sympathy': Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour Revolt of 1919", in Class, Community and the Labour Movement: Wales and Canada, 1850-1930 Eds. Deian R. Hopkin and Gregory S. Kealey (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1989), 134-159; Patricia Roome, "Amelia Turner and Calgary Labour Women, 1919-1935", in Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics Eds. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 89-117.

96. "Saving the World from Democracy", 146.

97. For more on Helen Armstrong, see Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919", 30-34.

98. "Saving the World From Democracy", 146.

99. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 14 June 1919.

100. Ibid., 20 June 1919.

101. Quoted in Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919", 28.

102. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 17 June 1919.

103. Ibid., 11 June 1919.

104. Strike Bulletin (Vancouver), 5 June 1919.

105. Ibid., 24 June 1919.

106. While this piece was condemned as "IWW sabotage philosophy" by some members of the SPC, others chose to print it in pro-OBU papers across Canada. For the controversy, see PAM: MG10A3, One Big Union Correspondence, Carl Berg to Victor Midgley, 1 May 1919; R.B. Russell Papers, Part One, Box 3, File 11, Carl Berg to William Kollings, 2 May 1919, 9 May 1919; PAM: RG4A3, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. R.B. Russell" Partial Transcript of Trial, 1159-1161.

107. PAM: MG14A18, Winnipeg Strike, 1919, OBU Bulletin (Manitoba), 1 May 1919. Emphasis in original.

108. Steven Maynard, "Sex, Court Records, and Labour History", Labour/Le Travail 33 (Spring 1994), 190-191.

109. For a sketch of the global dimensions of ruling-class masculinity, see R.W. Connell, "The big picture: Masculinities in recent world history", Theory and Society 22:5 (October 1993), 609-611.

110. OBU Bulletin, 30 August 1919.

111. PAM: P599-6, Jacob Penner Papers, Interview between Roland Penner and Jacob Penner, 58-59.

112. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 6, 8.

Chapter Two
"Proletarian Pills of Power":
The Transformation of the One Big Union and Marxist Masculinity, 1919-1924[1]

The OBU Bulletin, which was produced primarily by activists in the Winnipeg area, began its run in August 1919. Many of the Bulletin's columnists tailored their work to reinforce the basic concepts of Marxist masculinity that had proved so vital during the labour revolt. To this end, one writer wryly commented that "there is enough wealth in this good old world for all, if only those who produce it were not sent home without it when the whistle blows." There was a slight shift in the OBU appeal following the general strikes, as numerous columns emphasized the organization's need for collective solidarity to temper the effects of ruling-class coercion: "EVERY WORKER must educate himself or herself to take the position of the man or woman in front."[2] This theme emerged in response to the forceful power of the state which, despite the official optimism, permeated the atmosphere of the OBU. Within the span of one year, organizers for the union were beaten, blacklisted, kidnapped, and jailed.[3] The subsequent panic was so intense for some members as to prompt those in Victoria to close their library and bury its Marxist literature in their gardens.[4] With the first year of the organization's history occupied with defensive battles against state trials and other legal machinations, against anti-union drives by employers, and against lies spread by international union bureaucrats, the OBU's energies and influence waned substantially.

To this point, we have examined the creation of the One Big Union and with it the collective identity of Marxist masculinity. This chapter will shift how we look at the men of the OBU, from the large-scale portrait of class struggle in 1919 to a collection of snapshots of organizational life. As the radicalism of 1919 was overwhelmed by reactionary forces, the political practices of radical manhood shifted from outward-looking public displays of power to a defensive position concerned with the erosion of the labour movement. Marxist masculinity, then, will be examined as it continued to mark the lives of OBU advocates, increasingly few in number. To begin, I detail the

upsurge in the political activities of working-class women in 1919, with a focus on the relationship between the OBU's masculine materialism and socialist-feminist ideologies within the labour movement. A number of masculine reminiscences of life in the OBU will be considered in order to bring into relief several conflicting, and hierarchical, subjectivities within the organization. Next, information about the personal lives of three of the OBU's most prominent activists - Victor Midgley, Bill Pritchard, and Bob Russell - will reveal some of the subjective aspects of union organizing. In particular, the heroic images offered by the labour press will be counterposed with the negative effects of OBU activity upon the families of OBU men. To conclude, the final section examines the naturalized assumptions about heterosexuality which ground much of the literature about the OBU from the "western exceptionalist" school in order to suggest new directions for research into working-class sexuality. These three elements - women, the personal, and heterosexuality - were important forces in shaping the course of events during the sex scandal involving Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose in 1923 and 1924, which is the subject of Chapter Three.

"The rising of the women":
Working Women's Radicalism and the OBU

While addressing the Western Labor Conference in March 1919, Helen Armstrong informed delegates of her political isolation, recalling how she had "sat in meetings, hundreds of times the only woman." Within two months, in the midst of the nation's largest general strike, Armstrong was surrounded by thousands of women who mobilized "to defend working-class interests which included protection of the working class family, women workers, and the democratic rights of organization, free speech and collective bargaining."[5] Following the studies of Linda Kealey and Mary Horodyski, it is useful to view 1919 as a period in which working-class women carved out and explored dimensions of their collective emancipation through various strike activities, many of which have escaped the attention of male labour historians. For instance, according to David

Bercuson, the study of women and gender does nothing to change the meaning of the Winnipeg general strike, which we are told lies in a liberal interpretation which obscures the existence, let alone importance, of gender and class power.[6] This formulation is an example of the "add women and stir" school, although it should be noted that Bercuson leaves the task of adding and stirring to others.

As the Winnipeg labour movement joined their striking comrades in the building and metal trades in support of collective bargaining and a living wage, many working-class women began a campaign which drew upon domestic-oriented traditions of activism. The Winnipeg Women's Labor League (WLL), under the direction of Helen Armstrong and countless others, was responsible for much of the public relief. Operating out of the Strathcona, and later the Oxford, Hotels, the WLL provided free room and board for women, while those men who could afford to were asked to pay. Contemporary estimates suggested that the members of the WLL laboured to produce 1200 to 1500 free meals daily.[7] The money required to mount this production came from sources like the Winnipeg Labor Church, which contributed over three thousand dollars.[8] While supported by the male hierarchy of the Strike Committee, the WLL was an indication of the power of working women's independent activism, accomplished through collective action. This campaign was also important for its recognition of the needs of unmarried working women and others outside the male breadwinner nexus such as single mothers.[9] The efforts of the WLL thus legitimized ideas about the importance of women's domestic labour in the public sphere of socialist political activity. Assumptions about women's maternal role could also act as encouragement to radicalism.[10] When Rose Henderson suggested that "the real revolutionist is the mother - not the man," she was no doubt expressing a sentiment which met with favour from many women.[11]

The OBU provided an alternative for working women who encountered difficulties in organizations such as the National Council of Women, described by Deborah Gorham as "the ladies' auxilliary of the class that controlled Canada," because of its bourgeois bias.[12] For middle-class women, feminism and the larger social reform movement were part of the effort to prevent the

disorder and dangerous politics associated with the working class.[13] Nor would non-Anglo-Saxon women have found themselves welcome in the institutions of first-wave feminism.[14] Consequently, some working women who were radicalized by their participation in the general strikes may have looked upon the OBU, with its stress on working-class solidarity and the need for women to be active, as beholding promise of a better future.

This is especially true when considering that some women also used the terms of Marxist masculinity much in the same manner as OBU men, that is, to convey political strengths and weaknesses. For example, Albertan Jean McWilliam addressed a local of the United Mine Workers in Alberta to raise money in support of strike leaders arrested in Winnipeg. When the mostly male crowd was initially non-responsive, McWilliam suggested that their apathy made them "just like a bunch of old women."[15] Indeed, there is no guarantee that working women did not identify with the images of Marxist masculinity considered in Chapter One.[16] The OBU offered an ordered, harmonious world of gender relations in which the roles of working men and women were complementary and important to building the socialist future. The OBU also promised to remedy many of the familial ills rooted in the dynamics of the capitalist market. By encouraging women to be active, although subordinating them in theory and practice, the OBU appealed to groups of women eager to cast off the restraints placed upon them under bourgeois rule and its attendant stress on female domesticity. How these women viewed the masculinization of the OBU, however, is a different question.

By way of a case study, we will focus upon a letter written by Sandon resident Mary McPhee in 1920. In the early summer of 1920, miners in the Slocan district of British Columbia struck for a wage increase and better living and working conditions. While workers at several mines were successful, those in Sandon and Silverton were not, remaining on strike against the companies and the officials of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, who recruited scab labour for mine owners.[17] Janice Newton suggests that, within the socialist movement, women shaped their public appeals in order to "affirm both their sense of femininity and their serious

intent."[18] We can grasp a sense of both of these elements in Mary McPhee's letter to Tommy Roberts, head of the OBU miners and administrator of the Sandon Miners Hospital:

Mr. Roberts

Dear Sir

Please accept my hearty congratulations in regards to last nights success bringing up all those men from Three Forks. What I did intend to do this morning was to send you a note inviting 10 or 12 of the strangers up here for dinner, but I could get no meat as the stores are closed, but if any of them are here tomorrow I shall be glad if you or one of the other Boys would bring them to the House, not that the meal would be of much value in itself but the spirit of friendliness extended to the strangers might go a little ways to strengthen their faith in the Sandon Union and also a long way to prove to them that we are not running a menagerie up in Sandon. I talked this over with Jack and he thinks it would be correct to extend a friendly welcome to the Strangers as they acted white in this. And I would personally love to help giving those Boys a good time in some form to prove to the Scabs here that we (the women) of Sandon are united with the men to see the Strike through to the end.

Mr Roberts I beg of you to treat this as a confidence and if you don't agree with my views in this destroy this note. If I were not so busy I would go down & see you, but if the Boys wish to start a Card party or a little Social in any form. As Jack is on till 11 pm you can call on me to arrange for refreshments as I am confident that nearly all the women of Sandon would fall in line & hurry up & bake cakes etc. & come down this evening to pass round refreshments, let me know with as little delay as possible if you wish anything of this nature and if you decide to do anything along the lines suggested above, send up Charlie Jordan, Jack Hume, Neil McDonald (rather a live wire we need as there's not much time to loose [sic]) and we can make arrangements in 15 minutes.

I remain

Sincerely

Mary McPhee[19]

The task of interpreting Mary's words is difficult. The first framework considers this letter as a genuine reflection of Mary's state of mind. To begin, the letter has a self-deprecating tone rooted in Sandon's gender relations.[20] Numerous phrases downplay the significance of women's work in the home, which appeared to derive its "value" as a contribution to the union's struggle. In

Mary's mind, it seems, women's domestic labour was a way to bring the "Strangers" into the community spirit of solidarity, thus "strengthen[ing] their faith in the Sandon Union." Mary attempted to make Roberts conscious of women's particular support for the strike by noting that "we (the women) of Sandon are united." While Mary outlined a domestic role for women in this gendered union script, it is also clear that men's and women's networks of radicalism overlapped, as in her request to Roberts to "send up" three specific men to help out. As well, Mary's consultation with her husband Jack suggests both that she worked through, perhaps unconsciously, patriarchal lines of authority and decision-making.[21] Finally, Mary's request that Roberts "treat this as a confidence" and "destroy this note" if he disagreed suggests fear of the potentially dangerous ramifications of her actions. Still, Mary appears to have found strength in the Sandon collective, enabling her to contribute to the union's fight against the bosses.

Another interpretation, one which draws upon the dichotomies of public and private, appearance and reality, sees Mary's letter as an indication of the constraints placed upon women's activities by male conceptions of femininity in the OBU. In this light, Mary's letter was a public mask, self-fashioned to conform to what she believed Roberts, as leader of the strike, wanted to hear. By diminishing the "value in itself" of women's domestic activities as well as working through patriarchal channels of authority (consulting with both Jack and Tommy), Mary's letter seemingly legitimized Roberts' wisdom and power as a union man. This deferential stance, which spoke both to women's strength and their subordinate position, can thus be seen as tactical, designed to carve out public roles for women in accordance with the gendered division of political labour in the midst of a male-centred social movement. If this was the case, then Mary's letter was in a sense a "false" representation, an attempt to play to working men's domestic sensibilities in order to secure the collective right of women to organize against class exploitation. The latter method of analyzing Mary's letter suggests the existence of a female consciousness which sought to manipulate the conventions of male patriarchal control. The first, and more conventional, approach, while recognizing the gendered division of political labour, assumes that the men and women of Sandon

shared an essentially identical consciousness about their class interests. Whichever manner we choose to view Mary's words, it is likely that both interpretations existed as historical realities, although not simultaneously for Mary. Rather, it is reasonable to assume that some women internalized and acted within the parameters of Marxist masculinity, while others carved out independent spheres of activity which were an alternative to the OBU's gender ideology.

Activist women had interests besides the infamous "woman question" which affected their experience in the OBU. Mary Corse, the only woman elected to an OBU Provincial Committee at the Western Labor Conference, was involved in several centres of working-class economic and political agitation such as the Alberta WLL and the Dominion Labor Party. Corse's history illustrates that women were immersed in debates within the left which mitigated against their continued involvement with the OBU. While an initial OBU supporter, Corse shifted the focus of her activities after the wave of general strikes from unions to that of parliamentary politics.[22] BC activist Helena Gutteridge, an important advocate of working-women's concerns in British Columbia, worked against the OBU in order to bolster the craft union movement.[23] Conversely, Becky Buhay, one of the leading organizers for the OBU in Montreal, departed in favour of the Communist Party. At the 1922 convention which established the Party's union policy, Buhay launched one of the most vehement attacks on Bob Russell and the OBU. Indeed, Buhay remained within the Communist orbit for years, surviving the sectarian turmoil which wracked the Party during the late 1920s by becoming a leading advocate of Stalinism. Like Corse and others, Buhay appears not to have left the OBU because of its gender politics, but for other reasons.[24] In a different light, some female socialists rejected attempts by other women to bring to light issues surrounding women's particular oppression.[25] Therefore, we should be careful not to simplify working women's politics by viewing them solely in relation to feminism.

Similar to the Wobblies before them, OBU men envisioned a movement in which women would have active roles in the public sphere. In this exhortation to men and women of the working class to organize for their emancipation, the OBU departed from the policies of AFL business

unionism, which emphasized female domestic-oriented passivity.[26] How this shift affected working women is difficult to ascertain. In their political activities, OBU men constructed what Karen Dubinsky has called in another context "a complex web of male chauvinism and genuine compassion, class analysis and silly sensationalism."[27] Consequently, they could agitate for women's economic independence in the same breath that they articulated how working men, following the abolition of the wage system, would be the sole supporter of their families, the implication being that women's activities would still be of a domestic nature, regardless of whether this labour was socialized.[28] As well, control over the content of the OBU Bulletin was concentrated in the hands of a few men (although women performed much of the labour necessary to the production of each issue), resulting in few opportunities for working women to publicly address the specificity of their concerns.

Besides these problems, OBU men made it next to impossible for working women to have a formal role in the union's internal democracy. In the aftermath of the general strike, Winnipeg radicals attempted to return to the task of building a strong local organization. The arrests, to be sure, stifled much of the initial enthusiasm surrounding the OBU, leading to a downturn in its support. In early August, the Winnipeg Central Labour Council (CLC) began discussion of the official relationship between the CLC and the Women's Labour League with a motion proposing that the WLL should have had full affiliation with voting power. Despite claims that the structure of the OBU was to be the creation of the rank and file, union leaders remained firm in their belief that the basic premise of membership was to be that of wage labour. Out of jail on bail, Bill Pritchard informed delegates that the Constitution dictated that only "Wage Earners" were able to join. Consequently, the motion allowing the WLL to affiliate was rejected by an 18 to 23 count.[29]

At this point, this decision did not appear to mean that housewives would be excluded from participation. The Bulletin informed readers that, with the General Workers Unit, which had an open membership:

> there is absolutely no excuse for any man or woman not belonging to a union. It

> absorbs every man or woman of the working class who has to work for a living, and whose welfare and existence depends on the wages doled out by the employers of labor.[30]

While this appears to suggest that those not directly involved in wage labour would be able to join, with all the privileges bestowed on members of an occupational unit, this was not the case. After numerous discussions which failed to arrive at a solution to the "woman question," the CLC meeting on 7 October 1919 voted 28 to 16 to allow the WLL to send fraternal delegates with no vote. They rejected a proposal allowing women to join the General Workers Unit as individuals.[31] The decision of the CLC served to restrict women's institutional activism, but women were also excluded in less formal ways. In February of 1920, Mrs. Fairbairn informed the Reviewing Committee that more women would attend meetings but for the heavy amounts of smoking, which, as Janice Newton observes, was a perpetual issue for some women on the left. According to Newton, the smoke-filled atmosphere was one way in which labour men maintained the masculine construction of socialist radicalism.[32]

Less than a month later, a rather curious debate erupted about which women should be eligible for membership in the Women's Auxilliary, those related to OBU men or those "whose principles are OBU." Arguing the former, Comrade Frisken suggested that women married to men in international unions would spy for their husbands if allowed access to OBU meetings, thus playing upon the time-honoured trope of the deceptive woman. Comrade Anderson had a different viewpoint, suggesting, perhaps with his tongue firmly implanted in his cheek, that just "because a woman was unfortunate enough to have an 'International' husband, that was no reason why we should further humiliate her by refusing her admission into the OBU."[33] This exchange is interesting for several reasons, the first of which is that it illustrates the common practice of OBU men deciding what was best for their female comrades. More importantly, it suggested that women, regardless of the politics of their husbands (single women were ususally excluded from discussion, since their status was seen as transitory), could be attracted to the OBU and its stress on the need for women to be active in an auxilliary role.

Women's Labour Leagues in several districts of Winnipeg changed their name to the OBU Women's Auxilliaries, hoping that through their involvement with the OBU, "they will become more progressive and make greater strides toward helping in our forward movement."[34] The Bulletin publicized the weekly meeting times for the Auxilliaries, and provided coverage, albeit sparse, of their activities. OBU women organized their efforts around an appeal to family, informing readers of the Bulletin that "Every women [sic] whose husband is a member of the One Big Union should belong to this Auxiliary, which has been formed primarily for the purpose of assisting in every possible way the One Big Union movement."[35] These Auxilliaries were particularly active in the Winnipeg Labor Defense Committee's campaign to free the Winnipeg Eight, selling "home cooking" and holding raffles of such items as a "Defense cushion, with picture of [the] arrested men on the cover" to raise funds.[36] Women were also involved with the OBU Sunday School in Winnipeg, and Bob Russell fondly remembered the role played by women at the OBU's summer camp in Gimli, Manitoba. The camp, which ran programs for "about 250 kids a week," supplied "four meals a day, and...all the milk they could drink." Russell emphasized the femininity of OBU women at the camp, telling David Orlikow that "we had it supervised; we had the women go down there and **acted as women** - conducting the women."[37] With this memory of the past, where women "acted as women," Russell unconsciously highlighted the dominant attitudes of OBU men towards working women and the movement in general. Women were to be active in the fight for socialism; however, they were to do so as women, without losing their feminine qualities. Working-class women were thus represented in a manner which highlighted their femininity while denying that the socialist movement was male-centred.

Consider Lionel Orlikow's interview with Russell in 1961. In the course of his reminscences, Russell spoke of the speeches of Mrs. Silver, an American radical with ties to Daniel DeLeon who visited Winnipeg during the 1910s. In Russell's words, "she'd have a baby on her knee while she was talking - she'd be smoking a cigar. She'd be smoking a cigar - like a man." This interesting mix of maternalism and gender trangression was one way in which radical women were

represented. Likewise, when discussing SPCer Sarah Knight, wife of OBU activist Joe, Russell remarked that she also smoked, using her hatpin as a cigarette holder. "Was she an economist - she really economized - yes."[38] In these brief comments, which fill less than a page of an interview transcribed on fifty sheets, Russell managed to connect his brief memories of female radicals with images of women as consumers and mothers, and with undertones of them being potentially threatening to gender roles. Femininity was made the exception to the norm, a particular attribute which marked women, while masculinity was naturalized and removed from political view. This absence enabled men to construct their particular gendered experiences as socialist and labour organizers as the universal standard for participation.[39] Consequently, OBU ideology was centered around a masculine system of defining and prioritizing political interests. These propaganda efforts were used to secure their collective identity as OBU men, suggesting the importance of gendered subjectivity alongside resistance to capitalist exploitation.[40] In this light, the OBU's materialism was a programmatic response developed by working-class men in order to understand and reformulate the social bases of male power given the challenges posed by working women's activism.

During his address to the jury in his sedition trial in March 1920, Bill Pritchard expressed the sentiment that, whatever the court's actual verdict, history would vindicate the strike leaders: "the historian of the future will drive the knife of critical research into the very bowels of the bogey that has been conjured forth out of the imagination of certain legal luminaries of this city."[41] Pritchard spoke of using "mental dynamite," proudly stating that "the fight I carry on amongst my fellow-workers is a fight with ideas." He also suggested that through a peaceful war of "ideas," the labour movement could work out its own emancipation without resorting to violence. In Pritchard's mind, this peaceful approach differentiated the working class from its rulers, who violated the precepts of their own legal system with coercive tactics, such as his arrest, designed to maintain capitalist relations of exploitation. This, he predicted, would bring a challenge from labour:

> When that constitution is throttled; when that constitution is violated, when that constitution has been raped, gentlemen, there is bound to be a clash somewhere, sometime.[42]

By stressing violation and rape in this manner, Pritchard cast his appeal in terms of chivalric justice, in which male jurors would perform their duty and protect the feminized Constitution. Pritchard played to the manly knowledge he imagined they had garnered through experience, informing the jury that he did "not assume, gentlemen, that...you appear here in that virginal purity - I take you to be men of the world."[43] Towards the end of his defense, Pritchard, who had spoken for approximately twelve hours a day for two days, conjured up a beautiful passage which spoke to the creative vision at the heart of the socialist tradition:

> Reason, wisdom, intelligence, forces of the mind and heart, whom I have always devoutly invoked, come to me, and me, sustain my feeble voice, carry it, if that may be, to all the peoples of the world and diffuse it everywhere where there are men of good-will to hear the beneficient truth. A new order of things is born, the powers of evil are poisoned by their crime. The greedy and the cruel, the devourers of people, are bursting with an indigestion of blood.[44]

This brief excerpt captures some of Pritchard's oratory brilliance. Both the refusal to let the bourgeoisie escape his polemical eye and the genuine optimism as to the collective future of liberation were trademarks of Pritchard's propaganda. However, in his appeal to "men of good-will" lies one of the darker elements of his thought, that of its patriarchal legacy.

Pritchard's articles were featured prominently in the SPC's journal, the Western Clarion, which he edited from 1914 to 1917. Less than one year before his election to the OBU's organizing committee, Pritchard turned his attention to the issue of women's suffrage. Following the dominant tradition of the SPC regarding votes for women, Pritchard asked his readers:

> Can women, that is women of the working class, receive any great or lasting benefits by taking a mere "anti-male" stand, the futile policy of denouncing the tyranny of man-made laws? Have working class women anything to gain by lining up in a sex fight?[45]

The answer to these questions was a resounding no. Indeed, according to Pritchard, the suffrage issue was a bourgeois sham, since the "interests of our masters demand that sex be played off against sex." Instead, working women were to "assert their womanhood" and devote themselves to the class struggle, the necessary precondition for their liberation.[46]

What Pritchard and OBU writers in general refused to accept was that working women's oppression emanated from anything but capitalism. More evidence of this tendency is found in Frank Woodward's series entitled "Evolution," which began its run in the Bulletin in early January 1920. A future editor of the paper, Woodward provided his readers with a serial outlining the Marxist conception of economic stages and its relationship to social problems. Woodward's initial foray devolved into a lengthy discussion concerning how an archetypal "labor leader" was subtly seduced to "betray his comrades" by the ruling class. Woodward suggested that, to undermine the independence of labour leaders, the bourgeoisie used gradual pressure so as to not pose "an open affront to their manhood." Eventually, union leaders acquiesced, becoming class traitors while losing their sense of masculinity:

> Any return of manliness reacts unpleasantly upon him...The women-folk of his own household even reproach him, telling him to be careful what he says, and not to jeopardize their future and his own...At time, he has to confront angry workers. Even the women at his meetings call him traitor and tell him he has "sold out."[47]

The "labor leader" had lost his manhood, and all that implies - individual independence, political integrity, and mastery over his world. Indeed, his patriarchal power was "**even**" challenged by "the women-folk of **his own** household" and "**even** the women at **his** meetings."[48] In Woodward's mind, the One Big Union would enable working men to be men, to work, to provide for their families, and to control their future.

The third installment penned by Woodward drew upon the work of Lewis Morgan, much as Engels had done in The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State. Woodward wrote that "every man evolved from his ape-like ancestors with no moral qualms as to sex relations" and without any concept of property rights, citing the Iroquois as an example. With the beginnings of "patriarchal society," marriage became a "permanent bond" and moral restrictions were placed on sexual relations between parents and children, and between siblings. Lest his readers misunderstand the cause of this transformation, Woodward emphasized that this change to the "marriage relationship" came "purely from a desire in the male to secure for himself the labor of the woman

and her offspring." In short, it was "the material basis of society - the ownership of property," and not "morality," which was the foundation of "patriarchal society." For Woodward, "this was undoubtedly the turning point in the social development of woman, and from a social equal with man, started her upon that road to subjection which future history had in store for her."[49]

This appears to be a somewhat standard Marxist account of the history of women's oppression. However, upon closer examination, we see that Woodward depicted this "material" transformation as emanating "purely from a **desire** in the male."[50] His narrative relied on gender, as both system and process, by presupposing, and thus naturalizing, distinctions betwen "men," "women," and "children." If we are to believe Woodward, the social system of private property, the foundation for wage labour, originated in the patriarchal longings of men, since Woodward provided no other reason but male psychology for the creation of private property. While he was careful to locate this historic change in property relations rather than morality, he failed to explain why men would have such a "desire" in the first place. In this text, class society had its origins in male desires for patriarchal power, which led men to control women and children through private property relations and the heterosexual family. This unintended meaning of Woodward's article speaks to the naturalized assumptions about gender relations embedded within the very fabric which connected the dual processes of understanding and organizing.

This is not to say that OBU men operated in a feminist vacuum; a few articles in the Bulletin sketched portraits of the specificity of women's experience under capitalism in interesting ways. However, OBU men were resolute in maintaining that what contemporary historians call "gender" was solely the product of capitalist relations of power. In stating that women would continue to be oppressed until the destruction of capitalism, Pritchard deflected questions surrounding the politics of working-class masculinity, and in so doing delegitimized the activities of working women who fought against patriarchal power and privilege. By depicting gender politics as "futile" in comparison to the class struggle, Bill Pritchard's argument curiously paralleled the socialist critique of religion. Just like the worker told by the "long-haired preacher" to suffer on earth so that he may

"get pie in the sky when [he] die[d]," women were to suspend their "anti-male" politics, their feminism, until after the revolution.[51]

In these examples, it is clear that the OBU's ideology, both in form and content, was gendered. Not only did OBU men understand their efforts in terms of Marxist masculinity, but they also worked to delegitimize alternative knowledges which questioned the dynamics of male working-class power. As in the examples of Bill Pritchard's anti-feminism and Frank Woodward's masculine materialism, the politics of working-class masculinity framed the parameters of OBU knowledge. Materially, working-class women were given little institutional support from the remnants of radical unionism after 1919. Ideologically, the OBU's masculine Marxism hindered the growth of a socialist-feminist consciousness within the organization. In the words of Janice Newton, "Doubtless, socialist women would have been prepared to fight obstacles from their class enemy. This is quite different from fighting obstacles that have been created by one's allies."[52]

"Those qualities of greatness which all men worship": Subjectivity and Family Life in the One Big Union

Perhaps the most enduring slogan to emerge from the activism of the 1960s was popularized by radical feminists, "the personal is political," although this insight has generally escaped labour historians.[53] For example, David Akers has examined the contours of Jack Kavanagh's politics during the period when he was a leading advocates of the OBU and industrial unionism. What Akers fails to disclose is that in the midst of Kavanagh's efforts leading up to the Western Labor Conference, his twenty-three year old wife died, a victim of the influenza epidemic in Canada following the Armistice of November 1918.[54] How her death affected Kavanagh is unknown; it might have influenced his decision to reject the nomination for election to the OBU organizing committee. Whatever the impact of the death of Kavanagh's wife, Akers's article is typical in its avoidance of the personal dimensions of radical men's lives. When the family does appear, it does so mainly to symbolize women's unquestioning support for their husbands' politics without a

consideration of the conflicts that may have arose as a consequence. This section will attempt to address this oversight by assessing how the dynamics of working men's union activities interacted with the rhythms of home life.[55] These historical subjects rarely publicly addressed questions of a personal nature. Nonetheless, by examining the remaining traces of the lives of Vic Midgley, Bill Pritchard and Bob Russell, we can discern a number of emotional currents which influenced OBU leaders.

Given the common belief of the ruling class that the One Big Union was responsible for the national wave of general strikes in the summer of 1919, it is not surprising that OBU advocates were targets for state persecution.[56] Out of the ten strike leaders arrested in late June, three - Dick Johns, Bill Pritchard, and Bob Russell - were directly associated with the OBU. Other OBU activists such as Jack Kavanagh, Joseph Knight, and Victor Midgley were subjected to continual state surveillance.[57] Those detained were taken to Stony Mountain Penitentiary (Figure 2.1), which the Winnipeg Labor Defence Committee described as:

> that living tomb, where all that is best and noblest in human nature is stifled, where the laughing voices and the rippling laughter of little children is never heard, where the angelic presence, the sunny smile, and the gentle touch of a woman's hand is never known.[58]

This description captured the facet of Marxist masculinity that emphasized the importance of emotional ties between working-class men and women in times of crisis. When Bill Pritchard was arrested in Calgary on his way home to Vancouver, one writer voiced the "frustrated hopes and anxious hours for [his] lonely wife and waiting bairns." This image was repeated when J.S. Woodsworth was jailed in Winnipeg, as readers were asked to "imagine...if you can, the infamy of such proceeding and the cruel suffering and anxiety imposed upon his wife and children away on the Pacific Coast."[59] Another supporter suggested that the imprisoned Bob Russell was to be thanked "for real manliness, [for] suffering though he's right."[60]

FIGURE 2.1 Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba

One defendant published a poem in the OBU Bulletin which conveyed the mutual suffering of husbands, wives and children caused by the arrests:

> Out in that world outside this world
> A woman waits for me
> A woman with a tear-stained face -
> And prattling children three
> Seven other men with wives and kids
> Are down in Hell with me
> Their seven women daily want
> Their husbands' company.[61]

This evidence, while not perhaps great verse, implied that the sanctity of the working-class family was a deeply-held conviction which could also, as in these instances, be used as a political tool. Labour newspapers and the publications of the Winnipeg Labor Defence Committee stressed that the bonds between working men and their wives and children were threatened by the iron fist of state coercion. This way of framing the personal ties between OBU men and their wives excluded the potential emotional consequences stemming from men's organizational activities. Women, family, and home provided emotional sustenance which enabled these men to endure the hardships of organizing such as material deprivation and outright coercion. At the same time, OBU leaders devoted much of their time and energy to the union in ways that most likely had an impact upon their wives and children. OBU men had to negotiate their absence from and presence at home in relation to political demands and family needs.

Perhaps "negotiate" is not the right word, for it implies some form of "give and take" between OBU men and their wives, when women, in some instances, likely had little input concerning their husbands' actions. Rather, as Mark Rosenfeld suggests, many working-class women had to structure family life around the demands of their husbands' work.[62] This was true in the case of Bob Russell, whose wife and two children relied on community networks maintained by women like Helen Armstrong when Bob was remanded into police custody the day after Christmas, 1919. In an interview with Gerald Friesen, Russell's daughter, Margaret Sykes, who herself married an OBU official, spoke warmly of her home life. While admitting that her father's imprisonment

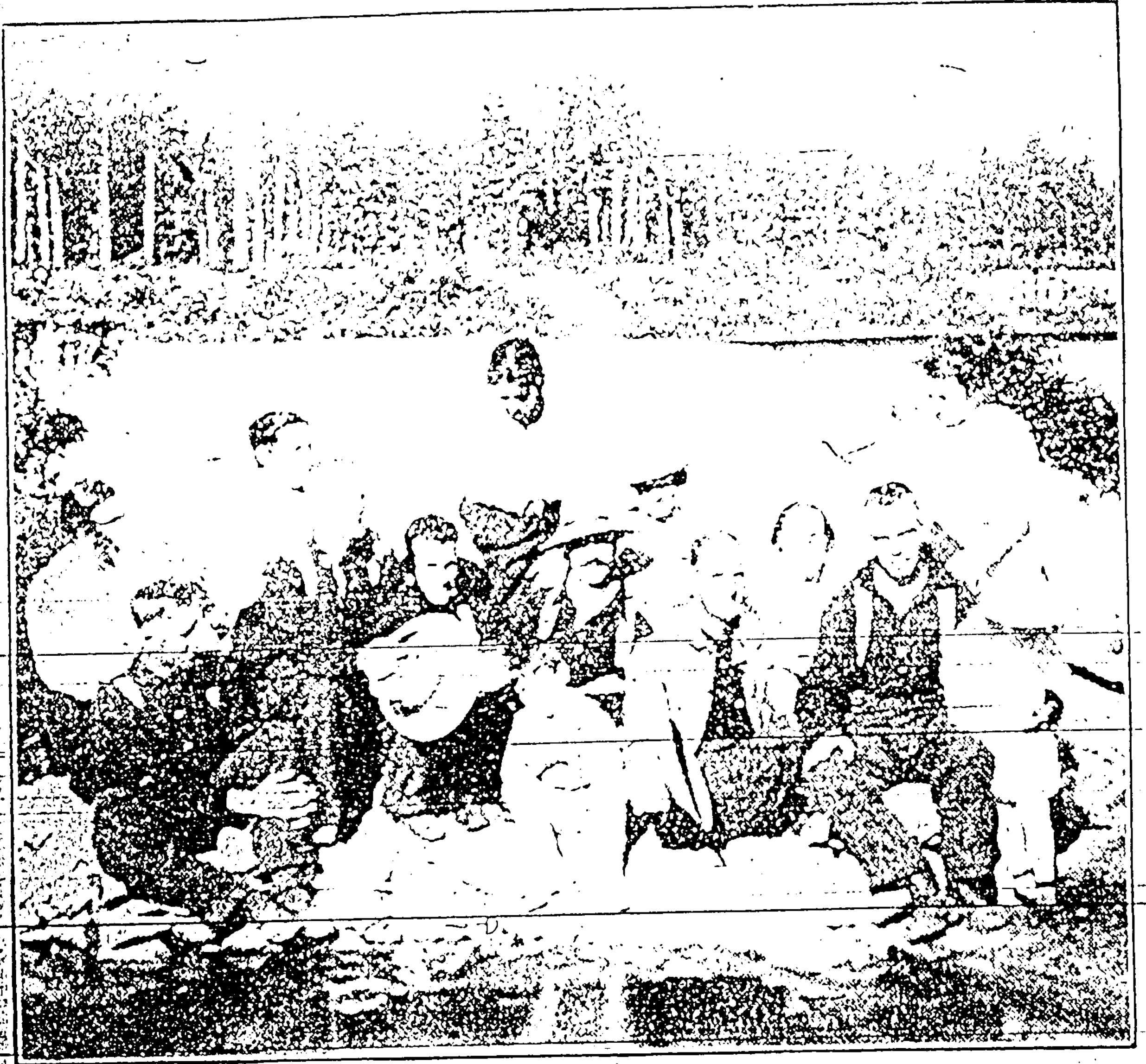
was hard for herself, her brother David, and her mother, Sykes gave no indication that she blamed or resented him in any fashion. She recalled that "the kids were very mean. They would say 'Oh your father is in jail - your father is a jailbird,' and of course I'd get really mad, and I'd say, 'My father didn't do anything bad,' because he didn't - I mean he was out working for them."[63] Perhaps because of her father's stature within the labour movement, Sykes did not bring up issues which would have detracted from Russell's public image. Consequently, while indicating the hardships her family endured because of Russell's arrest and the eleven months he spent in jail, these were depicted as events for which Russell held no responsibility. This representation may have its roots in the public use of Russell's martyrdom by OBU activists. For example, Russell's ethic of self-sacrifice was, according to one writer in the Bulletin, shared by his family and hundreds of others:

> There are hundreds of wives in Winnipeg willing that their husbands should go to jail and their children be fatherless, rather than that they should take the thirty pieces of silver and become a stench in the nostrils of every worker loyal to his brothers in toil. The little children of the workers are being brought up in the new culture. The road is long and the end is not in sight.[64]

Collective declarations of working-class solidarity, in which wives and children were willing to suffer for the class struggle, were central to understanding the emotional turmoil involved with the OBU. Indeed, in Figure 2.2, taken from the Bulletin, the spouses of imprisoned activists were assigned the social role of "wife," an identity which derived its meaning from these women's relationship with their socialist husband in jail.[65]

In her tribute to Bob Russell entitled Survival, Mary Jordan proposed that Bob possessed "those qualities of greatness which all men worship."[66] Suggesting that Russell had a "great deal in common" with that other Manitoban revolutionary, Louis Riel, Jordan gave Russell a title worthy of his stature - "Father of Labour in Manitoba."[67] Jordan's biography of Russell conformed to the narrative tradition of praising the public activities of labour men while shielding them from criticism about their personal life. Nonetheless, Survival is a somewhat curious work, since Jordan also provided information about some of the negative aspects of Russell's career as a union man. Bob's

A Holiday at The Prison Farm



Left to right: Ivens and wife, Armstrong and wife, Pritchard and wife, Bray and wife, Queen and wife, Johns and wife.

FIGURE 2.2

wife, Meg, although not a socialist, began attending SPC meetings in 1918 so that she could see her husband on a regular basis.[68] This fact was conveyed by Jordan with an understanding tone; while it was lamentable that Bob was unable to spend time at home, his politics naturally took precedence. Bob's frequent absences from home, however, had a greater impact several years later. While in Edmonton on an organizing trip, Bob learned that his and Meg's newborn daughter, Pearl, had died. According to Jordan, whose portrait of the Russells is sympathetic, Meg felt "bitterly lonely and hurt," with Pearl's death instilling a "new bitterness in her soul."[69] While the propaganda following Bob's arrest emphasized the mutuality and interconnectedness of feeling between working-class men and women, his involvement with the OBU suggests a somewhat different story. Russell's public activities - the endless meetings, the road trips organizing in small towns across Canada - were important facets of his identity as an OBU man; these were secured partially at the expense of his family members. His class politics took precedence over their demands, and Meg in particular suffered emotionally because of Bob's absences. Aside from a few quotes in Jordan's book, we have little idea how Meg coped with Bob's career, especially given that she did not share her husband's politics. We also lack knowledge as to how Bob viewed the interaction between his "public" and "private" lives.

Outside of family relations, OBU leaders also had to endure a constant barrage of personal attacks because of their political orientation. While much of this polemic served to strengthen their conviction in the truth of their cause, it is also reasonable to suggest that these continual attacks may have spurred the longing for a simpler life away from the perpetual demands of the union. For example, Victor Midgley was sent a letter by R.B. Taggart, a disgruntled radical in Slocan, BC, impugning his integrity: "I met some boys from Vancouver and they told me that you were no good, that before you got the job with the OBU bunch you had no more than anyone else. Now you were away up, had a car and was a great man."[70] Midgley left his position as OBU General Secretary in 1921, in part because he was subjected to intense public criticism during the conflict with Ernest Winch and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union following the Port Arthur Convention

in October 1920. While he kept in touch with his former OBU comrades, he remained outside any formal contact with the organization. In 1926, at a meeting of the OBU Joint Executive Board, one member aired the idea of asking Midgley to return as an assistant for Russell. This was rejected after the Board was informed that Midgley's "domestic affairs were rather a bar to him being brought here to fill the position."[71]

Similarly, Gloria Montero suggests that Bill Pritchard's role as a travelling organizer was difficult because of family circumstances, but nevertheless important to his political development and sense of self: "It meant leaving his wife and young babies but [organizing] gave Bill Pritchard a chance to see something of the country and learn firsthand what it meant to be a Canadian worker."[72] These trips took their toll on Pritchard's wife and children; while managing the household in Bill's absence, his wife, like Meg Russell, had to cope without him when their young baby died in April 1916. Pritchard continued his work; as Montero notes, "world events made no allowances for personal anguish."[73] Like Vic Midgley, Bill Pritchard also left the One Big Union. According to Peter Campbell, Pritchard's "support for the OBU was...lukewarm at best" following his release from jail in February 1921.[74] His political activities, though not his radicalism, waned, as Pritchard returned to longshoring in order to provide for his family. Alex Shepherd remembered that, in the 1920s, Pritchard "went thru [sic] a lot of political turmoil and family troubles, perhaps the latter being most responsible for the former."[75] During the 1930s, Pritchard was an important left-wing voice within the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, and also held office on the Burnaby City Council. In 1938, Pritchard left Burnaby for California because of the insitutionalization of his wife and the suicide of his daughter.[76] In his interview with Montero, Pritchard gave voice, however hesitantly, to feelings of guilt. Perhaps, he suggested, his life as a radical had somehow been responsible for their tragic endings. "I have no regrets, not for myself. It doesn't matter to me that maybe I sacrificed myself. But sometimes I worry that maybe I sacrificed my family."[77]

In the histories of Vic Midgley, Bill Pritchard, and Bob Russell, it is clear that the demands

of family played a role in periodically determining the extent of their energies as union men. In their attempts to secure their identity as radical men, activists such as Pritchard and Russell immersed themselves in public politics seemingly at the expense of their private lives. The participation of these men in the class struggle shaped the dynamics of their families; it is also possible that these radicals' ethos of self-sacrifice, their willingness to go to jail if need be, had consequences which extended to their relatives. Publicly, the One Big Union movement represented the emotions of wives and children of jailed activists as willing to suffer any price lest their husbands and fathers capitulate to the ruling class. Privately, with the information we have, it appears that the family members of OBU men may have wondered if this was the only way to organize the labour movement.[78]

The Heterosexual Foundation of Western Exceptionalism, Or, Gay Men Didn't Go to the Frontier

Liberal historians of the 1919 labour revolt and the OBU have relied on a framework known as "western exceptionalism," which interprets working-class political activity through the conceptual dichotomy of radical West versus conservative East. According to David Bercuson, working conditions were more dangerous and living conditions more rough in Western Canada because of the predominance of company towns. This economic system, which Bercuson mystically labels "industrial feudalism," is said to be the cause of higher levels of radicalism on the frontier.[79] Many historians have been quick to reject this spatial approach, noting that it both overstates the power of socialism in the West and obscures radical activism in Eastern Canada.[80] From a different standpoint, Marxist scholars have critiqued the empiricist methodology of western exceptionalists, observing that their primary framework consists of a crude anti-Marxism.[81] Indeed, by labelling the problem of frontier society to be "industrial feudalism," Bercuson ironically suggested that workers were exploited not by capitalism, but by the lack of it, by the absence of the "freedom" and "opportunity" which capitalism is said to provide.

While in agreement with the Marxist critique of western exceptionalism, there is one element which as yet remains unexplored, that of its heterosexual foundation. In his work on the OBU, Bercuson explains that socialism spread quicker in company towns and labour camps than it did in urban areas because of working and living conditions. He also suggests that workers in company towns were more susceptible to radical doctrines because of the relative absence of women as compared to larger urban areas. In these isolated areas, working men had to resort to prostitutes, who, according to Bercuson, "plied...joyless sex."[82] Attitudes and politics in cities were different because "there were women."[83] The problems with this framework are legion. To begin with, Bercuson provides no evidence that working men actually thought that the relationships they had with prostitutes were "joyless."[84] More important are his assumptions that heterosexual desire is natural, rather than historically constituted, and that these men possessed a need to have sex with women. In this light, frontier radicalism takes on a biological character, produced when men have no "natural" outlet for their "urges." To say it another way, these men would have rejected the radicalism of the One Big Union had they been able to have sex with their wives on a regular basis.

What this western exceptionalist formulation obscures is the existence of alternatives to heterosexual sex within marriage. Social historians are now beginning to understand the importance of locating sexual identity and behaviour in specific economic and social contexts. John D'Emilio has indicated the material connections between the rise of industrial capitalism and the formation of homosexual communities.[85] Similarly, Steven Maynard is exploring the existence of homosexuality both as behaviour and identity among working-class men.[86] This work questions Bercuson's homogeneous depiction of heterosexuality on the Canadian frontier. Nor can we assume that socialism was simply the product of heterosexual frustration, if for no other reason than many socialists did have "normal" sex lives. Nor would all socialists have identified themselves as "straight." George Chauncey Jr. has examined the complex definitions ascribed to same-sex sexual behaviour in the period following World War One, with men who were married and defined themselves as "straight" engaging in sexual practices with other men.[87] Indeed, as Paul Fussell

suggests, the Great War may have served to further homosocial sexual desire.[88] Clearly, then, the One Big Union was not created in a heterosexual vacuum.

While the impact of these alternative sexual identities is beyond the empirical reach of this study, I would like to suggest several possibilities. To begin with, the identity of Marxist masculinity, like the approach of western exceptionalism, was rooted in naturalized beliefs about heterosexuality as sexual practice and as family structure. As a result, there was a tendency to generalize about the inherent importance of the family, or its lack, to working men. Also important were attempts by OBU men to depict capitalism as the source of the working-class family's destruction. As Angus McLaren observes in reference to birth control, OBU theorists often dealt with questions about women, gender or sexuality by using libertarian arguments. To this effect, they rejected the Malthusian advocacy of population limits as a manifestation of bourgeois social control.[89] OBU men put forth a multi-faceted critique of what they called "Capitalist Chivalry." One writer opined that working-class women lacked the "deference due to womanhood" because "women in the labor movement are sent to jail with as little mercy as is meted out to men."[90] Also frequent were observations that "women were compelled to submit to the search in their night clothes" by policemen after their husbands' arrest.[91]

While the coercion of working-class women was a popular topic, the Bulletin offered prostitution as the most devastating symbol of the social problems caused by capitalism. The paper published several columns and poems by radicals such as Edward Carpenter emphasizing the class-bound dimensions of the sex trade.[92] One writer suggested that "the fine noble 'gentlemen,' ever courteous to the ladies of their own class, were quite within their 'rights' when making the women of the working class the miserable and powerless victim of their sensual lusts."[93] Such an approach rended heterosexual conflict between middle-class men and women invisible. This portrayal of working-woman-as-victim was also noticeably silent about the "rights" of working-class men. However, this was not always the case. A closer look at the OBU interpretation of prostitution indicates that it was not only the economy but also male need which was responsible for the

existence of the sex trade.

OBU commentators usually began their columns on prostitution by evoking sympathy for the "poor, dejected girl" for whom it was easy, "sweating her weary life out...working long hours for small wages, in unhealthy, irksome surroundings, to be induced to enrich herself financially at the cost of moral, and, later, physical degeneration." However, they also sought empathy for the working man, who, because of capitalism, was unable to have a "natural" life:

> What is a young man to do, who, longing for a home of his own and desirous of living a natural and happy life, finds himself unable, through financial difficulties, to carry out his ambitions? He has to forfeit his dearest desire.

This two-sided approach, which rooted prostitution in female economic and male familial need, meant that the negative effects of capitalism extended beyond the alienation of labour. Rather, according to the OBU, socialism would not only stop women from selling their bodies, but also enable working men to enjoy the comforts of the heterosexual family:

> Just so long as a woman wants for bread, so long will prostitution exist. Not until every man can be assured of having the wherewithal to live a happy, full and natural life, will prostitution cease...The daughters of the working class are the victims. No worker's daughter is safe while the present system lasts. No toiler's son is immune from the temptation while his future rests on such an unstable economic foundation. The remedy is to organize. Change the system, so that no worker's children shall be the vassals of the rich.[94]

Sentiments such as these obscure the existence of heterosexual conflict between men and women of the working class. This absence was crucial to maintaining the OBU's patriarchal politics because it negated a feminist focus on male power, however variegated, in favour of a stance which placed the blame solely on capital.

Nor did OBU men focus their critical eye upon marriage. An editorial in October 1920 used marriage law solely as an example of how bourgeois legality was resistant to change, and not as one of the crucial elements of male working-class power.[95] In examples like these, OBU writers failed to incorporate elements of socialism which viewed marriage as, to quote Emma Goldman, an "economic arrangement" which "prepares the woman for the life of a parasite, a dependent helpless

servant while it furnishes the man the right of a chattel mortgage over human life."[96] In her long life as an anarchist, Goldman repeatedly attacked the purveyors of bourgeois morality who relegated "woman to the position of a celibate, a prostitute, or a reckless, incessant breeder of hapless children."[97] Goldman's work aside, Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh note that the dominant gender ideology of scientific socialism consisted mainly of the belief that, "when women are engaged in wage labour on equal terms with men, and when housework has been socialized, we shall arrive at the nirvana of proletarian heterosexual sexual monogamy."[98] OBU men were within this intellectual orbit, and resisted attempts to rethink their heterosexual politics. This refusal enabled them to preserve their power as fathers, with all that implies, of the radical labour movement.

Working-class historians should begin to explore how naturalized ideas about heterosexuality shaped the labour movement and those who participated in its creation. Given that during the strike wave in 1919, some working men threatened women who scabbed with sexual violence, it is clear that the relationship between sexuality and socialism must be explored.[99] We also lack knowledge of the interaction between the heterosexual assumptions which framed the OBU's ideology and workers who did not define themselves as "straight." Did these heterosexist appeals cause some working men and women to seek their liberation elsewhere? This I cannot answer; however, it is clear that radicals who subjected the union's dominant assumptions about heterosexuality to a political critique did not meet with the leadership's favour. We turn now to just such a case, that of Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose, a pair of dedicated workers who were fired from their positions in the upper echelons of the OBU because of rumours about their sexual involvement. The organization underwent significant internal turmoil over the issue of "free love" while attempting to avoid publicity about the affair which the OBU leadership believed would harm the organization. The Cassidy-Rose affair, then, connects the three themes of this chapter - heterosexuality, the role of women, and personal character - and is thus a fitting subject with which to conclude this study.

Endnotes

1. "Proletarian pills of power" is from the OBU Bulletin, 8 November 1919.

2. Both quotes are from the second OBU Bulletin, 23 August 1919.

3. See, for example, Saskatchewan Archives Board: W.S. Martin Papers, Microfilm #R7.2, File 35338-35345, "Re: Kidnapping of P.M. Christophers"; OBU Bulletin, 24 July, 25 September 1920; Gregory S. Kealey and Reg Whitaker, Eds., RCMP Security Bulletins: The Early Years, 1919-1929 (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1994), 42-43, 71, 284.

4. Olenka Melynk, No Bankers in Heaven: Remembering the CCF (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989), 134.

5. Linda Kealey, "'No Special Protection - No Sympathy': Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour Revolt of 1919", in Class, Community and the Labour Movement: Wales and Canada, 1850-1930 Eds. Deian R. Hopkin and Gregory S. Kealey (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1989), 135-136. See also Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919", Manitoba History 11 (Spring 1986), 28-37.

6. See David Bercuson, "A Longer View", in Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations, and the General Strike Second Edition (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 196-205.

7. "Saving the World From Democracy: The Winnipeg General Sympathetic Strike, May-June 1919", in Norman Penner, Ed., Winnipeg 1919: The strikers' own history of the Winnipeg General Strike Second Edition (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1975), 74.

8. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 3, W.S. Shipman to Strike Committee, 10 June 1919.

9. Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike".

10. Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left 1900-1918 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Colleen O'Neill, "Domesticity Deployed: Gender, Race, and the Construction of Class Struggle in the Bisbee Deportation", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 256-273.

11. Quoted in Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 14-15.

12. Deborah Gorham, quoted in John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988), 74.

13. Carol Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Janice Newton, "The Alchemy of Politicization: Socialist Women and the Early Canadian Left", in Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 118-148. The OBU viewed issues like birth control as a manifestation of bourgeois social control. See Angus McLaren, "'What Has This to Do with Working Class Women?': Birth Control and the Canadian Left, 1900-1939", Histoire Sociale/Social History 28 (November 1981), 435-454.

14. Ibid.

15. Patricia Roome, "Amelia Turner and Calgary Labour Women, 1919-1935", in Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics Eds. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 97.

16. For a thoughtful exploration of questions surrounding representation and cross-gender shifts in the reader's subject-position, see Carol J. Clover, Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

17. David Bercuson, Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978), 192-196.

18. Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 14.

19. University of British Columbia, Special Collections (UBCSC): Mine Mill Papers, Box 156, File 14, Mary McPhee to Tommy Roberts, 1 July 1920.

20. For more information on Sandon, see UBCSC: SPAM 10962, By-Laws and Sketch of the Sandon Miners' Union Hospital; and Cole Harris, "Industry and the Good Life around Idaho Peak", Canadian Historical Review 66:3 (September 1985), 315-343.

21. The reference to the "strangers" acting "white" suggests that, in this locality, workers' racial identity subsumed ethnic differences within a positive value judgement about the benefits of "whiteness."

22. Patricia Roome, "Amelia Turner and Calgary Labour Women".

23. Irene Howard

24. Joan Sangster, Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), 64-66.

25. Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 25-27.

26. Ann Schofield, "Rebel Girls and Union Maids: The Woman Question in the Journals of the AFL and IWW, 1905-1920", Feminist Studies 9:2 (Summer 1983), 335-358.

27. Karen Dubinsky, "'The Modern Chivalry': Women and the Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1891", (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1985), 172.

28. Linda Kealey, "Canadian Socialism and the Woman Question, 1900-1914", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 77-100.

29. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 15, CLC Minutes, 5 August 1919.

30. OBU Bulletin, 4 October 1919.

31. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 15, CLC Minutes, 7 October 1920.

32. Ibid., 17 Feb 1920; Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 41-42.

33. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 15, CLC Minutes, 2 March 1920.

34. OBU Bulletin, 17 April 1920.

35. Ibid., 22 May 1920.

36. Ibid., 12 June, 21 August 1920.

37. Labour Organization in Canada (1926), 53; PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 6, 7. My emphasis.

38. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 4, 4.

39. Joy Parr observes that male unionists had access to "greater resources for undertaking public action which tradition and experience embodied in their manliness." The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 213.

40. See David L. Collinson, Managing the Shopfloor: Subjectivity, Masculinity and Workplace Culture (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992).

41. UBCSC: SPAM 10975, W.A. Pritchard's Address to the Jury, 3.

42. Ibid., 35.

43. Ibid., 147.

44. Ibid., 215.

45. Western Clarion, September 1918.

46. Ibid.

47. OBU Bulletin, 3 January 1920.

48. Ibid. My emphasis.

49. Ibid., 17 January 1920.

50. Ibid. My emphasis.

51. "Pie in the sky when you die" is a line from Joe Hill's "The Preacher and the Slave." See Joyce Kornbluh, Ed., Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 133.

52. Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 44.

53. The best history of the emergence and betrayal of radical feminism is Alice Echols, Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). For labour historians who have examined the personal, see Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners; Nick Salvatore, Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); and Eli Zaretsky, Capitalism, The Family, and Personal Life (New York: Harper Colophon, 1976).

54. David Akers, "Rebel or Revolutionary? Jack Kavanagh and the Early Years of the Communist Movement in Vancouver, 1920-1925", Labour/Le Travail 30 (Fall 1992), 9-44; PAM: MG10A14-1, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 3, File 7, C. Stephenson to R.B. Russell, 6 February 1919.

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56. Tom Mitchell, "'To Reach the Leadership of the Revolutionary Movement': A.J. Andrews, the Canadian State and the Suppression of the Winnipeg General Strike", Prairie Forum 18:2 (Fall 1993), 239-255.

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60. OBU Bulletin, 17 April 1920.

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72. Gloria Montero, "Bill Pritchard: Winnipeg 1919 and After", in We Stood Together: First-hand Accounts of Dramatic Events in Canada's Labour Past (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1979), 2-3.

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81. Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt"; Mark Leier, Where the Fraser River Flows (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990); and Bryan Palmer "Listening to History Rather than Historians: Reflections on Working Class History", Studies in Political Economy 20 (Summer 1986), 47-84.

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85. John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity", in Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-16.

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87. George Chauncey, Jr., "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era", in Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past Eds. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: Meridian, 1990), 294-317, 541-546.

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89. Angus McLaren, "What Has This To Do With Working Class Women?", 435-454.

90. OBU Bulletin, 10 April 1920.

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94. Ibid., 15 May 1920.

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97. Emma Goldman, "Victims of Morality", in Red Emma Speaks, 171.

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99. Steven Maynard, "Sex, Court Records, and Labour History", Labour/Le Travail 33 (Spring 1994), 190-191. See also Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

Chapter Three
The Strange Tale of Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose: Free Love, Heterosexuality, and the One Big Union

It was 14 February 1924, Valentine's Day. William McAllister sat at his desk in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, looking over his letter to Tommy Roberts, fellow member of the One Big Union General Executive Board (OBU-GEB). Having spent several days in Winnipeg, talking with former organizer Tom Cassidy and about him, McAllister was weary of the whole affair. Rumours had circulated among OBU members for over five months about Cassidy's purported sexual relationship with the General Secretary of the OBU-GEB and the Winnipeg Central Labour Council (CLC), Catherine Rose. Apparently, Cassidy, a married man, had taken to visiting the young Miss Rose at her boarding house late in the evening. Stories that Cassidy had three wives provided additional grist for the rumour mill. Upon hearing the gossip in late September 1923, the all-male Executive of the CLC moved into action, firing Tom and Catherine. This failed to resolve the situation, and OBU meetings for months afterwards threatened to collapse under a series of fantastic charges about crooked loans, fur coats, female spies, and private detectives. Acting as a mediator, McAllister had sifted through the complex and contradictory stories, concluding that Cassidy was "guilty" of "sufficient misdemeanor to warrant his being relieved." He did not feel it necessary to comment on the guilt of Catherine Rose. McAllister tried to assuage Roberts by echoing the position of the CLC Executive that Tom and Catherine's relationship was detrimental to the organization as a whole. Given their personal involvement, McAllister asked Roberts, "How long before the OBU would be labelled a 'Free Love' or probably worse propaganda institution, eh?" While confirming that Cassidy was planning to write a book attacking the OBU, McAllister informed Roberts that he did "not put any great stock in [its] crystalization."[1] In this regard, McAllister's instincts were correct. Tom Cassidy would not be writing a book, as he had died the night before, the result of a lengthy struggle with tuberculosis.[2] It was as if, given what had happened, he could not live through another Valentine's Day.

This brings us to the central problem of the strange tale of Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose: that the men and women of the OBU ratified the firings of Cassidy and Rose without any public debate over the nature of their supposed offences. In what was an opportunity to examine the OBU's sexual politics, little formal discussion took place. Instead, OBU leaders bracketed off the heterosexual "content" of the incident, positioning the activities of Cassidy and Rose in terms of a value judgement about what would hinder the progress of the OBU. This polarization created an intense and at times dramatic social confrontation concerning what it meant to be a responsible, heterosexual socialist man as much as it was about the health of the organization.[3] It also displaced the the real causes of the organization's decline onto the heterosexual relationship of Tom and Catherine. Indeed, the Cassidy-Rose affair took on the trappings of a moral panic which, to quote Jeffery Weeks:

> crystallise[d] wide-spread fears and anxieties, and often deal[t] with them by not seeking the real causes of the problems and conditions which they demonstrate[d] but by displacing them on to 'Folk Devils' in an identified social group (often the 'immoral' or 'degenerate').[4]

In this case, those who appeared to advocate the ideology of "free love" became "Folk Devils" within the OBU, posing the greatest threat to the organization's continued existence.

The ensuing crisis, which lasted six months, threatened to disrupt the relatively stable social identity of OBU men, Marxist masculinity. This by and large did not happen, because the power of the union's leadership to dictate how debate proceeded enabled them to formally regulate the gendered and sexual identities of its members.[5] The Executive of the Winnipeg Central Labour Council drew upon the legacy of paternalism accumulated through their experience as skilled tradesmen to assert themselves as fathers of the labour movement.[6] It was not just what they said, but how they said it, constructing the formal debates about the future of Cassidy and Rose around what leaders defined as progress. They suggested that if the heterosexual relationship between Cassidy and Rose became public, it would be manipulated by the bourgeois press. As a consequence, the progress of the OBU would be destroyed by the ensuing "free love" scare. In

taking this stand, OBU leaders deployed patriarchal conceptions of fatherly authority and working-class heterosexuality. By bracketing off and refusing to talk of sexual politics, they helped to constitute the social boundaries between what was seen as "sexual" and what was not, with union business being the latter.[7] Finally, their conduct was governed by a vision which had different expectations for men and women in the realm of heterosexual behaviour. Along with their revolutionary class program, OBU men clung to a patriarchal ideology which naturalized heterosexuality as a way to organize economic and familial relationships.

To understand why these men vehemently maintained these beliefs, we must first survey the context of the organization's decline. Ben Legere was a supporter of the One Big Union since its inception. Married to movie star Barbara Parrington, Legere had appeared on the silver screen in Birds of Paradise. Through his travels across North America, Legere developed ties with Wobblies on both coasts, and drew from them a strong anti-bureaucratic mentality. As an organizer for the OBU, Legere spoke out against policies which strengthened the power of the union's leadership, preferring to ground the movement in the energies of "wage slaves." This outlook placed him in opposition to the hierarchy of international craft unions in the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress (TLC). Shortly after the Western Labor Conference in March 1919, Legere rose at a public meeting in Calgary to criticize the anti-OBU speech of TLC President Tom Moore. According to Bob Russell, Legere gave Moore "the biggest trimming he ever got in his life," resulting in Legere's arrest by the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) in Lethbridge several days later. The OBU made arrangements for a lawyer, who successfully defended Legere in a deportation hearing; upon his release, Legere left Canada for the School of Organic Education in Fairhope, Alabama.[8] Ben maintained his ties with the OBU, contributing at least two months of every year to travel North America, organizing the unorganized under the banner of the OBU.

By 1923, this banner was tattered and torn. Most class-conscious workers who came together in solidarity in 1919 had returned to the TLC or lost their organizations in the tumult of the Red Scare. Nor was the OBU the only center of Canadian radicalism, as the creation of the

Workers' Party of Canada (WPC), a front for the underground Communist Party, in 1922 drew many militant workers and organizers out of the OBU and into craft unions through the policy of boring from within.[9] The OBU was in the midst of a devastating and paralyzing decline, although its advocates continued to believe that a much-needed breakthrough was always close at hand. This devotion to the OBU message blinded leaders to the fact that their appeal had lost its resonance with working men. This did not escaped the eyes of Ben Legere, who believed that conditions had changed substantially since 1919, necessitating a change in the OBU's tactics. "The community spirit has got to be planted in the labor movement...and self-reliance and strength infused into it," Legere wrote. The OBU needed "NEW material," the "right men to do the work" as the movement's "old-timers" were "in such a hopeless muddle."[10]

Because the organization lacked accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, Legere surveyed OBU activity from Winnipeg across the Canadian West, concluding his trip in Seattle, Washington. He then produced a report indicating the sad state of affairs, particularly in British Columbia. For example, he arrived in the community of Nakusp, BC on 17 September, but was forced to wait until the next day to hold a meeting because "the local comrades considered it unwise to attempt to compete with the movies." After the gathering, Legere concluded that "the slaves...there are thoroughly subdued." This was not the case in Sandon, where metal miners under the direction of Tommy Roberts had created a union "in the healthiest condition I've found anywhere...altho [sic] it is very small." Legere collected forty-six dollars at two meetings in Sandon, and then proceeded through Revelstoke to the OBU unit in Nanaimo, a "badly managed affair." Victoria, too, was "a dying community," the only hope being Comrades Allan and Bunker, although "Bunker is a sick man and I don't suppose much initiative can be expected there." Clearly, the old OBU networks of radicalism were no longer sufficient to ensure the union's progress.

Legere pointed to the need to have organizers who could instill "the right OBU psychology" in working men. As the centre of the OBU gravitated eastward from Vancouver to Winnipeg, now the organization's heart and soul, executive members had lost touch with the realities of working life

in Western Canada. Indeed, Legere pronounced his amazement at the fact that OBU men could "talk about organizing the...'District' between Winnipeg and the mountains":

> It isn't a problem of a "district," it's an "area"....If we had some airplanes at our disposal it might be easy to get around that "district" but I think even Cassidy's all-conquering car would collapse under the strain of trying to "cover" that territory.

As an antidote, Legere suggested that they establish permanent organizers in major urban centres, departing from the traditional practice of having travelling delegates who covered vast amounts of territory. This fundamental shift in strategy required, in Legere's words, "the right man":

> We are in such a great need of men who understand the OBU structure and who can clearly explain the OBU idea without confusing it with the old industrial union propaganda and who can develop the community psychology needed to build OBU organization.

He proposed that Tom Cassidy be relocated to Calgary for the next year, until the OBU there "can stand on its own feet." More than just of benefit to the OBU, this move took into consideration "the importance of conserving Cassidy's health....I think Calgary with its high altitude and dry air would be the best place in the West for him and I have no doubt that by springtime he would be laughing at the doctors that told him he was done."[11] When Ben Legere wrote this report on 4 October 1923, he had no way of knowing that the Executive of the Winnipeg CLC had suspended Cassidy several days earlier. Nor did he know that his concerns would be drowned out amidst the din of a Marxist moral panic.

Tom Cassidy was a long-time member of the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC); activist Tom O'Connor recalled Cassidy's involvement as early as 1910.[12] Like other "second-generation" SPCers, Cassidy was attracted to industrial unionism, and supported militant tactics such as the general strike.[13] He was also known for his speaking abilities, especially his sharp wit and use of ridicule. Located in Montreal for most of the 1910s, Cassidy followed other SPC members in resisting conscription in 1918 by hiding out in the Laurentian mountains.[14] With the increase in labour protest during the latter stages of the war, Cassidy believed that the socialist movement was lagging behind spontaneous displays of working-class militancy. He asked Chris Stephenson,

Secretary of the SPC Dominion Executive Committee, "are you formulating any plans for the future or are you sitting tight and waiting for the grace of God or the Government to grant you permission to do things[?]" Cassidy also maintained that the change in material conditions necessitated a new kind of industrial masculinity to bring about socialism: "The man who alone, knows his Marx his day is past. It is the man who knows his Marx and is in possession of the technology of industry as well, who is the man of the immediate future."[15] In a letter to longtime radical Richard Kerrigan in April 1919, Cassidy again stressed the need for active men, being "convinced that any passive resistance to labor fakery will no longer suffice, it must be attacked & that ruthlessly & now is a good time." However, this call for manly action was constrained by Cassidy's role as family breadwinner:

> I am still holding the job down or rather the job is holding me down, for the signs of spring are germinating feelings that only change can satisfy. But when one has domestic responsibilities one can only move with a healthy Bank accou[n]t.[16]

Like other OBU men, Cassidy had to continually negotiate between union organizing, which in his case meant travel, and his "domestic responsibilities."

Given the importance of socialism to his personal identity, Cassidy was soon active once again. By early May 1919, he was in Winnipeg, speaking to a gathering of three thousand in which he outlined reasons to support the fledgling OBU. According to an agent of the RNWMP, Cassidy reported to his fellow workers that, as soon as he arrived, "I landed in the arms of the law. I was held up by a Policeman challenging me as to how I earn my livelihood. I told him that life seemed to come to me naturally (Cheers & Applause)." According to this labour spy, "Cassidy also criticised Religion & Worshippers, denying the Bible and God" and the meeting concluded with the cry, "Long Live Comrade Cassidy and Bolshevism."[17] Cassidy became one of the few OBU organizers in Eastern Canada and the United States, struggling to build a militant union against the backdrop of the Red Scare. With the decline of the OBU in the East in 1920, Cassidy's energies were better served elsewhere; he organized throughout Western Canada for several years, covering the territory from Nelson, B.C. to Fort William, Ontario. In May of 1923, Cassidy's wife, now

living in San Francisco, became ill, and Cassidy left to be with her. Upon Cassidy's arrival, his wife's doctor suggested he be examined; Tom was diagnosed with tuberculosis.[18] He stayed in San Francisco for treatment until August, when he attended the Fourth General Convention of the One Big Union at Plebs Hall in Winnipeg.

Cassidy's overwhelming importance to the OBU was made clear at the 1923 Convention, as delegate after delegate rose to discuss the difference Cassidy made to their efforts. Comrade Cowie from Brandon reported that "we had tried for some time to get members, but Cassidy come there and got somewhere around 70 members." William McAllister noted that the OBU was making progress until a railway boss got Cassidy kicked out of Moose Jaw. Similarly, Comrade Skinner, a railway worker in Winnipeg, said that "Cassidy did a lot of good work, but immediately he leaves the activity leaves with him."[19] With the stagnation and decline in OBU fortunes, delegates repeatedly returned to the theme of new organizing strategies, and Cassidy was prominent among those emphasizing the need for rank-and-file oriented tactics like those of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Likewise, Ben Legere spoke out against the growth of a bureaucratic leadership removed from the "men on the job":

> we should always try to place our organisers in a position where they must either produce the goods or get off the job. It is the man on the job on all occasions that has any strength, that has stamina, that can put up any defense...Give any man too much power, and he will abuse it.[20]

This idea was seconded by Cassidy, who stressed the need for respectable, hard-working men who:

> should expect to do the same as he would on an ordinary job, get out and work; he must expect to get up early and get on the job....[Y]ou cannot organise the workers in the West going around in overalls. The worker wants to see an organiser looking decent.[21]

The difference in visions for the movement between the position of Legere and Cassidy and that of OBU leaders in and around Winnipeg was also evident in the discussion of a proposal from the Brandon men to have the OBU establish an insurance plan and pension fund for its members. IWW sympathizer Tommy Roberts ridiculed the plan, stating, "we must function on the job, not as an

insurance organisation." Cassidy also disagreed with the Brandon plan because it "would mean a much large revenue coming in to the office from the rank and file, and the more money you place in their hands, the more power they have."[22] With others such as Sudbury logging delegate Oscar Freeman advocating closer ties with the Wobblies, the traditional strategies of the OBU, typified by delegates from Brandon and Winnipeg, came under increasing criticism. In this light, Cassidy's and Legere's statements about the need to break with old certainties were unsettling to many.

Despite these conflicts, delegates were able to agree on the high quality of Catherine Rose's work as General Secretary, and they voted her a raise in salary.[23] To consider Catherine Rose a typical secretary would be to miss the importance and status of her work for the OBU.[24] As General Secretary, Rose addressed the 1923 Convention, providing an optimistic status report about OBU activities. She was also involved in the daily decisions which were crucial to the smooth functioning of the OBU. With leaders like Bob Russell travelling throughout the West trying to increase membership, Rose was often in the position of mediating internal conflicts. When Tommy Roberts threatened that the Sandon Metal Miners Unit would break from the OBU to join the Wobblies because British Columbia lacked a permanent organizer, it was Catherine Rose who persuaded him otherwise. She wondered if Roberts did not think "that for a Unit contributing such a small amount...it is somewhat unreasonable to 'demand' that an organizer be sent into BC?" Like Legere and Cassidy at the 1923 Convention, Rose appealed to Tommy's rank-and-file instincts, asking Roberts to "do your best to impress on your members that if they think of going over to the IWW, let it be because they think that it is the best organisation for them, not for the reason that we do not send you an organiser."[25]

In September 1923, the OBU-GEB decided to reassign Rose to the position of Business Manager of the <u>One Big Union Bulletin</u>. Under the direction of editor Frank Woodward, the <u>Bulletin</u> had accumulated a large surplus of money by running a lottery which was used to fund Cassidy's organizing trips throughout Western Canada.[26] Also in September, the OBU received a request from Comrade Dixon in Fort William that Tom Cassidy be sent there to organize. This the GEB refused,

feeling that Cassidy would be able to accomplish little in Northern Ontario until the spring.[27] Within days, they reversed this decision, hoping to quell the sexual rumours swirling around Cassidy and Rose by shipping Cassidy out of town.

On 26 September 1923, Catherine Rose, as was her custom, went to the meeting of the Winnipeg CLC Executive with pencil and paper in hand. Upon arriving, she was informed that her services were not needed that day; the minutes would be taken by someone else.[28] She departed, and Tom Cassidy entered the room, "called before the Executive" to explain his conduct. Comrade Wooler began by asking Cassidy to recount their earlier conversation. Cassidy replied that he had been told he "was to be laid off on account of no funds, and that [he] could go to Port Arthur." After further sparring, Cassidy exclaimed that "we were trying to kid one another or kid ourselves" by pretending that he was to go to Port Arthur because of finances. In reality, he was being ostracized because of the sexual innuendo surrounding himself and Catherine Rose, and it was pointless to pretend otherwise: "We might as well act like men and get at the real reason." This challenge to the Executive's masculinity did not sit well, and Frank Woodward retorted that it was Cassidy who should "face the issue like a man": "Would not, say the episode at Brandon, in view of the fact that you were Gen. Organizer and Miss Rose was Sec'y of the GEB and of the CLC, would the Executive not be justified in taking the action they did[?]" Here Woodward implicitly admitted that Cassidy's transfer stemmed from his relationship with Catherine. In response, Tom demanded that the CLC Executive "Prove the Brandon Episode":

> Rumour ha[s] it that [myself] and Miss Rose had registered [at a hotel] as man and wife, but when the charge is made I will then present my defense. Rumor has it also that I was drunk in Swift Current. I was too, and I admit it, also I am willing to proclaim from the house tops anything I have done, but I am not going to be a victim of a frame up either by those outside or inside the organization.

Cassidy's long history as an activist was important to him, and his sense of pride rankled at the thought he was being purged:

> I have a reputation to look after. I am known in every large city on the American Continent, and I don't propose to leave here or sneak out quietly with a cloud

> hanging over me and then a year after perhaps in Chicago or Frisco be accused of...stealing money or as in this case something worse.

Cassidy believed that socialist men should be open and willing to fight for the truth instead of "sneaking out" or avoiding the issue. In this light, the actions of the all-male Executive appeared to Tom as dishonest and unmanly.

Unable to bring himself to discuss the sexual content of the rumours, Comrade Clancy ducked the issue, asking Cassidy, "You admit the truth of the rumor of being drunk. Why don't you either affirm or deny the affair at Brandon?" This angered Cassidy, and he manoeuvered to have the matter brought into the open:

> Just let a charge be laid. I can puncture any charge presented so full of holes it will look like a sieve. In fact just to show you how sure I am I will admit that I was registered at a Brandon Hotel as T. Cassidy & Wife. I will also admit that Miss Rose was seen in my company at that time, but even admitting all this I can knock any charge that is made into a cocked hat.

The Executive refused to engage Cassidy in a debate over the truth, seeking instead to reverse his charges of unmanly behaviour. To this end, Woodward declared that he was "surprised at Com. Cassidy who had gloried in having the only real Revolutionary Morality, and yet now before the Executive he was seeking to hide it."

Sadly for us, the minutes of the meeting end here. All we know is that "considerable discussion" ensued. Without noting their rationale, the Executive voted to ask Catherine Rose to resign. If she refused, she was to be fired immediately, with two weeks' salary as severance pay.[29] They made no recommendation regarding Cassidy, whom they had already suspended, until two weeks later, when the Executive decided to fire him as well.[30] At this point, Executive members were more concerned with Catherine Rose's situation than they were with Cassidy's. While they initially hoped Tom would accept their decision and go to Port Arthur, Catherine was given no chance to rehabilitate herself, as they were unable to envision Rose as a travelling organizer because she was a woman. Nor would the Executive deal with Catherine directly, instead conveying their

decision through her father, John, himself an active OBU member. She refused their offer to provide a reference letter to help her get other employment, and was promptly fired.

These actions reveal some important features of the OBU's paternalist inheritance. While OBU men dealt with Cassidy through formal union channels, they could not bring themselves to publicly accuse Catherine Rose of sleeping with a married man. When the Executive's purge of Cassidy was used by activists in Northern Ontario to swing OBU loggers into the IWW that December, Bob Russell informed one dissident that a trial was impossible, as "the Executive had promised the girl's parents they would not publicly accuse" Rose.[31] This spoke to their chivalrous concern, shared by Rose's father, to protect her womanly respectablility, at least in public.[32] It also exposed their desire to preserve paternal authority by having Rose's father consent to their regulatation of her sexual behaviour, despite the fact that Catherine resided away from her family in a boarding house. Likewise, in attempting to convince Tommy Roberts of the legitimacy of the firings, William McAllister emphasized that "Father and Brother of Miss Rose [e]ndorsed the action of the GEB," suggesting their voices were more important than Catherine's. The Executive's reasoning harkened back to nineteenth-century seduction laws in which, before marriage, women were property to be controlled by their fathers.[33]

The Executive wanted to prevent the "Brandon Episode" from becoming public for fear it would hurt the progress of the organization. However, there was also an element of apprehension in their decision. In the words of McAllister, "who is going to be this young woman's accuser? Not for me."[34] This reluctance spoke to their personal anxiety about talking about heterosexuality, especially a scandal, in a formal union trial, because such an event would dissolve the boundaries which kept heterosexuality in its "proper place" in the private sphere.[35] The Cassidy-Rose affair threatened to make heterosexuality an issue union members had to discuss. This was difficult in itself, as it contradicted the reductionism of the OBU's particular kind of socialism which "closed off...earlier theorists' perception[s] of family and sexual arrangements as sources of oppression."[36]

More importantly, like socialists in other countries, OBU leaders "feared the emotionally charged atmosphere surrounding sexuality as a public issue."[37]

On 2 October 1923, the Executive issued a circular to members of the Winnipeg CLC to bring to their attention "a matter that [we] are convinced was going to wreck the movement...just at a time when it is necessary to put forth our best efforts to take advantage of a situation which was becoming favourable to us." They said nothing of the rumours about Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose. Instead, they outlined their efforts to convince Cassidy to go to Port Arthur and to get Rose to resign willingly; her obstinant refusal meant that "the Executive had no other course left but to discharge her." Cassidy, too, was "determined not to have the matter cleaned up quietly." According to the statement, Tom and Catherine believed the Executive had "no right to interfere with their moral conduct, something we are prepared to admit provided it does not hurt this movement." The Executive's circular requested:

> that the Council endorse [our] actions without calling upon us to divulge the details of the unfortunate situation....[W]e assure you as Comrades in the movement, comrade to comrade, that we have got all the necessary data to warrant the action we have taken.

This particular response, designed to enable Executive men to define the parameters of the situation, raised questions about responsiblity and the organization's political priorities. While Cassidy and Rose were "egotistical enough to consider the vindication of their moral standards of greater importance than the development of the movement," the Executive was "composed of Comrades who [were] not blinded by orthodox moral concepts." In this situation, not being "blinded by orthodox moral concepts" meant refusing to discuss the politics of gender and sexuality and their relationship to socialism. This refusal was obscured by their representation of events in terms of stark social dichotomies - Cassidy and Rose against the organization as a whole.[38] Indeed, the CLC Executive boldly proclaimed:

> we are so positively convinced that an exposure of the whole affair which means that it becomes public property, would retard the progress of the organization, we ask

> you to endorse our actions, otherwise we respectfully ask you to accept our resignations.[39]

Instead of formal discussions of the OBU's sexual ideology, the Executive demanded silence, suggesting that to speak about sex would destroy the foundation of the movement. And while the decline of the OBU meant in reality that there was little left of its illustrious dream, in the fantastic world of this Marxist moral panic, circumstances were "becoming favourable." Once again, the organization was rising, only this time in the guise of a farce.

Public reaction to the Executive's statement was not unanimously supportive. Comrade McIvor bluntly stated, "as far as I am concerned...they can resign." Mrs. Bray was also not convinced, asking "if the executive had any proof." Comrade Wooler rose to reiterate their position: "the Executive were not going to start any argument on the floor of the Council. Its position was clear." From the gallery, Tom Cassidy rose and said that "he would not leave under that Cloud" since "no charges have been laid against me." He even offered to work without pay for two months "if it was proven to him that he had done anything to hurt the movement." Similarly, Catherine Rose claimed, "I do not care one iota what you think of my actions. If you think my actions are detrimental to the movement, prove it." They were being forced out of their jobs without any formal charges being laid, "a fine thing for a rank and file movement." The Executive simply ignored their requests for a trial. Tom Mace recalled a similar scandal within the Socialist Party of America "which the capitalist press are still using to the detriment of the working class movement by playing up the 'free love' scare." With this reminder of the crucial importance of the issue before them, the Executive refused to discuss the "Brandon Episode" further; their position was endorsed by the Winnipeg CLC by a vote of 20 to 6.[40] This was a victory for CLC leaders, who won ratification for their decision without the publicity which, in their eyes, would have resulted in a "free love scare."

It is important we recognize that, within the prevailing context, their fear of a sexual Red Scare was somewhat justified. In the eyes of the bourgeoisie, 1919 could be described as the year

of the "alien." Indeed, ruling-class men such as Minister of Labour Senator Gideon Robertson and Manitoba Justice Metcalfe frequently conflated radicalism with "foreigners" in their efforts to preserve the foundation of "British capitalism."[41] This was not solely a class-oriented program, however, as the middle class articulated socialism with the deviant and potentially dangerous sexual practices associated with "alien" men. In doing so, they drew upon the residues of other recent moral panics.[42] In March 1919, C.O. Knowles, General Manager of Canadian Press Limited, wrote to the government's Chief Press Censor, Ernest Chambers. Knowles provided Chambers with a copy of an upcoming story about the "nationalization" of women in Russia, a story "so repellant to any man with any sense of decency" that he contemplated suppressing it; how "decent" women would feel about it was not mentioned. Knowles decided against withholding the story in order to influence public opinion: "There is an element in this country which is still deluded with the idea that if the Bolsheviks got the upper hand we would have the millenium next week instead of which we would have hell."[43]

Reporting from Vladivostok, Siberia, Canadian Press correspondent W.E. Playfair wrote of his dismay that some Canadians were voicing support for Bolshevism. Like Knowles, Playfair suggested that "no civilized country could countenance the tenets of the Russian Bolsheviks [once] understanding these tenets." According to Playfair, the manifesto of the "Bolshevik Anarchists" proclaimed that, under capitalism, "all the most beautiful women and best specimens have been the property of the Bourgeoisie". Under socialist rule, women were "declared to be the property of the whole nation"; those who refused the dictates of the "Saratov-Anarchist Club" were said to be "on strike." This program detailing the "nationalization of women" was far from anarchy, as Playfair's sexually sensationalized report included a detailed list of regulations governing male entitlement. For example, "male citizens have th[e] right to use one woman not oftener than three times a week for three hours," but only if they had a union card. Husbands, "the former owners" of these women, were allowed access to "their wives without waiting for their turn." The women involved were accorded a monthly allowance, four months maternity leave, and a bonus if they gave birth to twins

- a veritable welfare state for heterosexual services. The rules also made provisions for urine and blood samples to prevent the spread of venereal disease.[44] Playfair's story was confirmed by an Associated Press report stating that, upon turning eighteen, Russian women "must register [their] name[s] in the bureau of free love." The Canadian reading public was also told that "many of the girls are carried off and there have been suicides and murders as a result."[45]

Outrageous stories such as these, which bore little resemblance to the actual sexual politics of Bolshevik Russia, were central to the politicized moral panic created by bourgeois politicians, church leaders, and newswriters fearing the "desecration and defilement of womanhood."[46] Indeed, sources such as the Belleville Intelligencer informed readers that, in Russia, "the honor and respect of womankind has been scrapped along with all other high ideals."[47] More important to the OBU was the use of these "facts" by Manitoba Prosecutor A.J. Andrews during the trial of OBU leader Bob Russell. In his summation, Andrews emphasized to the all-male jury that the seditious program of Russell and his comrades involved more than just the collectivization of industry. According to Andrews, "They abolish the family, and they take that woman that we have put on a pedestal from that pedestal."[48] In opposition to Bolshevik tyranny was the classless society of Canada, where gender relations were naturally harmonious: "There is no place in society where the home is more sacred, where the family is more hallowed, than in the family of the good, honest working man."[49] Andrews thus presented for the jury's view the importance of heterosexual familialism, which was threatened by the "deviant" desires of "foreign" revolutionaries.

So prevalent were stories of the "nationalization" of women in Russia that socialists felt the need to counter these accusations. In May, the Red Flag printed a story confirming that the Bolsheviks had put a stop to the "nationalization" program, which emanated from an Anarchist group in Siberia. Indeed, one writer suggested that these stories were actually examples of "bourgeois pornography," and provided several accounts of working-class women's exploitation at the hands of their bosses.[50] In tales such as these, OBU ideologues appropriated feminist concepts and reworked them into a Marxist critique of bourgeois men's sexual corruption and decadence.

This coupling of an attack on capitalism as an anti-family social system with the defense of socialism from charges of supporting "free love" was in line with traditional leftist views on heterosexual morality.[51] During his trial for sedition, the Reverend William Ivens, then an Associate Editor of the OBU Bulletin, defended the ideal of working-class chivalry, suggesting that "no people put woman on a higher pedestal than labor."[52] Along with stories covering the activities of "Women of the Russian Revolution," the Bulletin proclaimed that "women in Soviet Russia are politically, economicaly [sic] and morally more cared for than in any other place on earth."[53] Writers for the paper also favourably cited Vladmir Lenin's suggestion that "We are too few to free women from the chains of household slavery. If the emancipation of the workman is the business of the workman himself, that of the women must be their own affair."[54] While this position reaffirmed the policy of encouraging women to be active in the labour movement, it also justified the gendered separation of political work and resources. In one sense, it was a clear rationale for the masculinization of the OBU's struggle in the name of proletarian women's independence.

Given these sexual dimensions of the 1919 "Red Scare," the fears of the Executive that the bourgeoisie would capitalize on any sex scandal within the OBU are understandable. Nonetheless, their reasoning was rooted in a hierarchy of political priorities. Their refusal to formally consider sex questions was rooted in a pragmatic judgement that sexuality would only stir up public reaction against the OBU. However, given the ideological power of bourgeois representations of socialism generally, especially after the wave of general strikes, if OBU men were truly pragmatic, they would have relinquished many of their core beliefs such as the need for a revolutionary transformation of production. This was, of course, not the case. They continued to be Marxists, whether or not their views were popular because they ardently believed that socialism was the inevitable outcome of the class struggle. They could refuse to take an explicit position on sexual politics because it was relatively marginal in their social vision's concept of progress. In their eyes, sexuality was by and large irrelevant to the revolutionary working-class movement.

While the CLC Executive managed to win support for their decision to fire Catherine Rose and Tom Cassidy, they were unable to stop the issue from resurfacing. The CLC returned to its regular affairs for several weeks, but the Cassidy-Rose affair had regained its momentum by the middle of November. On 20 November, Bob Russell rose to address what he termed a "whispering campaign" that was "discrediting the officials and embarrassing the progress of the organization." According to Russell, "Comrade Cassidy had been very free in expressing himself around the building," as had others "with chips on the[ir] shoulders." This "propaganda" only "hinder[ed] the progress of the organization" and Russell recommended that these people "get out of the way and hide themselves." Bulletin Editor Frank Woodward echoed Russell's words, telling CLC members of the phone calls he had received from a mysterious woman as part of a "deep-laid plot" against him. Once again, leading OBU men in Winnipeg stressed the need to preserve their "progress" by preventing further discussion of their decision. Also present was the unrepentant Cassidy, who, according to the minutes, "made a vicious attack on the Executive Board," saying that "he had learned to fight fire with fire and he would choose the time and the place and the weapons with which the battle would take place." This promise of manly combat was deserved in Cassidy's mind because his character had been questioned. Indeed, "he had been attacked when he was a sick man." The Executive moved to stifle this opposition; when Cassidy attempted to speak again, Russell and John Rose noted that Tom was not officially a delegate, and therefore not entitled to speak.[55]

The men of the Executive came to regret this move, as they later shifted strategies, proposing to meet with Cassidy to resolve their differences. Cassidy bluntly refused, and demanded that the organization pay his way back to San Francisco.[56] OBU members from Transcona were brought in to explore the situation, and informed the CLC that Cassidy was "a physical wreck." Another member, Comrade Schick, reported that the Cassidys were in such financial straits that they had to sell Mrs. Cassidy's fur coat and Tom's typewriter. This statement was challenged by Executive member Clancy, who said that "Cassidy's sickness and poverty was [not] the real cause of bringing this up. It was only another attempt to open this issue up again." In a similar vein, Comrade Foster

complained of "the council dissipating its energy" by discussing the matter. Bob Russell went further, replying to Cassidy's manly challenge by stating "he was prepared to fight Cassidy or any other individual, whether he was sick or not, if he attempted to disrupt the organization." Threats such as this testified to the process through which the Cassidy-Rose affair was constructed as a masculine experience, as Russell was not suggesting that he would fight Catherine Rose. Indeed, Catherine almost completely disappeared from the public record at this point, and her absence helped to preserve the overtly masculine nature of this conflict.

The intensely polarized nature of these debates is evident in the Executive's actions. As Executive members tried to maintain the legitimacy of their explanation of events, they increasingly contested every "fact" produced by those in sympathy with Cassidy and Rose. When Comrades Hansen and Hill voiced concern over Cassidy's illness, Bob Russell and Tom Wooler denied that Cassidy was sick at all. Wooler stated that "there could not be much wrong with" Tom because he was trying to "disrupt the organization," and Russell said he met Cassidy "on Notre Dame Avenue as bold as brass." Woodward wondered aloud if the Cassidys were really poor, even suggesting that Mrs. Cassidy had not sold her fur coat.[57] The highly oppositional climate in which debate took place intensified the importance of this conflict. The identities of many unionists were concentrated through formal and what undoubtedly was hundreds of informal conversations about the conduct of Catherine and Tom and the Executive's decision. Thus, the process of securing their identity as OBU men became increasingly tension-ridden and internally focused. No longer was the corrupt manliness of the autocratic bourgeoisie the primary opposition through which Marxist masculinity was constructed. Instead, internal sectarianism was the order of the day. The conflict was freed from its initial connection to the "Brandon Episode," and took on a rhythm independent of its origins.

The direction of events shifted dramatically, as the Executive's prediction about the organization's progress appeared to be coming true - members began to leave the One Big Union. While it is not possible to assess how many left the Winnipeg CLC because of disgust with the

handling of the Cassidy-Rose situation, the affair clearly had a concrete effect on union membership, as Cassidy wrote to longtime activists such as Tommy Roberts in Sandon, B.C. and Comrades Dunning and Freeman in Sudbury, Ontario, informing them of his plight. Dunning and Freeman used the information provided by Cassidy, including details of the organization's real membership total, to swing more than one thousand OBU loggers into the IWW during a referendum in December 1923.[58] In January, Bob Russell attempted to convince these radicals to remain in the OBU by attacking Cassidy, who "has demonstrated that he is even prepared to destroy the movement to satisfy his own ego" with his "god damn lie." Russell tried to impress upon Freeman that the Executive had little choice, writing that "the procedure that has been followed has been the one that has, or will, cause the least friction in the movement." Again, Russell appealed to the progress of the organization, obscuring questions of sexual politics in the process.[59] By this time, Russell was thoroughly tired with the whole affair; at a CLC meeting the next evening, he "advised the delegates to forget this matter and to get down to the real work and business of the organization." This was now impossible, as the CLC appointed a committee to investigate Cassidy's accusation that Frank Woodward hired a private detective to spy on him.[60] Several weeks later, after receiving a letter from Cassidy attacking Woodward, William McAllister proposed to act as a mediator. In this capacity, he travelled from Moose Jaw to Winnipeg to interview Cassidy and John Rose, who "deeply impressed him."[61]

McAllister's efforts at mediation failed to resolve the organization's problems, bringing us to the next paradox of the Cassidy-Rose Affair. While hundreds of loggers in Northern Ontario were leaving the OBU, women in Winnipeg were demanding a greater role in the organization. The night after McAllister's failure, Mrs. Lamb, representing the Winnipeg Women's Auxilliary, informed CLC members that her group had raised forty dollars for the union's coffers. According to the minutes, she "was applauded by the delegates, thereby showing their appreciation of the women comrades for the good work they have been doing." This statement was unique, since contributions by the Women's Auxilliary were traditionally noted and received "with thanks." This

departure from custom was linked to further discussion concerning the position of women in the movement. During this same meeting, elections were held for numerous positions on the CLC, resulting, not surprisingly, in an all-male leadership. Mrs. Lamb rose and informed those present that she "was surprised that none of the women delegates had been elected or nominated to any position on the Councils." In response, one man replied that this absence reflected "a desire on the part of delegates not to throw any more work upon the women comrades than they already had." The stalwart Mrs. Lamb was "not satisfied that this was the correct reason," and neither was Bob Russell, who believed that the failure to elect women was "purely an oversight" which occurred because "they had not thought on the matter."[62]

This exchange captures the problems faced by working-class women in relation to the organizational manifestations of Marxist masculinity. While the ideology of the OBU provided some women with the inspiration to unionize, they were guaranteed little in the way of practical resources and support from their male comrades. At the next meeting, three women - Mrs. Lamb, Bray and Day - were elected to the CLC's organizing committee, but only after the Executive had approved this decision in principle, indicating the power of male leaders to control the union's direction.[63] More importantly, when considering the role of women in the organization, OBU men were disingenous or thoughtless, and it is arguable which was worse. Indeed, OBU meetings were occasionally the site of outright hostility towards women. Later in 1924, Comrade Clancy declared that "during the last war every women, practically, wanted a hero," suggesting some element of personal envy considering many male socialists' history of avoiding conscription. He also derisively added that "it was the women who could stop all wars, if they cared to do so."[64] Women were also defined by familial bonds, and OBU men commonly depicted the Women's Auxilliary as a group of their wives and daughters. Given the small numbers of working women in the organization, this is not surprising. However, it is significant that following the upsurge of 1919, OBU men were primarily concerned with how to involve their female relatives in their movement.

This evidence points to the dual nature of public life in the One Big Union, in which men and women lived interconnected but usually separate existences. For example, while OBU men and women participated in joint social functions designed to foster the spirit of community, union minutes contain frequent complaints that men simply did not attend gatherings organized by the Women's Auxilliary. When the Auxilliary sent a letter to the CLC stating that they "did not receive the support they expected from the Council Members," John Rose noted that it took courage for women to take a public stand, indicating the general apathy on the part of working men towards their activities.[65] More importantly, most of the OBU's energies were focused on what working men defined as the central concerns of the labour movement. This power went beyond the neglect of working-class women's experiences to encompass the ways in which OBU men defined their sense of self and the world around them.

When situating this movement in relation to the rise of heterosocial culture in the 1920s, it can be suggested that elements of OBU activities stemmed from working men's insecurity about the encroachment of women as well as their socialist beliefs.[66] Traditional lines of patriarchal authority were threatened through women's participation in wage labour, which enabled them, as was the case with Catherine Rose, to live outside of the family home and paternal control. Moreover, the association between their ideal of politicized working-class masculinity and participation in the labour movement was disrupted through the increase in working women's political activities. When one Winnipeg labour activist proclaimed that "The Labour Temple is no longer a masculine preserve," he articulated both a judgement about the tactical need to organize women and a male sense of loss steeped in the collective importance of masculine solidarity in union struggles.[67] Within the OBU, the subordination of women and the exclusion of feminist politics spoke to male fears about the decline of patriarchal authority, and was a necessary part of making OBU men.

Given their difficulties coming to terms with the participation of women in the labour movement, it is not surprising that these men reacted so stringently against a public consideration of heterosexuality. Indeed, the very act of discussing subjects such as birth control in public was

considered an affront to the manly respectability of skilled working men.[68] When William McAllister travelled to Winnipeg on his fact-finding tour, he discovered that the Executive was worried about Tom Cassidy's "Revolutionary Moral Concept." There was little doubt in McAllister's mind that Cassidy was "guilty" despite his denial that "Miss Rose" was the woman he was with at the hotel in Brandon. McAllister informed Tommy Roberts that the relationship between Cassidy and Rose was "more than that of a friendly nature - [it was] in fact that of a married couple." However, there was more to this heterosexual moral panic than the involvement of Cassidy and Rose. According to McAllister:

> While in Brandon, Cassidy addressed the Labor Church on a subject in ToTo, "Birth Control", and advised the younger sex when the sex passion...caught them to go out and satisfy it, and also recommended a recipe he had for causing abortion....Let me state he gave a similar address at the Forum in Winnipeg and caused a furore of disgust and discontent amongst the lady members of the OBU and those who attended the Forum.[69]

Ideas like these were the stuff of sexual reformers, many of whom historically were socialists, who voiced the importance of heterosexuality to an individual's identity along with a critique of middle-class sexual morality.[70] OBU men, however, drew their socialism from a tradition which, as Janice Newton observes, had no concept of sexual pleasure. In this light, the Executive's refusal to publicly discuss the Cassidy-Rose affair was a rejection of sexual liberalism.[71] Indeed, McAllister suggested that Cassidy's speech to the Brandon Labour Church "alon[e]...was of sufficient misdemeanor to warrant his being relieved."[72] The firings thus implictly strengthened views within the organization which naturalized heterosexuality, confined sexual activity to marriage, and forestalled the development of alternative analyses of sexuality.

The men of the OBU continued to be haunted by Tom Cassidy after his death on 13 February 1924. After debating the issue, members of the General Executive Board decided not to attend the funeral. This prompted a strong response from John Rose, who labelled the act "callous, almost to brutality." He also suggested that "Cassidy [was] not...as black as he was painted." This charge was unacceptable to the Executive; Comrade Clancy proclaimed that he "would not let anyone say that

the Executive had not acted right in the matter," while Comrade Wooler steadfastly maintained that "the vindictiveness that had been displayed all during this trouble had been on Cassidy's part." Tom Mace went so far as to insinuate that Cassidy was spying on the OBU for someone.[73] A week later, Bulletin Editor Woodward conducted a pseudo-inquisition into the charges of Comrade Schick that Woodward had hounded Cassidy. While Schick eventually signed a retraction, he questioned Woodward's patriarchal stance, telling delegates that "if my daughter cared to do anything I would not attempt to bully her from doing it. I might advise her, but whatever she done was her own God damn business." Woodward countered that "Schick's attitude was a cowardly one," while Comrade Keegan admonished Schick to "be man enough" to clarify the record about his allegations.[74] Even with Cassidy's death, the OBU Executive refused to tolerate any suggestion that it had erred in any way. Eventually, the CLC passed a motion "instructing the chairman...to rule out of order any discussion dealing with the Cassidy case."[75] Even this was not enough to prevent the memory of Tom Cassidy from resurfacing, as several more meetings were embroiled with news of the plight of Mrs. Cassidy, who initiated a law suit against Comrade Hansen over the repayment of a loan.[76] Woodward capitalized on these discussions to gloat about his victory over Schick, informing his comrades that Mrs. Cassidy believed Woodward's assertion that he had not hired a private detective to trail her husband. This revelation was intended to embarass Schick, and he retorted to all present, "You can rest assured that Mrs. Cassidy and I meet no more. You can rest assured of that."[77] Meanwhile, the OBU unit in Brandon sent their congratulations to the leadership in Winnipeg, complimenting them on "the successful manner in which they had kept this matter from becoming a public scandal."[78]

While OBU leaders such as Bob Russell emphasized that the real task of the movement was to organize, it is clear that, for over six months, many OBU men drew their sense of self not from the ever-present class struggle, but rather the events of the Cassidy-Rose affair. For the duration of this Marxist moral panic, the chief task of these men was to defend the organization's progress from the threat posed by the rumours of a heterosexual dalliance between Tom Cassidy and

Catherine Rose. Of course, the OBU was not stagnant for this period; other things did influence the direction of the organization. However, as in the case of the split of the loggers in Northern Ontario, many of these events were connected to the purge of two dedicated OBU activists.

The Cassidy-Rose affair drained the OBU of much-needed emotional energy. William McAllister, who so ardently threw himself into the fray as a mediator in January, left the OBU two months later after, in the derogatory words of Bob Russell, "having been promoted to a Boss's job" on the Canadian Pacific Railway.[79] Meanwhile, workers who read the OBU Bulletin would find nothing of these matters. Instead, they learned of Cassidy's death on 13 February through a short but traditional obituary. Readers were told that Cassidy ceased his role as organizer in November of the previous year because of "ill health": "The system has thus claimed another victim." They were treated to a brief biography of Cassidy that concluded with the following statement:

> Comrade Cassidy had rare ability both as a speaker and an organizer, and his passing means a distinct loss to the working class movement, for there was never a time in working class history when fighters were more urgently needed and when there was a more limited supply.[80]

Cassidy's "ability" was not of concern six months before, when the CLC Executive used its position of patriarchal power to regulate the "deviant" heterosexuality of Cassidy and Rose.

The legacy of the Cassidy-Rose affair haunted OBU leaders for years afterwards. When interviewed by Lionel Orlikow in 1961, Bob Russell told many a story about the OBU. However, he steadfastly avoided Orlikow's question about why Cassidy left the organization. Instead, he chose to recount how Ben Legere and himself won over a crowd of workers in Sydney, Nova Scotia in 1925. According to Russell, Legere was speaking out against the Communist policy on unions when CPer Malcolm Blue stood up and demanded that Legere "take it back." Legere refused, and Blue punched him, sending Legere flying into "the lap of a woman." Russell said that he "was shaking in my damn shoes," but still had the presence of mind to offer the crowd a different style of masculinity, appealing to knowledge rather than physical strength. Russell proudly recalled that people thought him to be a "little Jesus" because of his time in jail, and he used this stature to

propose a debate, commenting that "out in the west we fight with our tongues and our heads." This offer was effective in rallying support for the OBU, allowing Russell to "captur[e] that audience." Russell went on to say that "Cassidy was the same type. He was a dramatic son of a gun. I always remember him here just when we got out of the - or when I got out of the jail after..."[81] Here the transcript ends.

In this interview, Russell opted to talk of a victory for Marxist masculinity rather than reveal one of its failures by discussing why Cassidy left the OBU. After almost forty years, Russell maintained the Executive's position by refusing to talk about what he believed to be the illicit heterosexual relationship between Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose. This brief history of the sexual politics of the OBU points to the need to move beyond the excavation of the patriarchal legacy of unions to a consideration of how gender, and specifically working-class masculinity, determined the direction of the labour movement. It also suggests the need to reexamine the social power of union bureaucracies in light of how they regulated the gendered and sexual identities of working men and women. Finally, events such as the Cassidy-Rose affair require that a strong feminist politic be fully incorporated into working-class history. For these events were not just the outcome of a particular Marxist vision, but also, and perhaps more importantly, a specific way of being a heterosexual working man.

Endnotes

1. University of British Columbia, Special Collection (UBCSC): Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, William McAllister to Tommy Roberts, 14 February 1924.

2. OBU Bulletin, 21 February 1924.

3. It should be noted that these subjects most likely would not have considered themselves to be "heterosexual," as the word did not enter popular usage until the 1930s. For the history and politics of heterosexuality, see Blye Frank, "Hegemonic Heterosexual Masculinity", Studies in Political Economy 24 (Autumn 1987), 159-170; Jonathan Ned Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality", Socialist Review 20:1 (March 1990), 7-34.

4. Jeffery Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800 Second Edition (London: Longman Group, 1989), 14-15.

5. I have drawn upon the argument of Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression", in Passion and Power: Sexuality in History Eds. Kathy Piess and Christina Simmons (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 157-177.

6. Bob Russell, who remained with OBU longer than anyone, was labelled "Father of Labour in Manitoba" by his longtime assistant and biographer, Mary Jordan. Survival: Labour's Trials and Tribulations in Canada (Toronto: McDonald House, 1975), 4.

7. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick discusses how male homosocial bonding can regulate men's heterosexuality in Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). See also Michel Foucault, The Use of Pleasure: Volume Two of the History of Sexuality Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

8. Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM): MG10A14-1, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 3, File 11, Carl Berg to William Kolling, 9 May 1919; Ben Legere to Carl Berg, 9 June 1919; PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 6, 13-14.

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10. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 160, File 8, Ben Legere to the Members of the General Executive Board, 4 October 1923.

11. Ibid.

12. UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 52, File 12, Dorothy Steeves' Interview with Tom O'Connor, 12 October 1958.

13. For Cassidy's views on the general strike, see David Akers, "Rebel or Revolutionary? Jack Kavanagh and the Early Years of the Communist Movement in Vancouver, 1920-1925", Labour/Le Travail 30 (Fall 1992), 17. On the "second generation" of the SPC, see Peter Campbell, "'Stalwarts of the Struggle': Canadian Marxists of the Third Way, 1879-1939", (Ph.D dissertation, Queen's University, 1991).

14. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 6, 13.

15. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 10, File 56, Tom Cassidy to Chris Stephenson, 24 February 1919.

16. PAM: RG4A1, Manitoba Court Records - King's Bench, "The King vs. William Ivens et al." Trial Evidence, Box 7, Tom Cassidy to Richard Kerrigan, 6 April 1919. Kerrigan had a long history of radicalism, beginning with a prominent role in the Knights of Labor. He also attended the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905, was a key advisor to OBU activists in Eastern Canada during 1919, and penned a history of the Canadian trade union movement for the One Big Union Bulletin in 1925-6. See Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, Dreaming of what might be: The Knights of Labor in Ontario, 1880-1900 (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1987), 18-19, 171, 276-277.

17. Public Archives of Canada (PAC): RCMP Papers, 88-A-73, R.B. Russell Personal File, Unidentified to Cortland Starnes, 5 May 1919. Thanks again to Prof. Greg Kealey.

18. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 7, R.B. Russell to Catherine Rose, 24 May 1923; Catherine Rose to Tommy Roberts, 8 June 1923.

19. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 9, File 49, Minutes of the Fourth General Convention of the One Big Union, 3-5 August 1923, 7, 13, 30.

20. Ibid., 10-12.

21. Ibid., 19, 29.

22. Ibid., 16-17.

23. Ibid., 37.

24. In his account of the scandal, David Bercuson understates the importance of Rose's activities as OBU General Secretary. See Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978), 230-234.

25. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 7, Catherine Rose to Tommy Roberts, 8 June 1923.

26. Peter Campbell, "Stalwarts of the Struggle".

27. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 18, OBU General Executive Board Minutes, September 1923.

28. Ibid., Box 4, File 17, CLC Minutes, 2 October 1923.

29. Ibid., Box 4, File 19, CLC Executive Minutes, 26 September 1923.

30. Ibid., 9 October 1923.

31. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, R.B. Russell to P.W. Dunning, 7 January 1924.

32. For chivalry and the courts, see Carolyn Strange, "Wounded Womanhood and Dead Men: Chivalry and the Trials of Clara Ford and Carrie Davies", in Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History Eds. Mariana Valverde and Franca Iacovetta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 149-188.

33. See especially Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

34. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, William McAllister to Tommy Roberts, 14 February 1924.

35. Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality", in Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality Ed. Carole S. Vance, Second Edition (London: Pandora Press, 1992), 267, 297.

36. Harold Benenson, "Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class", International Labor and Working Class History 25 (Spring 1984), 10.

37. Helmut Gruber, "Sexuality in 'Red Vienna': Socialist Party Conceptions and Programs and Working-Class Life, 1920-34", International Labor and Working-Class History 31 (Spring 1987), 44.

38. Judith R. Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London (London: Virago, 1992), 225.

39. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 18, Executive Circular to the CLC, n.d.

40. Ibid., Box 4, File 17, CLC Minutes, 2 October 1923.

41. See UBCSC: Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 33, File 6, A Comparison: Judges' Charge to the Jury (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Labor Defence Committee, 1920).

42. The relationship between the "Red Scare," sexuality and nativism is well-documented by many historians. See Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances, 155-158; Lisa M. Fine, "Our Big Factory

Family: Masculinity and Paternalism at the Reo Motor Car Company of Lansing, Michigan", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 274-291; Nancy Forestell, "All That Glitters is Not Gold: The Gendered Dimensions of Work, Family and Community Life in the Northern Ontario Goldmining Town of Timmins, 1909-1950", (Ph.D dissertation, University of Toronto, 1993), 120-121; Linda Gordon, Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence (New York: Penguin Books, 1989); Colleen O'Neill, "Domesticity Deployed: Gender, Race, and the Construction of Class Struggle in the Bisbee Deportation", Labor History 34:2-3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 256-273; and Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991).

43. PAC: RG 6, E, Volume 614, File 292, Secretary of State, Files of the Chief Press Censor 1918-1920, Part 3, C.O. Knowles to Ernest Chambers, 24 March 1919.

44. Ibid, Report of W.E. Playfair, 11 February 1919.

45. Ibid., Associated Press Clipping, 15 April 1919.

46. See Theresa Catherine Baxter, "Selected Aspects of Canadian Public Opinion on the Russian Revolution and on Its Impact in Canada", (M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1972), 5, 63, 165. For the Bolsheviks, sexuality and family policy, see Wendy Z. Goldman, Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

47. Belleville Intelligencer, 20 May 1919, quoted in J.E. Rea, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1973), 35.

48. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 10, File 54, A.J. Andrews' Address to the Jury, 36-37.

49. Ibid., 39. Andrews also informed the Jury that "there are no classes in this country." See Ibid., 31.

50. Red Flag (Vancouver), 10 May 1919. For Lenin's attack on "free love" as bourgeois, see Joan Sangster, Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989), 18.

51. Linda Kealey, "Canadian Socialism and the Woman Question, 1900-1914", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 96; Janice Newton, "From Wage Slave to White Slave: The Prostitution Controversy and the Early Canadian Left", in Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics Eds. Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 217-236.

52. OBU Bulletin, 27 March 1919.

53. Ibid., 25 September 1920, 22 November 1919.

54. Ibid., 22 November 1919.

55. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 4, File 17, CLC Minutes, 20 November 1923.

56. Ibid., Box 4, File 19, CLC Executive Minutes, 11 December 1923.

57. Ibid., Box 4, File 17, CLC Minutes, 18 December 1923.

58. Ibid., Box 4, File 18, GEB Minutes, 24 December 1923; Box 4, File 19, Meeting of the Winnipeg CLC Executive and Resident Members of the OBU-GEB, 2 January 1924; UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, R.B. Russell to C. Freeman, 7 January 1924. Ian Radforth estimates that between 1200 to 1500 workers left the OBU to join the IWW. See Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 119-120.

59. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, R.B. Russell to P.W. Dunning, 7 January 1924.

60. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 8 January 1924.

61. Ibid., Box 4, File 18, GEB Minutes, 20 January 1924, 21 January 1924.

62. Ibid., Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 22 January 1924. Since the minutes were written up and typed after the meeting, it is reasonable that the quotation about the Women's Auxilliary was added later as "proof" that OBU men did appreciate the work of their female comrades.

63. Ibid., Box 4, File 19, CLC Executive Minutes, 29 January 1924; Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 5 February 1924.

64. Ibid., 16 September 1924.

65. Ibid., 4 March 1924.

66. Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances, 115, 120; Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), 53-54; Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988), 86.

67. Quoted in Bob Russell, "A Fair or a Minimum Wage? Women Workers, the State, and the Origins of Wage Regulation in Western Canada", Labour/Le Travail 28 (Fall 1991), 78.

68. For the importance of respectability, see Angus McLaren, A Prescription for Murder: The Victorian Serial Killings of Dr. Thomas Neill Cream (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 91-96; Keith McClelland, "Some Thoughts on Masculinity and the 'Representative Artisan' in Britain, 1850-1880", Gender & History 1:2 (Summer 1989), 164-177.

69. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, William McAllister to Tommy Roberts, 14 February 1924.

70. Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 186-245; John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters:

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71. Janice Newton, The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900-1918 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 113, 134.

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73. PAM: MG10A14-2, R.B. Russell Papers, Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 19 February 1924.

74. Ibid., 26 February 1924.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., Box 4, File 19, Joint Executive Board Minutes, 11 March 1924; Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 1 April 1924.

77. Ibid., Box 5, File 20, CLC Minutes, 4 March 1924.

78. Ibid., Box 4, File 18, GEB Minutes, 27 February 1924.

79. UBCSC: Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 8, R.B. Russell to Tommy Roberts, 25 March 1924.

80. OBU Bulletin, 21 February 1924.

81. PAM: MG10F2, Manitoba Historical Society, Orlikow Tapes, Interview with R.B. Russell, C813-816, Transcript of Tape 6, 13-14.

Epilogue:
Towards A "New Masculine Personality"

In early 1921, Victor Midgley, as he had many times in the past, wrote to Tommy Roberts. By this point, Midgley's days in the OBU were numbered. Having been subjected to intense public scrutiny for his role in the organization's split with the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, he doubted his ability to function effectively for the cause. He did, however, remain optimistic about the potential for socialism in Canada, telling Roberts, "It looks doubtful if capitalism will ever get on its feet again, she looks pretty groggy; - let[']s pray that she is down for the count."[1] Five years later, with Midgley long since gone, Roberts found it difficult to maintain such a view. Writing to a friend in Cranbrook, BC, Roberts sadly noted, "I never saw the human animal so docile as he is today, but if he do[es] not wake up soon I am afraid that the change is a long way off."[2] In a letter to OBU locals less than a year later, Bob Russell proclaimed, "Now is the time for action! Let's make 1927 an OBU year."[3] 1927 was not to be the OBU's year, nor any year after that. After the campaign to organize the miners of Nova Scotia failed in 1926, the OBU was primarily confined to a few locals in Manitoba. While the organization was an important historical symbol of Canadian working-class radicalism, it was seen more as a relic of the past than a union for the future. The RCMP, noted for finding leftist conspiracies where none existed, stopped spying on the group's activities in 1925. Even within the left, especially Communist Party circles, the OBU was caricatured with the label of "sterile" syndicalism and left for dead.[4] The second greatest tragedy in the OBU's history (the first was undoubtedly its crushing after the summer of 1919) is that its death was thirty years in coming. The One Big Union was formally dissolved in 1956; with it went many of the traces of its history. Today, in Vancouver's Gastown, the office used by the OBU on 61 Cordova St. West has been torn down to satisfy the demands for parking in a gentrified location designed for tourists wishing to experience the "essence" of Vancouver's history without, of course, any hint of working-class radicalism.

The death of the One Big Union should be situtated in relation to developments in the international working-class movement during this period. The economic depression in Canada between 1921 and 1923 severely affected production in coal and metal mining and the railway as well as the agricultural and iron and steel industries, all of which were at one time important sectors for the OBU.[5] The Canadian labour movement in general experienced a decline, losing approximately 100 000 members from 1919 to 1922.[6] As Larry Peterson notes, this downturn was international in scope, and prompted the majority of radicals to move towards Leninism and Communist parties, thus transforming the socialist movement as a whole.[7] By the late 1920s, with the Bolsheviks under the control of the Stalinist cadre responsible for the purge of the Trotskyist opposition on a global scale, some radicals began to try to come to terms theoretically and politically with the failure of socialism to spread beyond the Soviet Union. It was in this context, and in jail, that Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci outlined the analytical strands of what we now know as the concept of hegemony. In the course of producing his voluminous prison writings, Gramsci ruminated on the connections between the regulation of (hetero)sexuality and the regime of capital accumulation known as Fordism:

> The formation of a new feminine personality is the most important question of an ethical and civil order connected with the sexual question. Until women can attain not only a genuine independence in relation to men but also a new way of conceiving themselves and their role in sexual relations, the sexual question will remain full of unhealthy characteristics and caution must be exercised in proposals for new legislation.[8]

This formulation of "the sexual question" strikes me as needing to be stood on its head. The problem with this way of seeing gender politics and their connection to class struggle, which remains dominant among the fragmented remains of the Marxist left, is that it emphasizes the need for women, and women alone, to change, to form a "new feminine personality." Working men and masculinity remain outside the parameters of critique, and thus change.

Hopefully, this study has proven something quite different, that dominant working-class masculinities, as they existed in different historical contexts, were (and remain) intimately connected

to the patriarchal politics of the socialist and labour movements. The problem is not simply that these men were sexist, or ignored women. It is more than that. The social movement which coalesced around the OBU was rooted in a particular vision about the power of working men once freed from the fetters of capitalism. OBU men took old ideas and inchoate feelings and knit them together with new collective practices to produce a revolutionary movement. Marxist masculinity was an identity in which class and gender relations were intertwined; for these men to make a claim about class was to also, usually in a subtle fashion, to deploy working-class masculinity in a political manner. The One Big Union, then, was a Marxist movement caught up in the patriarchal politics of gender and sexuality, and these factors cannot simply be filtered out to get at the ungendered and unsexed "truth" of their socialism. Engrained within this vision was the control and subordination of women (and other groups of men) in the workplace, family and community. This patriarchal influence was not a mere tangent, but rather was at the centre of working men's collective desire for One Big Union. To look at the struggle for the OBU in this manner is to come closer to understanding Canadian society in the period following World War One.

For these activists, the abolition of capitalism and the creation of a humane system of production would enable working-class men to regain dimensions of their humanity dependent upon the power stemming from a particular patriarchal heterosexual social formation. Could they have imagined a different way of organizing for socialism? The short answer, given the work of radicals like Emma Goldman and Helen Armstrong, is yes. That these men did not is testimony to the power of patriarchal identities and interests in shaping their vision and their movement. They appealed to women to be active, to contribute to the building of socialism, and this is perhaps the ultimate irony of the OBU's gender politics. In encouraging working-class women to take on new roles, they were also asking them to take part in a movement bent on their subordination.

Without wanting to understate the activists of its feminist minority, the labour movement has generally dealt with the "woman question" by celebrating the image of the heroic woman.

Attend a union function where women are present, and someone is bound to break into Woody Guthrie's "Union Maid," written in Oklahoma City in 1940:

There once was a Union Maid,
She never was afraid
Of guards and ginks and Company finks
Or deputy sherrifs
That made the raid.
She went to the Union Hall
When a meetin' it was called,
And when the Legion boys came 'round
She always stood her ground.

Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking by the Union,
Sticking by the Union, sticking by the Union,
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking by the Union,
Sticking by the Union 'till the day I die.[9]

Guthrie originally penned only two verses for the song. Later, his collaborator in the Almanac Singers, Millard Lampell, added a third verse. Lampell's version robbed the song of its original, far more radical intent, preferring instead to retreat into the male breadwinner ideal and the economic and political subordination of women:

Now you gals who want to be free
Take this little tip from me
Get you a man who's a union man
And join the Ladies Auxilliary
Married life ain't hard
When you've got a union card
And a union man has a happy life
When he's got a union wife.[10]

While speaking more to the industrial unionism of the Congress of Industrial Organizations than the revolutionary unionism of the OBU, Lampell's words bridge the gap between the two movements in its emphasis on women's secondary role. Women were to help their husbands; independent activism, especially in opposition to male domination, was unheard of, indeed a threat to the

movement as a whole. This patriarchal vision, which celebrated women's participation without addressing the power relations which subordinated them, has not survived this long without being contested, and in some cases, transformed. In this instance, Lampell's verse was dropped from the 1973 version of the Wobbly songbook in favour of a socialist-femininst rendition by Nancy Katz, and it is fitting that this thesis end with her vision of hope:

A woman's struggle is hard
Even with a union card
She's got to stand on her own two feet
And not be a servant of the male elite
It's time to take a stand
Keep working hand in hand
There's a job that's got to be done
And a fight that's got to be won.[11]

Endnotes

1. University of British Columbia, Special Collections (UBCSC): Mine Mill Papers, Box 161, File 6, Victor Midgley to Tommy Roberts, 18 February 1921.

2. Ibid., Box 161, File 9, Tommy Roberts to Thomas Miller, 26 March 1926.

3. Ibid., Box 161, File 11, Bob Russell to All Units, 27 January 1927.

4. The characterization of "political sterility" was made by longtime Communist leader and Canada's foremost Stalinist, Tim Buck. See Thirty Years: The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada, 1922-1952 (Toronto: Progress Books, 1975), 19.

5. John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988), 76-77, 92-96.

6. Ibid., 349.

7. Larry Peterson, "Revolutionary Socialism and Industrial Unrest in the Era of the Winnipeg General Strike: The Origins of Communist Labour Unionism in Europe and North America", Labour/Le Travail 13 (Spring 1984), 115-131.

8. Antonio Gramsci, An Antonio Gramsci Reader Ed. David Forgacs (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 282.

9. Woody Guthrie, "Union Maid", in Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People Compiled by Alan Lomax (New York: Oak Publications, 1967), 324-325.

10. Quoted in Wayne Hampton, Guerilla Minstrels (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 128.

11. Ibid., 128-129.

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